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# A Field Battery Association, Inc.

# National Newsletter

## March 2008

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### President Ron Bassan's Report

G'day fellow members. It is with a heavy heart that I must start this President's Report on a sad note once again.

It is my sad duty to inform you that we lost two old and bold since the last newsletter in November.

They are the Reverend Robert (Bob) Gray and Earnest (Lofty) Moore; they will be sadly missed.

There are Vales for both these men in this bulletin.

Also, I would like to convey our hope for a rapid recovery from a recent couple of very serious operations to **Ian Meibush. AO.**

A warm welcome extended from our association to the new **BSM. WO Dion McRay** and **Major Alwyn Payne** the new **Battery Commander.**

At our Committee Meeting in December we decided to have our June meeting in Sydney. As we are a national body now, we thought it was about time to have a meeting outside of Queensland.

The meeting will be held at the Brookvale Travel Lodge on Saturday 7th. June, starting at 1000 hrs and everyone is welcome to come along.

If you know of anyone who was in A Field Battery RAA and they are not members, get them to come and join us

We still have 53 non financial members on our books, I have sent emails and letters to these defaulters; so if you are one of these people, please pay your subs now.

If you don't, this might be the last newsletter that you receive.

Don Sinclair has stocks of shirts, plaques, badges, Malayan Episode books and car stickers, they are top quality and should you require any of the above, contact Don on 07 3408 9009.

Finally I would like to share Bonnie's and my experience for the last few days.

Everyone should know via the national news that here in Mackay over the last few days we have had over 1000 mm of rain. Luckily we have a high block house so we were nice and dry. Under the house was flooded and the carpet was ruined, have had it inspected and claiming the insurance

Last Friday morning we were up early watching the rain pouring down and the flashes from the lightning and the noise from the thunder, when all of a sudden there was a blinding flash and a tremendous bang, I looked out of the rear dinette window and saw a tree in my back yard had a small fire in it.

The rain soon put the fire out so we knew it had been struck by lightning.

Bonnie walked up our hall and she called me to have a look at our toilet. The toilet wall had a hole in it and pieces of plaster, fibro and toilet paper were flung across the hall and into our bedroom, so we knew the lightning had hit the house as well.

Thank heavens we have house and contents insurance with the Defence Service Homes.

The lightning blew out my brand new computer, only bought last December, a Sony DVD recorder that was a Xmas present and my set top box. Have had my computer repaired and thank heavens it was only the power unit, so I am using it to write this. I have not had the other two checked as yet and I am glad no one was sitting on the toilet, as instead of it going down, it might have been blasted up.

We consider ourselves very lucky when you see nearly 4000 people lost everything. Am attaching a photo of the toilet.

That's all from me for this newsletter, hope to see some of you in Canberra.

**Ubique. Tex Bassan.**



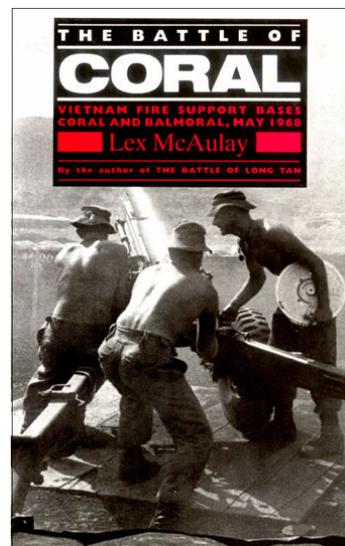
**THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE**

This year is the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Coral and Balmoral to be held in Canberra.

This concerns anyone who was in 12 Field Regiment RAA, 102 Battery, 104 Battery, HQ Battery and Detachment 131 Battery.

There is going to be a plaque laid in the Sculpture Garden for 12 Field Regiment RAA, the same as was done for A Field Battery two years ago.

This will involve the above units as well as A Field Battery, 104 Battery, second tour, HQ Battery, second tour and Detachment 131 Battery, 1971.

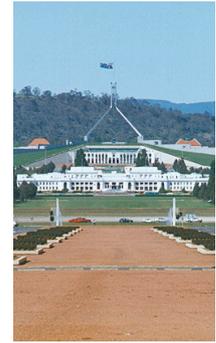


**OFFICIAL PROGRAMME**  
**40th Anniversary of the Battles of Coral and Balmoral**  
**Royal Australian Artillery - Canberra 12th– 14th May 2008**

**12th May 2008**

**TBC– National combined Battles of Coral and Balmoral Reception.**

- **Combined Arms Event**
- **Location - To be confirmed**
- **Attendance - Battles of Coral and Balmoral veterans only.**
- 



**13th May 2008**

**1000 hrs - National Combined Battles Memorial Service.**

- **Combined Arms Ceremony**
- **Location - Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, Anzac Avenue.**
- **Attendance - Unrestricted - Open to public.**

**1130 hrs - 12th Field Regiment Plaque Dedication**

- **RAA Event**
- **Location - Australian War Memorial**
- **Attendance - Unrestricted - Open to public**

**1900 hrs - RAA Battle of Coral Small Group Recollection Dinners.**

- **12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) and 131 Divisional Locating Battery (Vietnam Detachment) veteran's events.**
- **Locations - Various**
- **Attendance - RAA Battle of Coral veterans and partners only.**

