

7 Field Regiment Association

Yandoo

Royal Australian Artillery

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7 FD REGT RAA ASSOCIATION
WARRANE ROAD WILLOUGHBY 2068

Dear fellow gunners,

It is with great pleasure that I submit to you my report for the conclusion of another very successful and progressive year.

I would like to thank your committee for the loyal and enthusiastic manner in which they have carried out their duties.

What a year! you can only say we were ultra busy.

What words can we use to express the pride and joy which occurred on that wonderful Sunday 29th July 1990, when our Regiment was granted Freedom of Entry to the City of Willoughby.

The day of course was unforgettable, the organisation superb, the weather unbelievable, the support organisations terrific, the council staff outstanding and the Regiment was full of pride and never looked better.

On the 4th August 1990 representatives of the Association again attended an Artillery Assembly at the School of Artillery. The assembly was well attended and many attendees stayed to enjoy the Gunner Dinner.

Another successful reunion was held on the 5th October 1990 at the Willoughby Legion Club with a good roll up and some new faces attending.

On Tuesday night 13th November 1990 at the Dee Why depot we presented to L/Bdr Dennis White of 28 Battery our first award for "The most proficient soldier".

We also made a presentation to Lt Col Rick Main (an enlargement of a photo taken during the Freedom ceremony) farewelling him on his retirement from the army.

On Sunday 2nd December 1990 many members attended the RAA Association's annual church service at the Garrison Church, the Rocks and then proceeded to North Head for the official opening of the National Artillery Museum. Well done to all concerned.

On Sunday 17th March 1991 the Association participated in the Regiment's 75th anniversary activities with those members attending having a wonderful day.

The activities started with a Church service (organised by the Association) at the Garrison Church, the Rocks. At this service a plaque commemorating the 75th anniversary of the formation of the Regiment (17/3/1916) was unveiled by Brig A.G.Hanson DSO ED in the presence of Ken Lewis-Hughes, representing 7th Australian Field Artillery Brigade AIF, LtCol John Fairless, representing 7th Regiment RAA and Max Falconer MBE, representing 7 Fd Regt RAA Association. The plaque was dedicated by the church rector Rev Brian Seers Dip.Theol.

Following the church service guests enjoyed the spectacular of the "Feu de joie", fired by the members of the Regiment.

Guests then proceeded to the School of Artillery, North Head to savour a most enjoyable luncheon. During the luncheon we presented to the Regiment a Decorations/Medals board.

At this time I would like to give another big thanks to Laurie Hindmarsh, Barney Flanagan and our other helpers for the work done to organise this day.

Our latest activity was on Sunday 14th April 1991 when 20 members and their families attended a family day at the National Artillery Museum. The weather was good and those attending had another great day.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Regiment's new Commanding Officer, LtCol J.A.L. Fairless and the 2IC Maj. R.M. Corbett.

Your Association is now a life member of the RAA Historical Society.

It is with regret that I report the passing of 4 members Gerald Hammond (25/8/90), Bob Bayles (17/12/90), Dennis Shortus (25/1/91) and Ian Gamble (20/4/91). To their loved ones and relatives, I hereby extend on your behalf heart felt sympathy.

Membership now stands at 176 with 26 life members, and 1 Hon. life member, please keep trying to locate other interested gunners.

Remember to wear your Club badge with pride when socialising with your friends and fellow gunners.

Max Falconer President.

Since I last wrote the Regiment has celebrated its 75th Anniversary, conducted live firing exercises and participated in a Brigade level exercise at Coonabarabran in the period 12-28 Oct 90. The Brigade level exercise was an outstanding success with all ranks learning a great deal about the different corps, the workings of a Brigade and low level operations. It was refreshing for all to deploy to an area away from Holsworthy and Singleton.

1990 was a continuous training year and as such the Regiment was put through its paces by the CDA 2 Div and his staff at Holsworthy Range. The Regiment's evaluation was very good however, as always, there is still room for improvement. The Regiment deployed two four gun bty's and a fully operational RCP, FSCC and line party for the exercise.

Live firing weekends still play an important part in the life of the Regiment. This year independant Battery exercises have produced encouraging results. Our direct firing competition was once again very popular with unit members, family and the Association. It is gratifying to see the support the members of the Regiment receive from both families and the Association and I hope this trend will continue.

The 75th Anniversary of the Regiment was celebrated with a Church Service and Feu De Joie at Dawes Point and a luncheon at the School of Artillery afterwards. The occasion was enjoyed by all and we are looking forward to the next 75 years.

On 14/15 Sep 91 the Regiment will participate in Exercise Tasman Chain; a multi national, tri-service fireplanning activity to be held at Beecroft Range. A Navy Destroyer and A4 Skyhawk Aircraft will augment the firepower of the Regiment. For this exercise the Regiment will deploy two six gun batteries an RCP, FSCC, Line Party, Survey Party and RP Section. As you can see the Regiment is going from strength to strength.

1991 will culminate with the Regimental Annual Field Exercise to be held at Gan Gan and Singleton between 21 Sep - 1 Nov 91. As this year is an individual training year week one of camp will be dedicated to finalizing individual training with the Regiment deploying to Singleton in week two for some fire and movement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Association for the interest, support and encouragement that has been forthcoming in my first year as the CO. I hope the bond between the Association and the Regiment will continue to strengthen in the years to come.

Official opening of the Willoughby Drill Hall, Saturday 24 May 1930 by Col Jeremiah Charles Selmes DSO, VD, Commander of 1st Divisional Artillery.

WILLOUGHBY DRILL HALL
Most Efficient in the Commonwealth

The 7th Brigade, Royal Australian Field Artillery paraded on Empire Day at Willoughby for the official opening of their new headquarters. Well set-up, well-drilled and smartly turned out in every respect, the men were a credit not only to "The Regiment", but also to their country.

