



The Germ Journal



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Welcome to the September 2015 Edition of the Germ Journal (the Ex-104 Battery Member's Newsletter).

VALE
M C (Mick) CRAWFORD

You would all have heard by now of the passing of Mick Crawford, BC of 104 Bty's First Tour 1968-69. The following tribute was penned by Mick's son Robert;

A tribute to Colonel (Retired) Michael Croom Crawford MBE

25th August 1937 – 22nd July 2015

A pall of sadness hangs over the Crawford family at the passing of Michael, our loving husband, father, father-in-law, grandpa, brother, uncle and friend.

News of his death has moved quickly amongst family and friends. Thanks to so many who have helped pass the sad message and provided words of condolence.

Michael Crawford was born in Mayfield near Newcastle, NSW. Very early in his life his family moved to Mosman in Sydney, where he grew up. He always spoke fondly about Mosman and loved showing his two sons where he had adventures as a boy, during family visits to grandparents and aunties. He attended North Sydney Boys High School and in 1954 was selected for the Royal Military College Duntroon.

Army Life

He entered Duntroon in January 1955, where he became Mick or Cruff, names that were to stay with him during his 30 years in the Army (and beyond). Duntroon brought Mick the same rigors of any cadet's life and of course so many stories, ranging from motor-cycle training on a freezing Majura Road to the sadness of losing classmates in the well-known sailing tragedy on Lake George. It is at Duntroon that his dry sense of humour emerged and is something for which he will always be remembered. He was a Colour Sergeant for most of his senior year and part of the Colour Party on his graduation parade in December 1958.

Mick was allocated to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. Over the next two and a half decades he was a "Field Gunner" and also became a husband and father. The highlights of those 26 years as an officer were:

Meeting Janice Campbell in 1960, at the engagement party of a school friend.

- Serving in Malaya in the early 60s as a Lieutenant and then Captain in 103 Field Battery (in the Commonwealth Brigade) and his attachment to 20 Regiment, Royal Artillery, as the Survey Officer. He formed friendships with Aussies and Brits that were to endure the rest of his life. He became engaged to Janice in 1962, when she visited him in Malaya.
- His marriage to Janice in March 1964.
- His attendance at Gunnery Staff Course Number 3 at Larkhill in the UK in 1966 and building friendships with his fellow students and rekindling those from Malaya.
- The birth of Robert in December 1966.
- Commanding 104 Field Battery, including its tour of South Vietnam in 1968-69, for which he was awarded the MBE. He was always thankful that every member of the Battery came home alive.

- The birth of Lachlan in September 1972.
- Two tremendous years as the Commanding Officer/Chief Instructor of the School of Artillery 1976-77 and living at North Head.
- Moving the Crawford family into their own home in Balgowlah, Sydney, in 1979.
- In the early 1980s, as a Colonel, he was the Commander Field Force Artillery, which in those days was “double hatted” as the Commander 1st Division Artillery.

Mick’s final posting in the Army was the Colonel Administration, Field Force Command, which combined the logistics and personnel functions of the contemporary Forces Command. He was dined-out of the Army at North Head in January 1985.

Civilian Life

After Army service he reverted to introducing himself as Mike, something from his school days. It was always amusing to watch a conversation between a person who knew him as Mick and someone who had met him as Mike...those “furrowed brow” pauses in chat wondering if they were actually talking about the same bloke.

Mike spent a decade in a second career as the Administrator of the Northholm Grammar School to the north-west of Sydney. The 40 km drive each morning and again in the afternoon where made easier by the reward he felt contributing to the education of young Australians and the esteem with which he was held by the Principal and staff. To students with locker problems he was the “dude with the keys” and by the school board highly valued for his organisational skills, including a million dollar fund raising plan for school building.

It is almost impossible to get the Army out of your blood after 30 years, so Mike jumped at the offer to be the Honorary Colonel of the Australian Army Cadets in the early 90s. He relished the opportunity to participate in youth development, through the cadets, parallel with his work at Northholm.

He retired in 1995 and with Jan re-embraced their love of travel and set about seeing Australia and the world, much of the east coast with a camper trailer in tow. In late 1999 they made the “sea-change” to Smiths Lake near Forster-Tuncurry.

In sea-side life Mike kept busy and became involved in the community, in particular with the local Coastal Patrol unit as a volunteer radio operator. In time Mike took on the responsibility for coordinating radio training for the unit, which later combined with the Marine Rescue NSW organisation. He was involved in Marine Rescue for over a decade and found his contribution to maritime safety deeply satisfying.

He became Grandpa in July 2003 and drew much personal energy from his three grandchildren. He loved getting out on Smiths Lake in his “tinny” with his two granddaughters, sharing his love of birdlife with them and learning a little about how girls think. He and Jan have taken every opportunity to be involved in the life of their young grandson. During the late stages of Mike’s illness the vitality of his grandson was always a welcome distraction and tonic for his morale.