**1900 hrs for 1930 hrs - National Gunners Dinner**

- **Format - Traditional Gunner's Dinner with keynote speaker (s)**
- **Attendance - All serving and retired Gunners are welcome and encouraged to attend.**
- **Location - Federal Golf Club, Canberra.**
- **Dress - Winter Mess Kit or Black Tie with miniature medals.**
- **Indicative Cost - \$80 per head**
- **RSVP - NLT MONDAY 3rd March 2008 or for further information, contact.**

**Major Terry Brennan - 07 4651 0939 or 0419 179 974. email, [stratford01@bigpond.com](mailto:stratford01@bigpond.com)  
or Captain Tom Adams - 03 5735 6465 or 0407 921 328. email, [thomas.adams@defence.gov.au](mailto:thomas.adams@defence.gov.au)**

**14th May 2008**

**1000 hrs - RAA National Battle of Coral Commemorative Ceremony**

- **RAA National Event**
- **Location - RAA National Memorial, Mt. Pleasant**
- **Attendance - Unrestricted - Open to public**

**1900 hrs - RAA Battle of Coral Commemorative Dinner**

- **12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) and 131 Div Loc Bty (Vietnam Det.) veteran's event**
- **Location - Federal Golf Club**
- **Attendance - RAA Battle of Coral veterans and partners only.**

**Further information including accommodation details:**

**Colonel Don Tait, 0419 287 292**  
**Colonel Ian Ahern, 0417 691 741**  
**Major Terry Brennan, 0419 179 974**



**Aussie artillery "lost" a gun for a short period in this battle and also fired over "open sights".  
Neither of these things had happened to any British Commonwealth artillery since the Boer  
war. The gun was recaptured. It would be great to see A Field Battery well represented.**

**Ronald (Tex) Bassan.**

## *Obit* **Wale Reverend Robert John Gray 1939 - 2007**

Bob was born on the 9th September 1939 and passed away 23rd November 2007

I don't know much about Bob's military career, he came to A Field Battery as a reinforcement Gunner in 1959 when we were serving in the Malayan Emergency. When the Battery came home in September 1959, Bob stayed on in Malaya and served the rest of his two years with 101 Field Battery. I don't know what unit he went to when he came home but I do know that Bob went to Aviation Corps at Oakey and got out of the Army as a private in that corps.

In 2006 when I put the advertisement in the Vet Affairs newspaper about the laying of our plaque at the Australian War Memorial on our birthday, 1st August, Bob saw the advertisement and rang me asking if he could join our Association, of course I said yes and sent him an application to join. When the application came back on the 13th September 2005 with his joining fee, at the top he had put in brackets (Reverend) and beside it, I quote; "Just so there are no surprises."

We were going to have a Padre from RMC Duntroon to dedicate the plaque, I informed the AWM that we had a Padre as one of our members and he only lived in Goulburn, I suggested that they contact Bob and ask him if he could officiate at the ceremony. Of course Bob agreed and he dedicated the plaque on the 1st of August. At this ceremony I noticed that he was wearing the RSL badges on his vestments, I found out that he was Goulburn Sub Branch RSL's Padre.

When Ken Kennedy passed away and his wish was that his ashes be spread on Kennedy's Knoll, Canberra rifle range, Bob came to the fore once again and officiated at this solemn occasion.

On speaking to his wife Faith, I found out that Bob was ordained into the Anglican Church ten years ago and he was the Deacon in the community.

Bob's funeral was at the Saint Saviour's Anglican Church on the 29th November 2007 and was conducted by the Bishop of Goulburn and Canberra, also Gordon Wade, President of the Goulburn Sub Branch RSL.

A Field Battery Association's deepest sympathy to Bob's wife, Faith, children Jason, Renee and Charles.

**Bob, you will be sorely missed, rest in peace, old friend. Ron Bassan**



The Memorial plaque was laid at the Canberra War Memorial Museum at a ceremony on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006.

Left to right, Craig Johnston, Ron Bassan, Rev. Bob Gray, John Smith, Barry Campbell and Peter Seddon former BC A Fd Bty.

### **A Letter of Tribute to Lofty Moore From Tom Caldwell**

I remember the day Lofty Moore arrived at A Field Battery Georges Heights, fresh back from Korea and Japan, where he served in the Infantry

He was posted back to A Troop, A Battery as Signals Bombardier where he became an instructor in voice procedure, wireless operation, driver and maintenance

He also became mentor, friend and father figure to all us Sigs.

We were all together through training and Canungra in preparation for our tour of Malaya. We were all together in operations and Infantry patrols throughout our tour, there are many tales to be told of this period.

I am sure that all the Sigs of A Troop mourn the passing of such a great soldier and friend.

I would like to think if there is someone up there, he would take care of him, as he took care of us.

