

Yandoo

**The Newsletter of the 7 Field Regiment
Royal Australian Artillery Association**

Vol 2 No 3 (2008)

Website Address: <http://www.7fd-regt-raa-association.com>



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Upcoming Social Events

Annual Reunion Hornsby RSL 7 Nov 2008
Regiments Invite to LFX 22 Nov 2008
Regt Christmas Function Dee Why RSL 6 Dec 2008
St Barbara's Day Church Service 7 Dec 2008
Regiment Cocktail Party 7 Mar 2009
Anzac Day 25 Apr 2009
Reserve Forces Day Jul 2009

New Committee 2008/2009

President: D.Leek
Vice Presidents: S.Fulcher and J.Nash
Secretary: WO1 J.G. Balfour
Treasurer: D.B.McVay
Committee: WO1 K.S.Aiston
C.Bowen
K.Cochran
CAPT S.Flower
J.Gwilym
A.McCallum
WO2 P.Sengos (Website Manager)
R.C.M.Toplis
Regimental Reprs: MAJ A.Dunand
LBDR S.Fender
Patron: K.E.Flanagan
Hon Solicitor: MAJ G.Barter
Hon Auditor: W.J.Neill

The Presidents Report

Members of the Association

G' Day

As another year draws to a close and I look back over my first year as President I would like to make you aware of some notable events the association has been involved in.

The annual reunion was held at Pymble Depot on the 9th November with 31 members and 6 guests in attendance. The night was a great success with our guest speaker Major Daryl Kelly a previous RSM of the Regiment giving us a presentation on his time in Iraq. Daryl was the first RSM to take up office at Pymble Depot when the regiment moved from Willoughby Depot, so it was like old home week for both of us to stand in the Officers' / Sergeant's Mess having a beer prior to the dinner.

The Association presented the most improved Soldier 7th FD REGT 2007 award to PTE Catherine Smith from CSS (HQ) Battery, with the runners up being LBDR Shane Fender 28 FD Bty and GNR Reece Stewart 113 FD Bty. We also presented Danny Toplis with his Honorary Life Membership. Of the members that attended we had many who travelled a great distance to be with us, some from as far away as Queensland and Victoria and I thank them for their effort and hope to see them again this year.

The Association was invited to the Regimental Cocktail party at North Fort on the 29th March 08 and this gave us the perfect opportunity to ask the Regimental Padre if he would dedicate the pavers we had purchased in memory of deceased serving soldiers of the Regiment. Only a few members were in attendance on the night but being able to share the ceremony with the members of the Regiment was pleasing.

Anzac Day 08 saw 22 Members marching proudly behind our banner party of 6 from the Regiment. Thank you to the Regiment for their involvement under the able supervision of CPL Steve Balfour. To the members that marched thank you, if you don't, who will. Whilst I understand that many members march with other units on this day I would like to see the numbers swell next year. After the march all the Gunners

caught up for some fun and games at the Menzies hotel and some did not leave till quite late.

The National Gunner Dinner, Battle of Coral Dinner and Battle of Coral Commemorative Ceremony were held in Canberra on the 14th May and our Banner was paraded at the Governor General's presentation the next day. I was unable to attend this function and I'd like to thank John Balfour for representing the Association.

The RFD Parade on the 6th July 08 saw the first parading of the new Association Standard presented to the Association by the RFD council NSW. Many thanks to Jack Gwilym for parading the Standard. Jack it looked like you have been carrying it your whole life. With Jack on Standard Bearer duty this brought a new banner party to light consisting of Andrew McCallum and Chris Yates, with JB on marshalling duty and Gary Fry stepping in as ASM. The parade theme this year was the 60th Anniversary of the forming of the CMF and the RFD council wanted to highlight original members from 1948 to 49 of which we had 5 parade with us on the day.

On a sad note we have lost three Comrades during the year;

Alec Burke 25/5/08

Graham Elsley 18/6/08

Glen Coote 14/8/08

LEST WE FORGET

We had 14 new members join this year. Welcome and glad to have your Comradeship. This bringing our total membership to a sum of 220 with approximately 50% of those members being either Honorary Life Members or Life Subscribers.

