

1871

A Field Battery Association, Inc.

National Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2011

President Ron Bassan's Report



From the President's Chair

G'Day everyone,

I will start this off with one great apology to Bob McEvoy,

Bob I am so sorry for forgetting Lyn in my President's Report and I hope you will forgive my mistake.

The Reunion and AGM has been and gone and I have heard some glowing reports about the three days.

I was worried that we would have some hiccups over the three days, but to my relief and the way everything was organised by the Sawtell RSL, everything went like clockwork, also the bus trip and the barbecue at the Golf Club.

I think everyone will agree there was plenty of food, especially for the recovery breakfast and the farewell barbecue. Sawtell is a lovely town and where I stayed was magnificent.

I am so looking forward to



Merry Christmas

our reunion there in two years time.

I must extend a big thank you to Dave and Liz Jackson for all the work that

Dave put into helping to organise the event and Liz for opening her home to us, also a big thanks to

our committee for the work that they did and I think you all will agree that Saint's DVD was great.

If anyone had complaints, please let me know and I will see if we can rectify them next time.

We gained nine new members from the reunion, which was very pleasing, but we still need more, so if you know of ex Battery members, encourage them to join.

We still have twenty one members who are unfinancial at this time; four are outstanding for two years and will be deleted off our data base at the end of this financial year, unless subs are paid.

Why not become a paid Life

Member, it will only cost you \$200 and then you can forget yearly subs, and for all the Life Members, if you feel like making a donation to the Association, we will accept it with gratitude.

Someone I forgot was Vince Greck. Thanks Vince for all the wonderful photos.

Fred (Lofty) Rudduck fell over and broke his hip, he was supposed to come to Sawtell, he has just returned home from hospital and he informs me he is still very sore, I sent Fred a get well card on your behalf.

Two other members who I believe are not well are Stretch Fanning and Lloyd Mitchell, so I extend a get well to both of you.

Finally, the Committee and I would like to wish all our members and their families a Merry Xmas and Happy New Year

That's enough from me for this newsletter.

Regards, Tex



A memorial service at Sawtell Cenotaph was conducted by Padre Len Trump followed by an address by Colonel Robert McEvoy. You will find the full content of this interesting and moving speech on page 6 of this newsletter

This happy group are enjoying a BBQ and a couple of coldies in Jacko's back yard. I hope they wiped the wheely bin before placing that good looking food on it.



No worries ! I'll scrub up for 2013



'A' Battery 2011

**Battery Commander Major
Simon Hompas**

A common theme for 'A' Bty in 2011 has been change and tempo. We have really had our foot flat to the floor this year. Now we might take a moment to be able to take stock of what we have achieved. I guess to start from the beginning is the easiest.

January 2011 saw Brisbane and SE Qld suffer horribly from the floods. 1 Regt, RAA was tasked to stand up a Bty sized group to assist with the clean up.

Unfortunately 'Murphy' was lurking around the corner and as luck would have it, 'A' Bty was in transit from Sydney although mercifully most had made it to Brisbane before the roads were closed. 'A' Bty formed the nucleus of the Regiments response and the next two weeks were spent knee deep in Brisbane river mud helping people with the clean up.

Cleanup:

It felt like before we had scraped the silt out of our eyebrows we were on the way to Shoalwater Bay to thrash out the gunnery cobwebs. The rain had decided to not only drench SE Qld but Shoalwater too and although it wasn't on my BC's list of 'things to get really good at' we got really good at bogged vehicle recovery and coping with prickly heat rash. Things only got busier from there!

Almost immediately upon return from bush and with a post exercise inspection that would cause 'The Saint' to faint, most of the Bty disappeared to Puckapunyal to learn the new M777A2 Lightweight Howitzer or the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS). I'll leave it to other columnists from the 'A' Fd Bty Association to describe in their own words the M777A2 but quite simply for us the learning curve has been both wonderful and challenging. Wonderful because we have the honour of leading the RAA as the first sub-unit equipped with the best towed gun in the world. Challenging as any new piece of equipment fitted with its own GPS, radio, computer, batteries, hydraulics, myriad of cables and associated idiosyncrasies is destined to be.

A series of three exercises followed each other in quick succession (all at Shoalwater Bay and all about a month long). Throughout these exercises we learnt a couple of key things:



'A' Bty soldiers with the M777A2. C Detachment under the command of LBDR Kane Robertson

Mission Battery' you either sleep with ear muffs on or get a rude shock when the first thing you hear is "No.1 FIRE"!

1. When you fire a M777A2 on Charge 4 High (equivalent to a 'Red Bag' aka. A damn big bang) with the gun tractor parked next door, the overpressure will blow out the windows (at 'A' Bty we try to be rigorous in all things so we made sure to test this theory four more times!),

2. Shoalwater Bay was still damp; and

3. As there is no more tannoy box squawking a warning of 'Fire

The exercise season culminated in Ex Talisman Sabre

and Ex Hamel. Ex Hamel is a major combined arms live fire exercise and we relished the opportunity to show the Army our new guns and their capability.

Immediately following Ex Hamel we drew breath and belatedly realised it was our 140th Birthday so we thought we better organise a party.

Argument followed over whether it should be a party, shindig, hoedown or barn dance but we eventually settled on a low key party at the 1 Regt 'Gunners Club'.

My thanks to the members of the Association who kindly accepted our invite and special thanks to Mr Bassan for addressing the Bty and making a very generous presentation. Thanks too for teaching the youngest members of the Bty the 'A' Fd Bty song!

The Regt and indeed Bty are now in the process of getting ready for 2012. A select group of 'A' Bty Junior and Senior NCO's plus all of the officers will be heading overseas next year to Afghanistan. They will take over the important role of mentoring the Afghan National Army School of Artillery Instructors on how to do gunnery 'A' Bty style.

It has been a big year for the Bty; we have restructured, re-equipped, moved and now we are preparing to deploy, unfortunately not with our guns but hopefully with the same vigour we have

attacked everything else this year. I'd like to thank the Association for their interest this year and taking the time to visit when they could.

From the Officers and Men of 'A' Bty, please have a merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2012.



GNR Nicholas Cross and BDR Kelvin Groves assist Brisbane residents during the QLD flood cleanup.