**Tom Caldwell.**



**LIMA - OSCAR - FOXTROT - TANGO - YANKEE**

### *His Journey's Just Begun*



*Don't think of him as gone away—  
his journey's just begun,  
life holds so many facets—  
this earth is only one.*

*Just think of him as resting  
from the sorrows and the tears  
in a place of warmth and comfort  
where there are no days and years.*

*Think how he must be wishing  
that we could know today  
how nothing but our sadness  
can really pass away.*

*And think of him as living  
in the hearts of those he touched...  
for nothing loved is ever lost—  
and he was loved so much.*

E. Brenneman

## “A” Field Battery. Switched On and Eveready

Current News of A Field Battery from Lieutenant Peter J. Watkins

2008 has begun and I think I speak for most of us when I say despite a six to seven week break for most, it feels like it's only been about two weeks since we knocked off at the end of last year. Thankfully all members of the Battery returned to work safely and there were no significant dramas over the leave period.

The major focus for the Battery this year will be operations. Already we have committed several personnel, including the new Battery Commander, Major Alwyn Payne, to deploy to Afghanistan as part of Reconstruction Task Force Four (RTF4). The members deploying on RTF4 will be responsible for co-ordinating artillery, close air support and aerial fire support to protect the Australian forces rebuilding the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan.

Arguably the most exciting deployment in which the Battery is involved is Operation Herrick, the British commitment to the Helmand province of Afghanistan. Six members of the Battery will deploy to Britain for six months of lead-up training with 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, and will then deploy to Afghanistan for six months as a gun detachment. “The lads are all really excited that we're going to be deploying there in our Corps role,” said detachment commander, Bombardier Matthew Green. “Obviously it's something very few Australian gunners have had the opportunity to do in the last thirty years or so and that's been an extra incentive for the men in their preparation.” Indeed, the detachment have been dedicating a large amount of their time to physical preparation, conducting gruelling physical training sessions twice-daily to prepare themselves for the rigours of conducting operations with one of Britain's elite regiments.

The other operation that the Battery is involved with is the latest rotation of troops to East Timor, with several members putting their hands up to go over – in some cases for the second and third time.

What's left of the Battery has a busy training year ahead, with exercises scheduled in Singleton and Townsville. The first exercise of the year kicks off in Singleton in March and is to support a Joint Terminal Attack Controller course, where the guns are required to mark targets for close air support. Until the exercise the focus is on small arms proficiency and basic gunnery skills before building up to an advanced level throughout the year.



**29 Commando Regiment** is the Commando-trained unit of the British Army's Royal Artillery. The regiment is under the operational control of 3 Commando Brigade providing artillery support and gunnery observation.

The **Panzerhaubitze 2000** (abbreviated **PzH 2000**), is a German 155mm self-propelled howitzer developed for the German Army.

The PzH 2000 is one of the most powerful conventional artillery systems currently deployed. It is particularly notable for a very high rate of fire; in burst mode it can fire three rounds in 9 seconds, ten rounds in 56 seconds, and can fire between 10 and 13 rounds per minute continuously, depending on barrel heating. The replenishment of shells is automated. Two operators can load 60 shells and propelling charges in less than 12 minutes.

The PzH 2000 was used for the first time in combat by the Dutch Army in August of 2006 against Taliban targets in Kandahah Province, in support of Operation Medusa. Since then it has been used regularly in support of coalition troops in Uruzgan province, also in Afghanistan.

The PzH 2000 was also used extensively during the Battle of Chora. It is known as "the long arm of ISAF".

The gun has been criticised by the Dutch in Uruzgan province as the NBC system designed for use in Europe cannot cope with the high level of dust in Afghanistan.

The guns have been nicknamed the 'beasts of Tarin Kowt' by the Taliban. The guns have been modified with additional armour being fitted to the roof to protect against mortar rounds.



Panzerhaubitze 2000 in profile.

Type. Self propelled Artillery

Place of origin. Germany

Specifications Weight 55.3 tons combat loaded

Length 11.7 m (38.4 feet)

Width 3.6 m (11.8 feet)

Height 3.1 m (10.2 feet)

Crew 5 (Commander, Driver, Gunner, 2 Loaders)

Primary armament. Rhinemetall 155 mm L52 Artillery

Operational range 420 km Speed 60 km/h (37 mph)

**A Brief History of Early Penang**, of course this is mainly for the benefit of the single guys who only saw the bar area when they were granted a leave pass. The Marriedees were fortunate enough to call this paradise home living in tax funded houses with servants and visiting the mainland from 9 to 5.

A privilege not extended to their brothers, living in primitive conditions and subjected to daily bed inspections

Sixteenth century Portuguese traders from Goa, India sailing to the Far East in search of spices found a small island where they replenished their water supplies. They named it *Pulo Pinaom*. In the 17th century, Penang's location at the northern entry to the Straits of Malacca provided a sheltered harbour for Chinese, Indian, Arabian and European ships during the monsoon months; this, in turn, inevitably made it fertile hunting ground for pirates.

One of the very first Englishmen to reach Penang was the merchant-navigator Sir James Lancaster who in 1588 served under Sir Francis Drake as commander of the *Edward Bonaventure* against the nemesis of the Spanish Armada. On April 10, 1591, commanding the same ship, he set sail from Plymouth for the East Indies, reaching Penang in June 1592, remaining on the island until September of the same year and pillaging every vessel he encountered. He returned to England in May 1594.

On 11 August 1786, Captain Francis Light, known as the founder of Penang, hoisted the Union Jack thereby taking formal possession of Penang and renamed it **Prince of Wales Island** (name used until after 1867) in honour of the heir to the British Throne. Penang was the first British possession in the Malay States and Southeast Asia.