During the course of the year the committee spent quite some time investigating the insurance issues that have been around for a number of years. It was decided to put two issues to the Annual General Meeting for a vote by Members. The first was that the Association become incorporated, which in short would give us limited liability with regard to any claims against us; this motion was carried. The New committee under the guidance of Jim Nash is now pursuing incorporation. The second motion

was to take out public liability insurance and this drew the most discussion from the floor of the meeting as it did from the committee. The motion was defeated and therefore no further action will be taken by the committee to affect public liability insurance. As I indicated at the AGM of 2007 and in my message last year the Membership Fee increase that was affected was specifically designed to create funds for this insurance. As this insurance has now been deemed to not be required the committee has decided to reduce membership to \$10 per year and any Member that paid a \$15 Membership last year will have \$5 credited to their next year's Subscription.

Our Patron LTCOL Stuart Staziker has had to resign due to ill health and it is with great pleasure I announce the committee has appointed Kevin (Barney) Flanagan as our new patron. It is hoped we will be able to welcome our new Patron at the reunion in November and present him and his fellow new Honorary Life members Max Falconer and Laurie Hindmarsh their Certificates.

The AGM this year saw the implementation of the new committee structure with a committee of thirteen members being elected first, then the executive elected from that. Again this year we see some new faces in the committee. Welcome and congratulations to Capt Steve Flower and Chris Bowen with Sharon Fulcher stepping up to Vice President.

We now look forward to the annual reunion this year to be held at Hornsby RSL on the 7th of November and I hope we will see a strong turn out. The Regiment has asked the Association to its Live Firing Exercise on 22nd of November to be held at Singleton. At this stage no transport has been arranged but check the website closer to the time for more details.

I hope to see you all at the reunion in November but if you can't make it, have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year

UBIQUE

David Leek

President

The CO's Corner

As another year comes closer to closing I can report that the Regiment continues to progress well, despite the numerous challenges the last 12 months provided. While many in number, our main challenges proved to be the concentration of a number of our support staff to Brigade, the change over of key staff and ongoing high tempo within the ADF. These have all helped to make this a difficult year which in turn has required many of us to be more flexible in our approach and to provide higher levels of commitment to the Regiment. I can truthfully say that the spirit and dedication of our people has again allowed us to meet these challenges. To this end, full credit goes to members of the unit and I applaud them all for the work and dedication they provided.

I have noted that that there has been an influx of new staff. Given this it is perhaps wise to note the key Regimental appointments for this year which are:

Lieutenant Colonel Max Shaday
Commanding Officer;

Major Antonio Furman
Operations Officers and Second in Command;

Major Alain Dunand
Battery Commander 28th Field Battery;

Captain Greg Applewhite
Battery Commander 113th Field Battery;

Captain Il-Kwon Jeong
Adjutant;

Warrant Officer Class One Brett Armstrong
Regimental Sergeant Major;

Warrant Officer Class Two Peter Hume -
Quartermaster.

Even a casual review of the above shows that out of 7 names, four are new to this Regiment while only two are in the same position they held last year. There were certainly a lot of people getting used to their new roles and to the unit in general. In addition, we saw changes that required the Brigading of some our staff and assets. As a result we saw the movement to BDE of our TST, a number of our transport elements and a reduction in our support staff, particularly in the Q and admin areas. To say that we have had to review

the way we do business is to understate the work that has occurred to ensure the smooth transition to the new structure. Certainly the loss of many loyal members from the unit was initially hard to understand, but from the wider perspective it is clear these members will now benefit from being concentrated and being allowed to develop within their own specialisation streams, while still providing support to us albeit through BDE. It has also allowed the ADF to better utilise the limited resources we find across the DIV.

I was none the less pleased to see how members that remained at 7 Field Regt have worked to make these changes benefit us. There is little doubt that without their efforts this transition would have been very difficult. It certainly would have made achieving our key milestones a near impossible task.

Also pleasing is to see the number of ex unit members who have shown interest in the Regiment and made enquiries about rejoining. Of note was CAPT Flower's return to 28 Bty. It's great to see people reassess their civilian circumstances, and where possible rejoin expressly to rekindle the camaraderie of the Regiment. Their experiences and skills will enable the Regiment to further grow and develop.

