



RAM-RAMBLINGS

VOL 6: EDITION 1: MAY 2009

Newsletter of 107 Field Battery RAA Association. www.107fdbty.com

PATRON : Maj. Justin Collins. Battery Commander 107 Field Battery RAA.

HOBART REUNION ANZAC DAY 2009.

Hobart in the autumn was a wonderful experience. Thank you Peter Turner and Hilton Lenard for all the hard work that both of you put in to make the ANZAC weekend the success that it was.

The Troops gathered at The Old Woolstore Hotel during the day on Friday 24th and descended on the dining room at 1800hrs for the Reunion Dinner. It was great to see faces that haven't been greeted for nearly 40 years. Peter Jones (OpCp 1969-70), Kevin Morgan (BK's Driver 1970-71), Gordon Pound (BK 1969-70) all Taswegians now joined the Association for the first time and along with Peter Turner and Les Mullan has brought the Associations strength in Tasmania up to 5 members. On ANZAC Day another former member of the Battery from 1975 sought out the Association at the march and has indicated his willingness to join.

At the Reunion Dinner on Friday night I had the pleasure as your Vice President to welcome the Patron of the Association and BC of the Battery Maj Justin Collins and the BSM WO2 Terry Whitwam to our gathering.

Both Justin and Terry made the trip down from Townsville and from all reports enjoyed their time with the association members in Hobart and will be encouraging other from the current establishment to think seriously about joining us.

L to R Jim Wright (NT Rep) BSM Terry Whitwam, Maj Justin Collins (107 FdBty Patron) Barry Pearce (Vice Prez).



On ANZAC Day a number of brave Association members rose early for the Dawn Service held at the Cenotaph overlooking the Derwent River and Hobart. It was a wonderful setting and a great time for reflection on those who are no longer with us due to their war service.

At 1000hrs the members gathered in the foyer of the hotel and in pouring rain made their way to the FUP for the march. I don't think there was a dry gunner around by the time we got to the cnr of Murray and Macquarie St, but the warmth of the conversation and the companionship overcame any inconvenience. As the weather



cleared the members formed up behind the Association banner. Maj Justin Collins was out in front to lead us. There was a lot of shuffling of groups around the Association, but we maintained our position and forced the others to work around us. Justin, being dressed in civvies and looking very young compared to us "olds and bolds" received some gratuitous advise from a number of well meaning "old soldiers" from other era's and other corps about how he ought to take the salute on the eye's right and how he ought to lead the group. Justin took this all very well and went about his duties in a masterly way. Thank you Justin, I know that all members of the Association present were proud to march behind you on ANZAC Day.

Maj Justin Collins is the most recent Life member of the Association following on from our time in Hobart. Welcome Justin.



L to R Hilton Lenard, WO Terry Whitwam, Sgt Kerry Whitwam (Tas.Police: Terry's sister) Maj Justin Collins.

At the end of the march as the various groups approached the Cenotaph the banner parties were sent up to the Cenotaph while the body of the marchers were directed to the stand down area. Brian Tapp and your editor, who were carrying the banner, then spent the next hour standing in the wind and drizzle at the back of the Cenotaph while the dignitaries muddled around waiting for the Governor of Tasmania to arrive. I believe that there was an unfortunate lack of respect for the living in this service to remember the dead.

Whilst Brian and I were inconvenienced for this time, several WW2 and Korean Veterans, who had also been directed to the back of the Cenotaph with their unit banners, did it very hard. The long delay between the completion of the march and the Service of Remembrance was the only downer in what was otherwise a good day. This downer however was compounded by the desertion of the other 40 members of the Association who took off to the Naval/RSL Club without "so much as a word of farewell" to Brian and me. When we finally arrived back at the Naval/RSL Club the other members thought it was a great joke. Brian and I only smiled after we had thawed out and downed a couple of rum and cokes. The rest of the day was spent in various activities in and around Hobart.



