

7 Field Regiment Association

Yandoo

Royal Australian Artillery

1990

Vol 1 No 4



7 FD REGT RAA ASSOCIATION  
WARRANE ROAD WILLOUGHBY 2068

PRESIDENT MAX FALCONER AND PAST PRESIDENT BARNEY FLANAGAN YANDOO REPORT 1990

Dear fellow gunners,

In this our first joint report we look back at the Association's activities during the last year and a bit.

We have had an active year and some of our highlights were:-

In August 1989 and 1990 representatives of the Association again attended an Artillery Assembly at the School of Artillery. The assembly was well attended and many delegates stayed and enjoyed the Gunner Dinners.

Another successful reunion was held in October 1989 at the Willoughby Legion Club with a good roll up and some new faces attending.

11 members attended another great outing early on Sunday morning 8th April 1990 as guests of 7 Fd Regt RAA at their direct firing shoot at Holsworthy. A big thank you to LtCol Main and his staff for an enjoyable morning.

We have introduced a trophy for the "Most Proficient Soldier" to be competed for between the Sydney Batteries. The presentation will be made on the Regiment's last parade night for the year.

Of course the big event of 1990 was the granting of the "Freedom of the City" to the Regiment on Sunday 29th July 1990. A good roll up of members was evident with congratulations being passed on to all concerned for this wonderful day.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the Regiment's new Adjutant, Capt David McCallum and RSM WO1 Dennis Bowman. We would also like to thank Capt Delaney and WO1 Johnson for their assistance and support to the Association.

Membership now stands at 170 with 18 life members, please keep trying to locate other interested gunners.

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

Thank you all for your support during the year and we wish the Association well in the years to come.

Max Falconer  
President  
Barney Flanagan  
Past President  
23rd August 1990

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DECEASED MEMBERS

Reg Wilkens - 18th July 1989  
Bob Turner - 14th February 1990  
Mac Henry - 11th April 1990

The President and members extend sincere condolences to their families, relatives and friends in their sad loss.

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FROM THE DESK OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL A.R. MAIN  
COMMANDING OFFICER 7TH FIELD REGIMENT RAA

Since I last wrote the Regiment has conducted live firing exercises, as would be expected, a leadership development exercise in the Wallaroo State Forest, and a small arms practice at Singleton during the period 15-17 September 1989. The small arms weekend always creates interest and with 27,500 assorted rounds being fired there was plenty of action. Each member of the unit was able to fire the SLR, M16, pistol, GPMG M-60 and SMG. Grenades were also thrown, all of them in the right direction!

The major activity for 7 Field Regiment in 1989 was the Unit Courses Camp held at Singleton from 21 October to 4 November 1989. The camp was a resounding success with 115 soldiers qualifying at a variety of initial trade and promotion courses. Soldiers from 5/11 Field Regiment, 1 Field Regiment also participated in the camp.

1990 saw many positions within the Regiment change. Major Max Coaster - Garton, after a long association with the unit was posted to 2 Training Group and replaced by Captain Terry Waters and then Major Mike Laurence. Major Peter Widelewski was posted to the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill and replaced by Major Mick Shevak as Battery Commander Headquarter Battery. The Adjutant, Captain Karl Delaney, was posted to the Army War Games Centre at Training Command and replaced by Captain David McCallum while Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Bruce Johnston was posted as Regimental Sergeant Major 8/12 Medium Regiment and has been succeeded by WO1 Dennis Bowman. Two promotions to Warrant Officer Class Two should be noted. First, Dick Bice of 113 Fd Bty and now BSM of the battery, and second Peter McGrath who remains BG 28 Fd Bty.

In March, the Regiment provided 30 members, from Gunner to Captain, to support 23 Field Regiment who sent a Battery to New Zealand for two weeks on Exercise 'Tasman Reserve'. This activity, combined with soldiers attending the 3rd Division Courses Camp at Puckapunyal, supporting 5 Brigade's annual camp and conducting our own Live Firing Exercise, has led to a busy start in 1990.

Our live firing weekends continued of course and it was a pleasure to see the Association shake away the cobwebs and man a gun for direct firing shoot at Holsworthy in April - did quite well for old blokes! In May we practised being grunts again and saw many parts of Holsworthy that most prefer not to visit - Infantry Minor Tactics should be left to the Infantry.

An obvious highlight of the year was the granting of the Freedom of Entry to the City of Willoughby to the Regiment. There is little that I need to say to tell you of the day and the celebrations which followed. Many members of the Association were with us, and those who weren't would have heard anyway. I was proud to lead the Regiment and am gratified by the response to our performance on the day.

