

7 Field Regiment Association

Yandoo

Royal Australian Artillery

2000

Vol 1 No 14



7 FD REGT RAA ASSOCIATION

2 SUAKIN STREET, PYMBLE 2073
(P.O. BOX 206 FRENCHS FOREST 2086)

FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER 7TH FIELD REGIMENT

2000 has seen a substantial change in personnel representing the Gunners on the northern side of the harbour. LTCOL Ray Brennan has handed the Regiment over and taken up his appointment as an Instructor at the Regional Training Centre at Holsworthy. I thank LTCOL Brennan for his efforts whilst at the helm and the great shape that the unit was left in when I assumed command in January. Of other appointments, MAJ Shaun Harding has relinquished the job of BC HQ Bty to CAPT Steve Bennett so that he can concentrate on the many responsibilities of OPSO. Both field batteries have also welcomed new BCs, MAJ Andrew O'Brien at 113 and CAPT Andrew Attard at 28. WO1 Phil Matthysen has assumed his role as RSM and provided great support and advice throughout the year. Since August he has been away from the unit, posted as RSM of the Operational Search Battalion involved in the ADF's commitment to support the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. WO2 Scott Driscoll and WO2 'Paddy' McGarry both arrived at the unit this year as the new SMIGs, and have since worked tirelessly for their respective sub-units, especially during the absence of the RSM.

2000 was always going to be an 'unusual' year from the point of view of a CO of an artillery regiment. Training and exercising in the traditional sense of providing indirect fire support to other units of 8 Bde has not occurred. Instead, the focus for 7 Fd Regt, and indeed the majority of the ADF, has been towards preparing for the commitment to provide security to the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games – OP GOLD. The first six months of 2000 has seen the majority of unit personnel trained in operational search techniques over a number of block training periods and confirmatory weekends. Between August and November the unit has had over 60 GRes personnel involved in different aspects of the Operational Search Battalion, including CAPT Worboys performing the job of XO 8 Coy, as well as varying lengths of commitment by soldiers to the search platoons and reserve companies. Whilst this commitment to OP GOLD has been the priority for 7 Fd Regt this year, the absence of artillery firing exercises has enabled other personnel to also focus on other activities.

The new Tpt SGT, SGT Adrian Turrie marched-in to the unit fresh from operations with INTERFET in East Timor, and the ADJT, CAPT Brandon Wood completed a six month deployment to East Timor as a United Nations Military Observer with UNTAET. The remainder of unit personnel have been extremely busy with the other aspect of my focus for 2000; Recruiting! Changes to the recruiting process have led to both insufficient and inconsistent recruiting numbers. The unit has therefore initiated a number of activities, including school visits by the Cadre staff to address Year 11 and 12 students, and letterbox drops within the 'recruiting' areas for respective sub-units/depots. The purpose of such activities has been to draw prospective recruits to information nights to be held at depots in October and November, and then to a 'Try-before-you-buy' weekend at Holsworthy Range in mid November.

This year has also seen the successful completion of a pilot Non-RAA Personnel Safety Officer Assistant's Course at Puckapunyal by five members of the unit. Four of the unit members were female, and hence the long term intention is to be able to employ any member of the unit in the role of Safety Officer Assistant for a particular field firing exercise. This would thereby 'free' the limited numbers of RAA OPCP personnel to be employed as FO Assistants or to work in the battery Command Posts. In September, WO2 McGarry and I attended a 2 Div Arty Conference sponsored by 23 Fd Regt in Canberra. As well as the issue of this course being discussed, many other matters relating to GRes soldier and officer service were debated and consensus reached on matters of importance to 2 Div RAA units that need to be addressed at the RAA Corps Conference in November.

As I write this, it is with the sense of anticipation that next year will see a welcome return to our traditional role. As a CO I want to get the unit back into the field and training hard in the basics of providing indirect fire support and advising and co-ordinating all fire assets for manoeuvre unit commanders. Whilst attempting to return to this role I remain mindful of the fact that there will be a significant number of unit members deploying to Malaysia in November as part of the 8 Bde commitment to Rifle Company Butterworth. This will be a tremendous opportunity for unit personnel to experience an overseas deployment and utilize foreign training facilities.