Dave McGhee being groomed for the march by his wife Elaine

Sunday was an early and leisurely walk around the docks area to Salamanca Market and an emptying of wallets buying the many fascinating craft, art and produce items that Tasmania offers. We then boarded a touring bus for a sightseeing trip around Hobart before gathering at the Anglesea Barracks for a tour of the grounds and the museum. I believe that this museum has one of the best presentations of the battle of Long Tan that I have seen with interviews with both former Australian, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers who were caught up in the action. The presentation called "Tasmanians in Vietnam" was based on the experiences of Harry Smith who grew up in Tasmania. Other Tasmanians who served in Vietnam are also featured and I believe that we need to have Kevin Morgan's story included in this display as I was unable to find any reference to him on the day. If anybody has any pictures of Kevin in Vietnam please let me have them and I'll arrange to have them included in the Museum display.



After our tour we gathered in one of the lecture theatres and listened to Col Steve Carey give a very detailed history of the RAA in Tasmania from the early Colonial Artillery Regiments through to the current day. The group then went in various ways for the rest of the day. Unfortunately Sandra and I had to leave on Monday so we missed the trip out to the Cascade Brewery and Mt Wellington so I'll leave that for someone else to comment on in a future edition. Well done Peter, Hilton and all the other people who contributed to the weekend. Next gathering will be in Townsville in April 2010 for the 40th Anniversary of the Batteries departure for Vietnam and the 50th Anniversary of the reforming of 4th Field Regiment post WW2.

Tapps & Lucas' catching up after the march

Assn Items for SALE - FUND Raising:

Attached to this RR is a selection of Association items for sale to members. All proceeds to Assn projects, particularly the publication of the "Black Sheep" series in to a hard copy edition to be released at Reunion Townsville, ANZAC week April 2010 (40 years since the Battery deployed to Vietnam).



FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PEN

Firstly my apologies for not coming to the Apple Isle for Anzac Day but I have somewhat divided loyalties. B Company 2 RAR/NZ had their company reunion in Canberra and my FO Party, minus Griff (Ian Griffy – at the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club re-union in Alice Springs) and Brownie (Glen Brown – otherwise occupied) are obliged to attend.



We had a wonderful roll up and provided a full four days of events for the members and their partners covering the War Memorial, Dawn service, our own contingent in the March and a Memorial Dinner. We had over 60 members turn up from all over Australia but sadly had to formally recite the names of 26 of the Company no longer with us. The Company Commander and three original Platoon Commanders were there and enough ex-diggers to cause us to march in Platoon lots. As the FO Party for the full 12 month tour of SVN, we feel very privileged to be considered part of the 'Bravo Company Family and special mention is always made of this at re-unions. Official guests at the memorial Dinner were John and Nola Church – John was the CO 2 RAR/NZ of course, and Tan Roberts, the ex-Operations Officer and Editor of the

Battalion Book for the 70-71 Tour. On that note, one of the diggers has organised a limited reprint of the Battalion Book and if you want details please contact me. For me it was very special to march, four up, with the Platoon Commanders, Brigadier Phil McNamara (Retd) now Honorary Colonel of the Commando Regiment, Grant Chasling BSM Corps of Staff Cadets from my original RMC Class and Peter Gibson MC, who was decorated for that rather scary night ambush in the Courtney Rubber in 1971 when I used up most of the Province's Illum and HE allocation for the month in three hours. Phil's son, by the way, has just completed his second tour as a medic in 4RAR in Afghanistan and has a Timor tour up to boot. For those of you to whom the name Jack van Tongren means anything, he turned up as well. I haven't seen Jack since Vietnam where he was a lance jack and our interpreter and still think he is a much maligned individual. Jack's current claim to fame is that he is the only Australian to have ever been exiled from a State or Territory – "WA Inc" lives on.

For those who went to Tassie – what a wonderful report from Hilton et al. My phone conversation on Anzac day afternoon certainly confirmed you were having a great re-union.

Looking forward to Townsville in 2010 – it's been 40 years!

P.S. My almost 18 year old, drop-dead-gorgeous niece, Amber Feakes was selected for entry to the Royal Military College, Duntroon yesterday. With luck, I will be an even prouder Uncle in December 2010.