The unit is now in its Continuous Training year which will culminate with a Commander Divisional Artillery Assessment in October. This will be followed by our participation in 8 Brigade's Low Level Operations Exercise, Exercise Warrumbungle Bloodhound, at Coonabarabran. 8 Brigade will then be commanded by Brigadier J.P. Keefe RFD. This exercise will be the Regiment's first experience of low level operations. Everyone is keen to see how Artillery will be used and more importantly to expose our soldiers to the larger picture of operations in a Brigade setting, and, at long last, to exercise in a different area.

As I will relinquish command in November I will take this opportunity of thanking the Association for the interest and support which has been forthcoming during my time as Commanding Officer. I wish you well for your future.

## THE HARRY PECK TROPHY

This spectacular trophy (a model of the original 25 pounder gun) stands today proudly in the Officers mess of 7 Fd Regt Royal Australian Artillery at Willoughby, as a tribute to the gunners of the 2/5th Australian Field Regiment A.I.F. and especially for the memory of one Harry Peck.

Who was Harry Peck? - Well as legend has it, his story is as follows:-

As generations pass and individual names become less clear in memory, the traditions of the 2/5th will undoubtedly centre more and more round one name, a name that cannot be erased or dishonoured - the name of Harry Peck. Whatever the name on the records, whether its owner be living or dead, this is the one name that covers all, so it is said.

It was first heard at Ingleburn and springs from an early C O's inspection at that camp. Halting, the C O sternly indicated an untidy kit marring the otherwise military order of a hut. When the Battery Orderly Sergeant demanded the owners name from men standing by other kits, some genius who is thought to have gained inspiration from that well-known trade name on a jar of fish paste responded and said "I think it's Harry Peck's, sir".

Legend has it that Harry Peck was formally charged under Section 40 of the Army Act with "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline". When the rolls were searched in vain for the offender's army number, his mythical status became apparent. Gunner Harry Peck had no number then, he has no number now, but his existence in the hearts and memories of his comrades would render such identification superfluous.

His activities have become legendary, varied and illuminating. The benefits of his useful signature were soon manifest in securing forbidden goods at ordnance depots throughout the Middle East. The yield included pistols, tools, a road roller and even a motor truck - all highly prized possessions in those days of equipment starvation. The rapid promotions and demotions of Harry Peck between gunner and lieutenant-colonel suited the moment's need and added to the trail of confusion left in his path.

If Harry was engaged on some unlawful enterprise, it had to be of some benefit to all or part of the Regiment: he could never venture on activities involving personal gain or profit. Harry Peck embodied happiness, comradeship and clean fun. He exemplified the spirit of the Regiment.

He was neither an officer nor a man in the ranks; he was each and every member of a regiment where officers and men were comrades together.

On Sunday 8th April 1990 at the Holsworthy range, elements of 7 Fd Regt Royal Australian Artillery competed against one another for this trophy, in a direct firing competition. The winning gun detachment was:-

Bdr	C. Orgovanyi
Gnr	J. Lunan
Gnr	A. Birrell
Gnr	F. Kerbane
Gnr	D. White

Congratulations to the winning detachment and now you know the meaning of your win - "happiness, comradeship and clean fun".

The unofficial runners up, who had a successful shoot but were ineligible to compete, were, "dads army":-

John	Andrew
John	Balfour
Fred	Bastock
Max	Falconer
Peter	Mendl
Don	McVay
Harry	Taylor