A Detachment under the command of BDR Tim Dibben during a lull in a Fire Mission. BK Capt Lingard performing the role of safety officer.



**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
TOM. BANFIELD
CLARE. (BONNIE) BASSAN
TREVOR. BEER
FRANK. BERRIER
S.J. BLANCH (OAS. Malaya)
DOUG N. BRYAN
MALCOLM J. BUGG
GORDON CARMICHAEL
TOM. CARRUTHERS
KEITH. CHRISTENSEN
RICHARD. DUGGAN
R.M. DUCAT (OAS. Malaya)
PAT. DALY
TOM. DAWSON
JOHN. DOWNES
GEORGE. FORSYTHE
M.K. FUSSELL (KIA, Afghanistan)
ROBERT J. (BOB) GRAY
NEIL HARDEN
MICK. HARKEN
B.D. HENDERSON (OAS. Malaya)
KEN. KENNEDY
BOBBY. LEWIS
JOHN. MACDONALD
I.G. MATHERS (KIA. Vietnam)
E.J. (LOFTY) MOORE
R.J. PARKER (OAS. Vietnam)
R.J. (JIM) PONTING
DAVE. QUIRK
PETER. RAINSBURY
CLIVE. RALFE
BRIAN. SCOTT
PETER. SEDDON
ALAN. SINGH
NOEL. SMALL
R. F. SMITH
BRIAN. WHISKER
JOHN. WHITELAW. AO,CBE
BERNARD. (PLONKY) WINE
GUS. WOOLFE
JOHN. WORBOYS**

Vale - Malcolm (Mal) Bugg

OAM

Mal passed away on 16th April, 2011, sadly we were only advised recently.

Hundreds of people paid their respect and attended Mal Bugg's funeral which was conducted at the Sacred Heart Church in Morwell on Thursday, 28th April.

In his eulogy, Father Hugh Brown described Mal as "A man who was nothing less than gracious and welcoming. Mal had an impact on literally thousands of lives. He was a wonderful father and had the capacity to do anything and everything for people."

Victorian RSL president David McLachlan conducted an RSL service and Victorian RSL Treasurer, John Cullen read a reading.

All A Battery Association members offer their deepest sympathy and condolence to Mal's wife Moria, their children, Anne, Jim, Jenny, Cathy, Geraldine (Duffy) and Michelle and their families.



**Captain Bryce Duffy, Corporal Ashley Birt
and Lance Corporal Luke Gavin.**

Picture: ADF

A Field Battery Association offers sincere condolences to the families of the three Australian members of the Mentoring Task Force, killed in Afghanistan.

Captain Bryce Duffy, who was married but with no children, was born in Sydney and served with the 4th Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery in Townsville.

Corporal Ashley Birt, a sapper from Nambour, Queensland. His mates remember him as a great bloke, a distinguished sportsman and an excellent soldier.

Lance Corporal Luke Gavin, from Sydney, was married with three children he was known for being a devoted husband and father.

The AGM Dinner in the Princess Room of the Sawtell RSL

Nothing was too much trouble for the management and staff of this popular club.

It was a full house, so much so that extra tables were required to be set for the late comers, as usual the staff handled it with efficient cheerfulness.

Everyone looked good in semi formal attire and the meal was amazing, three delicious courses plus jugs of beer and table wines, plus port for the Toasts all for an incredible \$40.

My good intentions to have a moderate night on the booze were completely destroyed when I sat with the notorious Paul Forsyth. Later on there was a creepy sign that I should slow down, it occurred when Ron Hart's wife Susan attempted to pour me a glass of wine, forgetting to remove the top, naturally the wine didn't pour, I took no notice of this divine guidance from above. It is common knowledge that it is never my fault.

The meal which included prawns, fried whiting, grilled sirloin steak, stuffed chicken breast, pavlova and apple pie received rave reviews as we enjoyed the country and western music on stage.

After the meal there was a couple of short speeches before we were treated to a viewing of a couple of skilfully created DVDs by The Saint and Crash Kennedy on the big screen

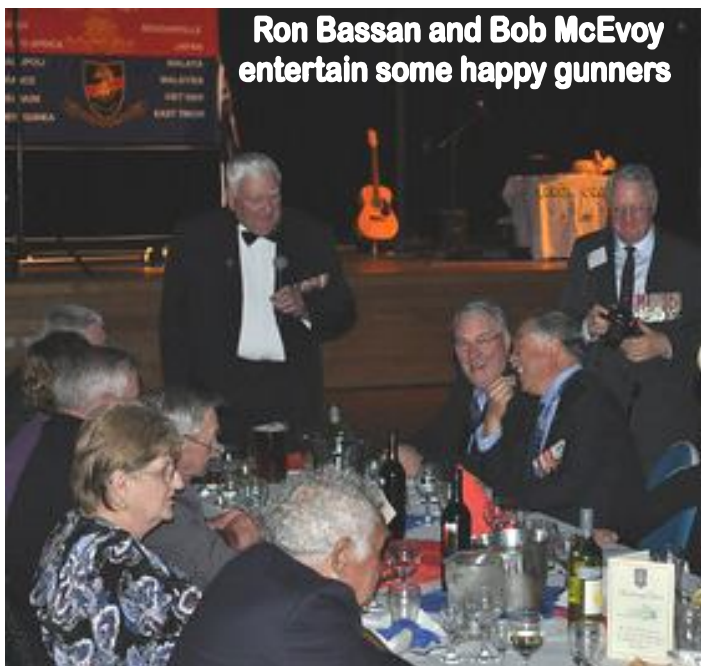
This was an excellent night where all the old and younger gunners mixed together to enjoy the companionship and our affinity with Artillery.

These pictures are a small selection of the Sawtell photo gallery expertly snapped by Vince Greck.

You will find a further 270 photos on Kimbo's fantastic A Field Battery website, to browse and enjoy.



Ron Bassan and Bob McEvoy entertain some happy gunners



THE SHED

During the AGM dinner we watched an interesting DVD created by **Paul (Crash) Kennedy**.

It features his extensive Artillery museum that Crash has on display in what he proudly calls **"The Shed"** that is situated on his property in Kingsley, Western Australia.

The Shed contains a wonderful collection of Artillery memorabilia.