In 16 years of living on the coast and in the bush Mike connected with his creative side. He and Jan dividing their time between garden club, art classes and Probus. Mike’s sketchbook was always close at hand when they travelled, including capturing aspects of Vietnam on a holiday in 2011. In early June 2015 Mike sold a painting at a local exhibition. It was the first and only piece he was able to send to an exhibition.

Many will know of Mike’s love of wine. He always wanted to be involved in wine beyond just drinking it. He nurtured 50 Shiraz vines (later 100) at Lachlan’s house and delivered small vintages from 2010 to this a year. Each vintage was a year-round project with tending the vines, weeding, picking and pressing the grapes and bottling. Unfortunately due to illness, Mike had to leave the final production of this year’s vintage to a Smiths Lake friend.

Remembering

As it has transpired his adult life was almost evenly divided between 30 years in the Army and then another 30 as a civilian. Michael, Mike, Mick, Cruft, Dad or Grandpa died comfortably in his sleep after cancer overtook him.

Michael had the gift of being able to engage with people no matter their rank, status, age or background, by tactfully injecting humour into a conversation and being sincerely interested in what they had to say. This never left him, warmly chatting with the nursing staff that provided his care over the last three months.

Quoting the year-book *Mission in Vietnam* compiled by 4 RAR, with a chapter dedicated to 104 Field Battery, his "*warmth and humour emerged when he was talking to the soldiers*". Similar sentiment has been echoed by his RMC classmates, friends and colleagues who have described him as a loyal friend, first-class soldier and honest gentleman. He had a genuine sense of community and was a marvelous role-model.

He will be dearly missed by so many family and friends

Editor's Note:

Allen Jackson attended Mick's Memorial Service on the Central Coast in September. Jacko joined with Nick Jans representing the Victorian Germs. Jacko spotted fellow Germs Ian Taylor and Peter Sharp and there were possibly more 104 Germs in attendance given the size of the crowd.

RIP Mick Crawford.

Contact List Updates:

If any Germ has an E-mail address that is not recorded on the Contact List please let me know (corcorf@bigpond.net.au). It will save time and money if all I have to do is mail out electronically.

New/Change of address, etc.: -

Welcome aboard to;

Ian McDonald email' iankmcdonald27@bigpond.com
Ph. 0755454086, Mob. 0419912136'.

Peter Robinson email. psr322@bigpond.net.au

Looking for updated email address:

Bob Braid and Greg Mathews seem to have changed email addresses. So if anyone can help with a current email address, please let me know?

12 Field Regiment RAA Association:

No Report this quarter.

Royal Australian Artillery Association:

No Report this quarter.

104 Battery, 1 Regt. RAA:

No Report this quarter.

Reunions:

Brian Armstrong has been emailing all of us on the 2016 Reunion, so I do not propose to reiterate.

Items of Interest:

Contributions from around the country follow;

Rob and Rosemary Brooker's News: -

Hi all,

Rob and I are in the throes of spring cleaning and gardening. Trudi and Matt marry on November 14th in the Sculpture Gardens at The National Gallery. All the relatives will be in Canberra for the occasion and for BBQ the next day. We will have 3 staying with us.

Rob's Bowls team won the Winter Pennants again this year and he was happy with his good game in the finals.

I had shingles in August which is a horrible painful experience. There is a vaccination available now and I would recommend everyone having that if they haven't had shingles yet. Rob is going to Drs shortly to get the injection as he doesn't want the disease.

Hope all are well.

Regards to all.

Rob & Rosemary

Ken and Judy Burt's News: -

Hi Frank and All,

Can't believe we are in September and Spring, looking forward to some warmer weather. It has been such a long cold Winter for everyone. Ken is keeping the wood supply up. It will be a great Spring with all the rain we have been having.

Unfortunately we lost Judy's Dad Gordon in February, he was almost 101 years so lived a full and great life.

For the Rugby Fans Gordon was the oldest living Wallaby. He played 1st Grade for Randwick 99 Games, 9 Games for N.S.W. Warratahs and 1 Game for Australia in the 1938 Test against N.Z. He won 3 premierships with Randwick. War broke out and he enlisted in the A.I.F. in the Medical Core. We miss him every Day.

We have not done much travelling this year, due to our involvement with Gordon. We have renovated a bathroom and been away with family and kids.

Our Two Grandsons Harry and Kale play in 11's R.L. team in the Cronulla Comp and won the Grand Final, so very proud Grandparents.

All The Family's are doing well and our 5 Grand Children keep us busy and are growing up to fast.

We are both well and look forward to doing some trips next year in our van.

Cheers to everyone

Ken and Judy

Ray and Fay Carlin's News: -

G'day Frank,

The only news the Carlin's have is that they are going on a Pacific Cruise soon, organised by the local National Servicemen's Association, might have some stories when we get back,

Also, still haven't obtained a photograph of WO2 Alan PRICE aka "Mother", the Battery Guide of 104 Field Battery during the first trip, would dearly like to get one for inclusion in the battery photographs.