In 1826, Penang, along with Malacca and Singapore, became part of the Straits Settlements under the British administration in India, later coming under direct British rule in 1867 as a Crown Colony, George Town became the capital of the Straits Settlements but its status was soon supplanted by rapidly developing Singapore whose importance eclipsed Penang's.

Cosmopolitan Penang was already a thriving colony of the British Empire in the first decades of the 20th. century, counting among its eminent visitors Somerset Maugham, Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, Noel Coward, Herman Hesse, Karl May, Count Friedreich M von Hochberg and Hans Sturzenegger.

The Battle of Penang that took place on October 28, 1914 during World War I saw the surprise naval assault in which the German cruiser SMS Emden attacked and sank Allied warships off the harbour of Penang including Russian cruiser Zhemchug. Otherwise, Penang was relatively unaffected by the Great War.

World War II, on the other hand, unleashed unparalleled social upheaval on Penang. With news of the imminent attack of the Japanese, the European population was evacuated beforehand, leaving the rest of Penang's population to suffer under a brutal Japanese occupation, causing much disillusionment and injury to the British prestige and image of invincibility. The British withdrawal left the defenceless island in the hands of a State Committee which had to subdue a three-day civil unrest. Penang was captured by Japanese forces invading from the north through Thailand on 19 December 1941, one of the key stages of the Battle of Malaya, days after having neutralised American sea power at Pearl Harbor. Three and a half years of rule of terror ensued. Many of the local populace fled to the interior and plantations to escape from Japanese atrocities, of which many were reported and documented. During this occupation, Penang was governed by four successive Japanese governors, starting with Shotaro Katayama.

It is a little known fact that Penang served as a secret German U-Boat base in the Far East. U-511, under the command of Kptlt. Fritz Schneewind, arrived in Penang, then under Japanese occupation in July 1943, followed by U-178 in August 1943. This essentially started the U-boat campaign in the Indian Ocean and also provided the Germans with penetration into the Pacific for the first time, alongside their ally, Japan. KK Wilhelm Dommies became the first commander of the U-boat base in Asia.

Japanese forces in Penang finally surrendered to British forces on 6th September 1945. George Town's historic buildings remarkably survived virtually unscathed despite Allied bombings.

The political landscape had changed irreversibly in the aftermath of the war. The end of British imperialism seemed impendent, even inevitable. In 1946, the Straits Settlements were dissolved, with Sir Shento Thomas being the last governor, and Penang became part of the Malayan Union, before becoming in 1948 a state of the Federation of Malaya, which gained independence in 1957.



Old City Hall, Georgetown, Penang

In 1786, Francis Light acted as middleman in securing Pulau Pinang from the new Sultan Abdullah of Kedah in return for a promise of British protection from his various enemies. "Pulau Pinang" is the Malay name for Penang. Literally translated, Pulau Pinang means "Island of the Betel Nut Tree".



**"Till this day, I do not understand why the Japanese had to bayonet them...they could have just shot them."**



### THE SNAKE TEMPLE

The temple was built in about 1850 and is dedicated to Char Soo Kong. The statue of the deified healer was brought to Penang by a monk from China.

The legend is that this pious monk gave shelter to the snakes of the jungle; when the temple was completed, the snakes moved in.

**An Email from David Troedel, seeking help from 101 Field Battery members**

From: "David & Pat Troedel" <davidpat@bigpond.net.au>

Subject: Photo's from Malaya (101 Fd Bty)

Hi all, I am trying to copy photo's onto a disc for the 50th Reunion in September 2009.

With the help of quite a few members we have put names to faces, could you please see if you can confirm that the RAEME and other names are correct?

It would be appreciated if you have any photo's you could email them to me and I can include them on the disc.

Still no word from Head of Corps (RAA) when we will receive the ACB.

Regards David Troedel



Colin. Fogarty, Barry Alger, I.J. Woods  
Gabby Hayes, Jack Ballsillie, Larry  
Hancock, Dusty Miller



?, Don Mackenzie, ?



?, Ben Blakeney, Don MacKenzie, Stan  
Briggs, Col Fogarty, Harry Schnaars, Dick  
Richardson, Snow Stewart, Mal Jackson



?, Barry Alger, Larry Hancock, Col Fogarty  
Jack Balsillie, Dusty Miller, Tom Simpson



Dick Finney,  
Jack Balsillie, Mal Myers



John. Tubby Campbell  
Don MacKenzie



Barry Alger, Dusty Miller

**Sadly, Harry Schnaars has recently passed away.**

**His funeral was on 18th. January 2008 at Kellerberrin, Western Australia**

**An update from Major Kym Schoene regarding the issue of the ACB**

Dear Maj Gen Ford, Brig. Winter, Colonel Commandants, RAA Associations,

I have received many queries for an update on the progress of our ACB applications since I have taken the appointment as the SO2 HOR RAA. I regret my late replies during my transition into the job. CAPT Tom Adams ensured that we met DGPer's timelines in 2007 with correct administrative checks and processes. The applications were supported by HOR, BRIG Winter and submitted correctly. I have re-initiated contact with the office processing the applications and assisted them by sending electronic copies of our submissions and offered any further assistance to ease their work load and prioritise our applications.