Noddy – The Prez

Secretary's Report:

Since the December 2008 RAM Ramblings we welcome six new members, Peter PJ Smith, John Tuck and Peter Kennedy all from greater Melbourne, Kevin Morgan & Peter Jones from Tasmania and Justin Collins from Townsville. All (except Justin) served in Vietnam (PJ with HQ Bty) and Townsville before or after Vietnam or both. PJ was with 107 as a Gun Sgt in mid 1970s and BSM in 1983-4. Justin is the current BC of the Battery and our Patron. We welcome the new Victorians, the two from that big island down south and our first serving member.

ELECTED POSITIONS (Executive)

President: Warren Feakes – Wanniasa ACT – m: 0417 209 360
Vice President: Barry Pearce – Meredith Vic – h: 03 5286 1545
Secretary/Treasurer: Hilton Lenard – Batemans Bay NSW - m: 0418 695 345

State/Territory Representative for:

Queensland: Neil Layton – Kippa-Ring – 07 3204 1125
NSW: John Shelly – Kiama – 0438 332 555
Victoria: Ken (Doc) Barclay – Mildura – 0428 251 364
Tasmania: Les Mullan – Launceston – 0408 449 006
SA: Adrian (Wally) Walford – Modbury – 08 8265 1976
WA: Bob White – Falcon - 08 9534 3738
NT: Jim Wright – Palmerston – 0419 842 158
ACT: Peter Moat – Weetangera - 0419 594 610
Serving 107 Bty Member: Sgt Stacy Russell - Townsville

NON-ELECTED POSITIONS (Appointed by the Committee)

Editor RAM Ramblings: Barry Pearce – Meredith – h: 03 5286 1545
Webmaster: Doc Barclay – Mildura – h: 0428 251 364
Historian: Hilton Lenard – Batemans Bay – m: 0418 695 345

Regional Representative for:

Northern Qld: Jon Eaton – Sarina – m: 0402 248 716
Southern Qld: Neil Lunney – Tewantin – m: 0419 712 136
North NSW: Col Lowe – Tamworth – 02 6761 8936
Sydney: Brian Tapp – Narrabeen - 0410 543 743
Southern NSW: Ian Hughes – Sanctuary Point – 0417 140 250
Eastern Vic: Noel Paterson – Box Hill – 03 9890 7020
Western Vic: Barry Pearce – Meredith – h: 03 5286 1545

Our Association membership has a net gain of six to 155 financial members. Like an updated membership list, then contact the Secretary. Current Association membership covers all states, NSW/ACT 60, Qld 44, Vic/Tas 27, SA/NT 12 and WA 10. Plus we have Paul Gaff in San Diego, USA and Jeff Roser in MACAU, China. Membership also covers most periods of 107 Fd Bty recent times, with 44 having served at Holsworthy, 68 in Malaysia, 74 at Townsville (1969-70), 91 in Vietnam, 59 at Townsville post Vietnam and 1 serving member. Many served in more than one location.

Treasurer's Report:

To date 125 members have renewed their 2009 subscription including 100 fully paid up life subscribers. Subscriptions for 2009 remain at \$15 and the life subscription is \$150. The membership renewal form is attached. Any questions or corrections contact Hilton. The Association's accounts are in a health state. All the life subscriptions received and all interest earned to date are in two premium investment accounts. As at 30 June 2008 the Association's current assets were \$16,697. If you would like a copy of the audited accounts then contact the Treasurer.

Army Combat Badge (ACB)

Some time ago your Assn applied, on your behalf, for the issue of the Army Combat Badge (ACB) as notified in RAM Ramblings. After a period of inactivity, Head of Regiment (HOR) Puckapunyal gained approval of DGPers-A Canberra for the issued the ACB to our Assn members. The bulk delivery of the ACB was mailed/delivered members in April.