Next year will also see 7 Fd Regt lead the 8 Bde commitment to the two week Exercise Pacific Reserve in Hawaii. To compound this high level of activity, many key unit members will be moving on at the end of 2000. MAJ Harding is posted to ATSOC in Canberra, CAPT Wood is posted to Land Headquarters, WO2 Bill Rowe is also heading to Paddington as the RQMS of the newly-formed 1 MP Battalion. Others to move on include the CCLK, WO2 Tim Jones, CPL Dom Adams, and LCPL Josh Brandon. As I write this, there is no intention by SCMA to replace many of these ARA staff because of the army-wide shortage of such personnel and the higher priority requirements of 1 Div units. To all of these personnel moving on at the end of the year, as well as to those remaining at 7 Fd Regt, I thank you for your commitment and endeavours over the past year, and wish you good soldiering in the future.

The past 12 months have been extremely busy for 7 Fd Regt. It has seen an ever-increasing demand being placed upon all commanders to ensure that the unit meets its significant commitment to the largest peacetime deployment of ADF personnel in Australia's history; support to the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As well, the continuing issue of recruiting to the GRes has required a significant and sustained commitment from the unit. With the new year bringing both a welcome return to our traditional role and the competing requirement to provide personnel to the Brigade's commitments to Rifle Company Butterworth and Exercise Pacific Reserve, the next 12 months will undoubtedly prove to be even busier for 7 Fd Regt. We would not want it any other way!

Ubique.

P. I. BROAD, RFD
LTCOL
CO 7 Fd Regt

DECEASED MEMBERS (continued)

COLONEL JOHN LINDSAY CROWE ED
25 JANUARY 2000 - Aged 83

John was born on 28 May 1916 at Tumbarumba NSW, being the second oldest and second youngest son of four children. His father John was a cattle station manager and his mother Margaret a member of the Clan Campbell.

He was educated in Albury after the family moved there in 1919.

On 21 July 1932 John joined 40 Field Battery, 22 Field Brigade, Australian Field Artillery, 2nd Cavalry Division in Albury, being promoted Sergeant at 18. After being transferred to Sydney with his work in 1938 he joined 53rd Battery, 14 Field Brigade RAA (Militia) at Marrickville. Though offered a position in a Victorian Unit he joined the AIF as a reinforcement Officer of 2/1st Field Regiment AIF on 27 April 1940, joining the Regiment on 22 March 1944 and was commissioned as a Lieutenant on 11 April 1938.

John transferred to the AIF on 27 April 1940 as a reinforcement to 2/1st Field Regiment AIF, being promoted to Captain on 4 April 1945. He was placed on the Reserve of Officers (RAA)(2 Military District) on 15 November 1945.

On the reforming of the CMF John joined 5 Field Regiment RAA at Marrickville on 1 May 1948 and was promoted Major on 22 December 1954. The Regiment's designation was then changed to 14 Field Regiment RAA on 2 February 1955 with John becoming first a Battery Commander then 2IC.

He was promoted to temporary Lt Colonel on 1 July 1958, promotion being confirmed on 1 July 1959. John commanded 7 Field Regiment RAA from 1 July 1958 to 30 June 1961. He was then transferred to Command & Staff Group, Eastern Command until being placed on the retired list on 28 May 1967 as a Colonel.

John was a foundation member and benefactor to 7 Field Regiment Association, Vice President 1986/87 and a Committee member 1987 to 1991.

DECEASED MEMBERS (Continued)

COLONEL SELWYN GEORGE (BILL) LANE ED
7 JANUARY 2000 - aged 77

Bill joined the AIF in July 1940 and trained for two weeks as a "Day Boy" 0900 to 1700 at 7th Field Brigade RAA (Militia) Depot at Willoughby before joining 2/9th Field Regiment AIF in which he served until November 1945 reaching the rank of Sergeant.. He then transferred to Army Headquarters Rehabilitation Unit and was discharged from the AIF in February 1946.

On the reforming of the CMF , Bill enlisted on 8 June 1948 in 7 Field Regiment RAA with the rank of Gunner and was promoted to Sergeant in the same Routine Order.

Bill was commissioned provisional Lieutenant on 4 July 1949 with the promotion confirmed on 21 December 1951. He was the first Officer to obtain commissioned rank in the Regiment after the War.

In December 1951 R Battery was transferred to Hornsby and Bill went with the Battery which became the nucleus of 21 Field Regiment RAA on 11 March 1952..He was promoted Captain 18 January 1954 and Major 26 February 1957, remaining with 21 Field Regiment until 30 June 1957.

On 1 July 1957 Bill was transferred to 23 Field Regiment RAA until 15 August 1962, then becoming Officer Commanding 130 Locating Battery RAA on 16 August 1962 where he remained until 30 June 1964.

Bill was promoted to Lt Colonel on 1 July 1964 and became Commanding Officer of 7 Field Regiment until 30 June 1967. Bill was the last member of the 2nd AIF to become a commanding officer of the Regiment.