Despite some of the challenges we faced, our targets remain unchanged. Meeting Reserve Response Force (RRF) and High Readiness Reserve (HRR) remain the greatest goals imposed on us and the Reserves in general. I mentioned last year that to meet our RRF goals we converted our AFX to an RRF camp. Our success here lead BDE to make us lead in providing BDE wide RRF training at the start of the year. The accolades we received say much for the way we succeeded. In addition, through this we have accumulated some 50 members of the unit qualified in RRF with a number formally joining the RRF. Given the importance of the RRF and the requirement for soldiers to achieve RRF qualifications as a prerequisite for a number of formation level activities: this number remains a significant achievement.

We have been no less successful in providing High Readiness Reserve capability for the BDE. Our requirements to provide 2 HRR JOST/Forward Observer teams have been met. Although two positions remain unfilled, this is due to the current shortage of courses at the School of Artillery.

The commitment our soldiers have given in joining the RRF and the HRR are not to be underestimated. By committing to these schemes our soldiers accept

the call to be trained to the highest levels and provide a commitment to serve on short notice. Already we have seen members of the unit on operations. Currently GNR Patterson is deployed as part of the Reserve Rifle Company Butterworth rotation, LBDR Strategos and GNR Vowell are on deployment in the Solomon Is and GNR Dawson is involved in border protection activities. In addition 7 members of the unit were on Operation Testament, involved in support of the Pope's activities in Sydney. There is little doubt that RRF, HRR and support for ADF Operations will remain a vital task for the Reserves well into the future.

This new emphasis has not however slowed our commitment to meet our RAA role. Training for the year commenced with obligatory induction and mandatory training, various conferences, orders groups, officer training and the annual RAA Safety course. Thereafter we continued with the job of providing offensive fire support to units of the BDE. This calendar year we have planned 3 LFXs and an AFX which will see members of the unit, not otherwise committed to training courses, engage in a two week AFX in Queensland. These activities are designed to practice our gun line and JOST/HRR capabilities. For us this is the first time in a long period where we will practice gunnery over an extended period and to do so outside of New South Wales. In addition, we will do this in combined arms setting which will allow us to show off our expertise to our non gunner colleagues. Unfortunately, our emphasis to place as many members as possible on training courses continues to rob us of having a full compliment of members at the AFX. Nonetheless by concentrating on having our soldiers attend courses we have put ourselves in the position to develop the Regiment and it future needs.

On the social front, unit members attended both the Sydney and Newcastle Gunner Dinners, supported ANZAC Day, and conducted small arms training activities. In addition, the Regiment has supported other units in the provision of ceremonial responsibilities for the Australia Day and Queen's Birthday salutes. It should also be noted that the Regiment celebrated its 92nd anniversary with a Birthday cocktail party at North Head in March 2008. The highlights for the evening included a guided tour of the fort system and the cutting of the birthday cake. The units Padre, CAPT Prosper also took the opportunity to formally conduct a dedication of the Associations pavers at the Memorial Walk. When the year closes, the Regiment plans to hold its annual all ranks dinner followed by attendance at the annual

RAA Church Parade at the Garrison Church in The Rocks.

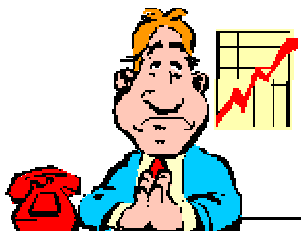
Despite 2008 being as hectic as it has been, we can rest assured that we have achieved much and have set the ground work to achieve our aims for 2009. There is no doubt that our challenges for 2009 will be no different to what we have experienced this year. To this end I wish to thank each and every member of the Regiment and the Association for their support both now and in the future.

Ubique

Max Shaday

Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer

Internet Banking



Payments for the **Reunion and Membership fees** can be made to:

BSB No 062 – 272 Account No 1001 3543

Don't forget to include your name

Sick Parade



I am pleased to advise all members are in good health.



Last Post



CARMENT David Maxwell (Max)

3 July 2007 Aged 88

Max enlisted in 1936 in 1 Cavalry Division Signals. In 1937, as a Corporal, and at the recommendation of then LT A.G. (Tom) Hanson, he transferred to 7th Field Brigade R.A.A. (Militia) being allocated to 107 (H) Battery as NCO Signals.

In October 1939 Max was made a Provisional Lieutenant. On 6 May 1940 with 78 other members of the Brigade, including the Commanding Officer, LTCOL Ralph Daly, he transferred to the AIF to form 2/6th Australian Field Regiment AIF as a Sergeant. On 23 November 1940 his appointment as a Lieutenant was confirmed. He was then transferred to 2/15th Australian Field Regiment AIF.

