

EXPLANATION This is a draft only for the preparation of a book on the history of our Regiment. As far as is practicable, the information is sequential. The intention is to cover all aspects of the history, including some matters that do not necessarily have a direct bearing, but would have an interest to the reader. Personal recollections are regarded as an important component of the contents.

Covering over 60 years of existence there is much that could be included, but space will dictate that there will be matters of importance and interest to some, but not to others. Additionally, there will be matters not brought to the notice of the History Committee that should have been included. This is unfortunate, but it is a fact of life: often it is that if we are not told, we do not know.

The final draft will follow after the adequacy of the contents and information is assessed and selected images from the photographic library incorporated. Then there will follow a rewrite to incorporate humour into the presentation, correct abbreviations, correct the range of tenses and generally make it more readable.

In Roland Perry's "Monash and Chauvel" mention was made of the capacity of the Australian Volunteer Force and its influence upon the armies of the world. The 1st AIF's 100 day original blitzkrieg (July to October 1918) was the deciding factor. So much so that Adolf Hitler was said to be convinced by General Heinz Guderian to use Monash's tactics and strategies for the German outcome of the war.

A SHORT HISTORY OF 23 FIELD REGIMENT RAA

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Former members of 23 Field Regiment RAA and those serving in its successor, 23 Light Battery (from 1 January 2013) and the unit titles and artillery roles that preceded and followed the first restructure are carrying on a proud tradition of voluntary service in defence of the country dating from the 1850s of colonial Australia.

In the 1870s permanent units were formed in several of the colonies and it is worth noting that until the 1940s, members of the Artillery represented the major component of the permanent forces personnel of the country.

The power struggles of the mid 1800s in Europe saw the possibility of the major deployment of British troops in support of its allies. The possible impact was the withdrawal of British troops from the colonies as had been the case in the late 1840s with the Maori Wars in New Zealand. Accordingly, volunteer units were raised to help protect the colonies from any incursions by any of the great powers of Europe and also fill any gaps in defences resulting from the deployment of British forces overseas.

In Sydney, defence of the harbour was the key to the protection of the colony and was one of the first tasks of the military. Consequently, it was in this role of manning the coastal artillery that the volunteers played their part. It is noteworthy that in the early days the limited range of the available guns meant that fortifications were sited to destroy any enemy shipping once it had entered the harbour.

Botany Bay was regarded as the back door to Sydney and there was the time when Napoleon gave approval for the colony to be taken by a force landing on its shores, but his time came up before the plan was put into operation. In anticipation of such an event, Bare Island and nearby Henry Head were

fortified in 1885.

The garrison gunners therefore, were the first line of defence for the colony and ultimately, Australia.

Over time, the part-time members of the defence force have been identified as Volunteers, Militia, members of the Citizen's Military Forces or the Reserves. There is a proud tradition of a peaceful people preparing themselves in their spare time during peace and volunteering to serve in defence of their country or in their country's interests when called. They have achieved standards of excellence and acquitted themselves in outstanding ways that have caught the attention and the imagination of the rest of the world, whether they be friend, foe, or the unaligned.

Today, Reservists are fundamental to the total defence of Australia and in the case of the Army, make up more than half of the combat force.

Many of the traditions and practices of the Australian Gunner have been inherited from the British Royal Regiment of Artillery (RA) and strong ties have long existed between the two. This is exemplified in the shared use of the mottos *Ubique* (everywhere) and *Quo fas et gloria ducunt* (where right and glory lead).

Similarly, the guns are the colours of the Regiment. In earlier times one gun of each battery was given the honour of Colour gun.

However close the link to the Royal Artillery, the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery has long confirmed its own identity.

It is worth remembering that on the birth of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901, the Royal Australian Artillery had been formed fifteen months earlier and was one of few federal Australian institutions in existence at the time. However, "A" Field Battery is the longest serving permanent unit in the Australian Army and can trace its beginnings to 1 August 1871.

The training ground for the Army commenced in the Holdsworthy (original spelling) area in 1819. Lord Kitchener visited the area in 1910 and following his recommendations, the Federal Government purchased about 80 square miles (200 km²) of bushland between Heathcote and Liverpool. In the publication "Sydney's Forgotten Military Railways" (Australian Railway Historical Society {NSW Division 2011}) there is described the branch railway lines from Liverpool serving the Moorebank Ordnance Depot, the Anzac Rifle Range in Anzac Avenue and following closely the Heathcote Road and cutting the existing suburban line just east of Holsworthy Station, through to the extensive base of Old Holsworthy. This is that railway.

The railway line construction on military land during World War I was undertaken by prisoners of war and internees of the German Internment Camp at Old Holsworthy. A plaque on a pier of the Harris Creek Bridge is a permanent reminder.

This was the largest and harshest of such camps in Australia, holding between 4,000 and 5,000 internees. Most were either from the Austro-Hungarian empire, staff of German companies temporarily living here, crews of vessels caught in Australian ports together with about 70 native born Australians of German descent. Some 700 were naturalised British subjects. Many were deported to Germany after the War.

The NSW Migration Heritage Centre records show that inmates were interred without trial, often without knowing their "crime" and without the knowledge of their families. The Army managed the operation and functions of the Camp.

Road access to Old Holsworthy followed much along today's system to the Holsworthy Military Camp from a turn off from Heathcote Road, along (US General Douglas) Macarthur Drive, bridging the railway line at Holsworthy Station. It is at the roundabout junction of the two roads that the route to the Princes Highway was constructed by the Commonwealth Government in the early years of World War II.

While the Singleton Range was better equipped for anti tank artillery, for many years our Regiment – and others – conducted live firing and deployment exercises and generally utilised the large and varied topography to great advantage. Post World War II, for live firing, a Regimental Officer reported to the control tower at Mascot airport as it was then generally known, to assist in the control of air space for aircraft and Artillery. It was not many years before air traffic became so heavy that the range was closed for live firing by the Artillery.

The Regiment's training in small arms was conducted at the Anzac Rifle Range until it was closed and became an airfield. In the 1980s the State Government acquired from the Commonwealth that area which now comprises the suburbs of Holsworthy and Wattle Grove.

1937

Britain and France, in particular of the countries of Europe, began to sense the dangers around them posed by Nazi Germany and its policies directed towards expanding its hegemony in Europe. France had commenced building the Maginot Line soon after World War I as a means of protecting its border and now commenced extensions. With the English Channel providing its border protection, Britain passed an Air Raid Precautions Bill.

The barracks at North Head were established in 1937-1938 in conjunction with major fortifications designed to defend Sydney from enemy attack from the sea. After the War, the School of Artillery relocated to North Head to continue with its role of training all members of the Royal Australian Artillery in gunnery subjects.

1938

Adolf Hitler took personal command of German forces in the field and ordered them across the border into Austria. In Vienna they received a rapturous welcome. The next objective was Czechoslovakia, a country far less welcoming, but that country's wishes were ignored and the German Army entered.

1939

It is at this stage that we see that 23 Field Regiment RAA had its genesis in World War II and the Second AIF.

On 1st September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, whose independence was guaranteed by Britain and France. This triggered ultimatums from Britain and France, concerned for some years about Germany's aims in expanding her hegemony in Europe. The ultimatums were ignored. This combination of events seeded the armed conflict that was to engulf much of the world.

When Britain declared war on Sunday 3rd September 1939, so did Australia. Robert Gordon Menzies was the Australian Prime Minister of the day, leading a conservative government. As part of the British Empire, Australia's national security depended heavily upon Britain and to the population at large it was unthinkable that Australia would not assist Britain in its role of peacemaker for the world. We also had to help protect markets and our interest in world trade.

An interesting point and one that has been the topic of much political comment from time to time is that nearly 417,000 Australians enlisted during World War I, being almost 40 per cent of the male population aged 18 to 44. The prime minister who committed Australia to War in 1939 was not one of them. However, it is less well known that his successors during World War II had not volunteered either. These were "Artie" Fadden, who as well as being Treasurer, served as prime minister for 40 days, Labor's John Curtin, Ben Chifley and Frank Forde, who served from 6 July to 13 July 1945, the shortest term for any Australian prime minister.

One of the first forms of assistance from Australia was the despatch to Britain of a significant proportion of its small arms ammunition.

Australia's commitment of personnel at that time was the raising of the 25th Brigade, comprising Australian troops in Britain in 1940. Raised to garrison Britain against a possible German invasion, they were later despatched to the Middle East where they were transferred to the Australian 7th Division. That division performed superbly against the Italian forces tasked to defeat the British forces in Egypt.

In 1940 Britain sent to Europe the British Expeditionary Force of 12 Divisions, which was just about everything available, leaving the British Isles all but defenceless. These divisions joined the 94 divisions from France, 22 divisions from Belgium and 9 divisions of Dutch troops.

Germany had deployed 136 divisions, so numbers were about equal, at least on paper. The big difference was that the allied forces lacked effective coordination and control.

The German forces held a great advantage in the impetus gained by their advances thus far and the employment of an important principle of war – surprise – when they attacked France through the “untankable” Ardennes Forest and bypassed the extensive and well constructed Maginot Line on which France had expended so much money and in which it had so much faith.

Despite many heroic stands by the allied forces, the German war machine surged onward, sweeping all opposition before it. The British Commander, Lord Gort, soon realised that only a rapid withdrawal to the coast and evacuation to England would save anything of his force. Perhaps even only a quarter of those who had sailed for Europe with high hopes only a matter of weeks before could survive. In June 1940, some 338,000 allied servicemen, comprising roughly two thirds British and about one third (100,000) French were saved from the beaches on Dunkirk by the Royal Navy's Operation Dynamo, using warships and almost any private vessel from the ports and rivers of the United Kingdom that could be put to sea.

The evacuation took place under heavy air attack and would not have been possible had not the French troops performed so magnificently in delaying the advancing German forces. It was a near thing. Dunkirk is one of the great military feats of history.

Although many lives were saved, destroyed and immobilised guns, vehicles, tanks and other equipment were scattered for miles along the approaches to the beaches. Only some small arms and personal gear were to accompany the troops to safety. Until a reorganisation of the Army was completed, the United Kingdom relied on the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force for home defence.

Britain had few weapons to reequip the remnants of those saved from the beaches of France. As a desperate measure, the government was forced to use whatever was available from rifle clubs and armouries. These were desperate times.

Italy had been waiting to see how the conflict would develop before declaring its support for either side. Dictator Benito Mussolini soon appreciated that the German forces had the upper hand and on 10 June 1940 he joined with Hitler with a view to extending Italy's area of influence. Among other actions Mussolini sent 10,000 troops to Libya to confront the British.

In terms of the breadth of experience for the Artillery, the Second World War surpassed that of the First World War. As compared with the First, the Second saw a larger number of units raised with a greater range and diversity of weapons, were deployed in a larger number of theatres and played a crucial role in the defence of mainland Australia.

In 1939 there were five militia Infantry divisions in Australia and in the book “The Proud 6th” (Mark Johnston – Cambridge University Press 2008) it is recorded that the 6th Division was the first Australian division raised in the Second World War, the first division to go overseas and the first to fight.

The 2/1st Field Regiment arrived in the UK in May 1940 with 24 obsolescent guns (from World War I) and in November 1940 was equipped with the 25 pounder Mark II. The 2/3rd Field Regiment arrived in June 1940 and was equipped with the 25 pounder in July, making it the first Australian unit to receive these “exceptional new weapons”. Both Regiments arrived in the Middle East in November 1940.

To preserve ammunition, only 10 rounds of observed fire were permitted per day. As was to be experienced later by Gunner units of the 9th Division there was a chronic shortage of vehicles, with borrowed and captured vehicles indispensable to the deployment and maintenance of the Regiments.

It was the 6th Division, with support from British tanks and troops that captured Tobruk within 29 hours of piercing the perimeter. Broadly speaking, the Italian forces were having the daylight hours beaten out of them. In March 1941 the leading elements of the Division, together with key elements of other British forces battling the Italians, departed Alexandria to defend Greece from German invasion. The forces available for the ill-fated campaign in Greece and Crete were nowhere near adequate for the task and allied troops were killed or captured in their thousands.

The weakened remnants of British in North Africa were unable to oppose effectively the arrival of the German forces, later known as the Africa Corps despatched by Hitler to support their allies, the Italians and avoid the humiliation Mussolini was facing here. The German forces were led by a German national hero, Major General Erwin Rommel, later to be known as the "Desert Fox". He also assumed command of the remaining Italian forces. The British had lost the initiative and were to pay dearly for the political decision to support Greece.

Our 6th Division later saw action in Syria and New Guinea. **(ADD 7 DIVISION)**

The history of our parent unit, 2/3 Anti Tank Regiment RAA AIF, is recorded in "Target Tank" under the authorship of "Silver John" also known as Lieutenant Colonel J N L Argent, the last of its four Commanding Officers and the first Commanding Officer of 3 Anti Tank Regiment RAA (Citizens' Military Forces) formed in 1948.

An extremely valuable addition to the record of the Regimental history was made by the then Lieutenant H E Sharpe who sailed to the Middle East with the Regiment in 1941 being a copy of "Target Tank" carrying the signatures of many of the Regiment who had served with him. A small team from our Association's committee identified the majority of the names of those who had signed and placed it with that copy of the book. It is intended that this will be placed in the care of the ANZAC Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney for safe keeping and a source of reference.

Recruiting for 7th Division and 8th Division, destined for the Middle East, was gathering pace and public servant Lieutenant Colonel E E (Darby) Munro, (1892-1983) commanding 14 Field Brigade (Citizens Military Forces) at Addison Road, Marrickville since 1935 was invited to form and command the Anti Tank regiment of 8th Division. He had seen active service in World War I.

The new unit was to be known as 3 Australian Anti Tank Regiment. The equipment was to be the 2 pounder anti tank gun, a highly regarded and versatile weapon, with a rate of fire of 25 rounds per minute. Initially, the prefix "2" was granted to units that had seen action in World War I, but was soon to apply to all World War II units.

In the publication "British Anti Tank Artillery 1939-45" by Osprey Publishing the 2 pounder, (40mm) introduced in 1936, is described as having all round traverse, 15 degrees of elevation and 10 degrees depression, weight of 2cwt 2qr 7lb, maximum range of 8,000 yards and penetration of 42mm armour at 1,000 yards.

This weapon was later replaced by the 6 pounder (57mm) which was adopted by the United States Of America. It weighed 6cwt 3qr 12lb, had an arc of traverse of 45 degrees right or left of its centre line 15 degrees of elevation and 5 degrees depression, maximum range of 5,500 yards and penetration of 74mm of armour at 1,000 yards.

Lieutenant Colonel Munro accepted the invitation while his CMF unit was in a camp of continuous training at Wallgrove and took on his new responsibilities from 1 July 1940. From a long list of volunteers, 15 Officers and about 90 Other Ranks formed the nucleus of his new unit, which had its headquarters at Warwick Farm Racecourse, near Liverpool, later moving to Ingleburn.

2/2 Anti Tank Regiment of 7th Division had the only guns 2 pounder guns in Australia. The Commanding Officer arranged for four of these to be made available, on short loan, for training

purposes. Other training aids were photos of the guns and films taken by Fox Movietone. With 48 gun detachments to train, training was rostered day and night. For laying and firing practice, a .22 rifle was clamped to the barrel of a gun, with the trigger connected to the firing mechanism. The target was a kerosene tin towed across the range about 100 yards distant.

Live firing with 2 pounder ammunition and trucks towing very basic targets, took place at Greenhills range just prior to embarkation for the Middle East on 14 November, 1940 on the Orion.

In recalling the early days of 2/3 Anti Tank Regiment AIF, Chris Hanson recalled that the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel "Darby" Munro stipulated that half the drafts of recruits come from country area. Chris was of the very strong view that this was one of the best things that happened to the embryo unit, for it meant that they had a cross section of men from Sydney plus fellows from the Riverina, North West, Central West, Newcastle and the Far West.

Chris further recalled that early in the early days in 10 Battery, some from the city were wearing bits and pieces of Militia (CMF) uniforms and were therefore called Rosellas; the country boys became the crows. This led to much friendly rivalry, even playing football against each other on a number of occasions.

One of the last of the surviving recruits from the bush, Gunner Douglas Last, originally from Lismore, died in Nerang, Queensland, in 2006 aged 88. The area's Weekend Bulletin of 5-6 August 2006 recorded the event under the heading "One of the Rats". He sailed for the Middle East in the Queen Mary and brought home a very special souvenir – a bullet lodged in his shoulder – which he carried for the remainder of his life.