Regards

Ray and Fay

Frank and Paula Corcoran's News: -

Paula and I spent a week in Townsville in August to get away from Melbourne's winter. We have also been having regular trips to Hobart to catch up with our grandson Jordy. He is now 2 years of age and developing into a real little boy. The National 16 and Under Boys Water Polo Championships were held in Hobart at the end of September, which I refereed. So I managed to catch up with him in my downtime.

Nothing more to add on the home front. Our house settlement is not until December 2016, so we have plenty of time to look around for new digs

Regards to all.

Paula and Frank

Dick Duane's News: -

Greeting Germs,

Caught up with Jeff Haack on Anzac Day, he walks with a stick but marched, also, John Ryan, Nikko, Johnno and Georgea Pisani. I could not march as the legs and hips don't move that fast any more. Jeff had to put his wife into a Nursing Home.

Now a tale of woe. End of June I had just brought my vegies back to the boil threw a veal chop into the pan and next thing I know I'm scrambling about on the floor trying to stand back up. I couldn't, so I crawled into the bedroom, clawed my way up onto the mattress, flipped over, swung feet to floor and walked back to kitchen. Turned cooktop off, vegies a blackened mess and ruined the saucepan. I had blacked out for over an hour. I saw my Doc and he sent me to a cardiologist at Redcliffe Hospital. After an hour long interview he and his boss sent me to a specialist at Holy Spirit in Chermside. A couple of days later I saw the specialist and he arranged with St Andrews War Memorial Hospital for me to have a cardioscopy.

Into hospital on July 8 for the operation, shaved the crotch and went up the artery to the heart. He then inserted a cardio monitor under the skin upper left of chest. I had private room with ensuite and TV and watched Qld thrash NSW in State of Origin. Home on the 9 July, cabs to and from all venues and the private hospital paid for by Gold Card. Not the end of the story. More tests CT Scans and MRI etc. Then on 1 September another blackout. This time I had just finished dinner, picked up plate to carry to sink 6 or 7 paces, took 2 and down like a bag. My head hit the door jamb, the plate hit the wall and punched a small hole in it. No idea how long I was out. When I came around I crawled to the bed, got up on the mattress, flipped and got to my feet. I walked to kitchen and put a dishcloth on my head. Blood everywhere. A great hunk of skin was torn from front to half way back of my skull. I stemmed the bleeding and put a towel on pillows and went to bed. Up the next day, had plate of porridge, shaved dressed and then drove to hospital at 7 am. The surgeon cleaned my head, pulled the flap of skin back into place and stitched 28 staples around the flap. Further CT Scan and stayed in overnight. More tests and a head MRI later in the week, then had a home arrhythmia monitor fitted. It hangs in a pouch around my neck with 2 electrodes either side of chest stuck to skin. I go back to see the specialists next week.

I guess the tests will continue till they determine what caused the blackouts. The joys of getting old.

Cheers and good health to all.

Dick.

John Hannon's News: -

Hello to all,

Hopefully if fundraising goes well or, we get someone to sponsor our airfares, I am off to Korea in October for a martial arts contest and seminar. If I get there I will be laying a wreath at the Korean War Memorial.

Regards

Hanno

Lee and Rosemary Stockley's News: -

Hi Frank and fellow Germs,

This report is coming from Nice in France. Rosemary and I have just finished a riverboat trip from Amsterdam to Arles with APT, great trip. We will spend 2 days in Nice with a tour to Monaco tomorrow then off to Rome. I would say to all the Germs and there lady's if they can travel do it now and don't wait as you are a long time dead. Will write a longer report for next Germ Journal

Regards to all.

Rosemary and Lee

General:

Cliff Dodds sent me the following history of 104 Battery;

Fiftieth Anniversary

104th Battery was re-raised 104th Medium Battery (Independent) RAA on 8th September 1965 at E Block Holsworthy Barracks NSW. Roll call on that day totalled four, namely:

Battery Commander	Major Cliff Dodds
Battery Captain	Captain Ian Darlington
Battery Sergeant Major	Warrant Officer Class II Tom Banfield
Battery Quartermaster	Sergeant Major Warrant Officer Class II Ray Wilson

Originally the Battery with its Light Aid Detachment was raised as a contingency for the possibility of Australia committing a Task Force to Vietnam.

The Battery was equipped with six 5.5 inch B.L. Guns. When the contingency for Vietnam Force planning was withdrawn the Battery was given the role of Depot Battery for the School of Artillery. 25-pr Q.F. Guns and 4.2- inch Mortars were added to the Battery's equipment for the Depot Battery role. The manpower strength grew to a peak of 404 all ranks before the Battery converted to a Field Battery in preparation for its first tour in Vietnam.

Ubique

Lt Col Cliff F Dodds OAM (Rtd)

Next Edition will be December 2015.

Up the Ol'Red Rooster.

Frank Corcoran