On the capitulation of the British Forces on Singapore Island on 15 February 1942 he became a prisoner of war first going to Changi Prison Camp, then becoming part of B force which left on 7 July 1942 for Sandakan Borneo.

Following the Japanese learning of an underground organisation on the 15 October 1943, Max with the rest of the officers were shipped to Kuching arriving 22 October. Max was freed on 8 September 1945 on the arrival of Australian medical officers, arriving home in Sydney on 27 November 1945.

Max was placed on the Reserve of Officers on 28 November 1945.

Max rejoined R.A.A 2nd Division on 1 May 1948 but returned to the Reserve of Officers on 1 March 1949.

On 20 February 1953 he joined 16 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment R.A.A and was promoted to Captain on the 24 February 1955, being retired as a major in 1963.

BURKE Alexander Robert (Alec) BURKE
25 May 2008 Aged 74

Alec was called up on 4 January 1952 and was allocated to Hut 27, Section 26, 17 Platoon, D Company, 12 National Service Training Battalion. During National Service he volunteered to become a Cook.

Following full time National Service, Alec was allocated, on 10 April 1952, to 7 Field Regiment RAA with a posting to the Australian Army Catering Corps.

In 1959 Alec qualified for his Warrant and was appointed as WO Caterer for the Regiment.

Alec later transferred to the Artillery side & became Signals Supervisor, HQ Bty and then later BSM HQ Bty.

He was transferred to the Reserve of Senior NCO's in 1982.

The last paragraph of Alec's Death Notice read "And this is one thing Alec won't be late to".

However, Alec was late to the Funeral Service; no fault of his own. The pallbearers could not make up their minds how to carry the coffin.

Alec was a foundation member of the Association's Committee from 1986 to 2003.

Alec's younger brother, Brian also served in the Regiment as a cook

ELSLEY Graham 18 June 2008 Aged 75

Graham joined P Battery, 7 Field Regiment RAA on 28 February 1950 and took his discharge on 7 October 1952.

After being called up for National Service, he served with 19 National Service Training Battalion from 5 May to 10 August 1953.

On 11 August, he was allocated to P Battery, 7 Field Regiment until he took his final discharge on 5 May 1958, as a Sergeant Gun Number one.

COOTE Glen William 14 Aug 2008 Aged 71

Glen was called up on 7 January 1955 to serve in 12 National Service Training Battalion.

On completion of his full time National Service, Glen was transferred to 7 FD Regt on 14 April 1955.

He was promoted to BDR on 16 August 1955 and to SGT on 14 February 1956, then taking discharge on 7 January 1960.

He served in both Q & R Batteries of the Regiment.

Glen's older brother, Kenny had also served in the Regiment

We Shall Remember Them - Lest We Forget



The Pavers dedicated by the Regiments Padre during the March Birthday function at North Head

Cannon Balls

It was necessary to keep a good supply of cannon balls near the cannon on old war ships, but how to prevent them from rolling about the deck was the problem.

The best storage method devised was to stack them as a square based pyramid, with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine, which rested on sixteen.

Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem, how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding/rolling from under the others.

The solution was a metal plate with 16 round indentations, called a Monkey, but if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make "Brass Monkeys".

Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannon balls would come right off the monkey.

Thus, it was quite literally, cold enough to freeze the balls off a "Brass Monkey".

And all this time, you thought that was a vulgar expression, didn't you?



Association Website Update

Hi all

Like to report I have now finished placing all of the CO's Biographers (ones that have submitted their details) on the web. A special thanks to Danny Toplis who compiled them.

Also the site is proving to be a good tool for past serving gunners to again touch base and join as members as well as helping out descendants of the 1st A.I.F in finding out more of their Gunner Heritage.

Recently a descendant of Shoemith Barblett (26 Bty) was researching his family military history for his 9 year old son. He was extremely happy when I sent him back a photo of his ancestor's grave of which I had taken and used as part of my battlefield tour article in 2006 Yandoo.

The site has now over 5000 hits, with good percentage of viewers being from local and overseas sources.

I am continually adding many new photos and memorabilia articles to the website, also I have sought the assistance of BC 28 Bty (Computer guru) in trying to figure out the problems we are having compiling a DVD Disc of the various Regimental movie clips sourced from members video tape collections.