A keen sportsman and a bricklayer by trade, he captained the Army rugby team which played South Africa in the Middle East. Gunner Last was grateful he survived the Middle East and his Regiment's actions in New Guinea and Borneo. His brother, Blandford, was captured with the fall of Singapore and died in Changi Prisoner Of War camp.

The Regiment arrived in the Middle East on 18 December 1940 and settled in at Camp Julis, Palestine, for training and equipping. Their only weapons were 37 World War I .303 rifles per battery, brought from Ingleburn.

In January 1941, instead of comprising part of the 8th Division, or the alternative of reinforcements for 6 Division, they were now to be in the newly formed 9th Division. Weapons training was on borrowed equipment and the following month they were privileged to use imaginary weapons during a brigade exercise. Later in the month they received captured 47mm Italian anti tank guns, 37mm Bofors and sufficient anti tank rifles for a battery. Transport comprised mainly captured or abandoned Italian vehicles. Difficult times, but praise was heaped on the British Army for its support for the Regiment.

Then came 17 March 1941, the occasion of the first and only Regimental Dinner in the Officers' Mess. A warning order was received for RHQ, 10 Battery and 11 Battery to prepare to leave for Egypt and the Western Desert. 9 Battery and 12 Battery were to follow when equipped. The war and the big adventure were getting close. General Rommel had taken Benghazi, and now the 9th Division and the British 2nd Armoured Division were in retreat. On 1 April 1941 the Regiment crossed from Egypt into Libya.

RHQ, 10 Battery and 11 Battery were part of a mixed force ordered to hold the old Italian fort area at Mecheli, but the Africa Corps was sweeping all before it. 9 Battery, with remnants of 10 Battery and 11 Battery withdrew to the port of Tobruk, but without the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Munro who was captured. He was to spend the rest of the War as a Prisoner of War. 12 Battery became part of the famous "Jock Columns" of 7th Armoured Division on the Egyptian/Libyan frontier for the next six months.

Tobruk is about 150 kilometres west of the Egyptian border in Libya and is the only deepwater harbour between Tripoli, landing point for the Africa Corps and Alexandria, Britain's supply base. Tobruk was of critical importance to Rommel. In his hands it would shorten his supply lines from Tripoli by some 1 500 kilometres – in Allied hands, it was an unacceptable threat to his lines of communication to Egypt. Under General Morshead, hold out it did, despite the Africa Corps making every effort to

capture the old Italian port which was developed by Italy, then a colonial power and following their invasion in 1911. After about six months, the defenders were relieved and commencing during the night of 18 September, the Regiment sailed in HMS Kingston and HMS Kandahar for Alexandria.

In October 1942, the fourth year of the war, Britain's General Bernard Montgomery (born in Tasmania) launched the Eighth Army's major offensive – the Battle of El Alamein - which, at that point, was the most important British offensive of World War II.

General Rommel knew that this offensive would be the turning point. His decision was to attack the 9th Australian Division, strategically located “right of the line” and closest to the Mediterranean. From the immediate right to left were located the 51st Highland Division, the New Zealanders, South Africans and 4th Indian Division. Only the 9th Division was at full strength.

At 2140 hrs on 23 October, 1942, 900 guns opened up on Rommel's lines and 10,000 troops advanced against heavily fortified Axis positions, full of confidence and determination. Australia's official World War II historian, Gavin Long, recorded that the floor of the desert shook, vehicles shuddered without pause, men's bodies and their very voices quivered under the mighty shock waves. However, elsewhere along the line, senior commanders and their “infirmity of purpose” almost resulted in the battle being lost.

The effect was that the weight of Rommel's Africa Corps was brought against the Australians and here, Australia played a critical role on the global stage and helped change world history. Rommel committed his reserves against the 9th Division, which, he commented, had not yielded an inch. Importantly, the 9th Division was acting as a sponge; soaking up the enemy's resources, thus allowing Montgomery to launch Supercharge – the armoured breakthrough that secured victory at El Alamein.

General Montgomery recognised fully the achievements of the 9th Division and was quick to visit the Australian lines and thank the commander, Lieutenant General Morshead. (British) General Oliver Leese, who commanded 30 Corps (which included the 9th Division) in the battle is quoted as saying “It was a magnificent piece of fighting by a great division led by an indomitable character, Leslie Morshead.” He made special mention of the critical role played by the anti-tank gunners. This was but one of a number of compliments by British Generals on the performance of the 9th Division, both during the battle and later.

During this critical time, at one stage the Regiment had under command a New Zealand anti tank battery, a Scottish anti tank battery, a Rhodesian anti tank battery and an anti tank battery of the Royal Horse Artillery. With the Regiment's own four batteries, this is said to be the largest number of guns under command of a regiment in the Royal Australian Artillery at one time. In early November, the battle was won.

For many years after the War, the Officers' Mess commemorated the event with “Alamein Night”, when Colonel Argent would read from a citation recognising the endeavours of a member of 2/3rd Anti-Tank Regiment (AIF). That was always a very moving experience for all in attendance.

For such an event, much effort was put in by all ranks to redecorate the Mess for the occasion. Shon Condon who later became Commanding Officer of the Regiment remembers carrying what seemed like tonnes of sand and piles of sand bags up the stairs to the Mess at the Belmore Depot and transforming it into a command post dug out reminiscent of that typical in the desert. Mention should also be made of the efforts of those the next day who had the task of pulling down all that had been constructed so carefully.

(Warrant Officer Class 2) Graham Williams recalls that it was always such a good night that there was no shortage of members of the Sergeants' Mess to volunteer their services to assist in easing the thirst of the Officers assembled, including those of who had served in World War II.

February 1943 saw the final withdrawal of Australian forces from the Middle East for the defence of Australia. The 9th Division was returning with its new colour patch, the famous “T” outline chosen, said General Morshead – most certainly with tongue firmly in cheek – because all the alternative designs were in use. Obviously, nothing to do with Tobruk.

Back in Queensland, the Regiment – as with other anti tank units – was without a defined role. Some units were not to survive. However, the regiment continued to refine its Gunner skills.

In 1943 the Regiment was deployed to New Guinea, but only as sub-units performing infantry, 4.2 inch mortar tasks, beach defences and supporting tasks as required. Recalling these days in an article in 2/3rd Anti-Tank Regiment AIF Association for October 1999 Chris Hansen expressed the view that the 37 mm and 2 pounder anti-tank guns served them well in the Middle East, while the 6 pounder issued later did everything asked of it. In his view, the 17 pounder would have been too big and awkward for jungle conditions and the smaller gun was better suited to that environment.

Borneo was next of the list of objectives, so in April 1945 the Regiment moved to the island of Morotai in the Moluccas, about 500 kilometres south of the Philippines. The four day voyage to Borneo was by Landing Ship Tank (LST) with accommodation in, under or alongside vehicles and equipment. The Regiment was now an independent support group under direct command of Divisional Headquarters 9th Division, the trials of the Middle East only a memory. As befits a great Gunner regiment, morale was high and the unit was showered with praise for the efficiency and effectiveness of its numerous endeavours.

Here, one of its significant achievements was the reopening of the light rail system using as the locomotive, the Commanding Officer's Jeep fitted with rolling stock type wheels fashioned by the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. This served military and community needs. It is on display at the Australian War Museum, Canberra described as an initiative of the 9th Division.

The unconditional surrender by Japan on 15 August 1945 was cause for much wild celebration. When news was received mid morning, school children in Australia were given the rest of the day off. The Regiment was privileged to fire the victory salute using 75mm howitzers. There was still much to be done by the Regiment including the guarding, controlling and administering the surrendered 4 000 Japanese, their repatriation, the War trials and re establishing the local administration.

On 12 February, 1946, the unit left Borneo for home, the last unit of 9th Division to do so. At an informal dinner on 26 May 1946, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel J N L Argent, Captain K I Meers, Lieutenant A B Jamieson and Staff Sergeant W Price, the only original member left, closed the curtain on a very gallant Regiment.

The final words by the Commanding Officer at the conclusion of the nearly six years after its formation were that there may have been units as good as the old Regiment, there certainly was none better.

In recalling the many crises and achievements of World War II, there have to be mentioned the outstanding contributors to the war effort by Australian industry and their workforces. As recorded in "Restored Cars" No.48 of 22 March 1982 it was the engineering firms, many allied with the motor industry, which provided the technological base for the production of guns in this country and in this regard General Motors – Holden deserves special mention. It was they who told the government that they would be prepared to tackle any task for which no other takers could be found.

Their major contracts were for the 2 pounder anti tank gun, the 6 pounder anti tank gun, the 25 pounder field gun. In addition to road vehicles and a range of sea craft, they manufactured a heavy machine gun and power plants for all manner of sea, air and land craft, each having their own unique problems to be solved with very limited resources and within very limited time.

The 2 pounder anti tank gun (40mm bore), was the initial and probably the most difficult of projects, with there being no local knowledge of manufacturing procedures and there being no special steels available for the major components. They worked closely with BHP Company and achieved amazingly good results. Within seven months of receipt of the order in June, 1940, guns were coming off the assembly line, when the US parent company estimated it would take 19 months. In the cases of the 6 pounder anti tank gun (bore 57mm) and the 25 pounder field gun (bore 87.6mm), they were coming off the production line within the year.

By special dispensation, General Motors – Holden were permitted to add their initials to the Royal Cipher marking the guns they produced.

With the War still in full swing, late in 1943, Prime Minister John Curtin gave the Defence Committee the principles of the government's post war defence strategy based upon collective security and its broad responsibilities both at home and overseas. No shortage of confidence here as to which side was to win the war. The essentials were identified early in 1944 and in 1947 the Army's new organization for the permanent and part time forces received Prime Minister Ben Chifley's approval.

The permanent force was at first known as the Interim Army, with a two-year term of service, until adoption of a permanent structure. Recruiting for the Permanent Military Force commenced in August, 1947 offering a six-year term of service.

In the formulation of the organization for the Citizens Military Force to be submitted for the Prime Minister's approval, prior considerations of strength, structure and training of post World War II Artillery units were critical issues requiring close scrutiny. In April 1946, senior Gunners met to consider these and other matters.

Decisions were taken to retain standard establishments. Up until Australia's involvement in Vietnam, the emphasis was on training for open country warfare such as was experienced in the Western Desert, with jungle warfare included as a phase of training.

It is also worth noting that at the time, the Citizens Military Force was the central component in defence planning. The militia and the volunteer were the two essentials for any expansion of the Army. Governments of Australia have long been reluctant to spend money on defence, preferring to rely on the presence of "great and powerful friends" to provide for the country's security. In this setting, reliance on the citizen soldier was politically and financially expedient.

This arrangement was unwieldy because under the Defence Act of 1903, the militia/CMF/Reserves were required to join the AIF or a force recruited for a particular purpose to serve overseas in times of emergency. In addition, training of a largely volunteer force for active service would take time and time was a critical factor in responding to world situations that could now develop more quickly than had been the fairly recent experience. If for no other reason, it would not be very long before the primacy of the CMF and the volunteer force in the defence of Australia was to be lost to the Australian Regular Army.

1948

In 1947 the government announced its decision for the implementation of a field force structure in 1948 of which 2nd Infantry Division (Citizens' Military Forces) was to comprise:-

Three infantry brigades (two for NSW, one Queensland)

Headquarters Royal Australian Artillery, Victoria Barracks, Sydney – Brigadier F B McAllister

Artillery Air OP Flight (Type A), Victoria Barracks – raising deferred

5 Field Regiment, Marrickville - Lieutenant Colonel A J Blyth

7 Field Regiment, Willoughby - Lieutenant Colonel C E Chapman

11 Field Regiment, Kelvin Grove, Queensland - Lieutenant Colonel C H Wilson

3 Anti Tank Regiment, Belmore, Homebush, Ashfield – Lieutenant Colonel J N L Argent

1 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment, Mosman - Lieutenant Colonel J E Pagan

2 Divisional Locating Battery, South Head – raising deferred

In addition, New South Wales was allocated units for 2nd Armoured Brigade Group (Independent) and Corps Troops.

From an historical viewpoint, it is worth noting that the Australian Imperial Force in World War I comprised 5 infantry divisions with 2nd Division having under command 5th Brigade (NSW), 6th Brigade (Victoria) and 7th Brigade (Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia).

The Commanding Officers of all Citizens Military Forces Artillery units had commanded Artillery units in World War II. Many Officers and Non Commissioned Officers also had wartime experience and this combination of expertise plus a plentiful supply of equipment and ammunition meant that many units had a high degree of proficiency.

The Citizens Military Force was seen as an expeditionary force for the nation's strategic role in the Middle East – the potential trouble spot - as part of the forces of the British Commonwealth of Nations or the United Nations. In short, Australia's strategic posture was based on the idea of collective security.

There would be a fourteen-day camp and twenty-four days home training; half of these were to be obligatory. Initially, attendance at Army schools to improve one's military knowledge and skills was without pay, no doubt in the firm belief that Officers' and Non Commissioned Officers' motivation and enthusiasm was sufficiently rewarded by a period of quality instruction.

Other Ranks were to enlist for a two-year period. Army payments were to be taxed.

The Citizens Military Force and the permanent forces would be equipped with existing war stocks, including uniforms. One change was to be the issue of black boots instead of the war time brown. However it would be many years before the "Boots AB" were available in black and members were issued with black leather stain to achieve the requirement. Working dress and dress in the field was the khaki summer dress.

Officers and Warrant Officers were issued with a light weight, belted and open neck safari jacket, but no shirt, as a walking out dress. They were also privileged to wear the peaked cap both for walking out and in the field.

An updated dress became generally available in the early 1950s. Known as the Battle Dress and recognised immediately as being of British Army origin, it was both a walking out and ceremonial dress with khaki shirt, tie and braces for the non self supporting trousers. The initial issue of shirts to Officers differed slightly in colour and texture, had separate collars and the associated studs to secure the front to the top button hole of the shirt and the rear to a button hole in the collar of the shirt and the separate collar.

Webbing, of the 37 pattern, was also the standard issue for all ranks comprising, belt, gaiters, ammunition pouches (2), pack and "braces" to support the ammunition packs. All brass was to be kept polished and the webbing cleaned with Blanco, a form of khaki clay powder dusted over damp webbing and worked into the weave with a small brush. For many years, the rifle was the well proven bolt action British designed Lee Enfield .303. Prior to ceremonial parades, the rifles, slings bayonets and scabbards were taken home – less the bolt – for preparation to inspection standard.

In 2014 Amber Books Ltd, London published Collector's Guides, Rifles and Muskets (ISBN 978-1-787274-151-0) incorporating an interesting coverage of the history of the ".303".

The original version was issued to the British Army in 1895. Its calibre was 7.7mm (.303 inch), weighed 4kg (8.8 lb) had an overall length of 1130mm (44.49 inch), was bolt action and had a 10 round (2 clips of 5 rounds fed from the top) detachable box magazine. In 1904 it was replaced by the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield Mk 1 (SMLE) which was further improved over the years with only slight variations in weight and overall length. The ".303" was in use for over 50 years.

Its great value was in the design of the bolt. The action was so smooth compared with others of the day, that the user could retain his focus on the target while operating the bolt. A sustained rate of aimed fire was typically 15 rounds per minute while 30 rounds per minute was not unusual for a "mad minute". The weapon could also be fitted with a grenade launcher with a blank cartridge fired in the normal way providing the propellant. A boss for the bayonet extended slightly beyond the muzzle. Stated range was 500m (550yards).

Other weapons in the armoury were the Australian designed and manufactured Owen sub machine gun and the .303 Bren gun. The Smith and Wesson .45 was the six chamber revolver issued to Officers.

Of course, the slouch hat – Hat Khaki Fur Felt - was retained and used both on parade and in the field. A book published by the NSW Military Historical Society, "The Australian Army Slouch Hat and Rising Sun Badge" sets out its story from the first introduction with a rounded crown in 1885 by the commander of the Victorian Mounted Rifles, Colonel Tom Price. In 1890 it was decided by the

military commanders of the Australian colonies that all Australian forces except Artillery would wear the hat, which became standard issue across the Army in 1903. The bash was introduced during World War I. After World War II hats were bashed using dedicated hat blocks and some years later, the bash was part of the manufacturing process. For historical reasons, there exist a couple of limited variations to the style of the hat's puggaree and the location of the chin strap buckle in relation to the mouth. It was not until the Vietnam War that the headgear in the field was changed to what was commonly known at the time as "Hats Ridiculous".

