

1871



A Field Battery Association, Inc.

National Newsletter

DECEMBER 2014



2014

President Ron Bassan's Report

From the President's Chair.

G'day fellow members, Here it is, the last month of the year and Christmas is nearly upon us, I do not know where the time goes, as you get older it seems to go so fast.

The year has been quiet productive, it started with several of us going out to 1 Regt to get our 25pr gun ready for the ANZAC Day Parade. There was an invitation from 1 Regt for me to lay a wreath at their ANZAC Day dawn service; there were several of us who attended this moving service where we had a breakfast afterwards. I am glad I went out, as I met all the Officers at the breakfast.

The usual boat trip with 105Bty was a non-event and I do not know if we will go with them next year.

Because the ANZAC Day parade is the 100th Anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli, the ANZAC Day committee thinks the parade in Brisbane will be longer than normal and because the ABC leaves the parade at noon to go to the European services, it was decided to start the parade half an hour earlier. It will start at 0930hrs. I do not know what arrangements has been planner in Sydney, or other Capitals, could our State reps find out and let me know? Then I will let everyone know in our next newsletter.

We have had four Committee meetings this year, the first was held at Greg and Margaret Kittelty's, Robina, Gold Coast, and the next was at Don and Carol Sinclair's, Manly, Brisbane, and the next was after the Annual General Meeting at Caloundra, Sunshine Cost, and the last was on the 6th of this month, at Ian and Wendy Leven's residence, Ballina, NSW. I would like to thank these lovely people for the hospitality they show in opening their homes for the meetings and providing lunch after the meetings.

For people who don't know, all the travelling is done at our own expense, this is why our bank account is so healthy and we have to leave a considerable amount in the bank to cover our Life Members. The next meeting is at Daryl and Luanne Bassan's residence, 21 Ascot Crescent Samford, Qld, date to be provided later (Late February or early March.).

I think the biggest event last year was the National Gunner Dinner, over 400 current serving and past members and their partners attended. The two people who organised the event should be congratulated; I consider this event was the best organised, best run event I have ever attended and the people, who did not show, have missed something



spectacular. The organisers were Graham Hampton and Kim McGrath.

At our Annual General Meeting, Don Sinclair did not elect to be on the committee this year and nominations from the floor were taken. Ray Alcorn took Don's place as a Vice President. I would like to acknowledge Don, for all the work he has done over a lot of years. He is the one who wrote the book on our time in Malaya, during the emergency, he has been the property officer, acquiring all the shirts etc., also he is the one who produced those marvellous DVD's and CD's. Well done Don, you will be missed from the committee and you are always welcome to come to any committee meetings.

Gentlemen, it is half way through our financial year and there are still 36 members who have not paid their membership, if you forget your membership, become a paid Life Member and then you will not have to worry ever again. I will be sending out reminders in the next week. If you are not going to re-join this year, please let me know and then I don't have to keep chasing you for your subs. Subs are still \$20.00 and Life \$200.00.

Our numbers are starting to dwindle and I would hate to see the Association fold, so be recruiters and try to get new members, anyone who was ever in Artillery can join and be Associate Members. The committee has decided that Ballina is not suitable for our next AGM & Reunion, and has decided to have the AGM at Sawtell, NSW, on the 2nd weekend in September, if that is agreeable with the Sawtell RSL. Make your bookings early and I hope to see a great roll up, this includes the Vietnam Vets.

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The committee has also decided that the 2016 Reunion will be in Canberra, so you members from the capital, start getting some ideas where to stay and sights to see and letting the committee know and if any of you would like to be the Coordinator.

Finally I would like to reiterate that all our widows are very welcome at our reunions, so please come along.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone the compliments of the season and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Until next time. **Ron (Tex) Bassan**



“A” Field Battery Association. Inc.

Committee Meeting: This meeting was held at the Events Centre, Caloundra, Queensland, on Saturday 23rd. August 2014.

Meeting Opened: The meeting was opened by the President. Mr Ron Bassan at 1725 hours.

Present: Ron Bassan, Ray Alcom, Ian Leven, R Cunningham, Greg Kittelty, Vince Greck.

Visitors: T Jobson.

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting which was held at Don and Carol Sinclair' residence at 61 Gordon Parade Manly, Queensland, on Thursday 26 June 2014 were read by the Assistant Secretary, Ray Alcom and were confirmed by R Curmingham as a true and accurate record of that meeting. Seconded by Vince Greck and carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes: Nil.