ANNUAL REUNION 1989

Top - Brian Primrose, Glyn Stark, Bruce McClelland

Left - Arthur Hammond, John Hungerford

Right - Alec Burke, Sue Howarth, Sharon Fulcher





ANNUAL REUNION 1989

Top- Ken Willis, Laurie Hindmarsh, Ed Brown

Centre- Bob Corbett, John Fairless, Richard Hogge

Right- John Balfour, LtCol Rick Main, Barney Flanagan



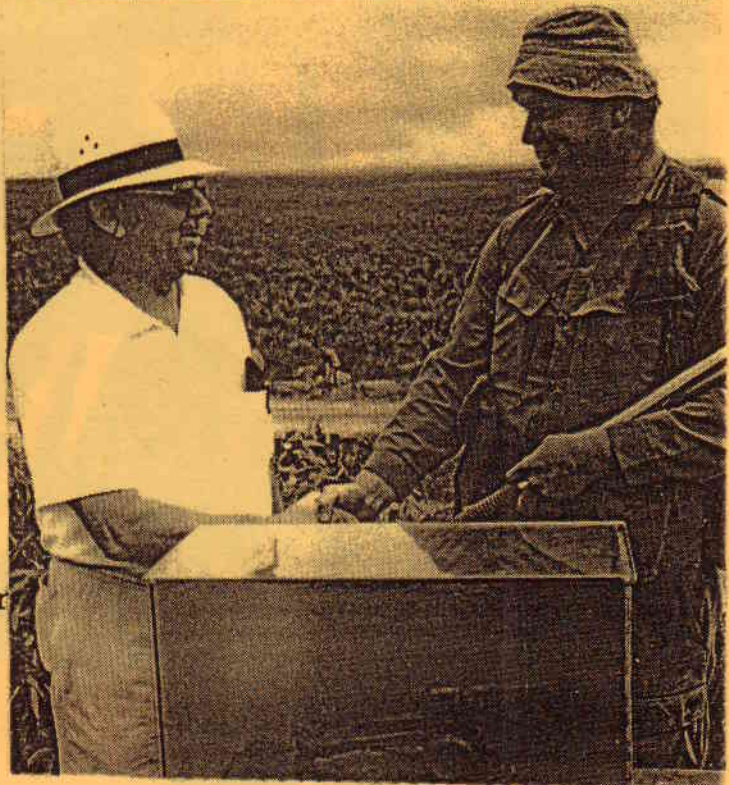




FIELD FIRING  
HOLSWORTHY-April

Grahame Smith,  
John Andrew,  
Harry Taylor,  
Fred Bastock,  
Don McVay,  
Danny Toplis,  
Laurie Hindmarsh,  
John Balfour,  
Peter Mendl,  
Keith Leek.

Fred Bastock  
presents Harry  
Peck Trophy to Bdr  
"Bear" Orgovanyi.



## Freedom

¶ The right, title privilege, honour **of** and distinction of marching through the streets of a city on all **Entry** ceremonial occasions with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and Colours flying is one of the most interesting of the military 'mysteries' of the past.

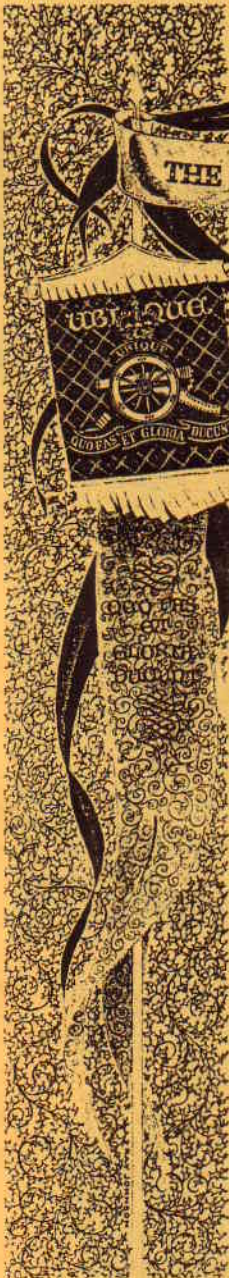
¶ The only cities which can claim to have had any rights with regard to the passage of troops are the Cities of Edinburgh and London. Edinburgh's claims arose in connection with the civic military force it once possessed, The Town Guard. 'No other drum but theirs (the Town Guard's) was allowed to sound on the High Street between Luckenbooth's and the Netherbow'. The Town Guard has long since disappeared and the City of Edinburgh now waives its claims to any special privileges. The City of London on the other hand has always been jealous of the rights it claims.

¶ Though the City of London lost direct authority over its military forces in 1661, when control of the London Trained Bands was transferred to the newly formed Court of Lieutenancy, the practice began of notifying the Lord Mayor when parties from regiments went into the City to 'raise recruits by beat of drum'. From this modest beginning developed, in the passage of years, the suggestion that the City of London had the right to decide which regiments could pass through its streets 'with bayonets fixed, Colours flying and bands playing'. Discussions between the Secretary of War and the Lord Mayor in 1769 show that the City's privileges in the matter at that date did not go beyond the right to receive, as a matter of courtesy, notification when troops were to pass through. The position today remains little changed from what it was in 1769.