On Fri. Feb 08, I sought a further update regarding the progress and processing of the consolidated RAA applications for the Army Combat Badge for our ex-serving members.

I have been advised that DG Personnel Branch are currently processing our applications. Each applicant will receive an individual letter authorising the wearing of the ACB plus the badge. The letters and badges are being processed in two batches, Vietnam and Korea are currently being approved, whilst Malaya and other service needs to be checked with CARO for approval. DG Personnel are currently processing approximately 2,000 applications per week.

The current timelines are that the RAA applications for Vietnam and Korea should be completed by the end of February 2008 and Malaya and other service by the end of March 2008. I wish to convey their intent that all our current RAA applicants should receive their ACB prior to ANZAC Day.

Once our applications are approved, the letters and badges will be sent to me at HOR, I will contact each Association to discuss the best method of issuing the ACB for each Association group. As we have received approximately 800 applications, this will be a large job for us.

Additionally, I will continue to accept applications as they arrive and have been submitted through the respective RAA Associations and submit further lists on a regular basis. The format for the applications is attached. Hard copies will always be accepted however to save transcription times, if possible the hard copy should be accompanied by an electronic copy.

Associations should not forget to complete the contact details for their applications.



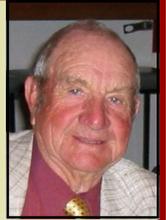


*They shall not grow old,  
As we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them,  
Nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun,  
And in the morning,  
We will remember them.*

**KEN. AGNEW**  
**TREVOR. BEER**  
**S.J. BLANCH (OAS. Malaya )**  
**TOM. CARRUTHERS**  
**KEITH. CHRISTENSEN**  
**RICHARD. DUGGAN**  
**R.M. DUCAT (OAS. Malaya )**  
**PAT. DALY**  
**TOM. DAWSON**  
**GEORGE. FORSYTHE**  
**ROBERT J. (BOB) GRAY**  
**MICK. HARKEN**  
**B.D. HENDERSON (OAS. Malaya )**  
**KEN. KENNEDY**  
**BOBBY. LEWIS**  
**JOHN. MACDONALD**  
**L.G. MATHERS (KIA. Vietnam )**  
**E.J. (LOFTY) MOORE**  
**R.J. PARKER (OAS. Vietnam )**  
**DAVE. QUIRK**  
**CLIVE. RALFE**  
**R. F. SMITH**  
**BRIAN. WHISKER**  
**JOHN. WORBOYS**



**Earnest J.  
(Lofty) Moore**  
**1928 - 2008**



Earnest Joseph. (Lofty) Moore Joined the Army in the late 40s and after recruit training at Greta, NSW, was posted to 53 Field Battery at North Head which was incorporated with A Field Battery on their return from Japan.

In 1952, Lofty, along with other A Battery volunteers was posted to 1 RAR in Korea, assisting in Anti Tank Gunnery and other war time duties; returning to Australia in 1953.

In 1954, Lofty was to serve a second tour of duty in Korea, where he was promoted to temporary sergeant before returning to Australia where he rejoined A Field Battery, on standby to join the Malayan Emergency in 1957.

Lofty served the final year of his nine year military career in Malaya and before retuning home told me that he was very proud and privileged to have served with A Field Battery.

Lofty Moore was a very experienced and professional NCO who trained his men to a high standard, accepting nothing less; his loyalty and conduct attracted the utmost respect from all ranks.

We will all miss this man.

Eulogy from Brian Czisowski



**Reverend Robert J.  
(Bob) Gray**  
**1939 - 2007**



Bob was born in Port Kembla and grew up on a farm at Myrtleville, just north of Goulburn where he was to spend his later years working at Kenmore Hospital, gaining an insight into the plight of the mentally ill.

He was very proud of his Army service, his tour of duty in Malaya with A Field Battery was to forge many life long friendships.

It was later in his life that he was to begin his Christian journey and an everlasting faith that was to culminate with him completing theology training and becoming ordained ten years ago.

Bob's earlier dealings with the mentally ill and his solid belief that these people should not be treated like "rubbish bins" prompted him to establish Auburn Cottage a haven that allowed them to attain dignity and a sense of achievement in this activities centre.

Bob was a man of honour and we offer our sympathy to his wife Faith, his sons Jason and Charles, his daughter Renee and beloved grandchildren Jayden and Broc.



**25 April 1915 is a date etched in Australia's history.** Its anniversary is commemorated across the country each year as ANZAC Day.

To many this is Australia's most important national day.

The first ANZAC Day was conducted in 1916. The troops observed it in various ways, and in London large crowds watched 2,000 Australians and New Zealanders march to Westminster Abbey.

In Australia there was strong support for the day, with between 60,000 and 100,000 people packing the Domain in Sydney for a service.

