

Unit 301

Dungherly Apartment

1 Victor St.

Chatswood

15.11.89

Dear Laurie,

At long last I have time to put pen to paper re the 1921 - 1939 period of 7th Ed Gen R.A.A.

Dress

I joined the ~~Bole~~ ^{Bole} in 1952 at that time there was one issue of a blue patrol type jacket with a red collar and gold piping and gold piping on the sleeves designed as a knot.

There were a cord type riding breeches with leather leggings boots & spurs which were held in place with leather straps.

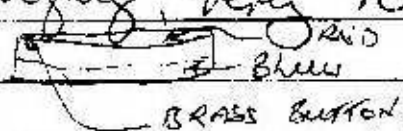
For daylight use we had the famous hat of felt with a purple of mostly blue with one stripe of red with the cross gun as a hat badge. I remember rightly the wording on this badge was UNIQUE CONSENSUS STABILIS AUSTRALIA - I can't help with the translation - I just can't recall it.

This jacket was also worn on night parades which were not official parades such as NCO classes etc. with it were worn blue slacks with a red stripe down the outside of each leg from the cuff (NOT TURNED UP AT THE BOTTOM) to the top of the pants.

also for night wear was a forage cap - cloth, blue on the outside red

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inside roughly, very roughly something like this



BRASS BUTTON. as you can imagine with a soft cap like this it was worn in some funny shapes and in queer places on the head of the wearer.

The troops gave it some funny names most of which would not bear being put to print.

These uniforms were reasonably comfortable but were hot in summer.

To overcome this problem with week end parades at the depot or horse riding parades troops were permitted to wear khaki shirts (which they purchased themselves) instead of the blue jackets.

Also whilst working on guns, harness or other dirty material troops were issued with fatigee jackets - just a loose khaki cloth jacket - 2 pockets 4 buttons down the front and trousers of the same material with buttons for braces no pocket. This fatigee dress was the usual day time dress for camps and daylight parades at the depot.

During training at the depot if I remember the unit had an issue of this clothing that lasted 12 months and was then sent to Ordnance to be laundered as these items were issued to different people every time they were used you can imagine how they were at the end of 12 months or if it comes to that how they were at the end of one month.

The same sort of fatigee dress was

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issued during camp of continuous training. The idea of the power that were in those times was to boil them with a heap of washing soda dye them, then issue them again. No one in authority had any idea of what an iron was for sure.

During camps Sgt's and above were permitted to wear khaki shirts.

Those of the senior N.C.O.s who could obtain them were permitted to wear jacket forage summer during camp and day parades. These jackets were a Regular Army Issue Parades.

There were regular weekly parades of which a few were compulsory parades the majority were voluntary parades.

Although all parades were not paid if I remember correctly fares were always paid (Iran fares). The troops were reimbursed with tram fare cards they were about an inch + half long and just over a quarter of an inch wide. These were acceptable to tram guards for the payment of fares one did not have to be in uniform to tender them.

Besides Tuesday night parades there were odd daylight parades at week ends where such ~~such~~ subjects as gun drill manoeuvre, signalling, Aek subjects were taught.

Before skill at arms and specialist subjects were conducted and also N.C.O. examinations were held it was a regular thing to be at the Depot on Sunday mornings when the Gunlayers practised regularly, the Signallers practised.

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with Heliographs (not very often) flags, telephones
Liv. Sigs were the only troops who used
radios. The Acks used No. 4 + No. 6 directors
boards? (I can't think what they were called
in those days)

Troop lessons were given in map reading,
diorama drawing, health, military law
rifle drill, and items of this type.

Camps

I find it quite difficult to recall in
what time of the year our camps were
held although I think it was Sep/Oct
accommodation.

As most of our camps were held
in Liverpool, the junior N.C.O.s and
gunners were billeted in corrugated iron
huts about 30 or 40 feet long and about
18 feet wide a double door at each end
and about six shutter type windows
down each side wall. To open, these were
swung on hinges with an arm made of
1/2" steel rod suspended from the shutter
the bottom of the arm had a hook formed
in it - the shutter was pushed out and
the hook was pushed into a hole in
the window sill, although this let a
fair bit of air in + out it was very
poorly lit. These huts did have electric
lights not very bright.

There were showers cold water made
of corrugated iron walls no roof, these iron
walls were about 1 foot above the floor
concrete - not only was the water cold but
the wind coming through this gap made it
colder still.

Junior N.C.O.s and gunners slept on

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pallioses made ofessian with straw placed in it (There was a novel ending debate on how much straw should be placed in them I seem to think if you half filled the palliosse it was at its best.

