

1871

A Field Battery Association, Inc.

National Newsletter

AUGUST 2012

President Ron Bassan's Report



From the President's/ Secretary's Chair.

G'day everyone, Welcome to the August edition of the National Newsletter and I am hoping everyone is coping with the cold weather,

I have recently returned from the European summer, some of the time we had 35 degree days, so I am feeling it more at this stage. Mackay is supposed to be in the tropics but we have had colder days and nights than Brisbane.

I know this has been spoken and written about before, if you want the National Newsletter to be printed and distributed four times a year, then you all will have to get off your butt and submit articles to our editor, Ron (Butch) Slaughter, as Butch is running out of articles to print. It can be anything, e.g. seeing an old army friend who you have not seen for years, a reunion, something funny

that happened to you in your army career, a funny joke, a holiday that you have been on, something that would be of interest to everyone, DFRDBF super and how the government is screwing us. So please flood Butch with articles to be printed, or, I can see the day when we will not have a newsletter.

I have just returned from Europe, visited Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic and Poland. My son and I went to the former Nazi concentration camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau in Poland will talk about this later in the bulletin. Two things that impressed me were the buildings (One Cathedral that I was in, in the Czech Republic was built in 1121) and how pretty the girls are in Czech.

I hope everyone will accept my apology for not being at the reunion, this is the first one that I have missed



Perfect Czech Chick

since I became President. Remember the Annual General Meeting and Reunion at the Maroochy River Coach House, 46 David Low Way, Maroochydore, Qld, 4506, on the 7th – 9th September. You have to make your own booking direct to the Coach House, phone (07) 5448 4344, email: info@maroochycoachhouse.com.au I have spoken to Lloyd and he said that the bookings are slow. Ring Lloyd and as soon as possible to secure your accommodation.

We will have at least one vacancy on the Committee as Brian Miller is not standing as a member of the Committee for the next year.

We still have forty seven members who are not financial for this current year and four from last year, I will have to name and shame the above members soon, remember it costs the Assn. money to have to send out reminder letters.

That's all from me for this edition.
Semper Paratus, Tex



Phone: 07 5448 4344

Book in now for The AGM and Reunion, a great weekend, Friday 7th. Sept, to Sunday 9th. Sept. 2012

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While staying in my Daughter In-law's home town of Havirov Northern Czech Republic, I stated my desire to go to the concentration camp of Auschwitz in Southern Poland; this includes the camp of Birkenau, which is a part of Auschwitz, two miles from the main camp. This is the one you see on the movies when the train enters through the gate.

To get to Auschwitz was quite difficult. The Polish border was not far from Havirov but to get there involved two trains and a bus and would take several hours. My Daughter In-law, Natalie said that her aunty and uncle would drive us there. I think it took us about an hour to arrive at this terrible place.

The trip there was very nice as it is summer in Europe this time of the year; several days were up to 35 degrees Celsius. The main highways are excellent but the secondary roads are narrow and have pot holes. Most of your trees are pines or poplars, with other varieties, including Hazelnuts, which grow wild everywhere.

The amount of tourists at Auschwitz was incredible, as the big car park was full of cars and about ten buses. This at least is one benefit the Nazis left Poland. We had to wait about ten minutes for the English tour to commence.

A very nice Polish lady was our tour guide and we entered the gates of the camp and an iron sign above the gates, reads, *Arbeit macht frei* (Work brings freedom), which is a big joke as not too many people ever got their freedom.

Auschwitz was originally a Polish army barracks with double storied buildings which we toured and were shown the appalling living and sanitary conditions and how the prisoners were treated, if you



The Black Wall in the courtyard of Block 11 where many innocent people were shot at the base of the neck. About 20,000 people were executed between 1940 and 1944.

The Officer in the background is Lagenfuhrer Altmeier the camps chief officer. The man doing the shooting is Rapportfuhrer Gerhad Palitsch who murdered most of the 20,000 men women and children.

became sick and could not work then you headed for the gas chamber. We came to the notorious block eleven, this block has a courtyard which has an interior cement wall and this is where prisoners were taken and shot with small calibre pistols, so not to make much noise and disturb the camp.