**MARCH TIMES AND LOCATIONS**

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

**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.

**ASSOCIATION MERCHANDISE**

**We now have good stocks of "A" Battery Association merchandise available.**



- Polo Shirts      \$35**
- Caps                \$15**
- Stickers            \$6 (2)**
- Plaques            \$30**

**Please add \$5 postage**

**To order contact  
Bob Cunningham at  
(07) 3350 1394  
or mail to  
26 Kilburn Street  
Chermside Brisbane 4032**

email: [carolchermside@optusnet.com](mailto:carolchermside@optusnet.com)

**Please make cheques or money orders payable to: "A" Field Battery Association Inc.**



**BRISBANE ANZAC DAY POST-MARCH CELEBRATIONS 2008**

We have been going to the Theodore Club for the past 4 years. It is perfectly located but has become over-crowded, hot and a beer swill. At our recent AGM we suggested a one-off River Cruise which could include family and friends and our fellow Arty Associations. This suggestion was floated around at the last Anzac Day drinks and was well supported. The other Associations have been invited and some interest has been expressed. Serving members of the Battery have also been invited and we can expect up to thirty from there which would be a very welcome outcome. Cost may be a significant factor and we would need a minimum of 70 confirmed starters to undertake the cruise. We can have up to 200 persons.

The following details are provided:

The cruise is conducted by Brisbane River Cruises. The cruise will depart from the Riverside Pier, a few hundred meters from the end of the march.

The vessel is the "Captain Cook".

The cruise would be for 2 hours commencing around 1245hrs.

The Captain Cook is fully licensed ( no bring-on grog allowed). Drinks cost is very comparable with other city venues including the Theodore Club. We can provide music for entertainment or hire a DJ (probably depends on numbers). BBQ Sizzle is provided.

Cost (which includes the Sizzle) will be \$20 per person. Dependant on numbers this cost may allow a free first welcome drink. (No guarantees).

Now the hard bit. To secure this cruise we need a firm commitment. Payment of \$20 per person is required (fully refundable if we don't get the numbers). We need this to be paid by 28 Feb 08. If you wish to participate please complete the detail below and forward to Neville Galbraith PO Box 465 Deception Bay Qld 4508. Make cheque/money order payable to 105 Bty RAA Assn.

(cut here)

**Yes I will be undertaking the Brisbane Anzac Day Cruise:**

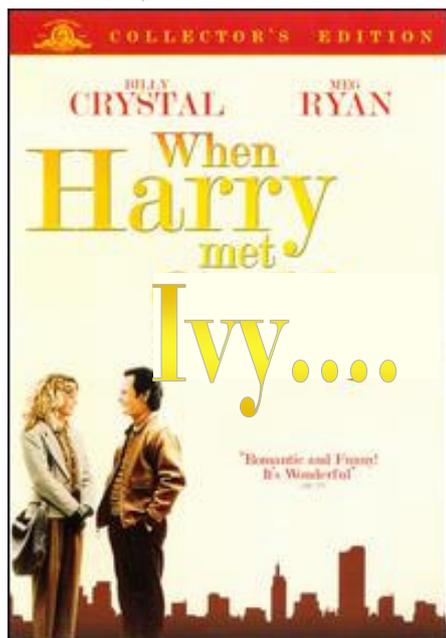
**Name..... Additional Persons ( )**

**Cheque/money Order for \$.....( \$20pp ) is enclosed.**

**If you have any queries please contact Graeme Maughan on email [gandimaughan@dodo.com.au](mailto:gandimaughan@dodo.com.au) or phone 07 32568413.**

**Should the cruise go ahead but you do not wish to take it, the RAA Assn meets at The Pig 'n' Whistle, Riverside Centre, and this should provide a suitable alternative. Dependant**

# Announcing the Marriage of Harry and Ivy Cook



Who doesn't remember the restaurant scene from the 1989 film *When Harry Met Sally*, or the classic line 'I'll have what she's having' Can Harry and Sally remain mere friends, or will they--must they--fall in love?

Forget those classic Hollywood romance movies, like "When Harry met Sally." gather up all those old Mills and Boon novels and feed them through the shredder. We have our very own home grown love story that surpasses them all.

Break out the tissues, this heart warming story will have you crying tears of sadness, to be replaced with tears of joy as you learn of a love lost, to be rediscovered, ironically through the initiative of the person who was inadvertently, yet partially responsible for the original suspension of their star crossed love affair.

It all started 53 years ago when Harry Cook and Ivy were young lovers looking forward to a happy future; when Ivy became pregnant.

In those days there was some stigma attached to having a baby out of wedlock and they were influenced into having the baby adopted and sadly forced to part and travel their separate ways and never to contact each other.

Harry was to join the Army and start another journey through life, yet as the years rolled by Harry was never to forget his love for this woman that had its beginning over half a century ago.



*Harry and Ivy at their Wedding*

Around 8 months ago Harry was to receive a mysterious phone call asking for Noel Cook, which is his correct name, but as we know he has always been known as Harry.

The caller identified himself as Eddy and that after some extensive research had established that Harry is his true father. Harry was speechless as Eddy went on to explain that he had already made contact with and recently had an emotional reunion with his mother; Ivy.

He then arranged a meeting between his Mum and Dad where; after all the tears and hugs and warmth, they fell in love, all over again.

What a wonderful feeling of satisfaction and achievement Eddie must be experiencing as he contemplates the new life he has created for the two people who were responsible for the creation of his own life so many years ago

This isn't a romance of passion, although passion is present, but one that becomes possible only because these two people have matured until they can finally see clearly what they really want in a partner as they embark on this journey of mutual discovery.