Inward and Outward Correspondence: The inward and outward correspondence were read by the Assistant Secretary, Ray Alcorn. Mr Vince Greck moved that the inward and outward correspondence be endorsed. Seconded by Mr Ian Leven and carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence
Discussed as read'

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer Mr Robert Cunningham presented his report and it is attached. The Treasurer moved that his report be accepted.

Seconded by Mr Greg Kittelty and carried.

General Business:

A. Moved by Vince Greck that Stan Pyanka be accepted as a member of the Association. Seconded by Ian Leven and carried.

B. Ian Leven and Kim Maczkowiack accepted responsibility to investigate the suitability of Ballina RSL for the 2015 Annual General Meeting and report back to the Committee.

C. A discussion took place on replacing the Banners for Queensland and New South Wales. Bob Cunningham moved that the President investigate the cost and delivery time of the new banners. Seconded Vince Greck and carried.

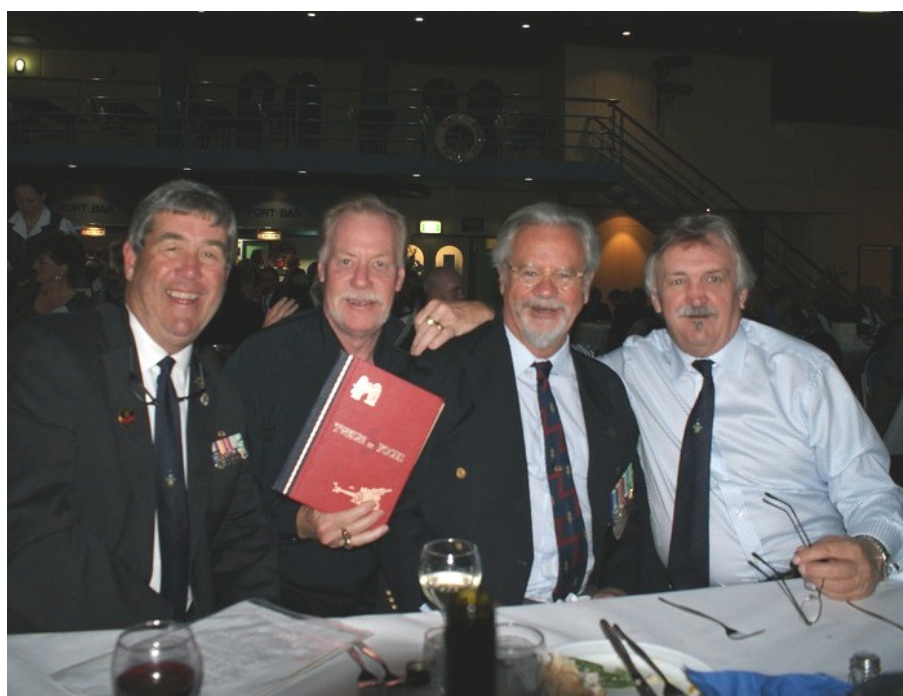
D. Vince Greck apologised that the new web site was not ready yet. He suggested that he may complete his current project by the end of September and then concentrate on the web site. Vince also suggested that Rod Simpson might be interested in becoming our Advocate.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at Ian and Wendy Levens' residence, ?6 Dolphin Drive, Ballina" NSW, 2478, on Saturday 6 December .

Meeting Closed: There being no further business, the President closed the meeting at 1210 hours.

Assistant Secretary. Ray Alcorn



The photo on the left taken at the A Battery AGM in 2011 was sent in by West Aussie Crash Kennedy and shows L to R Greg Laird, Crash, Gus Kelly, Al Russell. The other photo below featuring Mark Donaldson VC and Crash in “The Shed” appeared in the November 2011 Newsletter



Figure 3 shows the regimental badge now in evidence on the SD cap- in accordance with Standing Orders for Dress, 1931.

Note that a grenade, common to both PMF and Citizen Military Forces (eMF) other ranks, is being worn as a collar badge.

In the following month approval was given for other ranks of the RAA Regiment to wear the RAA cypher badge on their collar.