Kingsley is a suburb of Perth, Western Australia, that was once one of the largest wineries in the southern

hemisphere and operated from 1929 until 1986 when it was closed and the land redeveloped into suburban lots.

The Kingsley Football club had a number of members killed in the 2002 Bali bombings.

This photo shows Crash Kennedy and Mark Donaldson relaxing in **The Shed**.



THE HERITAGE BUS TOUR

The bus tour on Wednesday was a great day travelling through some beautiful and historic country, made even more enjoyable by a non stop interesting and at times very amusing facts and jokes from our very informed driver and owner of the Heritage Tour bus Lionel Mullard.

We left Sawtell at 9.30 am and headed for Nana Glen, about 40 kms away.

Nana Glen is a small village where film actor Russell Crowe lives at his 320 hectare property, as a result it has become famous in Australia and abroad.

The name Nana Glen is derived from the Two-Tailed Lizard. Nana is an aboriginal word meaning "Two"

The lizard is a rare mysterious reptile once sighted in the region. Hence the name Nana Glen, didn't see any lizards, let alone two tailed ones,

A railway station existed between 1922 and 1974. How do I know all this about Nana Glen ?. Lionel told me, so it must be fair dinkum, geez there I go talking like a bushie already, ah well may as well keep it going, forgive me if I start yakkin Aussie slang again.

We continued on from Nana for about another 80 km. through towns like Glenreagh, Coutts Crossing and over Blaxland Creek arriving at the little pub in Nymboida called the Coaching Station Inn built in the 19th century when Cobb & Co. stage coaches, bullock teams, timber cutters, graziers and other pioneers stopped there on the woolpack road from Armidale to Grafton.

This old pub is situated next to the "Museum of Interesting Things" a diverse museum and the brainchild of Russell Crowe, actor and Hollywood star, who is transforming the Nymboida Coaching Station into a tourism hot spot.

As the name implies, the museum showcases a selection of Hollywood and mainly Aussie history displays.

There are also plenty of sports-related memorabilia on display like the life-sized bronze statue of Sir Donald Bradman and some vintage motor bikes and a Jaguar XK120 racing car.

The Cobb and Co. coaches look



Boarding the bus at Nymboida



Now that's a coach



Dangar Falls



The Lava tree situated in the gardens of Dorrigos sewage treatment plant sometimes referred to as "Bleak's Turdle Farm"



The historic Dorrigo Hotel built in 1925 with the town's War Memorial in the foreground. Lionel reckons there is an obvious mistake, the soldier has his back to the pub.



Trooper Mark Donaldson VC with his wife Emma Donaldson and their daughter Kaylee

great full of models of passengers and drivers dressed in clothing from that era. Also a couple of stuffed horses and a chariot from Russell's movie Gladiator.

You can spend hours in this museum but we had to get back on the frog and toad, booked in for tucker at the

Dorrigo RSL about another 80 km away.

Lionel's botanical knowledge is amazing he names all the trees and plants including a lot that have been imported and have now become pests.

One tree that Lionel was very excited about was the rare and unusual Lava tree found only in Dorrigo, we were fortunate to see this lovely tree in full bloom and the sheilas were delighted that all the blooms had their seat down.

Picturesque Dorrigo famous for the Skywalk that gives you a birds eye view of the rainforest canopy, you can see over the remote Bellinger Valley and all the way to the ocean. The Dangar Falls, the best spuds grown in Australia and our VC soldier Mark Donaldson who is honoured with an impressive display in the local RSL.

We had lunch at the RSL and the tucker was beaut, we had been on the bus for a fair while so most of us were as dry as a dead dingo's donger, I was still a bit crook from the night before and settled for a squash, fair dinkum I looked like a bit of a poof sipping it through a straw.

It's time now to get back on the bus for the final 60km back to Sawtell via Bellingen, a time to sit back and reflect that sometimes us city dwellers seem to forget what a beautiful and historic country that we live in.

This Heritage Bus Tour is a reminder that Australia is indeed the Lucky Country, made more entertaining by Lionel's facts and fun, however before we go overboard with the praise let me repeat one of his jokes.

James Bond was driving his Aston Martin along the countryside when he saw a chicken in the middle of the road. He stops the car, gets out and says to the chicken. "My name is Bond, James Bond." The chicken looks him in the eye and replies. "My name is Ken, Chick Ken."

The passengers were unanimous in agreement that Lionel should take that one to the Lava tree and pull the chain.

Well Lionel, me old china plate apart from that corny old joke the day was abso-bloody-lutely bonzer and we were all as happy as Larry.

Anyway I'm off like a bride's nightie, goin to the local watering hole to put the nose bag on and sink a couple of pig's ears; see ya in 2013. Hooroo !

Cenotaph Address by Col. Robert McEvoy

We gather today as members of A Field Battery from three separate campaigns to remember those events and to remember those who fell and have died since.

The Malayan campaign from 1957 to 1959 is beautifully illustrated in Don Sinclair's record of that tour "Malayan Episode."

The Malayan campaign of 1965 to 1967 involved exercises throughout Malaysia with 28 Commonwealth Brigade. A Field Battery was warned for operations with 4 RAR in Sarawak but as confrontation was about to cease, the Battery did not deploy.

As this year marks the 40th. Anniversary. Tonight I want to focus on the 1971 Vietnam tour by A Fd. Batt.

The tour can be best described through the Fire Support bases we deployed and the major battle we fought. On most occasions A FD. Batt deployed as two separate sections of 3 guns to form a Fire Support base with occasionally APCs, sometimes with HQ 3RAR and occasionally with tanks to assist with local defence.

Our first operation was the deployment to Fire Support Base Marj to support 3 RAR's warm up operation. It heated up the very first night when D Coy had a major contact and A Batt fired HE and illumination most of the night until the early hours of the morning.

Many of our Fire Support bases supported 3 RAR operations and contacts with the enemy. Fire Support Base Beth was notable for the temporary deployment of 3 guns from 161 New Zealand Battery to expand to a 6 gun Anzac battery position for 2 days before reverting to our 3 Gun Base. We all remember Fire Support Base Ziggie, occupied on several deployments, FSB Centenary and the rain, FSB Shirley which was a feint deployment for 36 hours to distract the enemy, before the deployment at last light to FSB Maree to support 4 RAR in the Battle of Nui Le. This was in September after the Prime Minister announced the withdrawal of Australian Forces and the last major contact of Australian Forces in Vietnam.