Inside block eleven is where prisoners were interrogated and tortured by the SS and Gestapo; some were left to starve to death in their cells. A shrine is in one of the cells where a priest took the punishment of another prisoner and starved to death, also this is where they first tried gassing prisoners, as you can see, not a very nice place to be in.

The prisoners in each block had an overseer who was usually a criminal who were the original inmates of Auschwitz, they were called Kempos and these Kempos (Or most of them.) were more vicious than the SS guards, beating the prisoners if they failed to bow to their will, even killing some. If the Kempos fell out with their guard,



Heinrich Himmler and Commandant Rudolf Hoess

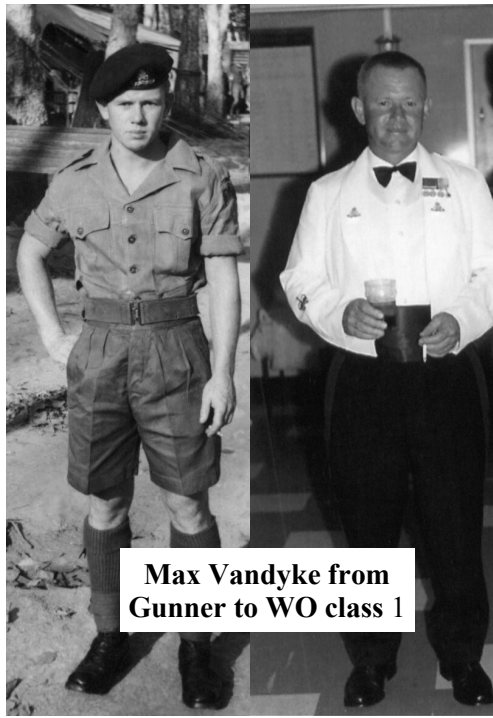
then they would end up being hung or sent to the gas chamber.

Outside the mess hall is where some of the prisoners were hung and there could be up to ten people hanging from the gallows. The bodies could be left there for days which were a deterrent to the other prisoners to behave.

Outside the electrified fence (The fence around the entire prisoner compound with a watch tower every fifteen meters.) was the gas chamber and furnaces for disposal of bodies, this was small and not efficient enough for the likes of Heinrich Himmler, leader of the Nazi SS and Rudolph Hoess, SS Commandant of Auschwitz and could not exterminate the Jews quick enough and that is why the camp of Birkenau was built to achieve the Nazi ambition of the Final Solution, the murder and disposal of bodies of all the Jews in Europe.

In the next Newsletter I will touch on Birkenau.

Tex



**Max Vandyke from
Gunner to WO class 1**

Max Vandyke has a proud military history, his father Jack, originally from Holland arrived in Australia in 1913 as a thirteen year old and enlisted in the AIF in 1916. Although Jack gave his age at enlistment as 18 he was in fact 15 years and 7 months.

Jack embarked to France in 1916 and was wounded in 1917 and again in 1918 and repatriated to Norfolk Military Hospital in the UK.

In 1919 Jack was sent home to Sydney in April 1919 and discharged as medically unfit in May 1919.

After some time in the part time militia Jack re enlisted in 1939 in the AIF as a sergeant and was soon Company Sergeant Major.

On the 14th. May 1940 Jack embarked from Melbourne to the Middle East, landing at Port Said to encamp at Palestine where he became Warrant Officer Class 1 and saw operations in North Africa against the Italians and the Germans, then to operations in Tobruk.

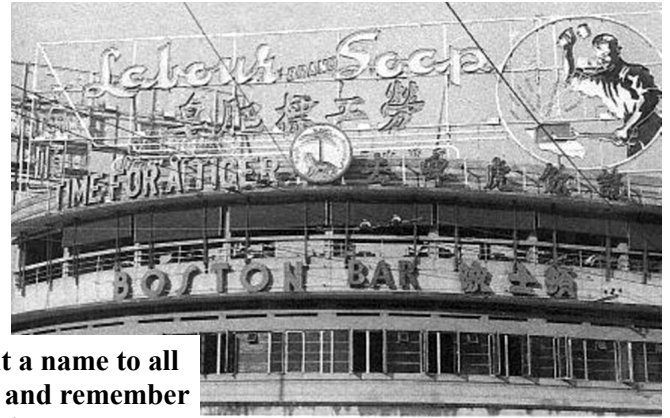
In July 1941 he acted as an escort transporting troops on the Queen Mary to Sydney, arriving in August 1941 where he was discharged in October, again medically unfit from a multitude of sicknesses including sand fly fever and bronchitis.