The question we now ask. Is there anything more beautiful in life than a young couple clasping hands and pure hearts in the path of marriage? Can there be anything more beautiful than young love?

And the answer is given. Yes, there is a more beautiful thing It is the spectacle of an older man and an older woman finishing their journey together on that path.

Their hands are gnarled, but still clasped; their faces are seamed, but still radiant; their hearts are physically bowed and tired, but still strong with love and devotion for one another.

Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love... It is, " Old Love."



David Harris, Barry Olver, Harry Cook & Alan Singh

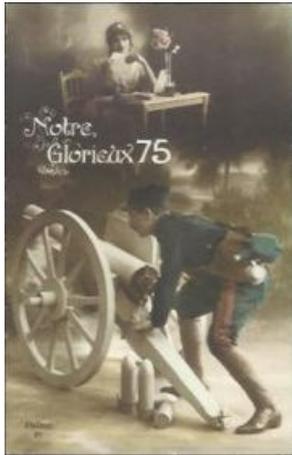
**Thank you Harry and thank you Ivy for allowing**

**us to share the intimacy and enchantment of this incredible story, and maybe, just maybe this awareness may inspire others to declare the love for their partner, before it becomes too late**



# THE KING OF BATTLE

Condensed by Ray Alcorn from an article by Bevin Alexander, Professor of History at Longwood University, Farmville, Virginia.



"Our glorious 75mm gun", propaganda postcard



Boer Guerrillas during the Second Boer War

Until 1897, "recoil" severely limited the effectiveness of field artillery pieces. The force of firing a projectile would thrust the cannon backward and the gunners then had to push the gun back into position to fire again, thus restricting the rate of fire and limiting the gun's effectiveness on the battlefield.

Because of its direct fire from alongside the infantry the gunners were open to rifle fire from enemy infantry.

In 1897 the famous "French 75" appeared, rendering all other artillery obsolete overnight.

This 75mm field gun featured a hydraulic oil compressed air mechanism to absorb the recoil. Only the barrel of the gun moved rearward when fired, after which the gun's carriage remained in place. Gunners were then able to fire at the unheard of rate 20 rounds per minute.

Field artillery was still used in the direct fire role and was still vulnerable during the Boer War (1899-1902).

The Boers used the groundbreaking German Mauser 98 magazine rifle. The Mauser fired high velocity bullets at a range of up to 1200 yards and shot to pieces the British Artillery gunners.

The British needed a new artillery strategy.

By 1910 the maximum effective range of rifled artillery had steadily increased to 6000 yards, five times the range of the average infantry rifle. But it was the field telephone that changed the vulnerability of artillery.

Using the field telephone and an artillery trained soldier with the infantry; artillery could be used in the "indirect fire" role. Artillery became less vulnerable by using the telephone and a forward observer who directed fire.

Indirect fire revolutionised artillery and positioned it once and for all as the unchallenged "King of Battle". By the time of the First World War, the machine gun and indirect fire had become established practice and the main killers on the battlefield



**Editors note:** Thanks Ray for a very interesting article, it is a little known fact that the revolutionary design of that French 75mm was invented by Craftsman Pierre of the French Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, while serving at the Paris L A D

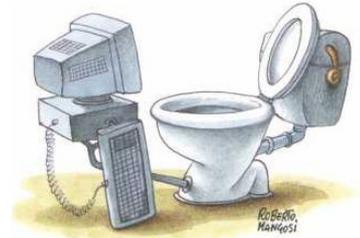


**Editor's flush.** You may have observed the rather intimate, yet tasteful image of La présidentielle de toilette on the front page of our newsletter. To other readers with a

similar desire to display their little room; forget it, this favour is reserved exclusively for our President.

Just another manifestation of the privilege of rank.

Of course the Editor is also excluded from this ban as my loo also serves as a workstation



## To Whom it May Concern

*In war one, thing both sides agree  
All soldiers loathe artillery  
Unlike the bullet that singles out by name  
A barrage treats all men, just the same*

*It's not the bayonet, or machine gun burst  
But the exploding shell "we fears the worst"  
A fateful lesson, the mortal learn  
The air burst shell addressed, "to whom it may concern".*

### **SSC KELSEN "The Bunyip from the Bush Poets society"**

The harder the fighting and the longer the war, the more the infantry, and in fact all the arms, lean on the gunners.

#### **Field Marshal Montgomery**

"Artillerymen believe the world consists of two types of people; other Artillerymen and targets."

#### **- Unknown**

"The thanks of the infantry, in my opinion, must be treasured more by every artilleryman than all decorations and citations. "

#### **- Colonel George Bruchmuller,**

Artillery conquers and infantry occupies.

#### **J.F.C. Fuller**

In many situations that seemed desperate, the artillery has been a most vital factor.

#### **Gen Douglas MacArthur**

I do not have to tell you who won the war. You know, the artillery did.

#### **Gen George S. Patton**

"Artillerymen have a love for their guns which is perhaps stronger than the feeling of any soldier for his weapon or any part of his equipment."