And amid all these actions we celebrated the Battery's centenary at FSB Lynette and our base at Kiwi.

In June, this year Phil Haynes and I were invited by 3RAR to a memorial service in Adelaide to commemorate the actions of the units involved in the Battle of Long Khanh and to remember those who paid the supreme sacrifice, the CO 3RAR and representatives from tanks, engineers, Iroquois Squadron and D and E platoons also took part.

The Battle of Long Khanh or Operation Overlord as it was then known began for me on 31st May 1971 as Forward Observer with A Company 3RAR sitting at the Horseshoe when I received an urgent call from the BC to return to base. My first thought was, "What have I done now?" or perhaps a fleeting thought. "What has Jacko and Ray been up to?"

I loaded my pack on the Kiowa helicopter and was flown back to Nui Dat where Tony Williams sat me down with a cup of coffee and told me I was to take over as Battery Captain. Despite protests that I had never lived on a fire support base let alone build one Tony assured me that there was no planned deployment for a while and that he would look after all the technical gunnery aspects and I was responsible for raising the morale of the Battery.

I immediately sat down with the BSM, Arthur Bretherton and senior people in the Battery to develop a plan of action but this was quickly disrupted by a call from our Commanding Officer to report to Task Force for an urgent briefing— Operation Overlord, the largest task force operation in two and a half years and I believe the last operation of that size involving Australian troops. A Fd. Bty was to move a section by air from FSB Ziggie and a section by road from Nui Dat to form a battery position at FSB Pamela in Long Khanh province to our north to face 3rd Battalion 33 Regiment North Vietnamese Regular Army.

After trying to settle the butterflies in my stomach and think about the enormous learning curve I faced, I managed to get a warning order to the battery and began preparing the complex loading plan. I remember being full of self doubt and totally dependent on people like GPOs Dick Jackson and Darryl Patch, the Battery guide Paddy Dumford, the BQ Peter Walton and of course my good friend Arthur Bretherton



I vividly recall the battery orders group and seeing the expectant faces in front of me, I was a novice at this and I was hoping I could deliver but I saw experienced men, hardened by 4 months of operations, people who knew what they were about, facing a new and potent enemy – a North Vietnam regular battalion - I saw the realisation on their faces that it was time to perform.

I must have read Duties in Action 20 times before I went to bed at 2am, had 2 hours sleep before I departed with the battery reconnaissance party, tanks and APCs for the long drive north.

The deployment is a little hazy in my memory because there was so much activity - securing the site before first light. Briefing the survey officer Jeff Evans with his security party, briefing gun coverers, the battery guide and GPO, guns arriving on schedule by Chinook from Ziggie, guns and ammunition arriving by road, the Engineers and APCs involved in our local defence and getting our perimeter wire erected.

There was no need for my self doubt as what I saw unfold was an experienced battery coming into action like clockwork and before I knew it; it was getting dark and time for orders for security, that night

The first contact came the following day, just before last light - 5 Platoon B Company 3RAR, with Lance Bombardier Blue Maher their FO ack - hit the enemy in a bunker system. A Field Battery fired HE and illumination for much of the night to allow 5 Platoon to pull back and to protect them before an assault, the following morning

In the morning, as B Company moved up to the bunker system we received word that the FO Second Lieutenant Ian Mathers had been shot and killed; Ian, a national service officer had been on the gun position until this operation and had volunteered as an FO. His loss hit everyone hard

Over the next 9 hours we listened to Sitreps relayed on the tannoy of the remarkably brave feats of Blue Maher, later awarded the Military Medal and Gus Kelly, recently awarded the United States Commendation for Valour and we continued to fire the guns to attack the bunker system and to extricate the wounded for most of the day. D Company and their FO party, C Company, their tanks and FO party all moved into bunker systems occupied by 33 NVA Regiment and D445 VC Battalion. An Iroquois helicopter - Albatross 07 - was shot down attempting to bring an urgent ammo resupply to D Company. For nine hours the battle raged, A Battery in direct support as well as later in Regimental missions with 104 Field Battery and the US Medium Battery, under Blue Maher's control fired in support of 3RAR and when the order for rest was given, exhaustion overcame the gun position.

The Battle of Long Khanh was fought against a regular North Vietnamese Army Battalion, dug in a complex bunker system and a hardened VC Battalion, also dug in. I learned recently that the elaborate bunker system had been originally constructed for the war against the Japanese in the 1940s, used against the French in the 1950s and modified and developed each time the North Vietnamese Regulars ventured into Phuoc Tuy Province to attack Australian Bases.

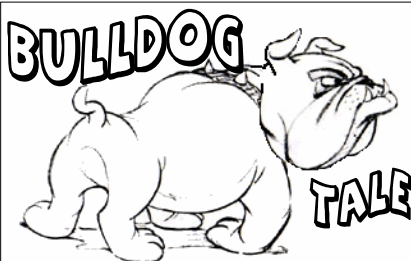
The Battle of Long Khanh was the ultimate test of A Field Battery's professionalism, I am proud of the FO parties. I was proud of the gun line, the command post, the signallers, the surveyors and the seamless ammunition resupply by road and air from the Regiment. The enthusiasm and adrenaline was running hot and the accuracy of the guns was so important for 3RAR in close contact with the enemy.

I was immensely proud of A Field Battery that day. Today you can stand proud of your part in A Field Battery's very proud history.

Later I arranged for Chaplain Len Trump to conduct a Memorial service at FSB Pamela and Father Dermot Casey at our base at Kiwi in Nui Dat for Ian Mathers, the Iroquois pilot and crew, also the D and E Platoon who lost 7 men. It was a rare opportunity to grieve, though for many of us it took much longer to heal the wounds.

We also lost 2 other men later in our tour, Bombardier Rod Parker, struck down with encephalitis in September and John Hall, a former member of A Field Battery; so tragically killed in Vung Tau on the eve of our return to Australia.

It is so appropriate today that Chaplain Len Trump is with us again, to lead us in remembering the events of 3 campaigns, those who fell and those who have fallen since.



These are a couple of humorous stories submitted by Tom (Bulldog) Caldwell

The operational camp occupied by A Troop in Malaya was just out of Sungei Seiput at a place called Lintang.