Immediately prior to the Second World War a metalware manufacturer, Henry Arendsen, of Malvern, Victoria, produced a variant badge design bearing a close resemblance in detail to that worn today (see Figure 4).

It is not certain why two distinctly different strikings of this badge were accepted by the MB, although it is probable that a surge in requirements had led to the introduction of a second supplier.

On the outbreak of war all supplies of badges were directed to be of lacquered or oxidised finish. Both designs will be noted with a gloss black lacquer over the original gilding metal finish, subsequent supplies being manufactured in oxidised copper.



**Figure 4. H. Arendsen
Manufactured Design**

The supply of badges for the CMF ceased in January 1941, although they could continue to be worn by members already issued with them and stocks held in store could continue to be issued and worn while they lasted."

Wearing of regimental and corps badges by the Australian Army was discontinued completely in March 1942 and the Commonwealth pattern general service

badge was issued in lieu to all Gunners."

Post-war dress for the Army, issued in September 1948, authorised the wearing of distinctive headdress badges by the Australian Regular Army and the newly reformed CMF. Subsequently instructions were given that pre-war stocks of badges on hand could be issued."

The motto of the regiment changed to 'QUO FAS IT GLORIA DUCUNT' at the beginning of 1950 although Alfred Festberg records that the regimental badge design had been redrawn in 1949 to incorporate this motto."



**Figure 3. 1st Field Cadre RAAat Victoria Barracks, Sydney, NSW,
24 May 1933, (Glyde Collection)**

This Month In Australian Military History-December

1 December 1942 HMAS Armidale sunk
HMAS Armidale was sunk by Japanese aircraft near Timor. As the Armidale sank Able Seaman Teddy Sheean fired at attacking bombers until he was lost with his ship.

2 December 1914 First Australian military aircraft despatched to war
Australian aircraft and their crews left to form the 'Mesopotamian Half Flight', fighting in what is now Iraq. Many were captured at the fall of Kut in 1916.

3 December 1914 First AIF disembarked in Egypt
Though many had expected to go to Britain, after Turkey's entry into the war the first Australian troops were sent to Egypt to protect the vital Suez Canal.

4 December 1990 Royal Australian Navy involvement in the Persian Gulf approved

Approval given by the Australian Government for the Royal Australian Navy's involvement in the Persian Gulf. Ultimately eight Australian ships served in the Gulf.

5 December 1939 First official RAAF operation of the Second World War
A Sunderland aircraft of No. 10 Squadron RAAF, flew on the first official RAAF operation of the Second World War. This was the beginning of six years of war for 10 Squadron, which flew as part of RAF Coastal Command continuously against U-boats in the battle of the Atlantic.

7 December 1941 Pearl Harbor
Japanese aircraft attack the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. With the Japanese attack on European possessions in Asia the Second World War was now a truly global conflict.

8 December 1941 Australia at war with Japan

Australia announces that it is at war with Japan. Some 17,000 Australians would die in the three-and-a-half-year war against Japan, 8,000 as prisoners of war.



Two unidentified members of the Mesopotamia Half Flight seated in



John Adrian Louis Hope, 7th Earl of Hopetoun

9 December 1942 Australians occupy Gona, New Guinea

The Japanese withdrawal from the Kokoda Trail enabled the allies to plan the encirclement of important Japanese positions in the Buna, Sanananda and Gona beachhead.

Gona was the first of the three to fall to the allies after weeks of heavy fighting.

10 December 1941 HM Ships Repulse and Prince of Wales sunk
The sinking of these powerful warships by Japanese torpedo bombers off Malaya came as a shock to those who had under-estimated Japan's military ability and had relied on the imagined impregnable Singapore naval base. The sinkings heralded the significance of air power in the Pacific war.

11 December 1941 Germany and Italy declare war on the United States

Though they had no need to do so, the declaration of war against the United States aligned the world's greatest economic and military power against them and virtually ensured their eventual defeat.

12 December 1917 HMAS Australia damaged

The battle cruiser HMAS Australia damaged in a collision with the battle cruiser HMS Repulse.

13 December 1915 Light Horse fight at Um Rakham
The Light Horse was deployed against pro-Turkish Arabs of an Islamic sect known as the Senussi, in Egypt's western desert.

14 December 1941 Japanese forces land at Penang, Malaya

Penang's military importance lay in the island's port facilities and its stocks of ammunition and stores.