¶ The practice of granting the Freedom of the City to regiments appears to be of fairly recent origin. There are few recorded instances until 1943 when The York and Lancaster Regiment was given the Freedom of the City of Sheffield. Since 1943, grants of freedoms or their Scottish equivalents have been quite frequent in the United Kingdom, although, so far as is known, very few such grants have been accorded to regiments in other parts of the British Commonwealth. The first Australian Army unit to be granted the Freedom of Entry was 31st Independent Rifle Company, The Royal Queensland Regiment, at Townsville in 1958.

¶ The grant of the Freedom of the City provides a dignified and satisfactory means of enabling a Corporation to honour a distinguished unit, thereby assisting in effecting the very desirable liaison between the Corporation and the Armed Services of the Crown.

# The Scroll



On the Twenty Ninth day of July, 1990  
we extend to the  
Commanding Officer and Men of the

## 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment

Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

### GREETINGS

WHEREAS many of our Citizens have served with pride in your Distinguished Regiment which, by its great achievements in times of peace and war, has built up, honourable traditions, the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Willoughby meeting in Council on the Second day of July, 1990, HAVE RESOLVED in appreciation of your great services to Our Sovereign, Our Country and Our City, to confer upon the Regiment by this Deed and in perpetuity, the privilege, honour and distinction of

### The Freedom of the City

with the right of entry on Ceremonial Occasions in full panoply with guns in train, swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and The Banner flying, and that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to such Deed.

IN WITNESS whereof the Common Seal of the Council was hereto affixed on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of July, 1990, in the presence of..

Paul Reidy  
MAYOR  
Alon Jayman  
TOWN CLERK



The Scroll granting Freedom of Entry to the City of Willoughby to 7th Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

## DOES ANYBODY REMEMBER HIM?

On Friday 8th March 1968, 20 year old Gary McKay lost the lottery. He was conscripted.

From the comfortable and carefree life of surfing and rugby football, he was drafted into the deadly serious preparation for war in the jungles of South Vietnam.

Lieutenant (now LtCol, C.O. 8/9 RAR) Gary McKay was 'medevaced' from Nui Le on the 22nd September 1971, severely wounded by machine gun fire. Early the next month he was returned to Australia. In July 1972 he was awarded the **MILITARY CROSS** for his service in South Vietnam.

In 1967 Gary opted to do six years part time in the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) instead of two years national service.

His CMF duty was far from unpleasant. He enjoyed the basic training course at **WALLGROVE** and was most impressed with the way he was trained.

After basic training he was posted to **7 FD REGT RAA AT WILLOUGHBY**, an artillery unit which must have been 50% over strength. The long serving members of the unit tried their best to make the training interesting, they were hampered by a lack of equipment with which to train and a lack of enthusiasm on the part of most of the gunners, whose main interest was when the boozier would open. Still it had its good times and **P BATTERY** was a fairly happy crew.

Highlights of his thirteen months were training on the **25 POUNDERS** for six months and then on the **105 MM PACK HOWITZER**, "spaghetti guns" for the remainder of his term. Gary never found out why this was organised in this way but at least it reduced the boredom of relearning the **9 MM OWEN MACHINE CARBINE** for the umpteenth time. Live firing at **HOLSWORTHY** and Queens's Birthday salutes gave some incentive for interest but it was one such range practice which more or less convinced him that he should chuck part time and get his national service training over and done with.

He went to **Holsworthy Range** for live firing practice and he was particularly looking forward to this "shoot" as he had been a range sentry on the last one. However his battery sergeant major had other plans and he was again rostered as a range sentry. He was very unhappy that he had been left all night on a locked gate which saw no traffic for his entire tour of duty, but he also missed one of the best surfs that summer. His mind was made up; He would take his medicine like a man and become a nasho.

WHO REMEMBERS GARY McKay?

WHO WAS HIS BSM?

-Written May 1989-

(Extracts from the book  
"In Good Company" by  
Gary McKay)

## REGIMENTAL HISTORY AND COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL ITEMS.

The narrative , in draft form, has reached the end of the First World War and the return of the 7th Field Brigade to Australia. Whilst not nearly as far advanced as the Author had wished, it is nevertheless a substantial Document and is complete in itself. At the time of writing the draft is being edited.

As regards the collection of historic items, it has reached the stage where , it is something of which the Association can be really proud . Many valuable contributions have been received, but three recent contributions are of particular significance. Our Patron, Brigadier Tom Hanson, has donated an important collection of photographs and personal items. Mr T. King, (son of B.Q.M.S. G. King, 25th Battery) has presented on "permanent loan", a 22 page letter written in March 1918, and a collection of trench maps which are priceless. Mrs M. Keogh has donated a further valuable collection of personal memorabilia relating to her Father's Service in World War 1.