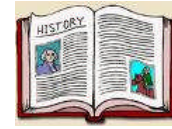
Finally, the Australian War Memorial has now made available many 1st A.I.F war diaries on their website. To date, the complete series of H.Q 3rd Division Artillery and 26 Battery are accessible. Hopefully the remaining batteries are not too far way.

HQ 3rd Division link is:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/diaries/ww1/folder.asp?folder=1417>

26th Battery link is:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/diaries/ww1/folder.asp?folder=1477>



The Regiments History

Danny Toplis has for many years been pain stakingly researching the Regiments history from those early Warren depot days until the time he discharged in the late 80's.

With assistance from past and present members and his associates at North Fort Museum, this project is nearing completion.

The way ahead for these articles will be discussed at future committee meetings.

Note: WO2 Sengos and other current serving members will continue on from where Danny finished.



If you have not yet informed the Association of your email address, please advise the Secretary

Those were the days



**Coming into Action
26 Bty Gressaire Wood 22 Aug 1918**

7 Field Regiment Key Postings 2008

CO	LTCOL M.Shaday
OPSO	MAJ A.Furman *
ADJT	CAPT I.Jeong *
PADRE	CAPT G.Prosper
RMO	CAPT S.Collins
RSM	WO1 B.Armstrong *
ADMIN	SGT F.Morgan *
RQMS	WO2 P.Hume*
OPS WO	WO2 P.Clemance*
BC 28	MAJ A.Dunand
BK 28	CAPT S.Flower
BSM 28	WO2 P.Sengos
SMIG 28	WO2 D.Hawkett *
BC 113	CAPT G.Applewhite
BK 113	WO2 G.Nicholls
BSM 113	WO2 P.Linsley
SMIG 113	WO2 G.Ryan *

* ARA

New Members

The Association welcomes on board the following new members. We hope to see you at the Annual Reunion in November.

WO1 Brett Armstrong, Peter Dwyer, Edward Felstead
SGT Clay Francis, Peter McMahon, Mark O'Neill,
David Officer, Con Ogravani, Richard Robinson,
Warren Rowe Noel Ryan, John Shannon,

Anzac Day 2008



7 Field Regiment Association "On Parade"

Annual Reunion Dinner 9 Nov 2007

The 2007 Reunion dinner was held at the Regiments Headquarters at the Pymble depot. A special thanks to the CO for allowing the use of the depot as well as the stewards and cooks, whom provided an excellent menu and service on the night.

It was pleasing to see a few different faces attend the night.

The following are the members who attended.

Jack Gwilym, Trevor Williams, Don McVay
Bill Knight, Pat Sengos, Grant Nichols
Michael Barnett, Ken Webb, John Stanford
Ian Haylen, Brian Heckenberg and Meryal,
Danny Toplis, Jim Nash, John Balfour
David Leek, LTCOL Max Shaday
WO1 Brett Franklin LBDR Shane Fender,
PTE Kathy Smith, GNR Reece Stewart
MAJ Darryl Kelly, Kevin Sullivan
Paul McDonough, Lachlan Finch, Sharon Fulcher
Kathryn Cochran, Tony Millar, Alec Burke
Bob Moysey, David Moysey, Clay Francis
Rusty Russell, Alex Brincat, Doug Coppard
Kevin Flanagan, Andy Kariks



Members enjoying the 2007 Annual Dinner

28 Battery Reunion

Past and present members of 28 Battery deployed on the 2nd August to the Dee Why depot for Beers, Bourbons, Stones Green Ginger and a few yarns.

Approximately some 40 odd gunners attended, with some travelling from interstate to catch up with their old mates.

These 28 Bty get togethers occur every 2 years (this was the 4th one held), so hopefully more ex members get wind of them and we increase our numbers for 2010 event.

BSM 28



Some members still capable of standing for a photo...

Bowral Gathering

On 8 May 2008, a small group of very early post World War Two enlistments in 7th Field Regiment met for lunch at Bowral Golf Club. They were Graham Gates, Phil Hawke, Laurie Hindmarsh, Ken Willis & Ian Willis. Each one had a family history of service in either the First or Second World Wars. One of the group had re-enlisted after service in WW2 and his family's service record went back to 1887.

It was under the guidance of Officers & Senior NCO's, all of whom had served through six years of war and in some cases had served in the pre-war Militia that the group and their comrades laid the foundations that are reflected in the 7th to this day. Sadly many of their comrades are no longer with us.