The first submission for the ACB was based on Association records as at April 2007. Since then some other members have come to our attention as possibly being eligible, particularly those who visited Vietnam from Malaysia in 1968 with the two FO parties and some new Assn members. **If you consider yourself eligible and have not received your ACB then contact the Secretary urgently and you will be included in our next submission.**

In the process, HOR advised that the following have already been issued the ACB:

2412422 S.R. Armistead through RAA Assoc NQ 5 Aug 08
214518 R.W. Buckman through AAD Assoc 3 Jun 08
2781830 R. Eade through 101 Bty Assoc 16 Mar 08
57061 K.R. Hall through Retd RAA Offr SE QLD Mar and Jun 08
37726 R.J Hayes through 4 Fd Regt Assoc 5 Aug 08
311618 D.J. Holmes through 4 Fd Regt Assoc approved Dec 08
2411946 N. Lunney through RAA Assoc NQ 5 Aug 08
2787484 A.R. Main through Retd RAA Offr SE QLD Mar and Jun 08
2784252 D.B. McPherson through Retd RAA Offr SE QLD Mar and Jun 08
17121 P.R. McWilliam through Retd RAA Offr SE QLD Mar and Jun 08
235291 G.D. Phegan through Retd RAA Offr SE QLD Mar and Jun 08
311513 G.G. Pound through 105 Bty Assoc direct
312669 P.J. Smith through 4 Fd Regt Assoc 5 Aug 08
43273 A. Walford through AAD Assoc 3 Jun 08

If you are on this list and consider it incorrect then please contact the above Assn for their reply.

The good news is the Defence Instruction (Army) governing the issue of the ACB was reissued and those members who retired from the Army with the rank of Sergeant or higher now receive the ACB miniature for use with your miniature medals as appropriate.

Reunion 2010 Townsville

As the dust settles on R09 Hobart, planning is well underway for Reunion Townsville over the ANZAC Week April 24-30, 2010. It will be 40 years to the week since the Battery deployment to Vietnam. Doesn't time fly! A massive program is planned and your Assn has applied for two grants from the DVA "Celebrating their Heritage" programs. One grant is to assist with some Reunion activities and the other to assist with the publication of the hard back history of 107 Battery "The Black Sheep 1965 to 1971" There is no guarantee that either grant will be successful, but nothing ventured - nothing gained. Doc is already dusting down his skeleton for the Raymond's Function and is even looking for a steamroller to get home! And there will be much more. So mark ANZAC week 2010 Reunion in your diary and watch this space and the website for further news.

4 Fd Regt 50th Birthday

Likely to follow R10 ANZAC Townsville Reunion, is the Regiment's 50th birthday celebrations. Details are still sketchy but there is the potential for this to gain legs and grow into a massive event with up to a thousand fellow olds and bolds present. All the more reason for you to pencil in a tropical holiday in Townsville during the last week of April and the first week of May next year. With the dollar as it is, don't travel OS, save your pennies and go to Townsville next year. The R10 accommodation plan will include top accommodation at budget rates for both events id you book through the Association's R10 registration. Details will be published in July 2009.

The Black Sheep – 1965 to 1971 – hard copy edition publication

Your Association Committee is working hard to publish the early history of 107 Battery since it was reformed. Periods in Malaysia and Vietnam have been produced in CD format.

Doc Barclay is coordinating our application to the Department of Veterans' Affairs and is hopeful that we will receive a grant of up to \$3,000 towards the cost of the publication. But even if we only get a small part of this, your Association has the funds from sale of our items and reunions to proceed with a limited hard copy edition book of around 350 pages. It will include detailed nominal rolls and what & how we did it, warts and all.

Neil Layton is coordinating the collection of information. He needs lots more stories, yarns, memories and photos particularly from Holsworthy 1965-67 and Townsville 1969-70. You all have been thinking about doing something. Now is the time to act. If you are hesitant in putting pen to paper, just jot down a few dot points on some toilet paper and mail it. Or better still send an email to Neil. The writing team, lead by Noddy,

will flesh out your notes into a professional story. The funnier the better, but can be serious. **Tell it as you recall it.** Include dates and names in fact and fun. But do not defame (hurt unnecessary) anyone or tell porkies.