Regular and Citizens Military Force units with lineage back to the Australian Light Horse of World War I retained the emu feather as part of their uniform.

In the Army newspaper of 2 October 1975, the Editor provided an outline of the origins of the emu feather addition as detailed in "The Australasian" of 1933. The background is that during the Great Shearers' Strike of 1891, the Queensland Mounted Infantry and some other troops of the Queensland Defence Force were called out to aid the civil powers. They were employed as soldiers, not special constables.

On the Western Plains of Queensland emus were plentiful and for the mounted infantry patrolling the Plains, riding down emus helped defeat boredom. The Gympie Squadron seized upon the idea of wearing the feathers in their hats and before the strike ended, the entire Regiment had followed suit.

In recognition of their service at that time, the Government of Queensland allowed the Regiment to adopt the emu feather as part of their uniform. An emu "passant" with the motto "forward" was registered as the Regimental crest. The emu plume first became well known during the South African War.

During the early days of World War I it was worn only by the Queensland regiments of the Light Horse, but in March 1915 the 3rd Light Horse Brigade arrived in Egypt wearing the emu plumes, although it did not contain Queenslanders until later. The Queensland units protested strongly.

The matter was finally resolved by the Minister for Defence, Senator Pearce who ruled that the whole of the Australian Light Horse and attached units would wear the plumes. From a Gunner perspective, it is of significance that Artillery units had and has no such entitlement.

The Rising Sun Badge, introduced originally in 1902, was retained post World War II. In 2012 Australia Post issued 60 cent stamps, with separate stamps for each of the five designs issued.

The peaked cap was worn by Officers and Warrant Officers until the edict was issued (in the 1990s ?) that the slouch hat would be the standard headdress for all ranks.

"The Weekend Australian" of 11/12 January 2014 reported an interesting and historically important aspect of military history that came to light in research undertaken for the play "Black Diggers", first presented at the Sydney Festival in January 2014. It was found that a significant proportion of the Light Horse Brigade was comprised of personnel of Aboriginal heritage, whose horsemanship is legendary and as is to be expected, they developed their skills while working in the pastoral stations. Olympic medallist Cathy Freeman's great-grandfather, Frank Fisher is said to have served. The 20th reinforcement of 11th Light Horse Regiment included so many soldiers of Aboriginal heritage, it was nicknamed the Queensland Black Watch.

The role of the 2nd Division in military history and for Australia is significant. Formed in Egypt on 26 July 1915 as an infantry division of the Australian Imperial Force, it had three brigades: 5th New South Wales, 6th Victoria and 7th Queensland, under the command of Major General J G Legge.

The Division commenced reinforcement of the ANZAC force at Gallipoli on 19 August 1915 and covered the withdrawal of the force on 20 December 1915. On 7 April 1916 it became the first Australian force to enter the line on the Western Front where it saw many significant battles, including the battles for Amiens and Mont St Quentin, where the Division's memorial stands. It was the last Australian formation to be withdrawn from the line.

During the early years of World War II, the Division comprised the 5th, 8th, and 14th Brigades, all from New South Wales. It was responsible for the defence of Sydney and from 11 July 1942 was part of 3rd Australian Corps deployed in defence of Western Australia.. It was disbanded on 9 May 1944.

Reformed on 1 July 1948 as a formation of the Citizen Military Forces, it was disbanded during the pentropic experiment (1960-65), again during the transition to the Army Reserve (1975-81) before returning to the Order of Battle on 1 July 1981 with 5th Task Force and 8th Task Force under command.

The 90th Anniversary of its original formation was marked on Saturday 30 July 2005 by a ceremonial parade at Victoria Barracks, Sydney at which all the guidons and colours of the division were paraded.

(3rd Anti Tank Regiment CO etc)

In 1948 and for decades after, the headquarters of 3rd Anti Tank Regiment and its successors was at 700 Canterbury Road, Belmore. Land for the drill hall had been purchased by local citizens in 1914 and the initial building was completed on 20th January 1916 at a cost of 1835 pounds. Wagon and harness sheds – later the gun bays and battery Q stores - were added in 1934 at a cost of 795 pounds and the two storey brick Administration Office was built in 1939 at a further cost of 7384 pounds. The top storey accommodated the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes separated by a common room with folding doors either end barring direct entry to the messes.

The common room was used for lecture purposes and the folding doors enabled the whole floor to be opened up for mess functions. In keeping with the high levels of security applying at the time, the armoury was located under the stairs leading to the messes.

The Gunners' Institute (mess) was a room to the left of the building in the drill hall, the battery offices lining the hall down to the stage, to the left of which was the Regimental Q Store for clothing issues.

Further buildings for storage purposes were added in 1970 and the height of the main building permitted construction of a mezzanine floor for lecture rooms above the offices and kitchen on the southern side. Authority for the additions was obtained by some creative explanations in paperwork submitted for maintenance of the building.

The first Commanding Officer of 3 Anti Tank Regiment CMF was the last Commanding Officer of 2nd/3rd Anti Tank Regiment AIF, Lieutenant Colonel "Jack" Argent (born 1905), who, pre War was a militia Officer. His Army service began in 1923 at the age of 18 when he became a compulsory cadet. On completing his training he volunteered to serve with 21st Artillery Brigade at Parramatta. When 2nd/3rd Anti Tank Regiment was formed in July 1940, Major Argent was appointed Battery Commander 12 Battery. At the Battle of El Alamein he was the Regimental Second in Command and appointed Commanding Officer in September 1943 until the Regiment was removed from the Order of Battle in May, 1946.

In civilian life he was a builder who did much for his local All Saints' Anglican Church, Parramatta. He was very active in Rugby League matters and was manager of the 1959/1960 Kangaroo Tour of the United Kingdom. Parramatta Leagues Club was said to be "the house that Jack built".

Rumour had it that his first post war car purchase was a Mercedes Benz with an engine serial number that incorporated his AIF service number in correct sequence.

When interviewed aged in his early 90s, he recalled with a mixture of pride and satisfaction that in the first six month of recruiting in 1948, 100 enlisted, mostly those who served under him during WWII. He also recalled that those attending the 1949 Annual Camp at Holsworthy numbered 178.

"Silver John" remained Commanding Officer until his retirement in 1951 with the rank of Colonel and for many years had the singular honour of leading the 9th Division in the ANZAC Day parade through the City of Sydney. His final years were spent in the RSL's retirement village at Narrabeen until his death, aged 99 years. He was farewelled on 24 August 2004 at All Saints' Anglican Church, Parramatta with a military funeral.

Also from those who had served, the much admired Colonel “Darby” Munro – the wartime Commanding Officer who was captured by the Africa Corps during a courageous stand in the Middle East – was a frequent visitor to the Regiment and was the first Patron of the Officers’ Mess.

Many served until they reached the Army compulsory retirement age and became the backbone of the Unit for many years. From the lessons learned in wartime and their appreciation of the role of the Army and Artillery in particular in national security, they instilled a confidence and pride in the Regiment that was reflected in the standards and qualities in all ranks that made our Regiment a standout performer in the 2nd Division with its reputation well known throughout the Army – both Regular and Citizens Military Forces/Reserve components.

Colonel Argent also recalled that the first issue of 25 pounders for our Regiment were formerly used in the Middle East by the units of British 8th Army of which the Australian 9th Division was part, before its return to Australia.

A further recollection was that while today, SMIGs (Sergeant Major Instructor Gunnery) are almost invariably members of the Australian Regular Army, AckIGs (Assistant Instructor Gunnery) - also of WO2 rank - between 1948 and 1951 were often Citizens Military Forces personnel.

Many of those who joined the regiment after World War II service were characters one would only expect to find in works of fiction. The messes were never dull, with “football” played occasionally in the space between the messes in Belmore with assorted items employed as the “ball”. During annual camps of 14 days or other Regimental activities away from home, almost invariably in hutted accommodation, “burials at sea” with the prone body of a particularly inebriated character or one who had been seen to do some minor wrong, placed on a Tables FS (Tables Field Service) and poured out of an open window.

In the Officers’ mess in a base camp with wartime buildings with no ceilings such as would be found at Singleton or Holsworthy, a cry of “into the rafters” would result from some minor misdemeanour or triviality after a formal dinner. The effect would be for all subalterns in their mess kit – and a few more senior Officers, from time to time – secure their drinks and behaving like latter day Tarzans, perch themselves on a rafter for a few minutes until the “all clear” was sounded.

Minor injuries did occur from time to time, but it was all in good fun and far from a drunken rampage.

Then there was the case of a 2IC (Second In Command) who had a legal practise in Sydney. One morning during Annual Camp he chose to attend the mess for breakfast in his pyjamas and dressing gown. His assertion was that the Officers’ Mess is the Officers’ home – and at home he likes to have his breakfast in pyjamas.

His status and personality were such that no one was going to argue, but it is instructive that the Commanding Officer was less than happy and the result was that there was no recurrence of pyjamas in the mess.

A personality rather than a character was Bert Cousins, who bore a distinctive birth mark covering almost half of his face. As a result, in his youth, he avoided much social contact because of the stares and jibes of people. However in the Army he developed a new outlook on life. In all his years in uniform – and he retired in 1968 as Battery Captain – not one man in uniform made unkind remarks about the pink discolouring of his face. Is that mateship or just respect for the man?

He was of quiet demeanour, but knowledgeable in military matters, a good leader and mentor for many a young Officer or soldier.

Two of the earliest recruits into the Regiment without war service, were two brothers. Alan Chenery enlisted in July 1948 and Dennis Chenery in September 1948. Two years later, on 30 September, 1950 Dennis wed Mavis. This is almost certainly the first of weddings for 3rd Anti Tank Regiment RAA. The brothers both retired with the rank of Captain many years later when attaining the compulsory retiring age applicable to the Corps. Both had a variety of postings within and without the Regiment and made a significant contribution to the achievements of 2nd Division.

Another early recruit was Brian Williams – later Major – who was a schoolboy Regimental cadet before joining the Regiment.

Another early and long serving member was (Captain) Kevin Laxton who joined in 1949. Reporting to Q Battery at the Ashfield Depot, on the North side of Liverpool Road, East of the high school, he raised his age from 17 to 18 years. There were no real checks and thereafter, his real age was one year less than his stated age in Army records.

His incentives in joining were threefold. His father had been a signaller in World War I and was a Lieutenant Colonel in administration in World War II. A professional soldier, he retired with the rank of Colonel. One older brother was in the Royal Australian Navy and another older brother was in the Royal Australian Air Force. All had seen service overseas.

His working life included operating his own small business and later being employed by the Commonwealth Bank.

Kevin was granted his Commission in 1952 and promoted to Captain in 1955. Later, he passed his written examinations for Major, but wifely pressures to leave the Army denied him the opportunity to pass what was known as the 21A – the practical paper. Over time, many members have faced similar family problems in maintaining continuity of service with their unit. He went on the Reserve of Officers on 8 October 1964.

Kevin recalled well the early post war years of industrial unrest. With the coal miners on strike and the resultant uncertainties in electric power supplies, many families were struggling to survive financially. Although an expanding CMF was making demands on the services of the School of Artillery, Kevin is of the view that the School further increased the number of courses on offer to provide some support for the unemployed or under employed part time soldier during this difficult time.

Our Regiment was equipped with the 17 pounder anti tank gun, manufactured in 1942 but kept in storage during the war years because our forces in the south-west pacific did not face a significant tank threat from Japanese forces. The gun was regarded as probably the most effective of its kind at the time.

The 17 pounder was a gun weighing 3 ton 3 cwt (3,201 kg), with a split trail, firing fixed ammunition having two charges and with a maximum range of 11,480 yards (10,500 m). Muzzle velocity was 2,980 feet/second (908 m/s). Rate of fire was 20 rounds per minute. The detachment numbered seven.

As with many exercises over the years, the equipment we had was not what the narrative outlined for that particular exercise, so we “pretended” in some aspects but had to accept the realities of the situation. In one particular instance in the early days of the Regiment the guns were designated as self propelled. Anti tank guns were normally dug in, but not so the self propelled variety.

One imaginative Sergeant No1, deployed to a hide, decided that his pretend self propelled anti tank gun need not be dug in and therefore his detachment would leave the gun hooked in to its tractor and take the opportunity to rest before being deployed to the main position. The Troop Commander, Lieutenant Tommy Dwyer, came to inspect progress in the hide and was not at all convinced by the argument presented by the No1. The detachment’s stolen leisure time was brief, but sweet none the less.

In later years, narratives were to describe the Regiment as being deployed by air, but six wheel drive tractors pretending to be helicopters leave much to the imagination – what track plan on the gun position is appropriate for deployment by air, for example.

No matter the gun, defence of the gun position is always foremost in deployment and local defence is a key feature. (Captain) Alan Chenery recalls an incident in his early years when he was deployed with a Bren gun on the 17 pounder Battery perimeter. His allocated position incorporated a rabbit burrow which enabled him some protection from the prevailing cold, windy conditions, while still permitting good fields of fire.

The Commanding Officer’s vehicle approached and stopped only a few metres from Alan’s position, with the Commanding Officer making clear to his party, his dissatisfaction about the absence of

Battery security. Alan chose his moment, released the Bren's action with as much noise as was possible and greeted him with a "Good morning, Sir". Alan was delighted with the Commanding Officer's reaction and was more than happy to have made his mark in retained the Battery's standing and honour.

Alan was an adventurous spirit and later still he was in charge of a target repair party at an anti tank range at Singleton. Here was an opportunity to see what the gun looked like from a distance. He was in the safety zone so he climbed to the top of the mound that was used to hide the moving target and saw that there was a flag at the gun end to mark the NO FIRE zone. Comfortable that all was well in his position he moved to obtain a better view then realised that the sound from behind was the target moving, followed a split second later by a muzzle flash in his direction followed almost instantly the sound of a shell striking the ground only about three metres to his left.

Showered with rocks and dirt he moved very smartly and returned to the other allocated duties. His claim to fame is that he was probably the only person in our Regiment to have been fired at by one of our guns.

Alan Whitely at the time was a member of 5 Field Regiment at Marrickville, equipped with 25 pounders and he recalled an occasion when both Regiments were conducting live firing exercises on the Singleton range. The 17 pounders were performing well on the moving target range and the two Commanding Officers agreed that there be a competition between the two Regiments on this seemingly very simple task of engaging a moving target. Suffice to say the task is not as easy as it looks and we ended the day moving out with heads held high. Alan's view on the result was that the high velocity of the 17 pounder meant that the projectile had a fairly flat trajectory as compared with the 25 pounder.

Fair comment, but to be fair, specialist training cannot be ignored, either.

Alan recalled that he enlisted with 5 Field Regiment with the singular intention of becoming a driver. However, the rule was that Gunner expertise was the first requirement so he did the required courses and excelled as gun layer. Now his services were in great demand, but undaunted, he insisted that driving was to be his only vocation in the Regiment. He put up such a strong fight that after much consideration he was given his wish and served his lengthy Citizens Military Force career in that role.

Singleton range was where most of the 17 pounder live firing took place, often using a sub calibre round. The target was drawn between two mounds of earth which hid the target if it were drawn on a light rail system by a winch and also served to protect the towing tractors if they were employed for the task. One pulled the target with the other following at the other end of the cable and for the return journey, the roles were reversed. Alan Chenery recalled an occasion when the gun was loaded and the Number 1 was anxiously awaiting the appearance of the target. The Safety Officer was also observing the scene closely when, from behind the mound appeared the nose of the towing tractor, driven by Sergeant Laurie Ney, one of the most popular and capable of Sergeants. With a timely shout of "Stand Fast" a potential tragedy was avoided. Laurie continued on his way, blissfully unaware that his career could easily have come to an early and not too pleasant, end.

Rifle practice was a popular occasion, held at one of several rifles ranges around Sydney, with the adventurous ones bringing their own rifles and small arms to make the most of the opportunity. The targets with the usual bull, inner, outer markings were raised and lowered on a counterweighted framework by a member of the butts party. The result of each shot was marked with a pointer, or if the target were missed, the pointer was waved several times across the target to indicate a washout. At the end of a particular exercise, the targets were lowered, the scores recorded on a reporting form and the results conveyed by telephone line to the mounds Officer. Scores were read out and later helped determine whether the soldier was classified as "efficient" for the year.