There are lots of stories to be told of this place, some good, some bad.

When we took over the camp there was a lot of work to be done to prepare it for our needs.

We had one of the best operational camp menus due to our ration clerk, Paddy Murphy who used to barter with the ration clerks from other pommy units.

Paddy used to set out once a week to pick up rations, however due to

his Irish origins he was very fond of food and drink and couldn't ever pass a bar on the way home.

The ice keeping the rations cool at the time was coated in saw dust and as would happen it was just about all melted by the time he got home. But apart from the ice we ate very well.

He was a bit of a hard case, our Paddy, he was also our camp QM and had a little Q store around the back.

If you required any items of equipment that was lost or stolen, Paddy would fix you up.

The only problem was Paddy didn't care much for paper work and as luck would happen, the night before we vacated the camp a fire destroyed all the stock and records of the store.

Another tale from Lintang has the names of the people concerned omitted, not to protect the innocent but because I can't remember who the bloody hell they were anyway.

In one of the idle times at Lintang a group gunners were having a

discussion after having killed a large snake, the conversation went along the lines of whether it was possible to crack the head of the snake by using it like a whip.

One of the blokes said, "I'll have a go." and taking the snake by the tail between thumb and fore finger and swinging it above his head which is not an easy task with such a large and slippery snake. Anyway the inevitable happened and it slipped out of his grasp flying through the air as we all ducked for cover.

A short distance away was situated our camp latrines which consisted of stalls with an open roof.

The snake sailed through the air and over the top of the wall landing around the shoulders of a seated occupant, with a mighty yell and not taking the time to adjust his dress he departed trailing a length of paper much to the mirth of the on lookers.

Tom Caldwell



Another great Bull Storey Story

I have read with interest the stories about the Bull in the last couple of newsletters, and would like to pass on an incident that occurred when I was doing corps training at the school in late 1953.

The Bull was RSM and lived out but he had an NCO's room on the end of A wing and would sit on the step putting his boots on before parade.

One morning as he was doing this he noticed one of the recruits sitting on the barracks room doorstep putting on a pair of red socks and he filed this away in the memory bank,

On the morning parade the bull would always inspect the troops, that was a stressful time for all recruits who had encountered the Bull.

He came up to the soldier he had seen with the red



socks, stepped in close to him and bawled "OPEN YOUR MOUTH SOLDIER", the kid opened his mouth and the Bull looked in and yelled. "WIDER I CANT SEE." the kid is standing there quaking in his boots and the rest of the parade is wondering what is going on, the bull stares down the kids mouth and yells. "YOUVE GOT BLOODY RED SOCKS ON WHAT ARE YOU A CLOWN."

A favourite of the Bulls on his inspection used to be. "DID YOU SHAVE THIS MORNING SOLDIER". and of course the reply always was "YES SIR", and the Bull would reply. "WHAT WITH A BLOODY STUMP JUMP PLOUGH".

Finally in defence of the bull although he put the fear of god into all young gunners he would go out of his way to help anyone with a personal problem.

Regards Denis (Bluey) Ashbrooke



An email from Rob Noonan.

In the vein of supporting your Battery while in the US recently I wore my A Battery cap and T-shirt at every opportunity, and got good response from the local returned servicemen's groups over there, some of the ladies too.

Its permitted to wear hats inside clubs, at least where I was it is. I also discovered a little-known fact about the Battery's motto, **Semper Paratus**.

In one of the clubs I visited, there was a U.S. Coast Guard banner hanging on the wall. On closer inspection, I

Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC



found they had the same motto, only they have had it since 1790. A Bty has only been using it since 1871 I think, so apparently we were not the first. And I suspect we won't be the last.

The photo shows my brother Graham and I at the Jeffersontown Memorial Day (similar to Anzac Day here) ceremony in our Anzac Day best. We had an appearance on the TV news that night. Hats are worn inside, or as they say in the US Marines, "Covers On".

Regards Rob Noonan



WWII - WORLDS LARGEST ARTILLERY PIECE - GERMAN "GUSTAV GUN"

The largest gun ever built was the "Gustav Gun" built in Essen, Germany in 1941 by the firm of Friedrich Krupp A.G. Upholding a tradition of naming heavy cannon after family members, the Gustav Gun was named after the invalid head of the Krupp family - Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach.

The strategic weapon of its day, the Gustav Gun was built at the direct order of Adolf Hitler for the express purpose of crushing Maginot Line forts protecting the French frontier. To accomplish this, Krupp designed a giant railway gun weighing 1344 tons with a bore diameter of 800 mm (31.5") and served by a 500 man crew commanded by a major-general.

Two types of projectiles were fired using a 3000lb. charge of smokeless powder: a 10,584 lb. high explosive (HE) shell and a 16,540 lb. concrete-piercing projectile.

Craters from the HE shells measured 30-ft. wide and 30-ft. deep while the concrete piercing projectile proved capable of penetrating 264-ft. of reinforced concrete before exploding! Maximum range was 23 miles with HE shells and 29 miles with concrete piercing projectiles. Muzzle velocity was approximately 2700 f.p.s.

Three guns were ordered in 1939. Alfried Krupp personally hosted Hitler and Albert Speer (Minister of Armaments) at the Hugenwald Proving Ground during formal acceptance trials of the Gustav Gun in the spring of 1941. In keeping with company tradition, Krupp refrained from charging for the first gun - 7 million Deutsch Marks were charged for the second (named Dora after the chief engineer's wife).

France fell in 1940 without the assistance of the Gustav Gun, so new targets were sought. Plans to use Gustav against the British fortress of Gibraltar were scrapped after General Franco refused permission to fire the gun from Spanish soil. Thus, April 1942 found the Gustav Gun emplaced outside the

US Troops astride Dora after capture



heavily fortified port city of Sebastopol in the Soviet Union.

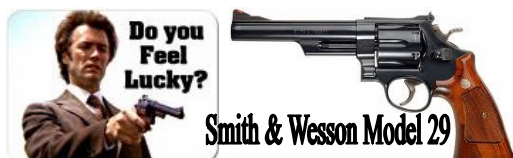
Under fire from Gustav and other heavy artillery, Forts Stalin, Lenin and Maxim Gorki crumbled and fell. One round from Gustav destroyed a Russian ammunition dump 100 feet below Severnaya Bay; a near miss capsized a large ship in the harbour.