The target date for publication is Reunion Townsville ANZAC week 2010. So we need to stop just thinking about it and put pen to paper.

Contact Neil on email nlayton@bigpond.net.au, home: 07 3204 1125 mobile: 0417 757 845.

If you have photos, slides, hard copy or even a CD containing good stuff, mail to 107 Field Battery Association PO Box 199 Erindale Centre, ACT 2903. We will reproduce and returned them to you along with a CD of the contents.

This is your LAST CHANCE to be in The Black Sheep 1965-1971. **So just do it - NOW!**

Around the Water Cart - Furphies from the Secretary and others

From Gunners North (formally the RAA Assn on North Queensland):

WO2 Paul Boswell Battery Guide 107 Fd Bty reports that the 4 Fd Regt gunners on Operation Herrick, Afghanistan, are carrying out daily fire missions for weeks on end, direct firing at mounted Taliban attacking their FSB, stepping into vacancies created by British KIA (29 Cdo Regt has had 5 KIA to date) and the British Gunners are busy trying to convince Aussie Gunners to transfer. Remember those Pommies coming to Australia during the Vietnam War. Gordon Pound, BK on deployment to Vietnam and Dave Holmes in the CP are just two members who come to mind. Clearly, the current Aussie Gunners are held in high regard.

As predicted in last ATWC, there have been significant changes in 4 Fd Regt. While the dust is still settling, I understand that the guns are now concentrated in 107 Bty and the observation or JOS elements (FO parties to us old chaps) are now in 108 Battery. We will wait for the dust to settle a little more for our next report.

As a result of the changes, we now have a new Patron, BC 107 Bty Major Justin Collins assumed command of 107 Battery in February. The BSM, who was posted back to the Battery early this year, is WO2 Terry Whitwam.

We wish Major Peter Meakin, our former Patron, well in his new posting.

Good news is that the BC and BSM joined us at R09 in Hobart. BC Collins commanded our contingent by leading Barry Pearce's Banner Party and the forty odd remainders. BSM Whitwam was at the rear keeping us all in step. Well everyone except your Secretary who failed drill at Portsea and has been reminding RSMs ever since. Time for some drill retraining?

Our resident movie critic, Sid Armistead, reports:

Watching a movie recently with George C. Scott playing Gen Patton, fighting off Rommel in Tunisia with L5 Italian mountain howitzers, clearly at the time when the Italian Army was available for rent. So taking this real battle all the way, we had Rommel attacking Patton with tanks looking very much un-Panzer crewed by Italians in German uniforms and the Italian infantry likewise fronting Patton. Finally, we have Italians in American uniforms, defending with guns that have not yet been invented. We know that the yanks won, the Germans lost and the Italians, well I guess they won and lost! I will throw one shoe at that one.

In an episode of "Band of Brothers" we have an FO ordering "Fire Mission H.E. quick." In the sub titles we see the interpretation as "aint she quick!"

Off the arty track and watching "Dances with Wolves" we have the Indians wandering the vast American plain with buffalos etc. And away in the raising background is a vast array of modern low level buildings together with water tower and radio mast.

Sid, have you been watching too much TV?

Construction of the new ChauPhau Lines, home of 4 Fd Regt at Lavarack Barracks, is well advanced and due for completion early 2010, in time for our R10 Townsville ANZAC week Reunion, 24-30 Apr 2010. Member and curator, Paddy Dunsford, advises that it will be an excellent and fitting home for the 4 Field Regimental Historical Collection, which is currently crammed in boxes in Cell 3 and the exercise yard of the Old Guard Room

What has happened to the guns? Barry Pearce Editor/Vice President.

A call to arms has gone out to all ex-service men and women who value Australia’s military history and believe that it needs to be preserved. In the Manly Daily just prior to ANZAC Day 2009 and also in the Daily Telegraph (Sydney) on 21st April 2009 it was announced that the North Fort Artillery Museum currently positioned on North Head Sydney is to be moved to Puckapunyal, Victoria. Rightly the Manly Daily asks in a banner headline “Where the hell is.....PUCKAPUNYAL?”