At the conclusion of each practice and on the order "Targets down, patch out". Holes in the targets were pasted over and covered with target material of a matching colour.

Soldiering is always a somewhat risky pastime, even behind an earth embankment. A cane carrying Battery Commander, later to be Colonel Artillery, paid a visit to the butts to satisfy himself as to the competence of the team operating the targets. Practice was under way – there was the sound of a ricochet and the tip of the cane under his arm disappeared forever. His reaction was to hold the cane

for closer inspection, show it in disbelief to all around him and move back to the mound – all without saying a word. Presumably he was happy with the performance of the butts party.

Because of his great nature, Laurie Ney was often the subject of attention by his Sergeant colleagues. One rifle range occasion in particular was to be remembered by many. Laurie was in the butts manually operating Target 7. The weapon being fired was the .303 rifle and as it happened, each firing position was occupied by a Sergeant. The word was passed down the line that Laurie was manning Target 7 and on the command “ten rounds, at your respective targets fire” ten rifles then engaged the soil just below that particular target.

Laurie was showered with debris and his target suffered mightily. All the other targets recorded “washout”. For the Sergeants Mess, that night was another to remember fondly.

Some years later there was the occasion when the rifle range at Malabar was the venue. One of the junior Officers drove a black Ford Customline, a vehicle popular for police road patrols, heads of government departments and also the diplomatic corps. Five of the more senior members of the Battery joined the driver and headed for Malabar in comfort that would not be found in an Army vehicle. Approaching the destination, traffic was slowed to a crawl by a driver leading an ever growing line of cars. One of the Officers, a Captain, was also a Police Prosecutor. Among his other attributes, he did not like being delayed. Taking hold of a megaphone to be used at the firing mound, he opened the passenger window, leant out and through megaphone, ordered “move over, driver”. The result was electric. Our fearless Officer driver used the eight cylinders at his disposal to full advantage and his little party arrived at the destination in good time and well ahead of the rest, travelling in convoy.

Regimental vehicles were the Jeep and trailer, the Ford V8 side valve and Chevrolet six cylinder over head valve petrol powered four wheel drive “Blitz Buggies” and a six cylinder petrol powered engine propelled the six wheel drive GMC (General Motors Corporation) “Jimmies” and Studebakers known as “Studs”. Although a range of cars and light commercial vehicles carried the name plate of Studebaker for many years prior to the War, the engine was a 5248cc Hercules JXD, with the Studebaker logo cast into the manifold. This engine also powered the White scout car and two models of Ford’s armoured cars.

One of the “Blitz Buggies” for the Belmore depot had shrapnel damage in the form of a tear midway up the metal windscreen frame in line with the driver’s left shoulder. It was said to have seen service in the Middle East.

All vehicles were left hand drive and in the absence of the yet to be invented “blinkers” to indicate a change of direction, they had installed a mechanical arm, operated by the driver in his left hand drive position, to indicate stop, which was also the sign to indicate a left turn and with fingers extended along the arm, to turn right.

The mechanical arm for signalling was also a fairly standard fitment to buses and civilian light and heavy trucks. These were the days when drivers’ hand signals were mandatory. Arm and fingers extended for turning right and arm extended, forearm held vertically with hand and fingers extended for stopping or turning to the left. There were penalties for non compliance or for indistinct signals.

All the military vehicles had “crash” gearboxes. For those without experience with this type of transmission, the drivers had to master the technique of matching engine speed for the engagement of a particular gear, with the road speed. This is fairly easy when going through the gears from a standing start, but changing from, say, top gear to the next lower gear when climbing a hill necessitated employment of a technique known as the double shuffle. In this process one depresses the clutch, brings the gear lever to the neutral position, engages the clutch, raises the engine speed to match gear speed to road speed, again depresses clutch, engages gear and engages the clutch.

The technique is soon mastered and a smooth, noiseless result is achieved. Experienced drivers will often carry out the drill with synchromesh gear boxes, which employ a simple soft metal clutch system to the side face of gears to synchronise the speeds of the driven and driving gears before engagement. The aim is to achieve a much smoother engagement of power to the wheels and also to demonstrate their superior skills.

The early model “Blitz Buggies” had the peace time dash board for that manufacturer while later models had the standardised version, common for all vehicles manufactured in or for the USA. Later, when standardised instrument panels were installed, many a driver then – and for years later – was to report, in error, critically low engine oil pressure readings. Seldom was this the case; the Ford V8s operated at 50 pounds per square inch and the Chevrolets at 10 to 15 pounds per square inch, so to know which brand one was driving was to avoid a potential heartache.

Drivers regarded the Chevrolet as the easier of the two to drive; it was very forgiving. On the other hand, the Ford’s engine revolutions had to be spot on for good gear changing.

Both the Ford and Chevrolet models were fitted with winch and tyre pump. The vacuum operated windscreen wipers were a pain for both driver and passenger because the vacuum in the engine manifold, to which the pipeline was connected, was weakest when the engine was under load and strongest under light load, such as going downhill. The difference was amazing – in heavy rain with the engine under load, the eyeballs would be compelled to follow the blade of the wiper to see ahead, while on the downhill run, the wipers would be operating so rapidly it could be envisaged that they would self destruct. There were tricks to the trade in getting at least a brief clean sweep when working hard.

Although there were electrically operated windscreen wipers at the time, the consideration in installing the vacuum models was said to be the severe weather conditions likely to be encountered in many of the theatres of operations for forces of the USA. Wiper blades frozen to a windscreen could result in a burnout of electric motors, but little or no damage to a vacuum powered system. Another important, but seldom mentioned reason was the likelihood of drivers of the armies of other countries would frequently be illiterate or nearly so, with little or no knowledge or appreciation of things electrical and the need for user care. Ultimately, most of our vehicles had the vacuum wipers replaced with the electric powered model.

Incidentally, many Jeeps had antiquated, hand operated wipers – they were last seen in the cars and trucks of the 1920s.

Alan Whitely recalls that on all US vehicles, the left hand side wheel nuts were left hand thread, while those on the right of the vehicle were right hand thread. This arrangement could be a real trap for the unwary driver if the workshops had dismantled an axle assembly for servicing and reinstalled the hubs on the wrong sides. It happened from time to time, with frustrated and exhausted drivers attempting to replace a flat tyre and wheel in the field, baying for the mechanic’s blood when realisation dawned that while they were trying to undo wheel nuts, they were in fact, attempting to further tighten them .

Wartime truck wheels were often of the divided type wheel pattern with clamping nuts and bolts holding the two sides of the road wheel together. The clamping nuts were usually painted red to avoid confusion with those retaining the wheel to the hub.

Towing hooks generally had a spring loaded top jaw that locked into place over the fixed lower jaw when the towing eye of the gun or trailer was dropped into place. Release was effected by either lifting or depressing a small bar. Studebakers had a slightly different system, requiring a split pin, attached to a short chain, to be inserted and lock the jaws in the closed position. Simple it was, but the weakness was that the pins could shear under difficult conditions or if the split pin was not of the correct diameter.

There was a number of situations experienced over the years when a gun or trailer was inexplicably dropped from the towing vehicle during training exercises and on the public road system both in the country and city. Most were never reported and none was known to have caused damage or injury.

The situation occurred with the 17 pounder and with later guns. (Captain) Alan Chenery and (Captain) Kevin Laxton both witnessed situations when the towing gun became detached and thought it a good move to overtake the towing vehicle. Kevin recalls a 17 pounder heading for the bush on its own, along the winding Putty Road to Singleton Range. His detachment had to camp overnight with the weapon, awaiting the arrival of the recovery team.

(Sergeant) Peter Burgess was a long serving and very experienced member of the Regiment who became involved in anything and everything to which the Regiment was committed. He recalls vividly two occasions when gun and tractor parted company in very public circumstances. While travelling to Sydney to perform a salute one Saturday morning, a 25 pounder had other ideas and decided to do some shopping, leaving the tractor and detachment at the corner of George Street and Park Street and stopped at the doors of Waltons, a leading retail store of the time. As if the whole thing was just another routine exercise, the tractor was backed up, the detachment hooked in the recalcitrant 25 pounder and the detachment resumed their journey.

Not to be outdone by an outdated piece of weaponry, some years later an M2A2 with an independent mind decided to drop off on the very public Southern Cross Drive. Again no damage done; the gun was hooked in with great efficiency as if it were a normal parade ground setting and the journey resumed.

(Warrant Officer Class 2) Graham Williams recalls an incident with a convoy proceeding along a bitumen road and down a long and winding decent when a gun dropped and ran forward, lifting the rear wheels of the tractor. The driver only had the foot brakes of the front wheels to slow progress, so with some very fancy clutch and engine revolution judgment, deftly engaged front wheel drive to avoid overheating the brakes, which, in extreme circumstances would render them almost useless. It worked. Fortunately, truck and gun maintained a straight line and the unusual combination was brought safely to a stop. With some help from our very capable band of Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers warriors, the Gunners soon resumed their trek.

This being the first reference to a Warrant Officer, it is appropriate to mention that Warrant Officers are not non-commissioned officers but officers who hold a Warrant: the next step higher is the officer by Commission. Warrants are now signed by the Chief of Army. Further detail is contained in the RAA Liaison Letter, Spring Edition 2013.

(Bombardier) John Smithwick whose roles included those of driver, gun number and acting gun Number 1 and who later achieved spectacularly in the field of commerce, recalls yet another instance when gun and truck parted company soon after negotiating a steep and winding mountain descent.

In this instance, the gun was to the right and passing the tractor while proceeding to demolish the wooden marker posts on the other side of the road. Again there was no damage to any third party. The detachment dismounted and in time honoured fashion hooked in the independently minded gun and proceeded to catch up with the convoy.

Not only were guns the culprits, for there is the report of an incident on the old section of winding Princes Highway leading down to the railway station at Bombo, approaching Kiama. Apparently, a heavily laden trailer detached itself from its towing vehicle and took up residence on the railway line.

The station master witnessed the incident and approached the towing vehicle's driver who had stopped to assess the situation and informed him in the sternest of tones that the driver could not park his trailer on the railway lines and in any case, a train was scheduled to pass through within fifteen or so minutes and he did not want to see any damage to one of his trains. Willing hands recovered the undamaged trailer with stores intact and with the minimum of delay, vehicle and trailer were back on the road.

All these incidents occurred despite the precaution of either the Battery Sergeant Major or the next most senior Non Commissioned Officer of the Battery, together with the senior Non Commissioned Officer riding the vehicle, inspecting all vehicles and towing hooks before departure. It was not the first time that a wire coat hanger was wrapped around a suspect towing hook to help ensure security, even if everything appeared to be in order.

For night deployments, which were a regular feature, particularly in Brigade camps, war time practices were employed with the white painted rear differential illuminated, providing the following vehicle with a guiding light. In these blackout conditions, familiar to many who had served on active service, a safe distance between vehicles was maintained by observing the tail light of the vehicle in front which had four white "cat's eyes". To see the four, the vehicles were too close; to see only one, the distance was too great; when the four blended into two, that was the correct distance.

These were the days when, on field exercises, trucks in convoy were halted, air sentries were posted to warn of approaching enemy aircraft. A close examination of almost any photograph of the time showing vehicles dispersed off the side of a road or track, will identify an air sentry or two valiantly doing their duty while everyone and everything else is under any cover available.

In the early days of the Regiment, the training of Non Commissioned Officers involved a wider range of equipments than in later years. Mine detectors also had their place. In the training area behind the Belmore depot, on one occasion the instructor had placed metal objects in the ground and the students' task was to report their location. Quietly proceeding along, one student had a positive response with one sweep, then another and another and so it went with each successive sweep. This kept going until, amid much hilarity, he reached the water tap in the transport lines. The instructor knew nothing of the underground pipe in the course of his planning, but for a long time the event was a favourite mess topic.

1950

The political and philosophical differences between the West and the expanding Communist worlds led by the USSR had been the cause of increasing tensions between the two following the end of World War II

Identified as the Communist Threat, it was seen as a real challenge to the security of Australia. Following upon the defeat at the polls of the Labor Government in Canberra in December 1949, the new Liberal Coalition Government led by Robert Menzies announced in early 1950 the intention to introduce a National Service scheme. This was seen as enabling Australia to co-operate with British Commonwealth plans to secure against Communist expansion.

Also in 1950, Communist North Korea invaded South Korea. The United Nations came to the support of South Korea. Australia's initial contribution was the commitment of 3 Royal Australian Regiment as part of a British Commonwealth brigade group. 3 Royal Australian Regiment was considerably under strength and volunteers were sought to build numbers. Sgt John Smyth of 3rd Anti Tank Regiment was one of the early volunteers; at the conclusion of hostilities in 1953 he returned to resume his role as Gun Sergeant with the Unit.

There was no commitment of Australian artillery units but there was an impact on the 3rd Anti Tank Regiment. It lost its 17 pounders to enable the 3 RAR anti-tank platoon to defend itself against North Korea's Russian built T34/85 tanks. This tank, with its 85mm gun, is regarded by many as one of the most effective tanks that any nation produced during World War II. The fear of the deployment of tanks was not realised and the 17 pounders were used often in direct fire roles such as demolishing enemy fieldworks.

An Australian Regular Army Engineers Officer who saw service in Korea, Colonel John Hutcheson MC, recalled an instance where a lone 17 pounder, deployed on high ground overlooking a major supply route from North Korea, was effective in severely interrupting the movement of enemy forces and in destroying equipment being brought forward. He won the Military Cross for his actions in Korea.

Several ex-gunners who had volunteered to serve with K-Force (as the United Nations force was known) joined the anti-tank platoon. 1 Field Regiment instructors trained the infantry in the use of the guns; the then Sgt Brian Williams of 3rd Anti Tank Regiment took time off from his work as a self employed watchmaker at Ramsgate to assist in the training. Brian was one of a number of unit members who contributed in this way.

The British 27th Brigade was in action north of Seoul late in 1950 and was joined early the next year by 16th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery. The ANZAC tradition continued.

The 17pounder became obsolete when anti-tank defence became the preserve of the Carl Gustav. In 2011 the first delivery of a new M3 84mm Carl Gustav Medium Direct Fire Support Weapon commenced to infantry, Special Forces and RAAF airfield defence guard units. This weapon was reported as being 40 per cent lighter and 5 per cent shorter than the M2 version. It was also equipped

with a BAE thermal sight. The old version, the M2, was to remain in service for combat-support elements.

The problems for the Government in supporting the United Nation's commitment to South Korea identified very clearly the changing strategic needs of our country. In the evolving new order of the post-war world, Australia had to rethink its position on defence matters and look to the primacy of regular forces. Thus we begin to see the beginning of the end to the time honoured reliance on citizen forces; the significant lead time before they could be committed was no longer acceptable in a fast changing world.

NATIONAL SERVICE

The Menzies government was heavily reliant on the Citizens Military Forces, supplemented by recruitments under the proposed National Service scheme, to meet any military commitment overseas. The Citizens Military Forces were seen as a 3rd AIF in being, although not all had volunteered for service overseas; from 1952 members were required to volunteer so to serve.

There was widespread fear of communist expansion in Europe and Asia and a third major war seemed imminent. Although National Servicemen were not to be required to serve overseas, the assumption was that sufficient would volunteer in a time of emergency to provide the necessary force, as has been the national tradition.

Since Federation, Australia has had a number of National Service schemes, the first being introduced in 1911. The National Service Act, 1951, provided for universal National Service for the male population. The initial requirement was for 5 year's service for fit and eligible 17 year olds. They commenced 98 day full time training period under Regular Army instructors, followed by posting to Citizens Military Forces units where the training commitment was 42 days per year comprising a 14 day camp, 14 days compulsory home training and 14 days optional home training.

Significantly, the mood of the nation at the time was such that there was no widespread political or ideological opposition to the Scheme. Although there were rumblings of discontent from some of those affected, many subsequently regarded their time in uniform with more than a degree of nostalgia. Indeed, there are those who say they enjoyed the life changing experience.