Gustav fired 300 rounds during the siege wearing out the original barrel in the process. Dora was set up west of Stalingrad in mid-August but hurriedly withdrawn in September to avoid capture. Gustav next appeared outside Warsaw, Poland, where it fired 30 rounds into Warsaw Ghetto during the 1944 uprising.

Dora was blown up by German engineers in April 1945 near Oberlichtnau, Germany, to avoid capture by the Russian Army. The incomplete third gun was scrapped at the factory by the British Army when they captured Essen.

Gustav was captured intact by the U.S. Army near Metzendorf, Germany, in June 1945.

Shortly after, it was cut up for scrap thus ending the story of the Gustav Gun.



The **Smith & Wesson Model 29** is a six-shot double-action revolver chambered for the powerful .44 Magnum cartridge, manufactured by the U.S. company Smith & Wesson. It was made famous by and is still most often associated with the fictional character "Dirty" Harry Callahan from the Dirty Harry series of films starring Clint Eastwood.

It remained primarily the province of handgun enthusiasts, some law enforcement personnel and hunters until 1971, when Clint Eastwood made it famous as "the most powerful handgun in the world" in the movie Dirty Harry.

At the time of its introduction, the Model 29 was indeed the most powerful production handgun.

I know what you're thinking. "Did he fire six shots or only five?" Well, to tell you the truth, in all this excitement I kind of lost track myself. But being as this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, and would blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya, punk?

The **Ordnance QF 25-pounder Short** was an Australian variant of the British Ordnance QF 25-pounder field gun/howitzer.

The gun was developed by modifying the 25-pounder's design to improve its mobility during jungle warfare.

Development began in 1942, and the weapon first entered service with the Australian Army the next year.

It was used by several Royal Australian Artillery regiments during fighting in the South West Pacific Area, before being declared obsolete in 1946.

The development of the Ordnance QF 25-pounder Short was an important achievement for Australia's defence industry, and provided the Army with a weapon suited to conditions in the South West Pacific.

Nevertheless, the gun's performance was inferior to that of the standard 25-pounder, and it received a mixed reception from artillerymen.

The difficulty of deploying artillery in New Guinea led to a need



for a gun which could be broken down into light parts and transported by aircraft or jeeps.

The Army had only a small number of British 3.7 inch Mountain Howitzers, and Australia's request for United States M116 75mm pack howitzers was not immediately filled.

In September 1942, the Army's Director of Artillery, Brigadier John O'Brien, suggested that a variant of the 25-pounder be developed to meet this requirement.

The process of designing the gun began in September 1942, and an acceptable weapon was ready by January the next year

'A' Field Battery
Association Inc.
Annual General Meeting 13th
Sept 2011.

Meeting held at the Sawtell RSL Club Ltd, Sawtell NSW.

Meeting Opened: By the President, Mr Ron Bassan, at 1015 hrs.

Attendance: As per the Attendance Book.

Apologies: Paddy Durnford, Reg Etienne, Len Fanning, Eddie Hawken, Terry Jobson, Max Ptolomey, Fred Ruddock, John Salmon, Bruno Sneddon, Don Weir, Tony Williams, Bty Comd, Simon Hompas, BSM, Dave Nutini, David Harris, Lance Gilkinson, Lloyd Mitchell and Alex Reynolds.

Visitors: Beryl Adams, Phil Haynes, Ian Brown, Bill Downie Bayne Kelly, Robert Barber, Greg Laird, Kevin Lakey, Rod Simpson, Ray Davis and Vince Greck.

Public Liability Insurance. The members were informed that under Queensland Incorporation Act, that we do not hold Public Liability Insurance.

Departed Comrades: The President asked the members to be upstanding and observe a minutes silence for Departed Comrades who have passed away since the last AGM. They are; Clare (Bonnie) Bassan, Douglas Bryan, Ken Lyons and Graham Woolfe, also Harry Brodie lost his wife, Vera. Bevan Filce lost his partner, Mary. May they all rest in peace?

Presentations: Life Membership to Rodney Althaus, Barry Marr, Bob McEvoy and Ian Robertson. All to be presented at dinner.

Minutes of previous Annual General

Meeting: The Assistant Secretary, Ray Alcorn, read the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, which was held at the Maroochy Coach House, Maroochydhore, Qld, on the 11th September, 2010, and was confirmed by Bernie McMahon as a true and correct record. Seconded by David Jackson and carried.

Business arising from Minutes:

The Sydney banner is now held by Don Green, we cannot give it to North Fort as previously planned, as it is shut down.

The President had seen an accountant, who he knows and in his opinion, we are a non profit organization.

The Committee had made a donation to the Premiers Disaster Relief Fund, of \$500.00. Still no list from Daryl. Daryl spoke about the nursing sisters in Vietnam, they are now

members of 7 Battalion RAR. A motion was put by Mr David Jackson; That Mrs Maureen Patch, who was a nursing sister in Vietnam during 1971, be made an Honorary Life Member of the 'A' Field Battery Association Inc. Seconded by Gus Kelly and carried.

Daryl Patch enquired about the cover of insurance when the AGM is held outside Queensland. Bernie McMahon stated that we are automatically covered by Sawtell RSL. The President said that he will check with the Office of Fair Trading, Qld, on this matter.

Correspondence:

Inward: Annual Return of Association from, Office of Fair Trading.

Outward: Nil.

President's Report: The President, Mr. Ron Bassan, presented his report, which is attached. It was moved by Mr. Rex Martin that the Presidents Report be received. Seconded by Mr. Peter Kimball and carried. Mr. Jackson stated that Mrs. Lyn McEvoy was not mentioned in the President's Report. The President apologised to Bob for this mistake.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer, Mr. Robert Cunningham, presented his audited report, which is attached.

Discussion on Treasurer's Report: Nil

It was moved by the Treasurer, Mr. Robert Cunningham, that the Treasurer's Report be received. Seconded by Mr. Noal Rodda and carried.

The President explained that there was only one written nomination for each voting position, so there is no need for a returning officer and scrutineers.

The President declared all positions vacant and asked the Assistant Secretary to remain and take notes, he then invited our Patron, Barry Campbell, to take the chair and elect the incoming Committee.