Jack Vandyke again joined the volunteer defence corps and was promoted to Lieutenant in February 1942.

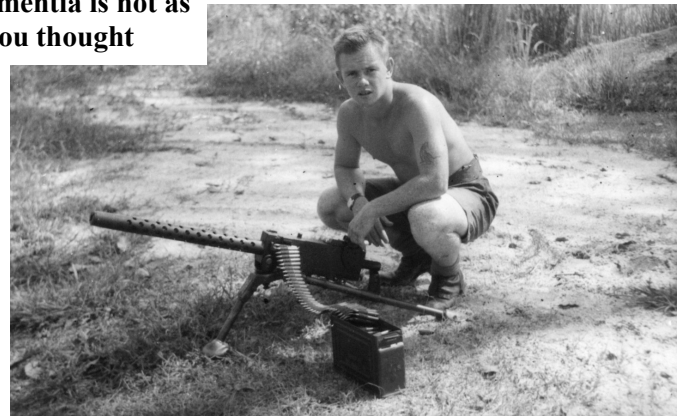
Jack Vandyke was discharged as a Lieutenant 14th. April 1944



**If you can put a name to all
these gunners and remember
what you did in the Boston
Bar, your dementia is not as
bad as you thought**



memories galore at the Boston Bar!



**'A' Field Battery Association Inc.
Nomination Form for Committee**

We, the undersigned financial members of 'A' Fd Bty Assn Inc.

Hereby nominate.....

For the position of

Proposer*.....Signature.....

Seconder*.....Signature.....

Acceptance of nomination

I,.....
A financial member of 'A' Fd Bty
Assn Inc.

Accept
nomination.....
(Signature of Candidate)

* Please Print

Harry Cook sent this photo with the following comment:



Hi Butch, I saw this photo in the Melbourne Herald Sun. Noticed that they are both wearing white lanyards on their left shoulders.

They were named as the 4th. Light Horse Regiment and I wondered why the similarity to A Field Battery. Regards Harry Cook.

Sorry Harry, couldn't come across any thing on the internet, maybe the lanyard is just a light colour in that old photo, however here is some history.

The 4th Light Horse Regiment was formed as Divisional Cavalry for the Australian Division. It was part of the 1st Contingent and raised at Broadmeadows Training Camp to the north of Melbourne, on 11 August 1914.

The recruits were drawn in large part from the Melbourne metropolitan area although the balance of men came from all seven Militia Regiments within the 3rd Military District which incorporated all of Victoria and part of Southern New South Wales.

The men from New South Wales found themselves mainly in "C" Squadron. Many of the men went from the Light Horse Militia formation into the AIF Light Horse.

During the war the regiment fought against the forces of the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire, in Egypt, at Gallipoli, on the Western front, on the Sinai Peninsula, and in Palestine and Jordan.

After the armistice the regiment eventually returned to Australia in March 1919. For its role in the war the regiment was awarded twenty-one battle honours.



Trooper A. G. Forsyth, 3109 4th Light Horse Regiment

A Lesson Learnt The Hard Way.

A Memoir from Harry Cook

There I was seventeen years old and thought I knew everything when in reality knew nothing at all. I joined the Army and got through Kapooka okay, also the same with School of Artillery.

Posted to 4 Loc Battery, 1 Field Regiment and was there for two weeks then I was sent back to North Head on relief duties for six weeks, which turned into three years, during this time I tried everything to get back to the Regiment but to no avail.

I even contacted Josh Cramer the Minister for the Army in the Menzies Government from 1956 and also our Church of England Padre out of desperation.

Finally posted back to A Field Battery then shipped on to Malaya.

However let me tell you of a good lesson learnt at North Head before I left.