When the allies were unable to stop the Japanese advance on the mainland it became clear that the island would have to be evacuated.

15 December 1900 Australia's first Governor General arrives.

HMS Royal Arthur, bringing the first Governor General of Australia, the Earl of Hopetoun, arrives in Sydney.

16 December 1944 Battle of the Bulge
Germans launch their final offensive of the Second World War in the west in the Ardennes Forest, in Belgium. The offensive, known as the battle of the Bulge, was defeated by British and American ground and air forces.

17 December 1967 HMAS Perth under fire

HMAS Perth comes under fire off Dong Hoi, Vietnam.

18 December 1944 'Arty' Hill, Bougainville, captured

'Arty Hill', as it was known, was captured by the Queensland 9th Battalion, and was a major Japanese position on the Numa Numa Trail leading across Bougainville.

19 December 1951 HMAS Sydney completes a tour of operations off Korea's west coast

Aircraft from Sydney left no operable railway lines in its area of operations, significantly disrupting enemy supply routes.

20 December 1915 Last Australian troops evacuated from Gallipoli

The evacuation of Gallipoli, largely planned by Brigadier General C.B.B. White, was a triumph of careful planning and bold execution.

21 December 1916 Light Horse capture El Arish Originally intended as an outpost for the defence of the Suez Canal, El Arish became one of the first steps in the Allied advance on Palestine.

22 December 1941 First United States troops arrive in Australia

Australia soon became a major base for US forces in the war against Japan. They were warmly welcomed as representing a defence for Australia.

23 December 1916 Battle of Maghaba, northern Sinai The capture of Maghaba by Chauvel's Mounted Brigade and the Imperial Camel Corps helped open the way for the successful Allied campaign in Palestine.



24 December 1941 Benghazi recaptured

Benghazi changed hands five times as the North African campaign ebbed and flowed along the Mediterranean coast.

26 December 1941 Japanese forces capture Hong Kong Hong Kong, a tiny British colony on the Chinese coast, withstood a three-week siege by the Japanese.

27 December 1943 7th Division capture 'The Pimple', Shaggy Ridge, New Guinea

The four-month battle for Shaggy Ridge culminated with the capture of this Japanese position on the ridge's summit.

28 December 1940 6th Division in their first action near Bardia Bardia

The Second AIF's first battle, involved an attack on an Italian frontier fortress. The preliminary operations began several days before the main attack was launched.

29 December 1860 Action at Matarikoriko, New Zealand.

Sailors from the Victorian Colonial warship, Victoria, take part in the action at Matarikoriko, New Zealand. The Victoria's service in New Zealand waters during the second Anglo-Maori war, represents the first overseas military operation by an Australian unit, the beginning of Australia's overseas war history.

30 December 1944 Australians of the 25th Battalion occupy Pearl Ridge, Bougainville

The capture of the heavily defended Japanese position on Pearl ridge gave the Australians possession of this important vantage point that provided views over both sides of Bougainville.

31 December 1967 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment arrives in South Vietnam

The 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, sailed to Vietnam on HMAS Sydney

So Proud To Have Been One Of Them

So Proud To have Been One of Them
 We were black, brown, white and brindle
 Whatever the religion or lack of it, we all did mingle
 Together in the proud military thread worn
 With sacred oath to sovereign and country sworn

Our bible was honour, duty, mateship and never let a
 mate down
 No matter be it in heat of war or on merry leave in
 some town
 We shared workloads, the last of the water and the
 dangers
 Tis true we brawled with others we treated as strangers

Always the same sense of purpose on operations
 together
 The challenge of the unknown and enduring cruel
 weather
 The sign of mines or bunker system would make the
 heart race
 On return to base, too many and so silent each empty
 bedspace

Survival and death of brothers in arms

Malcolm Quekett Dec. 2, 2014,
 As the time of his departure for war loomed, Ellis Austin William Smith sat to write to his parents. It was October 1914 and Smith, then aged 20, a wool classer, had been at the Blackboy Hill training camp in Greenmount for more than two months, having enlisted within days of Australia joining World War I. He said he was all too aware of the dangers ahead and that he had "the best parents that God could provide for anyone". "I trust I shall prove a credit to you both," he wrote. "I trust that I will be brave and cool-headed for my country's sake and if I have to take my turn and go under . . . I pray to God and I ask you to do so that I will be able to do so without a quiver just as a Briton and a Westralian should."