In those days numbers were small but not much less than those today. The point was that all were keen and RHQ could count on about 90% attendances at all parades both compulsory & voluntary and could plan accordingly. With the introduction of National Service in 1951, attendance at voluntary parades evaporated.

Over an excellent lunch, the talk ranged over days gone by, old comrades, the world today and how to fix it! Thanks to the host Graham Gates, the gathering was a great success and in all probability the group will meet again.

Laurie Hindmarsh

Reserve Forces Day 6 July 2008



The Association Banner

Military Sayings

'If the enemy is in range, so are you.'
Infantry Journal

'Aim towards the Enemy'
Instructions printed on U.S. Rocket Launcher

'Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs are guaranteed always to hit the ground.'
USAF Ammo Troop

'Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons.'
General MacArthur

'You, you, and you. Panic. The rest of you come with me.'

U.S. Marine Gunnery Sgt.

'Tracers work both ways.'

Army Ordnance

'If your attack is going too well, you're walking into an ambush.'

Infantry Journal

'Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.'

Unknown Recruit

The Anzac on the Wall

I wandered thru a country town 'cos I had time to spare,
And went into an antique shop to see what was in there.
Old Bikes and pumps and kero lamps, but hidden by it all,
A photo of a soldier boy – an Anzac on the Wall.
"The Anzac have a name?" I asked. The old man answered "No.,
The ones who could have told me mate have passed on long ago".
The old man kept on talking and, according to his tale,
The photo was unwanted junk bought from a clearance sale.

"I asked around," the old man said, "but no one knows his face,
He's been on that wall twenty years, deserves a better place.
For some one must have loved him so, it seems a shame somehow."

I nodded in agreement and then said, "I'll take him now."
My nameless digger's photo, well it was a sorry sight
A cracked glass pane and a broken frame - I had to make it right
To prise the photo from its frame I took care just in case,
"Cause only sticky paper held the cardboard back in place.

I peeled away the faded screed and much to my surprise,
Two letters and a telegram appeared before my eyes.
The first reveals my Anzac's name, and regiment of course
John Mathew Francis Stuart - of Australia's own Light Horse.
This letter written from the front, my interest now was keen
This note was dated August seventh 1917
"Dear Mum, I'm at Khalasa Springs not far from the Red Sea
They say it's in the Bible - looks like Billabong to me.

"My Kathy wrote I'm in her prayers, she's still my bride to be
I just cant wait to see you both you're all the world to me
And Mum you'll soon meet Bluey, last month they shipped him out

I told him to call on you when he's up and about."
"That bluey is a larrikin, and we all thought it funny
He lobbed a Turkish hand grenade into the Co's dunny.
I told you how he dragged me wounded in from no man's land
He stopped the bleeding closed the wound with only his bare hand."

"Then he copped it at the front from some stray shrapnel blast
It was my turn to drag him in and I thought he wouldn't last
He woke up in hospital, and nearly lost his mind

Cause out there on the battlefield he'd left one leg behind."
"He's been in a bad way mum, he knows he'll ride no more
Like me he loves a horse's back he was a champ before.
So Please Mum can you take him in, he's been like my brother
Raised in a Queensland orphanage he' s never known a mother."

But struth, I miss Australia mum, and in my mind each day
I am a mountain cattleman on high plains far away
I'm mustering whiteface cattle, with no camel's hump in sight
And I waltz my Matilda by a campfire every night
I wonder who rides Billy, I heard the pub burnt down,
I'll always love you and please say hoo roo to all in town".
The second letter I could see was in a lady's hand
An answer to her soldier son there in a foreign land

Her copperplate was perfect, the pages neat and clean
It bore the date November 3rd 1917.
"T'was hard enough to lose your Dad, without you at the war
I'd hoped you would be home by now- each day I miss you more"

"Your Kathy calls around a lot since you have been away
To share with me her hopes and dreams about your wedding day
And Bluey has arrived - and what a godsend he has been
We talked and laughed for days about the things you've done and seen"

"He really is a comfort, and works hard around the farm,
I read the same hope in his eyes that you won't come to harm.
Mc Connell's kids rode Billy, but suddenly that changed
We had a violent lightning storm, and it was really strange."
"Last Wednesday just on midnight, not a single cloud in sight
It raged for several minutes, it gave us all a fright
It really spooked your Billy -and he screamed and bucked and reared
And then he rushed the sliprail fence, which by a foot he cleared"