As was a usual occurrence in those days I came back to barracks roaring drunk one night yelling out and banging on Bull Storay's bedroom door, wanted to fight him, fortunately for me and thank God he wasn't there so I staggered back to my bed.

However Bull approached me the following morning and he was definitely not happy.

With that deep voice he looked me in the eye and told me to be in the Gym at midday. I could not back down too many people heard what he said.

Got there on time, it took a couple of minutes to put on the gloves, shape up and throw a couple of weak leads, then I was flat on my arse within three minutes, so ending my brief career as a boxer.



Bull helped me up and I got a lecture from him. Never had any more trouble with Bull after that, there were no grudges from either of us.

For those who really knew him I would say he was one of the finest soldiers you could ever wish to know.

He was a true man's man, let's say my six years in the Army sure did me more good than harm.

The friendship amongst us all sure does prove that point.

After the Army I had ten years as a prison officer, then I joined the NSW Sheriff's

Department and had 28 years there and retired as an Inspector.

Now you may wonder about the irony of this bloke whose entire civilian profession involved the upkeep of law and order in NSW could be the same inebriated serial offender who wrecked the Green Parrot Night Club and boy, did I get into some trouble over that. until a very senior NCO came to my aid.

Once again a timely manifestation of **Army Mateship** that was instrumental in a bad boy changing his ways.

My story, in brief shows you what Army life can do for you. To sum it all up. **"I grew up."**



James Cheah dancing with his sister Siew Kee, at the Green Parrot nightclub in 1957. James remembers, drunken brawls among patrons, particularly the ang moh (European) soldiers and sailors were common, with the military police often called in to handle the situation.



*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
MAURICE FONTAINE
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

Their Journey's Just Begun

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

**And think of them as living
in the hearts of those they touched...
for nothing loved is ever lost-
and they were loved so much.**

E. Brennerman

FONTAINE, Maurice Ernest Late of Tea Tree Court, Gympie.

Aged 61 years.

**Beloved Husband of Adriana. Dearly
loved Father of Melanie & her Partner
John, and Daniel.**

**Loving Poppy to Alisha, Joshua,
Kaitlyn, Cassandra, Shanae, Brittany
& Jayden.**

**Much loved Son of Barbara Fontaine
and Brother to Daphne.**

**Loved Uncle to his Niece and
Nephews.**

**Relatives and Friends attended
MAURIE'S Funeral Service held at
the Cooloola Coast Crematorium
Chapel, Brisbane Road, Gympie on
Thursday, 19th July, 2012**

Rest in Peace



Sailor and nurse who were pictured kissing in celebration of end of second world war are reunited in Times Square 67 years later

It is an image that captured an epic moment in U.S. history - a sailor locked in a passionate kiss with a nurse in New York City's Times Square at the end of World War II.

And, after decades of dispute, the couple in the 1945 photograph were revealed to be 89-year-olds George Mendonsa and Greta Zimmer Friedman.

Now the couple who won the nation's heart have reunited in the location of the famous smooch to reflect on the photograph that came to symbolize the end of the war.

Mendonsa told how he was on a date with another woman named Rita Petry at Radio City Music Hall on August 14 when news of the Japanese surrender was announced. 'They stopped the show and they said, "The war is over. The Japanese have surrendered,"' he recalled.

Mendonsa and his date, who would become his future wife, rushed to a nearby bar where the sailor admits he 'popped quite a few drinks.'

As they set on their way, Mendonsa spotted a woman in a nurse's uniform - he left Petry and rushed to grab her. 'The excitement of the war being over, plus I had a few drinks, so when I saw the nurse, I grabbed her, and I kissed her.'

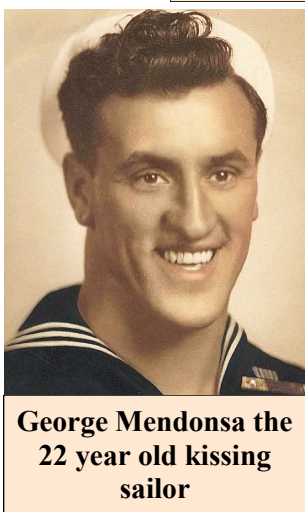
'I did not see him approaching, and before I know it, I was in this vice grip,' Friedman added.