On October 31, Smith sailed from Fremantle aboard the Medic as a gunner with the 8th Battery, 3rd Field Artillery Brigade. On April 25, 1915, the Anzacs landed at Gallipoli and Smith was called into action. During the campaign he was evacuated for treatment twice - once after being wounded and once after falling sick.

He recovered to join the battle on the Western Front with the 28th Battalion and was promoted to the rank of 2nd Lt. During this time he had what must have been an emotional meeting with his younger brother Haywood Woodford Gomez Smith. The brothers had been educated at Claremont and Cottesloe State schools and Haywood had been working as a clerk before enlisting in January 1916 and heading for the war



Ellis Austin William Smith, left, and Haywood Woodford Gomez Smith.

with the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column in June that year. Haywood's granddaughter Robyn Murray, of Albany, said the men had met several times while on the Western Front. Haywood had written home about their meeting on September 19, 1917, that "I had tea with him and he came back to my camp with me". "Needless to say we were talking of home all the time," Haywood wrote. "He was very cheerful and confident of success." Ellis, who was better known as Austin, was killed instantly by a German shell the next day.

Haywood survived the war and continued to write home, telling his family in one letter that he was most concerned about what would happen to the horses used by the Australians. "Tomorrow we are losing about 50 horses," he wrote. "They are going to be sold to the French people for meat. "A bit rough after going through the war and not being killed, to be eaten by the crowd they were helping."

Haywood returned home and in 1923 married Florence Wood, of Cottesloe, and named son Ellis Austin in memory of his brother. It was Ellis Austin Sr who wrote home one of the most poignant letters the brothers penned.

It was dated April 25, 1916. "Twelve months ago today at this time we were going all we know how. I in the very midst of it," Ellis Austin wrote. "It was certainly something done but at what a cost. I little expected to see this present day I assure you. "I really think one is better for the experience. I suppose in future the 25 of this month will always be a holiday." Sadly, it was not a day he would be able to mark in years to come.

Grunts, turret heads, drop shorts, bushrangers and scruffy engineers
 Blanket counters, vampires and nurses who gave comfort and cheer
 So many others in the big team including RAAF and Navy
 Nor should I forget the baitlayers who always burnt the gravy

As disciplined tribes, we soldiered in different places and times
 Always with love of just one flag, one country and never his or mine
 Given so many units, it's true not all knew each other
 Yet even as strangers, we were and always will be brothers

George Mansford © July 2014

Grunts— Infantry
 Turret Heads--- Armoured
 Drop Shorts-- Artillery
 Bushranger-- Helicopter Gun Ship (RAAF)
 Blanket Counters- Support troops who provided essential support
 Vampires-- Hospital Staff
 Baitlayers-- Cooks



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.
Lest we forget.



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
REG CLATWORTHY
RICHARD. DUGGAN
R.M. DUCAT (OAS. Malaya)
PAT. DALY
TOM. DAWSON
JOHN. DOWNES
BEVAN FILCE
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
BARRY MARR
I.G. MATHERS (KIA. Vietnam)
IAN. MEIBUSCH A.M
JACK MILLIGAN
E.J. (LOFTY) MOORE
BRIAN. MURTAGH
R.J. PARKER (OAS. Vietnam)
R.J. (JIM) PONTING
DAVE. QUIRK
PETER. RAINSBURY
CLIVE. RALFE
JOHN SALMON
BRIAN. SCOTT
PETER. SEDDON
ALBERT (ALBY) SHERIDAN
ALAN. SINGH
NOEL. SMALL
R. F. SMITH
BRIAN. WHISKER
JOHN. WHITELAW. AO,CBE
BERNARD. (PLONKY) WINE
GUS. WOOLFE
JOHN. WORBOYS

In Memory of Our Departed Comrades

This page is to pay tribute, as we honour those members of A Field Battery who have passed away but are by no means forgotten. We remember them as friends and comrades in happy and sad times. Most of them we knew as young soldiers and others, in later years developed a close friendship as we grew older

If you know of a departed A Field Battery member who is not listed here, please contact us and we will update the list.

Thank you.

"A" FIELD BATTERY ASSOCIATION. Inc. COMMITTEE 2014 - 2015

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great selection of music while you browse away.**

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