Colonel Selmes DSO,VD, the Divisional Commander, performed the opening ceremony."In every country" he said, "the people are generally conceded to have an intense patriotism, and that love is best shown in the service each and all can give to the land which enables them to enjoy life, free and untrammelled. Service here today is typified in the voluntary training which the lads are freely and gladly giving, and, parents and citizens, I do earnestly ask for your co-operation in making the service of those boys free and acceptable an honour to you, as well as to themselves in the doing."

It was a military function, pure and simple. There was no cheering. The men were turned about, the 18 pounder guns fired a salute, the trumpets sounded, the men again turned, saluted, and were dismissed to join groups of parents and friends and proudly show them round.

The Drill Hall is said to be the finest establishment of the kind in the Commonwealth, and in case of necessity could accommodate the three batteries comprising the Brigade, including personnel and horses, for an indefinite period. The property and material are worth over 200,000 pounds. Stabling accommodation is provided for from 20 to 30 horses, for training purposes.

Article arranged by R.Toplis, courtesy of Major W.Perry
MBE,ED(RL)

CAMP AND A BIVOUAC 1938

The following extract from a memoir written by Major D. M. Carment provides a fascinating insight into the training of the day. The limitations imposed on a unit that was entirely horsedrawn can only be imagined today when movement by air is taken for granted and ammunition is delivered to gun positions on pallets.

At the time described Major Carment was a Bombardier and Bty NCO Sigs of 107th Bty commanded by Major F. B. McAlister. He was later commissioned and went to Malaya with 2/15 Field Regiment in 1941. He rejoined the 7th in 1948.

"Annual camps were I think only of 6 days duration and consisted in one year of a manoeuvre camp and the next a shooting camp. The first camp I attended in 1938 was a manoeuvre camp held in the Port Stephens area. Prior to this camp a week-end bivouac was held in which guns were taken from the Depot on to the beach at Dee Why. The return journey up the hills in torrential rain was quite a pull for the horses.

The camp itself was quite an experience with the issue of horses and equipment. There were about 200 horses! It was quite a sight to see the unit on the move. Each officer followed by his trumpeter with his trumpet slung across his back, the gun teams with No.1's solo mounted alongside. The BCA and GPOA with artillery boards on their backs and signallers laden with telephones and drums of cable.

As NCO Sigs I was in the "R" party and made alongside the BSM - Sgt. Maj. O. N. Rosevear (later Major) and well known as the starter for the G.P.S. rowing regattas. As can be imagined, with so little time not everything went well and the horses were always a problem. At night they were tethered to a rope stretched between timbers with each horse tethered by a head rope and a heel rope attached to a peg in the ground. Horse line picket duty at night could be exciting. In addition they all had to be fed and watered!"

Laurie Hindmarsh

THE REGIMENT ARRIVES AT CHIDLOW W.A. JULY 1942

The description below is an extract from a 25 page memoir written by Mr. Ted Jeffreson who served in the 7th from September 1940 until the Regiment was disbanded in November 1943. Ted was a Bombardier in 27th Battery and is one of three brothers who served in the 7th, Norman the eldest enlisted about 1936 and went to Malaya with 2/15 Field Regiment in 1941. Fortunately he survived his experience as a PW which included work on the Burma railway. Alan the younger (whom I remember well) enlisted in the Regiment when it reformed in 1948; he was promoted to Sergeant but had to leave for business reasons.

"The Regiment detrained at Chidlow, round about 8 a.m. on the Saturday morning after the 4½ day trip across Australia. We formed up in batteries and marched down a bush road, shouldering rifles and kits. There was virgin bush on both sides. Soon we turned into the tall timber where a camp had been built, mess huts and ablution blocks. To our disgust, the tents were childrens play tents, like dad would give the kids for Xmas. Two men and four men tents with Indian heads and feathers painted on the sides. That's how short equipment was. They were not much shelter from the wind, rain and cold. All this and the early morning P.T. parades, and freezing cold showers caused many of us to catch colds. I got influenza and was carted off to Helena Vale (Racecourse) C.C.S. and a stay in a convelesent hospital at Narrogin."

This bizarre incident is quoted, not to demonstrate the hardships experienced by the troops (infinitely greater hardships were being experienced in New Guinea) but to demonstrate one result of the lack of preparedness. Although the country had been at war for almost three years there was still not enough tentage to go around.

Laurie Hindmarsh

DECEASED MEMBERS - 1990/91

Gerald Northropp Hammond-25 August 1990-aged 71
Gerry served in various units and is believed to have served in the Brigade in the late 1930's. He presented a large quantity of memorabilia to the Association.

Robert William Henry Bayles-17 December 1990-aged 57
Bob served in 6 Field Regiment, 112 Independent Field Battery, 9 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, transferring to 7th Field on the disbandment of 9 LAA in 1973. He retired with the rank of Captain as BC of HQ Battery on 27 April 1980.

Dennis Edward Shortus-25 January 1991-aged 62
Dennis was one of the few stalwart volunteers during the National Service years in the 1950's. He was commissioned in 1958 and transferred to the Reserve List of Officers, as a Lieutenant, in the early 1960's.

Ian Ewan Gamble MC-20 April 1991-aged 75
Ian served in 1 Field Cadre RAA, 2/6th Field Regiment AIF, Royal East Kent Regiment and was awarded the MC for action at Salamaua, New Guinea in 1943 while serving with 2/6th Field Regiment. He served with 7th Field Regiment as a Captain for a short period in 1951.

REUNION October 1990

Lance Gilkinson, Danny Toplis, Bob Rogan



Glen Coote, Os Rosevear, Nic Mason-Jones

Arthur Hammond, Ross Davidson, Jim Nash