Of course, that moment of wild elation, gratitude and passion was captured by LIFE photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt.

Now married for 66 years, Petry insists that she has never been mad that on their first date her future husband grabbed another woman and passionately kissed her, reported the New York Post.



Historians say the couple captured in a passionate embrace on V-J Day in 1945 didn't know each other before the kiss; and in fact, the sailor's future wife, Rita Mendonsa, can be seen peering over his right



George Mendonsa the 22 year old kissing sailor

However, she does admit: 'In all these years, George has never kissed me like that.'

A new book entitled 'The Kissing Sailor' details how, in August 1945, Mr Mendonsa, 22, was on

leave after surviving battles in the Pacific, where he watched nurses care for wounded sailors. 'She was beautiful,' he told the Post. 'I think I fell in love with her the first time I saw her.'

The 'other' woman Friedman was actually a dental nurse from Austria who had fled to the U.S. with her sister in 1939 - leaving her parents behind.

While George says he was too drunk to even



Above at 22 Mrs Greta Zimmer Friedman, now 89, she says although she has reunited with Mr Mendonsa several times in the last six decades they have never once reenacted the kiss



Rita Mendonsa says she has never been angry that George kissed another woman on their first date - pointing out that she can be seen grinning behind the kissing couple. George and Rita, now married for 66 years, are pictured here at the Rhode Island home

remember the kiss, Greta recalls being grabbed clearly.

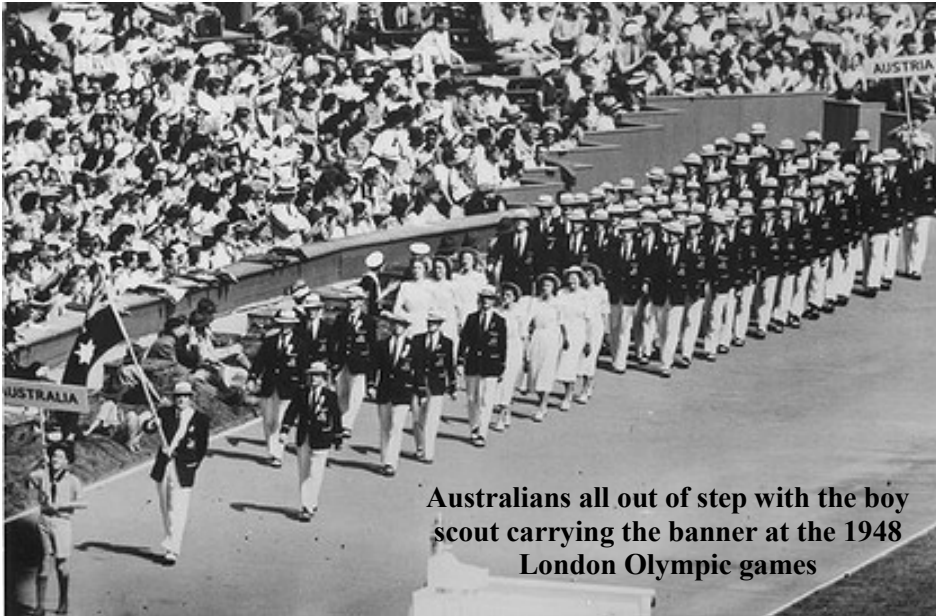
'That man was very strong. I wasn't kissing him. He was kissing me,' she told the paper.

Lawrence Verria, co-author of The Kissing Sailor, jokily cautions about grabbing strangers today adding, 'But in Times Square, 1945, they hear the war's over - it's not such a bad idea.'

Neither the young sailor, his date or the Austrian dental nurse knew that Eisenstaedt had snapped that moment.

Tucked away on page 27 of Life magazine's August 27, 1945 issue, their black and white image became the magazine's most reproduced, and more questions were raised about their identities.

Greta later discovered that her parents died in the war camps and she has never returned to Austria. A widow with children, she now lives in Maryland, according to the authors of 'The Kissing Sailor'. While Greta and George have reunited several times in the last six decades, they have never once reenacted the kiss.