This was the era of the "Cold War" between Communist Russia and its fellow travellers and the West. There was much tension between the two sides, with the story of the Berlin wall – many years later to be demolished by a popular uprising – which divided East and West, being the lasting reminder of the times. The threat of a nuclear war between the two ideologies was of very real concern to those living in those times. Under these stressful conditions, National Service units were seen by the government of the day and the senior levels of the military as having an additional and significant role – a disciplined source of manpower to support the civilian power after any nuclear strike.

Alan Whitely was one who sought to meet his National Service obligation, but missed out because of particular circumstances. He joined the Citizens Military Forces in 1948, then served in the RAAF for six years from 1950 and made application to his Squadron Leader to undertake his National Service commitment. His application was refused. After leaving the RAAF he rejoined the Citizens Military Forces and made a name for himself in several Gunner Regiments as an exceptional Bombardier Driver. His knowledge of vehicles and driving skills was exceptional, as was his ability to be allocated the "good jobs" such as driving the water tank during field exercises or becoming the Commanding Officer's driver. Alan has made a significant contribution to the compiling of this history of the Regiment.

In an article in the "Burwood Nasho's News" for March/April 2008, Jim Dodds recalled his National Service training at 12 National Service Battalion, Holsworthy in 1956 and his later transfer to 23 Light Regiment RAA. After his initial Citizens Military Forces experience with 4.2 inch mortars, "we changed to 25 pounders, real guns with wheels, so we did not have to carry the heavy barrels, base

plates and tripods anymore.” He recalled camps at Singleton and Tianjara on the Braidwood Road west of Nowra and had the usual complaints about the rations.

Jim’s recollections described his “reluctant and illustrious military career, but I really enjoyed it.” He was not alone and these words echoed the sentiments of many National Servicemen of the day.

Initially, Infantry training occupied the 98 days, with Citizens Military Forces units providing the Corps training. As the scheme progressed, the length of commitment was reduced and Corps training was incorporated into the full time period.

Barry Willoughby, who was to retire many years later as Warrant Officer Class I, recalls that he was doing his National Service training in 1957 and training on the 25 pounders. Near the conclusion of his course, the Regiment put on a mortar demonstration for them. When he transferred to the Regiment the Mortars had gone and training was proceeding with great enthusiasm on the 25 pounders. On his first night parade with the Regiment, Barry made his mark when he joined a group of gun numbers in the P Battery gun park at Belmore being instructed by the very capable and knowledgeable Sergeant Tony Collins. Tony was keeping them all on their toes with his variety and range of questions. While the others were learning, for Barry it was little more than a refresher course and it was he who was providing all the answers. He now describes himself at the time as a real know all, although one can detect a sense of pride in the recollection.

James Sutherland was one who became a “Nasho” towards the end of the scheme and his recollections make interesting reading.

I entered Ingleburn on 7th January 1958, aged 19 and marched out 77 days later a far better person. The main things that are impressed in my mind are

Mateship

We were installed in huts 5 blokes per room and being “9 mile snipers” we made up the crew of a 25 pounder. Over the next 77 days we became mates and had lots of good times (and some bad ones) in the process.

There were many silly jokes perpetrated on one another, like the one when a bed was dismantled when the normal occupant was on leave and relocated high up in a gum tree outside the hut. Our unsuspecting hero returned to find no bed, only a vacant floor space. The humour was in witnessing his befuddlement as to where he was and what was going on.

I spent many hours running around the football oval with rifle at the high port as punishment for being the ringleader in so many instances. No wonder I came out fit!

Discipline

At first it was a bit of a culture shock, but after a short time most of us got used to it. However, there were a few idiots who were slow to learn the rules and the recognise implications arising from their actions of non-observance.

Ingleburn in January is invariably hot so one day three clowns decided they had had enough marching and shot through with their rifles, hitched a ride to the Crossroads Hotel only a matter of minutes away and took advantage of the comforts available.

On closing time they decided to hitch a ride back to camp. Still carrying their rifles, they flagged down the first vehicle and that turned out to be the MP wagon. They travelled back to camp quickly enough, but ended up in the clink.

Now the Army has its ways of educating idiots. If they were left in the cells, to some they might become heroes and the Army could not have that, could they?

Next thing we know – about midnight – BANG! BANG! on the walls of the hut accompanied by “everybody out; full marching order. Thanks to Messrs (A) (B) and (C) we now commence a 9 mile route march”. Later, the three in question were taken down the back of

E Company lines and given a real hiding. It taught everybody a lot and the three became very good soldiers. We were most impressed.

Health and Fitness

When I went in I was approximately 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighed about 9 stone. When I came out I was 5 feet 9 1/2 inches tall and weighed 11 stone 7 pounds. I could have taken on Joe Louis in 5 rounds! The combination of exercise and diet worked wonders on just about everyone.

There is no doubt in my mind that **every** 18-19 year old should do a similar time in the Army.

Other

My time in uniform saw me become more aware of the importance of little things in life and in standards of dress and bearing. I remember spending 45 minutes per shoe spit polishing them to go on leave and/or a dance.

The march out parade was memorable for my family and me. My then girlfriend had spent time as a WRAAF member and told me that our parade was superior to any she had seen in the Air Force. Nothing like a morale booster to impress.

At the time I was studying to be an accountant at three nights a week at technical college, which had to be put on hold for my time at Ingleburn. I changed my mind about accountancy after my mates said I had the “gift of the gab”, and decided to take on sales. It was a decision I never regretted. I became general manager of a company at age 26 and later started my own company that after 18 years of operation and sales of \$20 million plus per annum, I sold and became a self-funded retiree.

You may be wondering why I was older than most in entering National Service. Actually, I was called up in 1957 for the RAAF, but my employer organised a 12 month deferment, so I ended up in the Army. You little beauty!

National Service concluded in 1959 and the Government cancelled the January 1960 intake. The next step of the Government was the automatic discharge of all National Servicemen in the Citizens Military Forces at 30 June 1960.

In 1964 a new National Service Scheme was to be introduced because of our fear of war with Indonesia over its concerns about the future of Malaysia after independence from Britain. When Indonesia changed its policy over that issue, those National Servicemen helped meet the Government’s commitment to the United States of America in its support for South Vietnam against the forces of North Vietnam. More on the “Birthday Ballot” later.

Now, let us step back. In the 1950s the possible deployment to the Middle East was the most likely scenario. Equipment and training reflected this influence. With so many serving Citizens Military Forces Officers and Non Commissioned Officers of 3 Anti Tank Regiment having experienced this type of warfare, training was good and comprehensive.

Although the Regiment had a near full establishment of all ranks, the arrival of National Servicemen had a negative effect on the culture of serving members; the Other Ranks’ Mess was now dry and the *camaraderie* engendered by after parade Mess activity was gone. The local pub was an alternative, but not a really satisfactory alternative. There resulted some loss of experienced Citizens Military Forces members, but the impact on the operations of the Regiment was not significant at the time.

However, the ultimate impact of the introduction of National Service together with changing public perceptions towards the military was an increasing difficulty in attracting volunteers.

By the end of 1953, the CMF had increased sufficiently in numbers (about 84,000) to allow for an increase in the field force order of battle. National Servicemen totalled some 70,000 and 14,000 volunteers provided the balance.

The new Artillery structure for 2nd Division under Lt Gen I N Dougherty was:-

Commander HQ RAA	Brigadier C E Chapman
5 Field Regiment	Lieutenant Colonel C C Thomas
7 Field Regiment	Lieutenant Colonel A G Hanson
21 Field Regiment	Lieutenant Colonel D H Wade
3 Light Regiment	Lieutenant Colonel T A Harris
1 Amphibious Observation Regt	Major L G V Stark
1 Movement Light Battery	vacant
31 Divisional Locating Battery	Major C E H Rich
HQ 1 Army Group Royal (Aust) Artillery (Anti Aircraft)	Brigadier P W A Kelso
1 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regt	Lieutenant Colonel W L Perry
23 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regt	Lieutenant Colonel D H Vose
1 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment	Lieutenant Colonel F W Thomson
18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment	Lieutenant Colonel J Manning

1951

As mentioned, the 17 pounders of 3rd Anti Tank Regiment went to Korea in 1950 for the anti tank platoon of 3 Royal Australian Regiment. The anti tank role was now to be undertaken by the Armoured Corps and the Infantry, so there was a change of name to 3 Light Regiment and a change of major equipment to the 4.2in mortar. This enabled a valuable air lift capability.

The smooth bore 4.2 inch (107 mm) mortar had seen wide service in the Second World War and for members of 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment AIF who saw service in the South West Pacific, it was a familiar weapon. It had a detachment of 6, a maximum range of 4,100 yards (3,750 m) for the 19 pound (8.6 kg) bomb and 2 charges. Rate of fire was 12 rounds per minute.

The Regiment now had to take a significant change of direction. The direct fire role of the 17 pounder, demanded much of the skills of the No1 and the Layer (No 3) in hitting a moving target where it was most vulnerable. These particular skills were now replaced by skills of speed and accuracy in applying to the mortar sights technical information calculated in the Command Post and ordered to the guns.

The new technical aspects of gunnery had to be learned quickly, necessitating a complete change in duties and concepts. Under Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel T A (Tom) Harris – in civilian life, an executive of the Sydney Morning Herald - a very effective transition was accomplished.

(Captain) Kevin Laxton's recollection was that the effectiveness was due to the enthusiasm of all ranks for the transition, the very good Regular Army Warrant Officer Class 2 instructors – known as Assistant Instructors Gunnery – and the large number of members who had World War II experience and had been introduced to the weapon while performing the war time unit's varied roles in the South West Pacific.

One of the new skills to be developed for an indirect fire weapon was the accurate orientation and parallelism of the battery mortars or guns. This was achieved by the employment of a simple theodolite called a director which could be oriented with a built in compass and then used to orientate or pass a line to each gun sight through a simple trigonometric process thereby achieving parallelism for the battery.

The Gun Position Officer (GPO) was responsible for the determination of his battery's map reference for the command post's measurement of range from guns to target. The next steps were the progressive development of the battery grid to the other battery or batteries within the Battery by the Command Post Officer and his team, to the Regimental Grid by the Regimental Survey Officer and his team. This process changed little from the time of its introduction in World War I to the retirement of the 105mm Hamel gun. The RAA Liaison Letter of Autumn 2015 records this significant event for the School of Artillery with the CO/CI highlighting the technological, doctrinal and cultural changes occurring for

the Gunners with 53 Battery retiring the 105mm Hamel in December 2014. With this development, the traditional cry on the gun position when the guns were being brought into action of “Aiming Point Director” was relegated to Gunner memories and the pages of history.

Deployment of mortars was by Jeep and trailer. The Jeep replaced the six wheel drive GMCs (General Motors Corporation) and “Studs” (Studebakers) gun tractors, both made in the USA, that had such a great reputation as gun tractors and had served us so well with the 17 pounder. For our Regiment, these trucks were now cargo carriers.

The “Classic Military Vehicle” publication for August 2010 ran an article on the Studebaker. It recorded that at the time, Studebaker was one of the largest automobile manufacturers in the world, although, to meet production demands, Reo Motors of Lansing, Michigan was contracted to build copies of the truck. Production began in June 1941 and 197,678 vehicles later, production stopped in August 1945. This truck and the White scout car, familiar to our Army personnel, was powered by a 5248cc Hercules JXD six cylinder petrol engine, having the Studebaker logo cast into the manifold.

The Studebaker used the same five speed transmission and two speed transfer case as the GMC and even the Timken axles were identical to those on the GMC trucks.

The general purpose light vehicle was the Jeep and Alan Whitely recorded some of its interesting features. This $\frac{3}{4}$ ton, four cylinder petrol 4 x 4 vehicle had a three speed transmission and two speed transfer case. It had more than one manufacturer. Originally, developmental work was undertaken by American Bantam and Willys for the “GP” vehicle, with Ford a somewhat reluctant starter. However, it was Ford that had the production capacity and it received its initial contract in December, 1940. Those made by Ford – the first major producer - were originally powered by what was, in effect, one half of a Ford Mercury side valve V8 engine having 1966cc capacity, producing 42 brake horse power. Never slow to recognise the value of advertising, Ford produced Jeeps were identified as such by the traditional Ford logo on the rear body pressings or the trademark “F” on bolt heads.

Some of the ground-breaking peculiarities of the Jeep were that all radiator hoses were the same diameter and the same length, any necessary curves were metal, not rubber, headlights could be turned around to illuminate the engine bay by slackening a butterfly nut and the wheel wrench fitted many of the nuts and bolts elsewhere on the vehicle.

With the Mortar, separately boxed were the barrel and tripod with sight and aiming posts. The baseplate, with a spring-loaded socket designed to absorb much of the effect of the upward thrust of the bomb travelling along the barrel, was carried with two rope handles.

For man pack operations, two carried the base-plate by its rope handles, two the barrel and two the tripod and extraneous items.

Later, the Regiment had a battery of Mortars on two wheels that were towed complete behind the Jeep. These were described as mobile base-plate mortars and had different range tables.

Construction of the base plate position was all essential. Depending on the type of ground, the base plate could be set in a fairly shallow hole, or in a much deeper hole reinforced with wood or stone.

The first or “bedding” round was nearly always an interesting experience. Sandbags on the baseplate and tripod did not always stop the whole piece of equipment wanting to follow the bomb to the target, while on other occasions in soft ground, the baseplate was keen to disappear into the bowels of the earth. A Number 1 never took kindly to a baseplate poorly dug in on hard ground bouncing out when the bomb left the barrel and deciding to sit in his lap, while the detachment had quite unkind things to say about having to dig, dig, dig to retrieve a recalcitrant baseplate trying to find its way to the other side of the world.

There was generally less drama with the mobile baseplate, but with both types, after a day live firing the Number 2 seldom had to reach too high to load.

If the reader would like some excitement in life, this came with misfire drill. In the centre of the bomb's four fins was space to accommodate the primer – not unlike a shotgun cartridge – and between the fins were placed the charges, held in place by a coiled wire spring.

The intention was for the bomb to slide down the barrel, the primer to hit the fixed firing pin at the base and detonate the charges. Sometimes there were misfires. After the prescribed safety period, the barrel was unlocked from the baseplate – a simple half twist – the barrel lifted and tilted down for the bomb to slide forward and be caught by the Number 2 standing to one side of the barrel having his hands cupped to avoid the fuse. The primer and charges were then removed.

This was always a heart stopping experience. Although any risk was minimal, imagination always came to the fore and made the occasion a major event, to be talked about sometimes for years afterwards. The more the story was told and retold the greater became the drama – and there have been some great stories!

It would not be for the first time that the No1 of the nearest mortar would time the firing of his weapon to coincide with the detachment carrying out misfire drill experiencing the bomb just completing its slide down the barrel. For the witnesses, the expressions of the detachment the subject of the joke and the instant shades of grey in complexions will never be forgotten

Alan Chenery was a Citizens Military Forces “original” and he recalled vividly another heart stopper, when a height challenged No2 stood on an ammunition box to load the bomb, lost his balance, pulling the barrel with him. The round fell too close the OP for comfort.

What we did not know when we lost the 17 pounders for the Korean War, was that they would continue in service with Infantry units of the Citizens Military Forces. In *The History of the University of New South Wales Regiment* there is a record and photograph of the weapon at their 1955 camp, Singleton. Officer Commanding the Anti Tank Platoon was a Sergeant.

Orders from the Troop Command Post to the guns were by megaphone, later by a battery powered Tannoy, a British trade name for a small two way loudspeaker system with a unit at each gun.

Commanding Officers are always very sensitive as to who does what to their Regiment, especially when the Regiment is performing well. There is the story of a Divisional Commander, a keen gardener, who called into the Belmore Depot on his way to Holsworthy training area. At the entrance to the Depot were two substantial pot plants. The General told the Adjutant – a World War II veteran, very efficient and a gentleman of the old school – that the plants had scale. Later in the day the General returned to the depot, inspected the pot plants again, summoned the Adjutant, recounted the morning incident and made it very clear that it was his expectation that appropriate action should have been taken immediately. The Adjutant was transferred from the Regiment.

On hearing of this, the Commanding Officer – also a World War II veteran - said he would solve the pot plant problem and did so by lifting the plants from the pots and with due ceremony deposited them in the garbage bin. It is only conjecture, but maybe the Commanding Officer did not have much time for the General.