Besides this there two or three blankets and a groundsheet pillows & sheet just went on the usual thing feet pillows was boots.

Agts and above Sepis in huts that were used a lot of them used sleeping bags some even carried pillows with them other than that their accommodation was very much the same as the gunners.

Food for the junior NCOs & gunners was mostly adequate but being cooked in bulk in the kitchens of these days left a hole to be desired. There was usually porridge, maybe fried eggs or scrambled eggs with bread & butter (make your own toast if you had time and the inclination) Other dishes for breakfast was mince and mashed potatoes and on Fridays fish of some sort. Sunday day was usually a corned beef salad with bread & butter maybe a slice of cake & tea. Evening meals steaks, roasts, salads with plum duff, bread pudding & stewed dry apricots, these are meals that come to mind after concentrated thinking.

Our training consisted of individual efforts such as drivers learning to groom a horse, gunners perfecting their gun drill & so on for the first few days, then a day or so of working together and practicing deployment of in and out of action then Battery exercises, next a Regimental exercise then what we were all waiting for live

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shooting, which was enjoyed by everyone - often the cooks would even make it open air with their cooks carts.

The training was somewhat like the 1918 concept. I stress 1918 because Artillery training had advanced a bit between the period 1914-1918. We also experimented with such exercises as camouflage against aircraft usually No 3 Squadron fighters would zoom down on us taking photos mainly - we were sometimes shown the photos and so we began to learn to protect ourselves from the air, also planes from the air cook flight used to do live shoots with us this type of shooting was used early in our war.

So my mind an awful lot of people began to talk about war and the preparation for it after the Italians moved into Ethiopia when England made a lot of statements about the Italian actions but like us they had very little in the way of arms to do anything about it. Even though they were experimenting with equipment like dragon gun towing vehicles, 3.7 A/A guns, 25 pdrs were coming into being, 2 pdr A/T guns were another gun wireless was being used more often - the trouble was they were about ~~two~~ ^{ten} years too late.

Schools

During the period 1933-1938 when the I joined 1 Flt Cadet RAAF I attended 3 or 4 Schools, they were all gunnery schools where we all worked very hard, from about 6 AM until 10 PM. The schools were usually held at the hospital block Liverpool Camp these

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Schools were most comfortable best heaters, beds, mattresses, sheets, pillows the whole works, the meals were good and if I remember correctly there was beef to be purchased.

Usually the students came from 1 Jtd Jtd RAA Newcastle + 7 Jtd Jtd, probably 10 from each unit. The instructors were the Regular A.I.C. Warrant Officers from both units and one or two more from the Det. HQ.

The students I am sure became a great deal from these courses as quite a lot of them did a course and the next thing one would know they had reached First Appointment as Second Lieut.

Promotion

I think promotion was on somewhat similar lines to what it was in your days. If one had the time to study and apply yourself I think you had a fair chance to go on + on.

Competitions

Very much the same as we knew them old, Schank, and I trophy, and so on - one we did not have was the Harry Peel trophy (25 pwt in a glass case) this came into being in 1948.

There was a great deal of competition later each Army Day at the Army Showground which we could enter such as cadet drill teams for the Captain's Cup (I got a few aboard one night after the cadet from 1 H/A Regt won it) drinking from the cup (of course) One competition gunners were very keen on winning was a couple gun + timber.

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with horses downed gunners & NCO's of G
remembers rightly the WO had to bring his
gun into action then back in rear and
go through an intricate course 27 kg won
it about 1938 the only time I can recall
us winning it.

Personalities

I don't think we had many personalities
as such with the exception of the R.S.M.
W.O. Jim Nugent. He was a well known
identity with all the troops Officers N.C.O.
& gunners. He was a good general combat gun
or better on any subject. bore himself as
a soldier should give me invaluable advice
on how to conduct myself when I joined
the Regular Army. At the outbreak of the
1939-45 war he was quickly promoted to
Capt. but as he also served in the 1914
war I don't think he was permitted to
have anything but a desk job.

There were others like Capt. Humphries
who at one time stocked a Kings Cup light.
I think it was for West Australia.

Sgt Shearer who won a D.C. in the 1914
war was an excellent marksman for many
years.

Our present patron Tom Hanson was
a lieutenant at the outbreak of war was
finished up C.O. 211 Old Regt. R.A.A. as a
Lt/Col and a D.S.O. to last held an honorary
Brigadier and equerry to Her Majesty the
Queen.

I think that about all I can dig up
for you Laurie I only hope it is of some
benefit to you

Owen