Australians all out of step with the boy scout carrying the banner at the 1948 London Olympic games

Scout's honour restored

At the opening ceremony of this year's London Olympic Games the marching Australians, happy and carefree, didn't so much march as stroll, waving to people. But at the 1948 London Olympics the Australian team took the notion of marching literally and in deadly, military earnest. And that's why the famous photograph of the 1948 Australians marching with military precision, but out of step with the English boy scout leading them in the parade, his right foot is forward, the team's left feet are forward, and it stayed this unsynchronised way all around the Wembley arena is so famously amusing.

The Canberra Times published that photograph on the front page on Thursday last week. Now, amazingly, testifying to the miracles of coincidence, the boy scout of 1948 has seen that front page and has come forward.

He is John Bramley, an

Australian now, he migrated in 1965 and, with his scouting days long behind him, living in retirement in Perth with his wife Margaret.

Ever since 1948 he's been sure he was at fault on the day ("Although I've always made a joke of it") but now he's just been assured that, no, it wasn't his fault. It was the Australians.

The aforementioned front page story reported that while Australians were waiting to learn who would carry our flag in London, Canberran Reg McKay rediscovered in his Duffy garage a long lost photograph of his statuesque brother Les carrying Australia's flag at the London Olympics in 1948.

Now, after Bramley (who to this day has his own copy of the photograph) has seen the story and been in touch, this week, with Reg McKay, he's been assured by McKay that he, Bramley, has been in the right all this time. After all, McKay told him, it's a military drill truism that you must imitate your leader.

Young, knobbly-kneed Bramley of the Fifth Wembley Scout troop couldn't look behind him and it was up to the Australians to follow the lead of the boy carrying their nation's name.

Yesterday Bramley, who is finding all this enormous fun, said that he'd always presumed he must have been in the wrong because at the time he was just a boy while "Reg's brother was very much in charge and looked and sounded just like a sergeant major, in fact Les McKay was a military man and went on to become a major and you got the feeling he'd drilled the rest of the team to march perfectly".

Bramley, who was a stevedore and then a shopkeeper in Perth before his retirement, remembered how busy he was at the 1948 Olympics. He was an usher and did all sorts of odd jobs.

Of course, both Bramley and Reg McKay pointed out yesterday, impeccable marching was the order of the day in 1948 because the influence of the war (1939-1945) was still powerful.

Most of the athletes would have been in the armed forces. Any waving at the crowd would have been an unthinkable breach of discipline.

The two men are destined to meet soon. McKay goes to Perth several times a year and says: "I'm going to Perth next month. I'm going to catch up with him and have a beer and a chat. I'm abuzz about that."

McKay has been a keen researcher of his family's history's and this discovery of such an important, living link with a great chapter in his late brother's life feels an exciting thing and a godsend.

Some facts about the Games of the London 14 Olympiad, 1948

His Majesty King George VI officially opened the Games of the 14 Olympiad at the soccer Wembley Stadium, which had recently been equipped with temporary tracks for athletics.

Germany and Japan, the aggressors of World War II, were not invited to participate. No new facilities were built for these Games.

No Olympic Village was built. The male athletes were housed at an army camp in Uxbridge and the women housed at Southlands College in dormitories.

Shirley Strickland de la Hunty won three medals at her very first Games, a silver in the 4x100m relay team and bronze medals in the 100m and 80m hurdles. In a career that spanned three Olympic Games, Shirley Strickland de la Hunty finished with a total of 7 Olympic medals, 3 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze.



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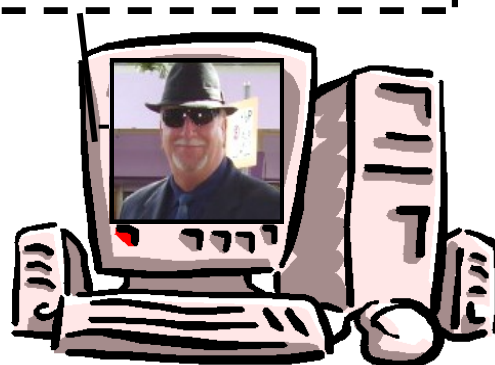
An amazing collection of photographs and news items covering the
 1940s to the present day with A Field Battery.

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

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>



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