1955

This year the lanyard was reissued. Coloured white and in a finely plaited style, it was to be worn on the right shoulder for the Artillery and the end secured in the right shirt pocket as an ornamental item of dress. This was soon replaced by a plain white cord style. While originally issued to Cavalry and Artillery its purpose was to secure a type of pocket knife for freeing horses entangled in rope or leather harness or in cutting open bales of horse feed combined with a hoof-pick for removing stones from a horse's hooves. Lameness in a horse can be a critical problem especially for those towing weighty guns or wagons.

Gunners had another practical purpose for the lanyard – the securing of a fuse key. For reasons much discussed, but never authenticated, the famous A Field Battery wear the lanyard on the left shoulder, which was the original requirement. The reason for the change of shoulder for other Gunners was the

difficulty in removing the items attached to the lanyard from the left pocket when also wearing a bandolier for small arms ammunition. The change was made soon after World War I.

The 1950s saw our Regiment and others heavily committed in providing guards of honour for ceremonial occasions acknowledging the war dead.

One event of special significance occurred on 25 September 1955 when the Anglican Church of St George, Earlwood, built as a memorial to those who gave their lives in the two World Wars, was dedicated by the Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia, The Most Reverend HWK Mowll CMG DD.

23 Light Regiment, RAA provided the ceremonial guard, supported by a military band.

Guards consisted of mostly enthusiastic volunteers for such occasions and the turn-out was always of a high order. Webbing was “blanco-ed” (a type of fine powdered, khaki coloured clay worked into the dampened weave with a nail brush or old tooth brush), the black leather boots, gaiter straps and the various brass fittings polished to a gleaming finish. The rifle sling and its brass received similar treatment.

The .303 rifles were issued and taken home the previous Monday (parade) night – minus bolts – and also given the once over. Bolts were issued by Quartermaster staff on the day of the parade.

It was usual for the guard to rehearse its drill for some hours in the depot grounds at Belmore. Sometimes this drill was also carried out in the streets behind the depot. This always brought out the family groups to watch and occasionally youngsters would march alongside, proud to be associated with the Army.

A member of that guard, then Bombardier Walter Reed, recalls the day.

The guard commander gave his final briefing before we left the depot in the unit’s trucks. The strongest point made was that if he gave an incorrect drill order, we were not to move. The guard Non Commissioner Officer would correct things at an appropriate time.

The ceremony was fairly long, but not too tedious and everything was going along well. We were “at ease” and it was time to go. The appropriate courtesies were made and the guard commander took his position at the head of the guard and behind the band for the march off down the road, around the corner and into the trucks. “Guard – right turn” ordered our fearless leader.

Because we were “at ease” and facing the church, two orders were required before we could move. The absolutely essential one was to come to attention. A wrong order, so to a man, the guard stayed “at ease”, in accordance with our briefing, although there were some anxious glances between those in the ranks and some quiet mutterings about Officers and their abilities.

“Band by the centre, guard by the right, quick march” ordered the guard commander.

The band struck up and marched off, followed at the regulation distance by the Officer. The onlookers applauded, which must have been very satisfying to our singular hero as he disappeared into the distance.

The guard was all alone and getting lonelier by the second. As the band commenced its right wheel into the street where we were to disperse, the guard Non Commissioned Officer found his voice and gave the orders to get us on the move. Another round of applause from invited guests and others.

As we finally arrived at the dispersal area, we came to a thoroughly mystified guard commander wondering how his guard could have become lost over such a short distance. While map reading might not have been one of our strong points, surely we could not have been that bad!

To make the point as to who really knew what they were about, the guard threw all it could into its final drill movements. Royalty would have been impressed. The Non Commissioned Officer made his report to the Officer and after the final orders for the guard were given, we headed back to the depot.

Surprisingly, little was made of the event, probably because we had again performed well and we had again demonstrated to all and sundry that nothing was going to faze the Gunners.

Some years later, history was to repeat itself to a certain extent, on an even grander scale. More of that later.

1956

In 1956 a further name change occurred; the Unit was now 23 Light Regiment and therein lies a story of some significance to our Regiment. That story revolves around the grim determination of one man, the negotiating and persuasive skills of a Staff Officer and the generosity and understanding of another.

The genesis lies in the introduction of the 1951 National Service Scheme, which resulted in a rapid expansion of the number of Citizen Military Force units. With any expansion there is a requirement for the numbering of the new units and often sub units.

Within Gunner circles, this task fell to the Staff Officer Royal (Australian) Artillery Grade 1, Directorate Royal (Australian) Artillery, Lieutenant Colonel W (Bill) Ford. Naturally, existing units will always be keen to retain their numerical identification and in discussions with the author of this history, the retired Colonel Ford OBE, recalled that the difficulties in meeting units' demands were compounded by the wishes of the then Citizens Military Forces Member of the Military Board – Major General Windeyer – that there be no duplication of numbers.

At the time, the figure “3” was in demand by two Gunner units – 3 Light Regiment with headquarters at Belmore and 3 Field Regiment based in Perth, Western Australia. Both CMF units were raised in 1948 and both Commanding Officers had commanded the parent AIF unit.

The strength of the Perth Unit's claim was that 3 Field Brigade (Militia) had existed for many years before World War II. From 1937 to 1939 its Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel Athol Hobbs who then raised 2/3 Field Regiment (AIF) and continued as Commanding Officer from 1939 to 1940. As is to be expected, many the Militia Officers, Non Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks transferred to the AIF unit with their Commanding Officer.

Worthy of mention is that his father, Lieutenant General Sir J J Talbot Hobbs had joined the Perth battery in 1887, commanded the Australian Artillery at Gallipoli and was General Officer Commanding 5 Division in the 1918 offensive.

Another feature of some significance in that unit's claim to retain the figure “3” is that 2/3 Field Regiment of the 6th Division, was the first Australian unit in World War II to be issued with 25 pounders. By coincidence, Bill Ford also served in that Regiment at one time.

The Perth unit's claim to “3” could not be ignored and the Sydney unit would have to be allocated something else, but there was nothing available that would keep alive the relationship between our Regiment, its parent Regiment and the famous 9th Division of World War II.

Colonel J N L Argent (“Silver John”), the last war-time Commanding Officer of 2/3 Anti Tank Regiment and the man responsible for raising its post War successor in 1948 would have none of this. Colonel Ford recalled a “dreadful row” ensuing.

However, searching deeper, a possible solution emerged. Within Eastern Command, under Lieutenant General Sir Frank Berryman was the recently raised 23 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment located at North Head, commander by Lieutenant Colonel D H Vose. A former Militia Officer, his were the first anti aircraft gunners of World War II to engage Japanese aircraft in their raids on Darwin in 1942.

The magic combination “23” – what could be more suitable? Lieutenant Colonel Ford undertook some delicate negotiations. The outcome being that, with a degree of understanding and outright generosity from a Command Officer that only Service personnel could really appreciate, the hallowed figures were transferred from Heavy Anti Aircraft to Field Artillery.

Once the formal approvals were granted, there was quiet celebration by those who had served in the parent unit in World War II and those that were serving in 23 Light Regiment. Colonel Argent and the Commanding Officer of the day, Lieutenant Colonel A (“Sandy”) Mair, also a World War II Officer, who had served with 2/3 Anti Tank Regiment RAA, decreed that in recognition of our Regiment’s proud history and to perpetuate the war time link, henceforth the numerical identification of the Unit in the spoken word would be Two Three. Only the uninformed would mention “twenty three”.

Lieutenant Colonel Vose accepted the renumbering of his unit to 16 Heavy Aircraft Regiment; it was removed from the Order of Battle a few years later, when new technology replaced the gun for ground defence against aircraft and the Regular Army handed responsibility for that role.

The generosity of Dudley Vose and his commitment to and support of the Gunner fraternity was to be demonstrated again, many years later, when the Executor of his Estate informed the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company in 2005 of his bequest of \$10 000 together with some memorabilia. He was a great Gunner in many ways.

By way of postscript, Colonel William (Bill) Ford OBE was born on 6 September 1913 at Seymour in Victoria. He started his civilian career as a schoolteacher and later joined the Militia 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) the same battalion that his uncle, Brigadier and Senator William Kingsley Bolton had raised and then commanded at Gallipoli in 1915. He served in World War II, was Mentioned in Despatches, commanded the School of Artillery from 1956-1960 and retired from the Army in 1963.

Bill died, aged 97, on 24 May 2011 and at his death was the oldest survivor of those who graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1939. Always a man of drive and dedication, he was still driving and delivering Meals on Wheels to others at age 95. One of his sons is a distinguished Gunner. Major General Tim Ford AO (Retired) took up the appointment of Representative Colonel Commandant in April 2005 and stood down from that role on St Barbara’s Day 2012. General Ford had been a driving force over many years in his support for the Royal Regiment and in involvement with the many Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery regional, unit and historical associations around Australia.

Work commitments often resulted in Officers travelling to Holsworthy Range in their own vehicles for live firing weekends. One particular Gun Position Officer managed to get his Jaguar bogged behind the Command Post, where it stayed until the Sunday afternoon while the Battery completed two more fire and movement exercises. On completion of the exercise, the Battery Reconnaissance Group detoured to the first position occupied so the Gun Position Officer could retrieve his car from the now dried out bog.

(Lieutenant Colonel) Sam Wheeler recalled an incident when the Battery was late getting into position. The speedy laying of Regimental line was critical, so in the absence of adequate Regimental and Battery vehicles, the Battery Commander put a drum of cable and the dispenser into the boot of his car, secured the cable at the gun position and headed off down the track. Soon after setting off, the cable broke and he arrived at his destination with a near full drum of cable. So much for initiative and innovation.

Talking of communications, Sam was a National Serviceman in the first intake for 1956 and trained on the radio equipment in use by the Regiment at the time. The set was the weighty “122”, powered by wet cell car batteries. The first task in establishing communications for the day was to “balance the aerial”. The procedure was to turn a small wheel (A) a little larger than a 50 cent piece quite quickly by using a pencil or similar in a recesses in the front of the wheel provided for that purpose, to build up a meter reading, turn more slowly a similar wheel (B) to lower the reading, then another spin of (A) to raise the reading. The set should then be ready to transmit and receive. Unless one had developed the required knack, often it meant repeating the process which after the second or third time became a real frustration, particularly when speed was the essence.

While speed might have been the essence, turn the wheels (A) or (B) too quickly and too far and the internal contacts could be thrown off the revolving drum, requiring a part dismantling of the set by the Sergeant Signaller to reconnect. In moments like this, it is not often they are around when required most.

Signallers of the day will recall that, with the 122, as the sun went down, so did the standards of communication.

Charging the batteries and maintaining a number in reserve was the responsibility of the Battery's Sergeant Signaller. This task required a petrol driven generator and to reduce noise to a minimum, a dug in and specially constructed shallow trench over a couple of metres for the exhaust pipe. Done properly, the noise level was surprisingly low.

Not only signallers had their problems. There was the story of the Brigade Commander who was not at all happy with the quality of his Army issue vehicle. The solution? Buy a Land Rover resplendent in military green, equip it with an Army driver plus signaller with his equipment and travel in comfort.

1957

Then came the big day in 1957 when the Regiment said farewell to the 4.2 mortars. It had proven to be a very good weapon and with a well trained gun detachment, it was surprisingly accurate. Compliments were readily forthcoming from Regular Army and Citizen Military Forces observers both as to deployment, technical proficiencies and response times.

Under Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel A (Sandy) Mair ED the Regiment was equipped with the 25 pounder. A new gun and a new name - 23 Field Regiment RAA.

The 1 ton 15 hundredweight 3 quarter (1,778 kg) gun, with a maximum range of 13,400 yard (12,250m), firing a 25 pound (11.3 kg) shell and with a detachment of 6 had a great reputation from World War II. Equipped with a platform onto which the gun was towed about a metre into the firing position by its tractor, the gun had a rapid 360 degree traverse. For high angle firing the platform had to be removed, followed by some enthusiastic digging to elevate the wheels and consequently the front of the weapon, lower the spade box and dig a hole to accommodate the breech on recoil.

Mention of the platform is a reminder of a story by (Lieutenant) Bob Elphinstone when a Number 1 did not ensure that the platform was correctly locked in before road movement. In short, the platform became a little mangled, this being a sin no respectable Number 1 would ever admit happened to him. Arriving back at the Belmore Depot, he arranged with a mate in the scrap iron business to purchase one that was in good condition. The damaged item was removed and replaced with the recent purchase.

What to do with the old one? Roll it out of sight between a fence and a depot building – no one would ever know. Well, that was correct in theory. However, an audit of Regimental books was in progress and the auditors determined that there was one more platform than there were guns in the Regiment. There was some quick thinking outside the square by the Regular staff and ultimately the auditors went away satisfied that all was well.

Ammunition was separate and there were 4 charges. In loading, the projectile was placed on the open vertically sliding wedge breech block by the number 4. The number 2, with a rammer about a metre long, then rammed the projectile forward to engage the driving band. The cartridge case incorporating the appropriate charge followed, with the number 4 pushing the base forward with a closed fist. This movement engaged the protruding rim of the cartridge case with the two extractors, releasing the block, which was closed by the Number 2, operating the LBM – Lever, Breech Mechanism. Cumbersome and slow, you might be thinking, but with the rate of fire at 5 rounds per minute, it could hold its own with the later M2A2 and the L5 having fixed ammunition.

Later, with the replacement of the 25 pounder, the badge of office of a Number 2, the part brass sheathed wooden ramming rod would disappear and with it the satisfying thud that characterised a good ram. A bad ram meant that the driving bands of the projectile were not engaged effectively with the rifling of the bore and of course, this could affect the fall of shot. Such an event was reported by the Number 1 to the Command Post, which then reported to the Forward Observer who would then make the decision as to whether to accept the significance of the information provided by that round or not.

The mid 1950s were golden days. The Regiment was at full strength, many Officers and some Non Commissioned Officers had war experience, there was plentiful ammunition, Brigade exercises and

live barrages provided an excitement seldom equalled in peace time and the Regiment held its own in technical expertise and performance in the field.

Regimental fire missions were a highlight of any training programme. Who could ever forget the electrifying experience on the gun position with the call “Mike target Mike target Mike target”! There was great competition between batteries, gun detachments and safety officers to be the first ready.

If the target was in sight of the gun positions – and where possible Commanding Officers arranged this as a morale booster – all ranks of the Regiment in all postings took personal delight and great satisfaction in the end result.

With the 25 pounders, there was now the responsibility for the firing of salutes, initially at the site of Mrs Macquaries’ Chair in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Then there is the question of why a 21 gun salute.

The British War Office re-examined the much examined question many years ago and came to the conclusion that Queen’s Regulations were the authority, which laid down 21 guns as the number to be fired for a Royal Salute, except at Hyde Park (London), where the number is 41. It was also observed that from a list of salutes authorised in 1827, the number of guns fired ranged from 7, 9, 21 and 41. Over time, many theories have been advanced but have been largely discarded as popular superstition and fable. There is no arguing with Queen’s Regulations, just do not ask why.

In the early years, Citizens Military Forces members were not called upon to man the 25 pounders to fire salutes. This was the responsibility of “Wallaby Troop”, comprising the Cadre staff of Gunner units in Sydney, utilising the guns of one or more of the Field Regiments. (Lieutenant Colonel) Don Smith recalled that as Adjutant he was Gun Position Officer for at least one salute and probably several more.

Don commenced his Army career as a Citizens Military Forces Gunner with 3 Light Regiment, gained his commission in 1956, became Full Time Duty and appointed Adjutant to Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Ray Gay ED before transferring to the Regular Army.

His first posting overseas was to Malaysia in 1967 serving with 107 Field Battery as BK (Battery Captain) then Battery Commander. In 1969 he was on the staff of Officer Training Unit Scheyville then spent seven months in the US at the School of Psychological Warfare. During the period 1971/1972 Don served in South Vietnam on Headquarters 1 Australian Task Force. Then followed staff appointments in Canberra before his appointment in 1975 to the School of Artillery at North Head as 2IC (Second in Command). At the School he served under the very highly regarded Lieutenant Colonel M (Mick) Burge, who after leaving the Regular Army and commencing a very promising career in civilian life, was to become Commanding Officer of 23 Field Regiment RAA in 1978.

Later promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Don was appointed to the Weapons Research Establishment in South Australia. Staff appointments at Victoria Barracks, Sydney followed until retirement in 1984 when he entered the civilian workforce.