Those of us who have wintered at Puckapunyal know very well that it is a “hell” and during our time there determined that only the Army could love the place.

Donors to the museum are starting to recall their items in protest at the move and the volunteers who have established the many displays and kept the museum open for the thousands of visitors who come each year are condemning the plan “ as a waste of money and a sure fire way to ensure no one visits it.” (Manly Daily article).

As the editor of this newsletter and someone who is constantly seeking artillery news I cannot but wonder whether this proposed move has any connection with the downgrading of the artillery reported in the last newsletter and the lack of any new guns under the 155’s reported in the “White Paper” released on 1st May 2009.

Despite all the history that surrounds the Royal Australian Artillery there appears to be a lack of appreciation of the role that the guns of the Regiment have played in all the conflicts that Australian infantry have been involved in,



including the current conflict in Afghanistan.

As reported earlier in this newsletter the display at the Anglesea Barracks about the Battle of Long Tan emphasises the role of the guns in overcoming the numerically superior North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces during that battle.

In Les Lyons two epics recently published on the Great War of 1914-1918 he emphasises that the role of the guns both on Gallipoli and the Western Front were crucial to both the inflicting of damage on the enemy and the protection of Australian Forces, as Monash showed when he was given the opportunity to use them properly.

During WW2 the guns of the Regiment played a crucial role in the African campaigns against Rommel and again in the Pacific

region against the Japanese.

Is the removal of the high profile Artillery Museum at North Heads a move towards hiding the Artillery away from public view? To move the guns out of sight is too also move them out of mind.

Gunners everywhere the Regiment is under siege and needs your help.

Please write to your local Federal MP, Minister for Defence and the Prime Minister and give your support to the Regiment both in keeping the Museum at North Head and also in increasing the profile of the guns as an essential part of our land forces.

You can get the contact points both e-mail and snail mail from the Parliament House website www.aph.gov.au

Letters are flowing into pollies offices all over OZ. Please add yours to the flow.

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This publication was compiled and edited by Barry Pearce, 19 Creamery Road, Meredith Vic. 3333 for the 107 Field Battery Assoc. Care is taken with the correctness of all articles produced, but no responsibility. President – Warren Feakes (ACT) :VicePres. Barry Pearce (Vic) : Secretary Hilton Lenard (NSW) : Committee : Jim Wright (NT), Ken “Doc” Barclay (Vic), Neil Layton (Qld), Adrian Walford (SA), Les Mullan (Tas).

John Shelley (NSW), Peter Moat (ACT), Bob White (WA), Stacy Russell (107 Field Battery)

Contributions to future editions can be e-mailed to editor@107fdbty.com Please consider any news or events.

Ram Ramblings is published three times a year, April, August & November.



“WE WERE ONCE YOUNG AND HANDSOME.”
 L to R Peter Gibson MC, Phil McNamara, Grant Chasling and yours truly...Incidentally, Grant Chasling and Phil McNamare were successive BSMs (Battalion Sargeant Major) of the Corps of Staff Cadets RMC 1968 and 1969 and Peter Gibson was an intelligence Corps officer doing his stint as an infantry Platoon Commander when he won his MC. In his later years, he was Desk Officer at Joint Intelligence Organisation when the Indonesians invaded E Timor and reckoned Gough knew it was

on and sanctioned it all along. Cheers, Warren

ASSISTANCE IN ORUZGAN PROVINCE : AFGHANISTAN

As mentioned in previous Ram Ramblings, there are gunners from 4 Fd Regt, including some from 107 Fd Bty, who are embedded with 29 Commando Regiment and currently serving and live firing in Afghanistan. Rampart Rammers you are encouraged to offer your support by mailing a card OR parcels to the lads, via following address, and they will be distributed among the troops:

**AFPO 14
 Op Slipper/Op Herrick
 Australian Defence Force
 NSW
 2890**



Peter Jones (from Tassie)



“Baldy” Moat & Peter Turner

The Burnetts taking in the sights.



Touring Anglesea Barracks



Peter Kennedy & Graeme Coe



“On the buses.”