He was seconded to Headquarters Officer Training Group, Eastern Command from 1 July 1970 and placed on the retired list on 16 April 1972 as a Colonel.



Paul Broad,

Brian Heckenberg,

John Fairless

ANNUAL REUNION - NOVEMBER 1999



Michael Jones,

Wal Gresley,

Patrick Gates

Mark Trentin,

Mick Banham,

Steve Noakes





LtCol Ray Brennan with Soldier of the Year 1999, Gnr Henry Lee, HQ Bty & Runners-up Gnr Shane Fender, 28 Fd Bty and Gnr Dean White, 113 Fd Bty.



**David Moysey,
ANNUAL REUNION – NOVEMBER 1999
John Crowe,**

**Ian James,
Barrie Newman,**

**Rusty Russell
Alex Brincat**





DECEASED MEMBERS (Continued)

RONALD KENNETH PETER MEAKINS ED
24 SEPTEMBER 1999 - AGED 72

Ron joined the AIF on 3 June 1945 and continued after the War to serve in the Interim Army and the Australian Regular Army, serving in Transport and Military Police, taking his discharge as a corporal.

In 1956 he joined 16 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment RAA with the temporary rank of Sergeant, transferring to 9 HAA Regiment in 1960 when 16 HAA Regiment was disbanded. On 5 July 1961 he was commissioned and remained with the unit when it became 9 LAA Regiment RAA in 1962, being promoted on 14 July 1966.

Ron transferred to 7 Field Regiment RAA on the disbandment of 9 LAA and its amalgamation with 7 Field Regiment on 1 November 1973.

He retired from the Army on 19 February 1974 with the honorary rank of Major.

RAOUL DYMOCK (RAY) TOPHAM
26 JUNE 2000 - AGED 90

Ray was commissioned on 8 August 1940 as a Lieutenant RAA (Militia) (Field) and transferred to the AIF RAA (FD) Reinforcements on 3 April 1941.

On 31 January 1942 in Singapore as a reinforcement he was allocated to 65 Field Battery, 2/15 Field Regiment AIF and became a Prisoner of War on 16 May 1942. He was discharged from the AIF on return to Australia on 6 December 1945 and posted to Reserve of Officers (RAA) 2 Military District on 7 December 1945.

On the re-raising of the CMF Ray joined 7 Field Regiment RAA on 1 May 1948, was a temporary Captain 27 June 1949 and a Captain (provisional) from 1 May 1950 to 8 April 1951.

He transferred as a Lieutenant to the Reserve of Officers (RAA)(2MD) on 9 April 1951.

MAJOR D.R.(DOUG) RICKARD

by Laurie Hindmarsh

Doug Rickard commenced his military service with his school Cadet Corps and in 1933 obtained a cadet commission. Completing his education at the end of the year he enlisted as a Gunner in 7th Field Brigade AFA (later 7th Field Brigade RAA(M) and later still 7th Field Regiment RAA) at Willoughby. He was commissioned in 1937 and in October 1939 was one of the first officers selected to join 2/1st Field Regiment RAA, AIF.

With the 2/1st Doug took part in the assault on Bardia and subsequent advance to Benghazi. He took part in the unfortunate campaign in Greece and was one of those fortunate enough to be evacuated to Egypt.

Doug returned to Australia in July 1942 and after several postings was appointed to Flinders Naval Depot as Chief Instructor in Naval Bombardment. Following the Lae landing 1 Australian Bombardment Group was formed late in 1943 with Doug as CO. Subsequently the Group was doubled in size in preparation for the Borneo operation and Doug was replaced as CO by a more senior regular officer who lacked experience in Naval Bombardment. In March 1945 Doug was appointed to Combined Operations HQ in London. There he drafted procedures to be used by air observers directing Naval gun fire from the air.

Doug Rickard never received the rewards which were and are his due for his work on Naval bombardment in combined operations.

In the 1950's 1 Amphibious Observation Regiment was raised in Sydney and many identities from the wartime group joined its ranks. The Regiment held field firing weekends and since it did not have Guns, 7th Field Regiment supplied a depot troop on those occasions. These weekends were very popular with the junior subalterns of the 7th; there was no nonsense about being tactical and there was congenial company in the Mess (a tent fly) on Saturday evening.

I have not met Doug Rickard in person but have spoken with him several times by telephone. I believe he is 85 years young and from the way he speaks is looking forward to the next 85.

Doug published a book in 1999 under the title "My War a Memoir" which contains his recollections of the lead up to WW2 and his subsequent service. I am proud to be able to say that a copy of the book signed by the author is in the Artillery section of my library.