Voting Positions:

It was proposed by Mr Robert Cunningham that Mr Ron Bassan be President/Secretary. Seconded by Mr Ray Alcorn. Mr Bassan accepted. There being no further nominations, Mr Campbell declared that Mr Bassan be President/Secretary.

It was proposed by Mr Ron Bassan, that Mr Ian Leven be a Vice President. Seconded by Mr Ray Alcorn. Mr Leven accepted.

It was proposed by Mr Ray Alcorn, that Mr Don Sinclair be a Vice President. Seconded by Mr Ron Bassan. Mr Sinclair accepted. There being no further nominations, Mr Leven and Mr Sinclair were declared Vice Presidents.



It was proposed by Mr Robert Cunningham, that Mr Ray Alcorn be Assistant Secretary. Seconded by Mr Don Sinclair. Mr Alcorn accepted. There being no further nominations, Mr Alcorn was declared Assistant Secretary

It was proposed by Mr Ron Bassan, that Mr Robert Cunningham be Treasurer. Seconded by Mr Ray Alcorn. Mr Cunningham accepted. There being no further nominations, Mr Cunningham was declared Treasurer.

It was proposed by Mr Ray Alcorn, that Mr Greg Kittelty be a Committee Member. Seconded by Mr Don Sinclair. Mr Kittelty accepted.

It was proposed by Mr Ray Alcorn, that Mr Brian Miller be a Committee Member. Mr Miller accepted.

There being no further nominations, Mr Kittelty and Mr Miller were declared Committee Members.

Non Voting Positions:

Editor:	Mr Ronald Slaughter
Assistant Editor:	Mr Donald Sinclair
Property Officer:	Mr Robert Cunningham
Liaison Officer (Qld)	Mr Raymond Alcorn
Liaison Officer (NSW)	Mr Robert Noonan
Liaison Officer (ACT)	Mr David Adams
Liaison Officer (SA)	Mr Robert McEvoy
Liaison Officer (WA)	Mr Maxwell Ptolomey
Liaison Officer (Vic)	Mr Harry Cook
Liaison Officer (TAS)	Mr Raymond Davis
Liaison Officer (NT)	Mr Peter Thomas
Web Master:	Mr Peter Kimball
Auditor:	Mr David Harris CPA.
Advocate:	Mr Richard Morrison
Patron:	Mr Barry Campbell

General Business:

The President thanked Mr Peter Walton and Mr Brian Czislawski for their generous donation. It was mentioned that Bayne Kelly had received the US Medal of Valour this year, 40 years after he earned it in Vietnam. This was received with acclamation.

Bayne Kelly thanked the Committee.

Birnie McMahon asked why our first Patron was not on our remembrance page. The President said this had been an oversight by previous committees and would be corrected.

The President thanked Mr David Jackson for the time and effort he had put into organising the venues in Sawtell for the reunion.

2013 Annual General Meeting. Mr Daryl Patch moved that the 2013 Annual General Meeting and Reunion be held at the Sawtell RSL and to be held on the second weekend of September 2013, Fri/Sat/Sun, as some people are still working. Seconded by Mr Peter Kimball and carried.

Next Meeting: The next Annual General Meeting will be held at the Maroochy River Coach House, Maroochydore, Qld, on the 2nd Saturday of September 2012, commencing at 1000hrs.

There being no further business pertaining to our AGM, the President closed the meeting at 1115hrs and thanked the members present for their attendance.

President. Ron Bassan

Assistant Secretary. Ray Alcorn



**Asst .Sec. Ray Alcorn.
Pres. Ron Bassan.
Treas. Bob Cunningham
Vice Pres. Don Sinclair**

"A" Field Battery Association Inc.

Treasurer's Report 2010 - 2011



Our Association has experienced another good financial year, as shown in our annual accounts, however, our Statement OF Income and Expenses for the year I feel needs some explanation.

The Net Income of \$12764.64 you may consider an incredible increase from last year's \$3436.39. This increase is in fact due to Members payments held for the AGM and Reunion functions totalling \$6820.00 as at the close of our financial year 30th. June 2011.

Add to this amount a further \$2250.00 DVA Grant for the reunion, making a total of \$9070.00.

If you take this amount away from our annual total, we come back to an adjusted net income for the year of \$3694.64 which you will agree is much closer to last year's net income.

Another item worthy of mention is our member donations which this year is our highest ever at \$2767.00 and our thanks to those many members who are responsible for this generous amount.

On the expenses side we have made two donations to very worthy causes. First was \$200 to Vietnam

Vets. Advocates for stationery etc. as agreed at our AGM last year.

The second was \$500 to the Premier's Flood Relief Fund as moved and agreed at our February Committee Meeting.

Turning to our Balance Sheet you will notice our Investment Account now totals \$21671.41, which is made up of our Life Subscriber's

Account of \$12161.01 which reconciles to our Life Subscription Members plus interest.

The second Investment Account, the Future Project Fund now totals \$9510.40 an increase of \$4000.00 for the year plus interest, which for both accounts remains between 6.15 % and 6.25 % per annum at present but may become lower in the near future.

Looking forward, our future appears good with sound membership numbers maintained thanks to a great deal of hard work by our President Ron Bassan.

With A Battery now permanently based at Enoggera we have put in some valuable ground work recently at the 140th. Dinner with current serving members who have shown considerable interest in our association and eventually we hope may result in new younger members which will be a real boost to the longevity of our association; only time will tell.