"They brought him back next afternoon, but something's changed I fear
It's like the day you brought him home, for no one can get near.
Remember when you caught him with his black and flowing mane?
Now Horse breakers fear the beast that only you can tame,"
"That's why we need you home son" - then the flow of ink went dry-
This letter was unfinished, and I couldn't work out why.
Until I started reading the letter number three
A yellow telegram delivered news of tragedy

Her son killed in action - oh - what pain that must have been
The Same date as her letter - 3rd November '17
This letter which was never sent, became then one of three
She sealed behind the photo's face – the face she longed to see.
And John's home town's old timers -children when he went to war
Would say no greater cattleman had left the town before.
They knew his widowed mother well - and with respect did tell
How when she lost her only boy she lost her mind as well.

She could not face the awful truth, to strangers she would speak
"My Johnny's at the war you know, he's coming home next week."

They all remembered Bluey he stayed on to the end
A younger man with wooden leg became her closest friend
And he would go and find her when she wandered old and weak
And always softly say "yes dear- John will be home next week."

Then when she died Bluey moved on, to Queensland some did say

I tried to find out where he went, but don't know to this day

And Kathy never wed - a lonely spinster some found odd
She wouldn't set foot in a church - she'd turned her back on God

John's mother left no will I learned on my detective trail
This explains my photo's journey to that clearance sale
So I continued digging cause I wanted to know more
I found John's name with thousands in the records of the war
His last ride proved his courage - a ride you will acclaim
The Light Horse Charge at Beersheba of everlasting fame

That last day in October back in 1917

At 4pm our brave boys fell - that sad fact I did glean
That's when John's life was sacrificed the record's crystal clear
But 4pm in Beersheba is midnight over here.....
So as John's gallant spirit rose to cross the great divide
Were lightning bolts back home a signal from the other side?
Is that why Billy bolted and went racing as in pain?
Because he'd never feel his master on his back again?

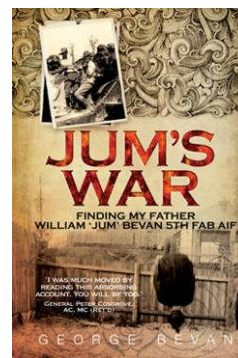
Was it coincidental? same time, same day, same date?
Some proof of numerology, or just a quirk of fate?
I think it's more than that you know as I've heard wiser men
Acknowledge there are many things that go beyond our ken.
Where craggy peaks guard secrets neath dark skies torn asunder
Where hoofbeats are companions to the rolling waves of thunder
Where lightning cracks like 303's and ricochets again
Where howling moaning gusts of wind sound just like dying men

Some Mountain cattlemen have sworn on lonely alpine track
They've glimpsed a huge black stallion - Light Horseman on his back.
Yes sceptics say it's swirling clouds just forming apparitions
Oh no, my friend you cant dismiss all this as superstition
The desert of Beersheba- or windswept Aussie range
John Stuart rides forever there -Now I don't find that strange.
Now some gaze at this photo, and they often question me
And I tell them a small white lie, and say he's family.

"You must be proud of him." they say - I tell them, one and all,
That's why he takes the pride of place - my Anzac on the Wall.

*By Jim Brown of ex-"Healthy, Wealthy and Wise"
fame, on the iconic mateship of a high country*

Early Christmas Present



Just finished reading Jums War and thoroughly recommend it to all Gunners.

William "Jum" Bevan was a Gunner in 14th Battery, 5th F.A.B. during WW1. He was a true Gunner, getting into fights, loved a drink, (this being his downfall in later life), chased the local girls, saved the Padres life, loved his mates and his battery.

So get yourself an early Christmas present and find some spare time!.

True Words

We must look forward one hundred, two hundred, and three hundred years, to the time when the vast continent of Australia will contain an enormous population; and when that great population will look back through the preceding years of time to the world-shaking episode of the Great War, and when they will seek out with the most intense care every detail of that struggle; when the movements of every battalion, of every company, will elaborately unfold to the gaze of all; when every family will seek to trace some connection with the heroes who landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula, or fought on the Somme, or in other great battles in France....