The Committee gratefully acknowledges the assistance and the contributions that have been received from the following sources since the last issue of "Yandoo".

Messrs H and L Bradley.  
Mr M. Falconer MBE. JP.  
Mr G.N. Hammond.  
Brigadier A.G. Hanson. DSO. ED. RL.  
Captain K.C. James. RL.  
Mrs M. Keogh.  
Mr T. King.  
Mr B. McClelland.  
Mr L.G. Pinnington.  
Mr W.S.F. Rutledge.  
Lieutenant O.R. Saville. RL.  
Lieutenant P. Tranter. RL.  
Mr R.C.M. Toplis.

Whilst all of the above is very positive and rewarding, we are never satisfied ; we always want more. If you have any data that you can contribute to the Regimental History or Memorabilia to add to the collection, please contact Laurie Hindmarsh. 5 McRae Place. Turramurra. 2074 or (02) 449 1169 (AH).



18717 Gnr F.F.(Frank) Neilson. 26 Battery. 7 A.F.A.

Frank Neilson was born at Maryborough, Queensland in 1892. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Sydney Town Hall on the 17th of August, 1915. The attestation paper shows that he was aged 23, married to Alice Neilson and that his address was 341 Catherine Street, Leichhardt. At the time of enlistment he was serving in the St. Georges Rifles, (later The St. George Regiment and now 4/3 Battalion R.N.S.W.R) and would have been close to completing his service obligations under the original Compulsory Military Training Scheme.

On enlistment Frank was drafted into the 12th Reinforcement Reserve as a Private and transferred to 1/15 F.A. Brigade on the 16th of November 1915 as a gunner. The transfer papers were signed by Lieut. L.J. Colquhoun (later Major and B.C. 40th Battery, 22nd Field Brigade, at Albury, in which Colonel John Crowe served in the 1930's). at that time Artillery Reinforcements were trained at "The Warren" in the suburb of Marrickville, and Frank would have been able to get home to 341 Catherine Street on most evenings and at weekends.

It should be mentioned here that it was not easy to get into Artillery at that time; a contemporary newspaper account describing training at "The Warren" stated that applicants were required to produce two references. It is on record that the C.O. at "The Warren", Lieutenant Colonel R. St.J. Pearce V.D. (Victoria Decoration equivalent to the E.D) on appointment to command the 7th on the 17th March 1916, interviewed all applicants for the 7th and took into account their position in Civilian life and their ability to ride horses.

Frank Neilson was one applicant who was accepted for the 7th. when it was formed and he transferred to the 26th Battery on the 1st April 1916. From that time until the end of the War, Frank's fortunes coincided with those of his B.C. Captain T.A.J. Playfair, who selected Frank as his Fatman. Somewhere along the track Frank acquired a camera and photographed his B.C. and the R.M.O. (Captain Samson) in front of one of the huts at Larkhill. This photograph is in the Archives of the Association.

On the 18th March, 1917, three days after his Battery had been redeployed at Ploegsteert from Armentiers, Frank was admitted to hospital suffering from tonsillitis, a serious complaint at a time when antibiotics were unknown. Frank rejoined his Battery on the 23rd of March.

Towards the end of 1917 the 7th returned to Armentiers after rest and reorganisation following the Battle of Paschendale and rostered leave was granted to the United Kingdom. Frank Neilson was fortunate to be one granted leave at Christmas. The combined Leave pass and Rail Warrant, which is in the Archives of the Association, is made out for the period 23rd of December 1917/6th January 1918 for travel to Dundee in Scotland.

Early in 1918 Frank's B.C., by then a Major was appointed Brigade Major, 4th Division Artillery and Frank followed him on the 15th March 1918.

Following the end of the war, it was not until the 1st of May 1919 that Frank Neilson embarked at Devonport in H.M.A.T. "China" to be returned home. He arrived in Sydney on the 11th of June 1919 and was discharged from the A.I.F. on the 18th of July 1919. Frank joined the firm of Thomas Playfair and Sons and remained a valued member of their staff until after the Second World War.

Lieutenant Colonel D. H. Playfair M.B.E., E.D., RL. said of Frank Neilson in a letter to the writer dated 4th September, 1989 :- "Frank was a wonderful man, highly regarded in the firm of Thos Playfair and sons. He had a special position in Dad's admiration and was a very very fine man.