With the increasing professionalism of the Citizens Military Forces, “Wallaby Troop” was disbanded and the task fell to Citizens Military Force members with, in Sydney, the responsibility alternating between the two Field Regiments with one supporting the other as circumstances demanded.

Peter Burgess remembers participating in salutes being fired from Mrs Macquarie’s Chair in the Botanic Gardens, Fort Dennison, Dawes Point, Man o’ War Steps, Opera House foreshore, Parliament House, Canberra, Fairbairn Air Force Base, Qantas Base at Sydney Airport and Royal Military College, Duntroon.

We always expect the best from the gun detachments and the firing of salutes, but Peter recalls that not always do things go to plan. A salute for Her Majesty The Queen at Fairbairn was conducted at a time when ejected cartridges resulted in tinder dry grass catching fire. The well disciplined detachments took it in their stride and continued with the salute while the Fire Brigade doused the flames. The incident later appeared in the Australian version of “Bloops and Blunders”.

At the Dawes Point site, a salute was fired with a combination of 7 Field Regiment and 23 Field Regiment detachments with a gun persistently reporting a misfire. Because of the observance of standard drills, the salute was not interrupted, but there was acute embarrassment in the other regiment when the cause was found to be the absence of a firing pin. That detachment did have the advantage of a clean barrel which reduced substantially the time spent on after firing maintenance, but this was little consolation to the dejected members.

At another combined salute, this time at the Qantas Base, for the Vice President of the United States of America, a gun was seen to be having trouble ejecting the cartridge case after the first round. The No1 instructed the No4 to hit the LBM (Lever Breech Mechanism) harder to solve the problem. That did not work and the cartridge case stubbornly resisted all reasonable attempts to do that expected of it. Again, the observance of correct drills ensured that all but the well informed knew that anything was amiss.

On return to the gun park, the cause of the trouble was readily apparent – no extractors. Of course, again, it was not one of our guns or one of our detachments.

Not only are guns sometimes the cause of difficulties. There was the case of the salute GPO (Gun Position Officer) ordering the firing of the 22nd round in a 21 gun salute. With the Regimental Sergeant Major Ceremonial watching proceedings and looking very apprehensive as to what was to follow, there was relief all around when the Number 1 of the gun ordered to fire was heard to say "We don't fire that". Who was the Number 1? Who was the Gun Position Officer? In honouring a long established tradition, no names, no pack drill!

Talking of Gun Position Officers, there was the occasion when a Gun Position Officer had his hat blown off while the guns were in convoy in suburban Sydney, only to see it lost forever following upon the quick action of a local resident.

As those who have served in the Regiment will know, the demands on members can, at times, be such that even reasonable employers have to draw the line in granting time off for an employee's Army commitment. Another of Peter Burgess' recollections centre around some of the salutes fired in Canberra, when detachment commanders had insufficient members from the Regiment for the task at hand. The solution? Employ volunteer ground staff from Duntroon or Officer Cadets from the Defence Academy. On one occasion the Royal Military College "Q" Store issued dress blues for the occasion, which ended up being permanent personal issue, at least for those serving Gunners from Sydney.

Lest there be serious concern about the quality of gun drill performed by the volunteers, clearly demonstrated on these occasions was what the part time soldier always knows – good instruction by committed and experienced Non Commissioned Officers, coupled with the efforts of equally committed and enthusiastic volunteers will result in a performance of great quality. These salutes went without a hitch and without criticism and the experience was obviously enjoyed by the volunteers. Importantly, from a Gunner's perspective, it gave the Officer Cadets a valuable introduction to Artillery.

In the mid-1950s the ever popular Jeep – Truck, ¼ ton – was supplanted by the Champ, manufactured by the Austin Motor Company in the UK and powered by a Rolls Royce four cylinder, 2838cc 80 hp (60kw) water cooled, petrol engine. Suspension was independent at all four wheels using wishbones and longitudinal torsion bars. It had a five speed gearbox and for reverse, a lever operated a single speed transfer case, which enabled the same five gears to be used in reverse. As with the Jeep, it had a fold-down windscreen.

Peter Revell recalls the expertise developed by the more experienced drivers in the field in unauthorised competition to determine the driver with the best skills in changing gears while driving in reverse. No casualties were ever recorded.

Alan Whiteley well remembers the trap for younger players when moving off in the Champ from the parking area at Kogarah Depot. The distortions in the wire fencing surrounding the vehicle park are lasting evidence of the necessity for drivers to ensure that the forward/reverse lever was in the correct position for the direction of travel when moving off after first parade servicing.

Access to all things mechanical was difficult because of built-in waterproofing and radio suppression.

The efficacy of the water proofing was always in doubt in practice.

With snorkel raised, the vehicle could wade streams to a depth of 1.8 metres – with driver standing. (Bombardier) Terry Turner has recollections of a successful river crossing being accomplished after about four hours of preparation. Then followed two to three hours of work returning the vehicle to normal mode.

Terry has fond memories of their comfort and cross-country performance, but the steering was heavy and the turning circle was woeful.

The Champ was as complex and expensive as the Jeep was primitive and inexpensive. In addition there was the Land Rover which had an enclosed cab as compared with a folding canvas arrangement, could match most of the Champ's capabilities and was a fraction of the price. The Champs were withdrawn from service in the early 1960s and Land Rovers confirmed their pre-eminence.

Alan Whiteley recalled that the first Land Rovers purchased by the Australian Army were short wheelbase models, with the rear cargo area accommodating only four passengers. The Regiment used series IIA, a four cylinder petrol engine model of 2 ¼ litres (2286cc) having optional four wheel drive, a four speed gearbox with high/low range transfer case.

This was later supplemented by the long wheelbase Series III 6 cylinder petrol engine model of 2.6 litres (2625cc). Its cargo area was a much more useful area and could accommodate eight passengers.

Both Land Rovers were very similar in appearance and they shared many common features, but there was a range of improvements incorporated in the Series III that reflected the introduction of general enhancements in vehicle and driver safety and comfort. There were also some minor variations that drivers could regard as a step backward, such as the driver's seat not now being adjustable.

Progress in technology was to have a significant impact on the role of artillery as were the changes in defence policy with the emphasis on forward defence and the resultant change in the role of the Army.

First to feel the impact were the Anti Aircraft units. Aircraft were now flying too fast for manually operated guns, even with the use of computers to direct the fire. Surface to air missiles systems were more transportable and more effective than the gun. Then came the decision that the RAAF would take responsibility for targets above 15,000 feet and that saw the demise of the Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiments. The Army would retain responsibility for low altitude air defence but that responsibility would be assumed by the Regular Army. For the CMF that meant the loss of Light Anti Aircraft Regiments from the establishment.

In an historical sense, an even more important decision was made in 1962 for the abolition of coast artillery – the passing of an era.

Technological change also has had an impact on the status of Artillery. Up until the beginning of World War II, the Artillery was the most sophisticated in a technological sense and this was reflected in the standards of technical proficiency required of Officers, Non Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks. However other Arms and Services advanced to the stage where the standards of expertise required of all ranks in all Corps were at least equally demanding. The pre-eminence of the Gunner in the application of sophisticated technology was to be reasserted in the early years of the 21st century, but more of that later.

Forward defence was not a new concept. Australia had long accepted overseas commitments beginning with the Maori Wars in New Zealand and the Boer War of South Africa in the 1800s.

Then came the heavy commitments to the Allied successes of the two World Wars. World War I was more in support of the interests of the British Empire, trade and its allies under threat than in preserving Australia's national security, although honouring our alliances was also a significant feature. Initially that also applied in large measure to Australia's involvement in World War II, but upon Japan's entry into the War, national security became the principal feature of defence policy.

Post World War II, Australia's first commitment of troops was to support the British in the Malayan Emergency then the various United Nations' Organization sponsored actions in South East Asia and in Vietnam as an ally of the United States of America.

Artillery involvement in the Malayan Emergency from 1955 to 1960 provided valuable experience for the Royal Australian Artillery. Training since World War II had been for open warfare and now Gunners were faced with small bands of terrorists hidden deep in dense jungle. The lessons learned about insurgency, the use of jungle and the deployment of the guns were to prove invaluable later in Vietnam.

In 1957 there was a major review of defence policy. The threat of global war was in decline, but limited war within Australia's area of influence was a possibility. A Regular Army able to respond quickly to changing circumstances was required. As a result, the National Service scheme was modified in 1956 and the intake reduced to provide 12,000 youths to be trained annually.

The primary emphasis for the Army had thereby changed from the Citizens Military Forces to the Australian Regular Army. The Citizens Military Forces were no longer the basic component of Australia's defence; this role was now to be handed to an expanded Regular Army. Since the earliest Colonial days, slow means of communication meant that the raising of a force to meet an emerging threat or request for assistance from an ally usually gave sufficient lead time to recruit, train and field a volunteer force of appropriate strength and composition.

However, improved communications and the increasing pace of change in the international field demanded a quick response that could only be provided by regular forces. The primacy of the volunteer and the political influences of the volunteer Officer Corps that had held sway for so long were now to be lost forever.

The Citizens Military Forces became supplementary to the Australian Regular Army in 1959 when the Military Board emphasised as a first priority the need for troops that were readily deployable.

Australia's increasing alignment with the United States of America meant that questions of standardisation of equipment and compatibility of procedures and structures were gaining in significance.

The increasing possibilities of military involvement in south East Asia encouraged the Government to look to the structure of the Army. Although close consideration was given the UK model of organization, the decision was made that it was not compatible with the US military – the most likely Army with which we would work in partnership - and another should be considered.

1957

By now, it was clear that the nuclear deterrent had removed the threat of global war. The resultant Army reorganisation of 1957 emphasised the need for a Regular Brigade Group to respond quickly to any threats to our north. The structure of the CMF was severely affected. One of the units disbanded was 21 Field Regiment RAA with RHQ and P Batteries based at Hornsby and R Battery (detached) at Lindsay Street depot, Hamilton, Newcastle. The Battery, established in March, 1952, survived and transferred to 23 Field Regiment. It moved to the newer Adamstown Training Depot formerly occupied by the disbanded 34 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment.

Major Alan Smith ED (Ret'd) prepared "A History of Field Artillery in Newcastle, New South Wales 1952-60" which appeared in "CannonBall" the Journal of the Royal Australian Artillery Company in April 1999. It is a valuable historical record and an essential component of the research undertaken for our Regimental History as well as providing a snapshot of the military history of Newcastle since 1797.

R Battery's new Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel LH Hellyer who had been a Troop Commander with 2/15 Field Regiment, 8 Division in World War II and had been a Prisoner of War of the Japanese. The Battery retained its designation and the integration went smoothly

In all fields of activity the Battery was a consistently good performer and on one occasion was awarded the highly prized AIF Trophy. The Regiment had long been a good to outstanding performer, but the

CO complimented BC Major J H Mullins on the Battery's standard of training, acknowledging the quality of leadership and the enthusiasm of Battery personnel.

In 1960 R Battery was removed from the Order of Battle. Those soldiering on served under several sub-unit designations and roles until becoming a Battery of 7 Field Regiment RAA under Lieutenant Colonel G S Staziker. That Regiment was equipped with the 105mm L5 Pack Howitzer.

The Battery Commander was Major Carl Christie, the last Officer commissioned in R Battery in May 1960. For many years a member of the Fort Scratchley Historical Society Inc., more generally an outstanding contributor to the preservation of military history and for services to the community, he was awarded The Order of Australia (OAM) in The Queen's Birthday Honours List, notified 13 June 2016.

1960

Pay rates and allowances are always matters of contention and 1960 saw those for the Citizens Military Forces increased to Regular Army levels. An added bonus was that from this year "wet" canteens were again available for Other Ranks after the long "dry" years introduced at the commencement of the National Service scheme.

At the conclusion of the National Service scheme in 1959, numbers were down markedly. However, we still had a reasonably strong Regiment. Commonwealth and State public services and a range of big employers granted paid military leave to their members of the Citizens Military Forces attending annual camps. Additionally, private employers were encouraged to grant their employees a similar concession. However, there was still a significant number in the Regiment who served without employer support and had forego part or whole of their annual leave or take leave without pay to meet Citizens Military Forces training commitments. We are hugely indebted to such people.

A huge impact on the CMF in 1960 was introduction of the Pentropic Division, designed to provide "a lean, powerful, versatile organization, readily adaptable to any type of operation in which it is likely to be involved in South East Asia" (*Australian Army Journal No 129 Feb 60*). We now adapted to the concept of a task force in place of the previous brigade structure. The structure of a task force was the responsibility of Division as was its administration, but in practice the arrangement was unsatisfactory.

The first nuclear warfare exercise for Citizens Military Forces units was conducted in 1960 in the Denman-Jerry's Plains area of the Hunter Valley.

It is worth noting that the concept was adopted without the critical assessment so expected of the Army. Although the new structure found fervent favour with a few, in 1965 the majority of senior Officers were quite prepared to see its conclusion as a not very satisfactory experiment.

Heavily influencing the introduction of this new structure was the US "Pentomic" concept, the aim of which was to reduce casualties and other effects of tactical atomic weapons on the battlefield. Sub units were grouped into fives and deployed over larger areas. This resulted from the US thinking of the day that the US would respond to major threats to its interests by use of atomic weaponry and "massive retaliation". In theory, the result would be the need for a much smaller Army.

In Australia, the basic component was the battle group which consisted of an infantry battalion supported by a field regiment, an engineer squadron and other combat and service elements. The structure was seen to have the flexibility to provide for a particular circumstance or set of circumstances. With five infantry battalions, a Pentropic Division could have several battle groups under command of the one task force headquarters.

In the restructure, the Citizens Military Forces were hit hard. The Commander, Headquarters Royal Australian Artillery (HQ RAA) was no longer a Citizens Military Forces Officer and Australia wide, only seven of seventeen Artillery units survived. In New South Wales the survivors were 7 Field Regiment and 23 Field Regiment. Infantry battalions were even harder hit: they were reduced from 30 to 14. The Citizens Military Forces were decimated. This was yet another blow to the Citizens Military Forces, its Officer Corps and its influence in military matters.

Under the previous structure, a field regiment had 24 guns (3 batteries of 8 guns, with a structure of 2 Troops, each having 4 guns) but now they had 18 guns (3 batteries of 6 guns). While our Regiment retained the 25 pounder, in the Regular Army, the towed M2A2 was replaced by a pack howitzer, the Italian L5 manufactured by OTO-Melara, which had also been purchased by the British Army. The purchase of this gun in 1963 reflected the greater use of helicopters in the 1960s and the accompanying realisation that the helicopter provided much greater mobility for the guns. The L5 was well suited to the lifting capacity of the helicopters of the time.

The L5 was first issued to the Regular Army and saw service on the Malaysian mainland and in Borneo during the period of Confrontation with Indonesia. In 1973, the gun was issued to 23 Field Regiment ten years after the initial purchase, replacing the M2A2.

A strong advocate for the new six-gun battery concept was the then Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Quentin Macarthur-Stanham who addressed the Regiment assembled at the Belmore Depot and would speak with strong conviction and at length to any doubters about the wisdom of the change. A significant number of Officers saw the old model of a battery comprising two discrete troops each of four guns as providing the flexibility and the firepower required by troops on the ground; they were hard to convince otherwise.

Another effect of the introduction of the Pentropic Division was to be felt in later years in Vietnam, when the infantry battalion commander expected the field regiment to be “his” during operations and not lost to his battalion and his requirements because of other Gunner commitments.

Under the Pentropic structure there were two battle groups covering New South Wales and in 1965, a reorganisation of the Citizen Military Forces resulted in a new designation for one of them – 5th Task Force for which our Regiment provided the firepower. In 1975 it commanded 3rd Battalion, 4th Battalion, 17th Battalion and 1st/19th Battalion, The Royal New South Wales Regiment together with 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers.

The Commander was Brigadier K R Murray, AO OBE RFD ED QC who had a reputation for singling out Gunners for criticism.

7th Field Regiment provided the firepower for 8th Task Force.

(Pentropic Division tree)

The 1960s saw the replacement of the World War II gun tractors and cargo carriers with the International 2 ½ ton truck designed specifically to Army requirements. A 6 cylinder petrol engine with a displacement of 282.5 cubic inches was the power plant with fuel consumption at a stated 8 miles per gallon, a manual gearbox with four forward and reverse, a high and low transfer case and four wheel drive. A six wheel drive was also produced.