Winston Churchill, London, December 16, 1918

The Association is now Incorporated

Following a motion carried at the last AGM, the association was incorporated last Thursday (Sept 25th) within the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act. This means that our association is recognised as a legal entity in its own right and has more standing at law than when it was only seen as a private members group. Members now have some legal protection against law suits with any legal liability that may arise probably being limited to the amount of assets held by the association.

Incorporation has also seen the association fulfil a requirement of its constitution which called for incorporation to be effected but without stating any time frame in which it be done.

J.Nash

Quick Hands of the A.I.F

After reading Les Carlyon's 'The Great War' I was impressed by the way the diggers of the 1st A.I.F went about their souvenir collecting, appropriately named 'ratting'. List of desirables being Watches, Shoulder Straps, Binoculars and Luger pistols.

These actions by the Diggers helped create the wonderful collections that are now on display in the Australian War Memorial, various museums or held as 'family heirlooms' of descendant families.

A few quotes from the book highlights the 'professional' way the diggers handled the Hun.

"What a harvest for our boys! Talk about 'ratting' ... as each Hun advanced with his hands above his head several of our lads would dive at him, and, before the astonished Hun knew what was happening, hands were in every pocket, and he was fleeced of everything but his name and his clothes."

"A new reinforcement was working like a cat on a hot tin roof, pulling cigars out of a Hun's pocket. In a ferocious manner I asked him if he was not aware of that order of the day that all loot had to be handed over to an officer to be sent back to headquarters. He meekly handed them over. I smoked cigars all day, and the rest of the platoon tormented the life out of the youngster for falling for the joke."

"A German officer captured at Broodseinde in 1917 said; your men are funny, they rob while they fight"

"With as acute sense of what was important in this war, the three rankers began 'ratting' some 20 Germans for watches. An Australian officer objected, the three said that if they didn't take the watches, others would. The Officer conceded the point. 'What about one for me?' he said. Take your pick, sir,' a man said, offering clasped hands full of watches"

The most famous 'Rat' is Private John (Barney) Hines. The following article is from the AWM website.

Private John (Barney) Hines (1873–1958)

A Liverpool Irishman, Hines was drifting around Australia working at different jobs before he joined the AIF in 1915. He was heavily tattooed and gave his age as 28, but was in fact much older.

Hines served with the 45th Battalion, No 2296. An effective soldier in battle, he was a troublesome one out of it. He was often absent without leave, and also faced charges for drunkenness, and for forging entries in his pay-book. He saw most of his action in Flanders, where he was wounded. Hines was eventually discharged on medical grounds before the war ended.

A photograph of Hines taken near Ypres, wearing a German cap and surrounded by souvenirs taken from the enemy, was published in late 1917. It was simply titled, "Wild Eyes, the souvenir king". The photograph was widely circulated during the war, and it achieved fresh fame when exhibited and re-published more than a decade later. Old soldiers felt that it represented the larrikin side of the archetypal digger.

Hines became the subject of many tall tales and true. One popular but doubtful story was that the Kaiser had been enraged by the publication of the photograph that seemed to show a barbaric Australian gloating over his battle trophies.

After the war Barney Hines lived as an unmarried loner in a bag humpy beyond Sydney. From time to time, the photograph would be published and he would come briefly to the public's attention. The post-war years and the Depression were hard on him, although he received occasional support from ex-service groups.

He spent the rest of his days in Mount Druitt and died in Concord Repatriation Hospital on 2nd January 1958, age 84.



Private Barney Hines, with his trophies from the fighting at Polygon Wood, Belgium



Barney Hines featured on the cover of the returned soldiers' journal, *Reveille*, in December 1933



John Hines Road in Minchinbury NSW recalls the lovable larrikin. (Australian War Memorial)



The Re Opening of Fort Scratchley

Late June the historic Fort Scratchley was officially handed back to the people of Newcastle in a ceremony at the refurbished site.

A military parade opened the proceedings and more than 2,000 people watched as the Commonwealth handed the site over to Newcastle council.

The fort has been closed to the public for the past four years while it underwent almost \$12 million in upgrade works.

The Fort will be open 6 days a week, Wednesday to Monday (closed Tuesday) from 10am to 4pm, with Free General Admission and Self Guided Tours.

<http://www.fortscratchley.org.au/>



I hope you have again enjoyed this year's rag. If you wish to contribute to next years article or pass on any ideas, please drop us a line at patseng@tpg.com.au

Also thanks to the members who have contributed to this year's article.

ED (BSM 28)