Frank is survived by his daughter Mrs Margaret Keogh and Three grand children. Mrs M. Keogh is an enthusiastic supporter of our Association.

7FD REGT RAA ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERS AS AT 1 JUNE 1990

AGNEW	Charles	FLIPPENCE	Addie	MOONEY	Ronald
ANDREW	John	FRAZER	Ian	MOORE	Dennis
ANGUS	John	FULCHER	Sharon	MORGAN	Robert
ARLINGTON	Michael	GATES	Graham	MORISON	Jim
BAGSTER	Mark	GIFFENEY	Desmond	MOYSEY	David
BALDWIN	Murray	GILKINSON	Lance	MOYSEY	Robert
BALFOUR	John	GILL	Greg	MUIR	Lawrence
BANHAM	Mike	GODFREY	Anthony	MUIR	Peter
BASTOCK	Fred	GWILYM	Jack	McALISTER	Fred
BATEMAN	Ray	HAMER	Colin	McDONALD	Ken
BAYLES	Robert	HAMMOND	Arthur	McLEAN	Russ
BAYNIE	John	HAMMOND	Gerald	McVAY	Donald
BIBBY	Vic	HANSFORD	Jes	NASH	James
BIRCH	Karen	HANSON	Arthur	NEALE	Geoffrey
BOWEN	Chris	HARGREAVES	Thomas	NEILL	William
BRADLEY	Herb	HARLE	Charles	NELSON	John
BRADLEY	Leo	HARRISON	Allan	NICHOLLS	Eric
BREWER	Charles	HARROWER	David	NOAKES	Steven
BRINCAT	Alex	HAWKE	Phillip	OVERTON	John
BROADHEAD	Ken	HAWKINS	Neil	OWENS	Robert
BROOKER	Gayle	HAYLEN	Ian	OWENS	Robyn
BROWN	Ed	HECKENBERG	Brian	PINNINGTON	Laidley
BRYANT	Kevin	HILL	Robert	POSENER	John
BURNETT	Jerry	HINDMARSH	Laurie	PRIMROSE	Brian
BURKE	Alec	HOEY	Ian	PRYOR	Alan
BUZACOTT	David	HOGAN	Christopher	RICHARDSON	Robert
CARMENT	David	HOGGE	Richard	ROGAN	Robert
CARRODUS	Michael	HOPKINSON	Fred	RUSSELL	Robert
CARROLL	Gordon	HORTON	James	RUSSELL	Ross
CASHMORE	John	HOWARTH	Sue	SAFTICH	Rolf
CHAD	Allan	HUNGERFORD	Bruce	SAINSBURY	Maurie
CHRISTIE	Carl	HUNGERFORD	John	SAVILLE	Owen
CLIFTON	Alfred	IRELAND	John	SCOTT	Ian
COLE	Mick	JACKSON	Neville	SENGOS	Patrick
COLLINS	Don	JAMES	Ken	SHORTUS	Dennis
COOTE	Glen	JOHNSTON	Warwick	SMITH	Grahane
CORBETT	Robert	JONES	Michael	SMITH	Roger
COTTLE	Victor	KEEFE	John	STARK	Glya
CROUCH	Robert	KEPT	Barry	STARKE	Bill
CROWE	John	KENTWELL	Wilfred	STAZIKER	Stuart
CUNNEEN	Stephen	KIELY	Douglas	STEDMAN	James
DAVEY	Gregor	KILKELLY	Graeme	STONE	Peter
DAVIDSON	Ross	KOINA	Jeffrey	SULLIVAN	Kevin
DICK	Anthony	LANE	Bill	TAYLOR	Harry
DOUGHERTY	Robert	LAURENCE	Michael	THOMPSON	Reg
EAGLETON	Harold	LEEK	Keith	TIMBS	Christopher
EDWARDS	Hugh	LEWIS-HUGHES	Ken	TOBIN	Philip
ELDERTON	Frederick	LONGFELLOW	Virginia	TOPLIS	Danny
EWAN	David	LORD	Dick	TRANTER	Peter
FAIRLESS	John	MEGGATT	Thomas	TRUELOVE	Peter
FAIRLEY	Jack	MENDL	Peter	WATKINS	Kenneth
FALCONER	Max	MILHAM	Glenn	WHITE	Peter
FISCHER	Henry	MILIC	Karl	WHITFIELD	Timothy
FITZPATRICK	Roy	MILLAR	Anthony	WILLIS	Kenneth
FLANAGAN	Kevin	MITCHELL	Frederick	WILSON	John