#### **Brigadier General S. L. A. Marshall**

## Jimmy James, P.O.W. Plotter of Escapes, Is Dead at 92

### A story submitted by Clive (Lofty) Castles



Jimmy James, a British flier in World War II obsessed with escape plots during his five years in German captivity, most prominently the breakout portrayed in the movie "The Great Escape," died Jan. 18 in Shrewsbury, England. Mr. James, who lived in Ludlow, England, was 92.

On the night of June 5, 1940, Flight Lieutenant James, the co-pilot of a Wellington bomber, was on the way to a mission over Germany when his plane was shot down by anti-aircraft fire over the occupied Netherlands. He bailed out about 25 miles south of Rotterdam but was captured and taken to the prisoner-of-war camp Stalag Luft I on the Baltic coast of Germany.

Mr. James made at least seven unsuccessful attempts to tunnel out of that camp. Then he was transferred to Stalag Luft III, about 90 miles southeast of Berlin. By the time he was liberated by American troops in Austria in May 1945, a few days before Germany surrendered, he had tried to escape at least 11 times from P.O.W. camps and a concentration camp and had succeeded twice, only to be recaptured.

The most storied escape occurred on the night of March 24, 1944, when 76 Allied prisoners, mostly airmen from Britain and the Commonwealth nations, tunneled out of Stalag Luft III. Mr. James and another prisoner had overseen the hiding of soil displaced by the tunnel digging, supervising its placement underneath seats in the camp's theatre, where the captives had put on shows.

Mr. James was the 39th man to escape through the tunnel.

The breakout, as depicted in the 1963 movie starring Steve McQueen, is remembered for what Mr. James once called "rather Hollywood fantasy" — the McQueen character's short-lived escape on a motorcycle.

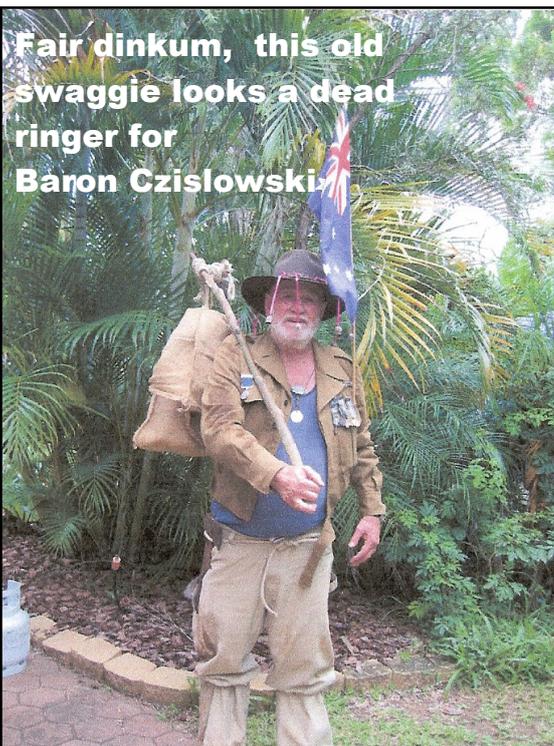
But the real escape became a grim affair. Only 3 of the 76 escapees made it to freedom. Fifty of the 73 men who were recaptured were shot on Hitler's orders.

Mr. James was recaptured at a German railroad station while fleeing toward the Czech border and was eventually transferred to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

In September 1944, he joined several other prisoners of war in escaping from the camp through a 100-foot tunnel they had dug 10 feet below the surface, using a table knife. He fled north, hoping to board a ship for Sweden, but was recaptured once more and later imprisoned at two other concentration camps before being liberated.

Bertram Arthur James, known as Jimmy since his days in military service, was born in India, the son of a tea merchant. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1939 and remained in the military until the 1950s. He later entered the British diplomatic corps, holding posts on the Continent and in Africa. He is survived by his wife, Madge.

Mr. James told of his experiences in a 1983 memoir, "Moonless Night." In 2004, he attended a ceremony at the site of Stalag Luft III, now a part of Poland. "The huts have been razed to the ground but you can see where we dug, the route of the tunnel, and you can still feel the atmosphere of the camp," he told the BBC then. "Having lost 50 comrades, ghosts of the past are inevitably going to rise up. I feel a great loss. I never thought that 60 years ago, when I crawled out of the snow, there would be a ceremony in Poland to commemorate the event."



### Australia Day with Ray

Every year on Australia Day, Ray and Lorraine Alcorn put on a BBQ to celebrate our heritage.

For the last two years Brian Czisowski has arrived dressed as a Swaggie.

There is generally about 30 guests and each guest has to read an Australian poem. This has been very successful and seems to get better with each year.

Among the guests are some of the Associations members such as: Don Sinclair, Bob Cunningham, Brian Czisowski and their wives; and of course the host Ray Alcorn and his wife Lorraine.

This year a friend of ours, Margaret Beck, made an excellent DVD of the day.

The DVD is hilarious, mainly because of the excellent poetry.

If you chance, upon this old swaggie, mean of eye and just so daggie,  
Take him from that lonely trail, whisper softly, "Baron; check your mail."

For I have written him a letter which I had, for want of better  
Knowledge, sent to where I met him down the Lachlan years ago;

He was shearing when I knew him, so I sent the letter to him,  
Just "on spec", addressed as follows: "Baron, of The Overflow."

Apologies to A B (Banjo) Paterson

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