R. Cunningham
Treasurer.

Statement of income and expenses 1st. July 2010 - 30th. June 2011

2009 - 2010		2010 - 2011
INCOME		
\$2,460.00	Annual Fees	\$1,680.00
\$1,000.00	Life Subscriptions	\$1,800.00
\$175.00	Shirts	\$385.00
\$90.00	Caps	\$75.00
\$10.00	Name Tags	
\$36.00	Car Stickers	\$39.00
\$30.00	Plaque	\$90.00
\$80.00	A Battery Book	\$140.00
\$60.00	Postage Merchandise	\$51.00
\$105.10	Tax Refund	
\$2005.00	Donations	\$2767.05
\$520.00	Bus/Boat Trips	\$465.00
\$50.00	AGM & Reunion	\$6,820.00
\$2.44	Interest, Bank A/C S21	\$3.50
\$6,623.54	TOTAL INCOME	\$16,565.55

EXPENSES		
\$243.76	Shirts purchased stock	} \$501.20
\$312.13	Caps	
\$257.40	Badges	
\$22.00	Name Tags	
\$0.00	Car Stickers	
\$0.00	Plaques	
\$171.80	Postage Merchandise	\$354.45
\$294.85	Postage General	
\$618.50	Printing & Cartridges	\$738.51
\$223.79	Stationery	\$138.55
\$500.00	Bus/Boat Trips	\$660.00
\$0.00	Donations	\$700.00
\$501.92	AGM Dinner	\$362.00
\$0.00	General expenses	\$304.00
\$41.00	Office of Fair Trading	\$42.20
\$3,187.15	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,800.91
\$3,436.39	NET INCOME	\$12,764.64

"A" Field Battery Assn. Inc.

Balance Sheet Financial Year 1st. July 2010 to 30th. June 2011

2009 - 2010		2010 - 2011
\$24,643.59	Member's Funds	\$31,465.03

Represented by Current Assets

\$100.00	Petty Cash	\$100.00
\$4,748.76	Bank S21 Account	\$12,513.40
\$15,606.76	Investment Accounts	\$21,671.41
\$2,216.17	Sales Stock @ cost	\$2,028.32
\$22,671.69	TOTAL	\$36,313.13

NON CURRENT ASSETS

\$1,117.00	Banners @ cost	\$1,117.00
\$250.00	25 Ponder Gun @ cost	\$250.00
\$450.00	L5 Pac. How. @ cost	\$450.00
\$0.00	HP Laser Printer, written off 2009	\$0.00
\$154.90	Sony Recorder & Mike, purchased 2010	\$154.90
\$1,971.90	TOTAL	\$1,971.90

\$24,643.59	TOTAL ASSETS	\$38,285.03
	Less Current Liabilities	
\$0.00	Creditors, nil	\$0.00
\$0.00	AGM Repayments	\$6,820.00
\$0.00	TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$6,820.00

"A" FIELD BATTERY ASSOCIATION. Inc. COMMITTEE 2011 - 2012

Vice President.
Donald (Saint) Sinclair
 60 Topsail Crt
 Banksia Beach
 Bribie Island. Qld. 4507
 Ph. (07) 3408 9009
thesaint@tpg.com.au

President / Secretary
Ron (Tex) Bassan
 6 Harveys Rd.
 Beaconsfield. Qld. 4740

 Ph. (07) 4942 5433
texbassan@yahoo.com.au

Vice President.
Ian Leven
 345 Teven Rd.
 Teven, NSW. 2478
 Ph. (02) 6687 8834
ianleven@optusnet.com.au

Assistant Secretary.
Ray Alcorn.
 14 Lambourn St.
 Chapel Hill, Qld. 4069
 Ph. (07) 3378 6906
gunneralcorn@hotmail.com

Treasurer.
Bob Cunningham
 26 Kilburn St.
 Chermside, Qld. 4032
 (07) 3350 1394
carolchemside@optusnet.com

Committee
Greg Kittelty
 (07) 5593 1212
gmkittelty@bigpond.com
Brian Miller
 (07) 3886 9074
brianmiller625@gmail.com

Patron:- Barry (Combat) Campbell.

Editor.— Ron (Butch) Slaughter. ronbutchslaughter@hotmail.com
 6 / 8 St. Ives Dr. Robina, Qld. 4226

Asst. Editor.— Don (Saint) Sinclair. thesaint@tpg.com.au

Property Officer.— Bob Cunningham. carolchemside@optusnet.com.

Liaison Officer, Qld.— Ray (Bubbles) Alcorn. (07) 3378 6906

Liaison Officer. NSW.— Robert (Dodger) Noonan. noonanrf@bigpond.net.au

Liaison Officer Vic.— Harry Cook (03) 9478 2340

Liaison Officer. ACT.— David Adams bdadams@lightningpl.net.au

Liaison Officer. SA.— Bob. McEvoy. ehdesign@hotmail.com.

Liaison Officer. WA.— Max. Ptolomey. (08) 9447 4783

Liaison Officer. Tas.— Ray Davis

Liaison Officer, Northern Territory. — Peter Thomas

Web Master.— Peter. (Kimbo) Kimball. gunner116@bigpond.com.

Advocate.— Richard. (Dick) Morrison. KEMARIE@HOTMAIL.COM

Auditor:- David. (Banger) Harris



The best way to share your message or photos is to contact
Kimbo, our Webmaster. Want to keep up with latest ? Log on to
 our website and you can read the latest and all the past newsletters

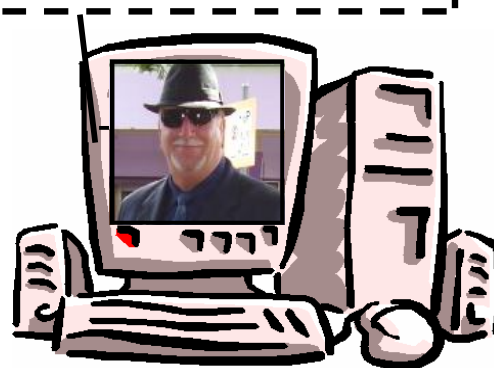
An amazing collection of photographs and news items covering the
 1940s to the present day with A Field Battery.

**This website is addictive, with the news, links, notice board and a
 great selection of music while you browse away.**

One of the best websites available and kept up to date by Kimbo.

You will want to put this address into your favourites

<http://afdbty.australianartilleryassociation.com>



If you are receiving this Newsletter either through the post or on your computer please help us meet the
 expense of printing, posting, maintaining our website and a host of other expenses by sending the \$20
 membership fee now to

Hon. Acting Sec. Ron. Bassan
 6 Harveys Rd.
 Beaconsfield, Qld. 4740



Disclaimer

This newsletter is produced for the membership of "A" Field Battery Association (Inc). Readers should not act, nor refrain from acting solely on
 the basis of information in this newsletter, on any matter. Neither the "A" Field Battery Association (Inc) nor the Editor accepts any responsibility
 for actions taken by readers. Views expressed by the authors contained in the newsletter, are not necessarily the views of the Association.