A feature seen on no other cargo carriers used by the Regiment – before or since - was in having all the switches, including the ignition switch, on a panel above the top of the windscreen and behind the sun visors.

For the first time, our trucks had hydraulic air assisted brakes which were a trap for the unwary driver used to the hydraulic brakes of its predecessors and which required firm pedal pressure to operate. It never ceased to amaze the casual observer that with the full capacity of troops seated along the tray of the vehicle and facing each other, a heavy braking by an unthinking driver would seem to result in an immediate doubling of the truck’s carrying capacity. Also impressive was the imaginative use of adjectives to describe the driver’s ability and also cast significant doubt on his parentage.

1961

In 1961 issue to Citizen Military Forces units of the SLR (7.62mm Self Loading Rifle) units commenced about two years after its issue to the Regular Army. This weapon was a far cry from the bolt action, single shot Lee Enfield .303 which had served the Services well during World War I and II

and Korea. The L1A1 SLR was an Australian version of the Belgian FN FAL rifle. A semi-automatic, gas operated, magazine fed weapon, it was capable of firing single shot or in bursts. The round was rimless, complied with NATO standards and had a muzzle velocity of 2,700 feet per second. The magazine held 20 rounds.

Without bayonet or grenade launcher and with a full magazine, it weighed 4.96 kg (10 pounds 15 ounces). It had a high rate of accurate aimed fire of up to 20 rounds per minute to 300 metres and effective section fire on targets up to 600 metres.

There was also the AR (Automatic Rifle) L2A1, fitted with a bipod, with the same characteristics and weighing about an additional 2.5 kg. This replaced the World War II Bren Gun which fired the .303 round.

From an historical perspective it is interesting to note that from 1962 our title was no longer the Royal Australian Artillery, but The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery of which The Queen was to be Captain General, formerly Colonel-in-Chief.

The year was also important because for the first time, Officer promotion candidates could be relieved from Regimental duties to prepare for examinations. Posted to Command and Staff Groups they received high standards of tuition and other support from Command and Staff Groups formed from Citizens Military Force personnel displaced by the Pentropic Division restructure. The preparation period ranged from 3 to 6 months.

The success of this innovation was seen in 1962 in the 75% pass rate for first appointment to Lieutenant.

During the 1960s there was growing evidence that the Australian Regular Army viewed the Citizens Military Forces not as a number of cohesive fighting units but rather a reserve for the regular soldier. As a counter to this viewpoint, in 1962 Battle Group exercises were conducted as a finale to units' fourteen day annual camp.

Peter Burgess recalls a situation with the Regiment embarking on landing craft for transportation across Jervis Bay to a beach at Huskinson, with the troops landing in an assault type formation. One enthusiastic Sergeant, having watched too many films of the United States Marines, readied himself on the lowered ramp as the landing craft slowed on its beach approach and slowed to a crawl then almost to a stop. Our hero, with a cry of "follow me" promptly stepped off into neck deep water.

Like all good gentlemen Gunners, keen to maintain the reputation of the Corps and perhaps also to avoid walking around in soggy socks and wet underwear for the rest of the day, stayed where they were and stepped off into the shallows.

Not such a bad start to the exercise, but then, when guns were driven safely down the ramps to the beach, within a few metres most hit soft sand and became bogged. Not surprisingly, the exercise was called off while recovery commenced. When the last gun and tractor left the beach they left with the cheers of the assembled tourists and other spectators echoing in their ears.

1962

The unit's 25 pounders were fitted with muzzle brakes, which changed the "jump" characteristic on firing. The additional weight on the end of the barrel necessitated a balancing weight at the other end, which was placed above the breech block.

Some Commanding Officers can be very demanding of members of their Regiment, especially their Officers. One who was so inclined had seen service in the Middle East and was a bank employee of some standing. His expressed view was that the Army came first and all other matters came a very poor second. Officers were expected to be well versed in technical gunnery and everything associated with it.

Frustrated by what he deemed to be a display of inadequate knowledge in the Officer ranks,

(Captain) Alan Chenery recalls the Commanding Officer's decision during an Annual Camp, for officers to be assembled prior to Reveille for his address from an Artillery pam(phlet) covering a perceived weakness he had observed.

After a couple of days of stoic observance of the morning ritual, there came the occasion when the assembled throng could not make head nor tail of a particular technical matter. For one, the particular subject was his "bread and butter" and full of confidence – and perhaps a little bravado – he interrupted the Commanding Officer mid-stream and suggested that the Commanding Officer had turned over two pages instead of one. Finding that he had indeed done that, the Commanding Officer corrected himself and perhaps by coincidence the word was spread later that Officer standards had improved and therefore the early morning ritual was now at an end.

A great example of his "Army first" insistence was the occasion when a promising young Sergeant was paraded and informed that he was considered to be Officer material and was to be nominated to attend a coaching course at a particular date. The elated Sergeant's response was that he was privileged indeed, but because on that date he was to be best man at his brother's wedding, he sought to be included in the next available course. The Commanding Officer made it very clear that it was the nominated course or none at all for the Sergeant.

By way of retribution, the Sergeant proceeded to the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 after a very successful and wide ranging career in the Citizens' Military Forces/Army Reserve.

Talking of courses, Alan Chenery also recalled a situation at an Officer promotion course, when the subject was gun ammunition and a base ejecting smoke round was the topic of the moment. A student, Dick Woolner, a World War II veteran and very popular Officer was somewhat bored and not following proceedings as closely as should have been the case. One of his colleagues noticed his lack of interest and after inserting successfully the required three smoke canisters into the group's projectile, emptied the drill round and handed it, with FOUR canisters, to the unsuspecting Dick Woolner.

After an extended delay, with several impatient course members waiting their turn at the exercise, the instructor came over and enquired of the mystified and frustrated student as to the problem. The explanation was that no matter how concerted the effort and how imaginative the endeavour, only three canisters would fit into the space and there was always one left over. A bemused instructor confirmed the accuracy of Dick's finding and retrieved the surplus canister. The lesson continued.

In a fairly static situation in the field, there were times when telephone lines were laid from Observation Post to the gun position. Remember the World War II story of Lieutenant Sir Roden Cutler and his winning of the Victoria Cross? So it was during an Annual Camp when the Commanding Officer attempted to test the mettle of the Signallers by inserting a pin between the cables leading to a gun Battery. The pin, of course, shorted out the line and made it inoperable.

The Commanding Officer headed for the static Observation Post and proceeded to check communications, quite confident that there would be a fault, but no fault. Everything was working as it should. Perplexed, the Commanding Officer accepted the result and praised the work of the line parties. What he was not to know that his act of sabotage had been observed by one of the signallers who had taken a little time to answer a minor call of nature behind a tree near where the Commanding Officer's vehicle had stopped. Quick thinking meant that the damage done was undone in a matter of seconds, as the Commanding Officer's vehicle left the site.

Although very demanding, that Commanding Officer was highly regarded within the Regiment and throughout the 2nd Division.

1964

By 1963 it was becoming increasingly evident that the structure of the Pentropic Division was not all that was expected of it. The Americans had moved away from their similar structure before ours was adopted and it was time for a rethink. Added emphasis was given the matter when, in 1964 Britain sought assistance to counter the efforts of President Sukarno of Indonesia to create unrest and opposition to the Britain's proposal to create a new state of Malaysia.

His “Konfrontasi”, which commenced in 1963, was a troubling time for Australia, because it followed so quickly after events in 1962 when the government was assessing the implications of the growing crisis in Vietnam and the commitment of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in support of the American efforts.

“Confrontation” was a small, undeclared, conflict with many clandestine missions inside Indonesian territory conducted by both Britain and Australia. 23 Australian troops were killed during the period from the time troops were first committed in 1964 until the crisis ended in 1966.

Obviously, if Australia were to assist Britain or the USA - or both – its force structure had to be compatible with the major force. In 1964 the Pentropic Division was abandoned, well after the “Pentomic” Division was abandoned by the US. .

One legacy of the Pentropic Division – at least for a few years – was retention of the description Task Force, which implies flexibility as compared with the word Brigade that implies inflexibility. Although not stated, it may also have been a peace offering to those in the higher echelons who were strong advocates of the Pentropic structure.

There was a very strong possibility of war with Indonesia, particularly if there were an infiltration of Indonesian forces into New Guinea. At the time, Australia had four Infantry Battalions in the Regular Army. One was serving in Malaysia, one was getting ready to go and one had just returned. The general rule is that for every unit deployed overseas, three are required to maintain it.

The Government decided to double the number of Regular infantry battalions to eight and increase also the size of the Navy and the Air Force. Such an increase in Army strength demanded the reintroduction of a National Service scheme in 1964 with the first intake in June 1965. Australia was enjoying a period of prosperity and low unemployment and the government decided that the system least disruptive to the national economy was a selective scheme for 20 year old males – the “Birthday Ballot”.

Those selected were to serve two years full time with the Australian Regular Army. The option was a longer term with the Citizens Military Forces. Current membership with the Citizens Military Forces provided liability and full time deferment criteria for those subjected to call up.

Major General Hori Howard RL, in his keynote speech marking the National Servicemen’s Memorial Day ceremony at Wollongong on 5 February 2012, commented on the National Service Scheme of 1964. From a Military point of view, he regarded the Scheme as a great success. He saw the period of two years as allowing for adequate training and integration into units so important for proper teamwork. In the units in which he served he saw nothing to differentiate the National Serviceman and the Regular Army soldier; indeed, it was not unusual for National Servicemen to be promoted over their regular counterparts. While he recognised that there was criticism of the lottery system, he also recognised that the Army simply could not have managed a universal scheme.

The “Birthday Ballot” concluded in 1972.

It is interesting to note that with the possibility of providing support to the British in Malaysia (ultimately, this did not happen), protecting New Guinea and assisting America in Vietnam, the Commanding Officer of the day spoke to his Officers of the possibility of 23 Field Regiment being mobilised.

The extent of the possible mobilisation and the units involved was not mentioned. Our likely deployment was not known, but it did confirm to our minds that our existence and our commitment to the Citizens Military Forces were in the national interest. This proved that it was indeed worthwhile – we were fulfilling our role.

In May 1964 the Defence Act was amended to permit the Citizens Military Forces to be called out in a “time of defence emergency” by proclamation of the Governor General. Additionally, Citizen Military Forces pay became tax free. These were further morale boosts. Since the inception of the Citizens

Military Forces, the citizen soldier's pay had been taxed frequently at a higher rate because of the increased income. Clearly, altruism was the motivation for most for joining, not the monetary reward.

Despite Indonesia's stand, Britain persisted with its intention to create the new state of Malaysia. In light of Britain's determination and the Five Power Defence Arrangements that supported the external security of Malaysia and Singapore, Indonesia abandoned its policy of "Konfrontasi" in 1966. Australia breathed a little easier but the challenges of Vietnam were soon to be experienced.

1965

Recruit training had been a unit responsibility since the beginning of the Citizens Military Forces. The programme, organization and staffing were devised by the unit. Those that had experience in the Army Cadets had a distinct advantage and were used frequently to assist instructors; often, they experienced a fairly rapid progression. Standards varied throughout the Division and in 1965 a directive issued that recruit training should proceed over 4 months and cover, if possible, 200 lessons.

The change of Field Artillery major equipment from the well proven British 25 pounder to the 105mm M2A2 – a weapon whose design dated back to the 1920s, but manufactured in the US from 1939 and 1953 – reflected the Government's acceptance in the late 1950s of the logistic standardisation with ABCA (America, Britain, Canada and Australia) Nations and use of the 105mm calibre for close support field artillery. The first of the American M2A2s arrived in 1959.

There were certain advantages with the M2A2 – it fired a 33 pound projectile (14.9 kg) and ammunition was readily available, it was easier to fire in upper register (or high angle) than the 25 pounder and was thought by some to be more suited to jungle warfare.

Since 1957 the Regiment had held a field role with its 25 pounders. Late in 1965 the Regiment's role was changed to general support and the 105mm M2A2 Gun Howitzer replaced our old friend. (Lt Col Ken Broadhead's) research discloses that when the Regiment was reequipped with the L5 Pack Howitzer in 1973, the role was changed to Close Support.

The Regiment's Annual Camp 1965, was significant in two respects – it was the last for the eight gun , two troops per battery structure, and was intended to be the last for the 25 pounder.

1RAR arrived in South Vietnam mid 1965 and became part of a US brigade; the Australians were supported by a battery of New Zealand Artillery. The ANZAC spirit lived on!

In 1965 1 Field Regiment RAA commenced its tour of duty and 1 Australian Task Force base was established at Nui Dat. The war in Vietnam was to provide some new challenges for Artillery.

The concept of the Fire Support Base was now introduced. The first experience by Australia of this concept was by the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, posted as the third battalion of the United States 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) at its headquarters in Bien Hoa, 30 kilometres north-east of Saigon and site of a major airfield. The Brigade was the first and only airborne brigade in the United States Army.

The Fire Support Base concept provided a firm base, enabling the infantry to carry out offensive patrolling within the enemy dominated area and a secure area from which Artillery and mortars could provide support. A Fire Support Base also includes a mix of other combat units with supporting units and sub units and headquarters administration and maintenance areas. There may also be an airfield, but certainly a Landing Zone for helicopters. There is no prescribed size for the Fire Support Base – which is semi permanent in its nature - or for its composition.

Existing training manuals were not much help in the conduct of counter insurgency operations of the type then being experienced. There was no front line and the enemy seldom provided a significant or concentrated target.

One exception was the four hour battle at Long Tan in 1966 which saw the 105mm L5 pack howitzers of 1 Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery firing continuously a total of well over 3000 rounds and the FSCC (Fire Support Coordination Centre) fully occupied in all aspects of its role.

Another was in the Coogee area of operations and the battles of Fire Support Base Coral and Fire Support Base Balmoral involving 12 Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery, equipped with the M2A2. These battles represented the largest operations by Australian troops in Vietnam and the first deployment of tanks since WWII. 3 Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment also had the support of 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery.

The action commenced on 12 May 1968 and concluded 6 June. Splintex was used over open sights and a gun was lost to the enemy briefly, but soon retaken. In 2008, at a 40th Anniversary National Commemoration in Canberra, the Honour Title *Coral* was awarded by the Governor General to 102 Battery (the first to an Australian Unit) in recognition of its exemplary conduct in battle.

The employment of Fire Support Bases was very successful, with all attacks on the Bases repelled and defeated.

The lessons learned and being learned were incorporated into the training and the Annual Camps of the Citizens Military Forces.

1966

Geoff Linn was a clerk in the NSW Public Service whose birth date meant that he was not called up for National Service, so he enlisted with our Regiment as a volunteer, but not at all certain as to which of many roles would appeal. The moment came when the Q Battery, Battery Sergeant Major called for expressions of interest in the position of Orderly Room clerk; an essential requirement was the ability to type – even with one finger. Geoff could do even better than that so he put his hand up. The reward was two stripes and a job he found satisfying.

Geoff was also one to make the most of any opportunity to broaden his military experience which saw him a member of the gun detachment and party firing a salute from Fort Denison with one of the Fort's ancient cannons. The occasion was St Barbara's Day, 1966, in acknowledgment of the Patron Saint of Gunners as well as military engineers, miners and others working with explosives. His recollection is that the firing of the salute was generated by Army Headquarters in liaison with the National Parks and Wildlife Service which managed the site.

This was yet another of a variety of special events with which the Regiment was involved over the years. They were never ending and the Regiment always seemed to be in demand, probably because the task was almost invariably done well, with volunteers exceeding the numbers required. On this occasion the gun detachment comprised eight Gunners, gun sergeant (Sergeant Roy Axford) and an Officer (Lieutenant Matthews).

First step, a rehearsal, so they assembled at the Harbour Master steps at Circular Quay, took a launch across to the city island citadel and were introduced to the monster they would be firing the following Sunday. After going through their paces, they took a measurement of the bore for future reference.

Then came the morning of the big day when the detachment, plus a few hangers on, departed the Belmore Depot for Victoria Barracks where a retired Colonel – who had ultimate responsibility for the exercise, including the quantity of the propellant used – collected the powder. The firing party then proceeded to the Quay, once more boarded the launch and headed for Pinchgut.

As part of the detachment's own preparations they had procured an eight inch diameter plastic ball which matched the size of the bore of the cannon, had it cut just enough to accept sand, gravel and assorted odds and ends. Their reasoning was that if Gunners are going to fire the weapon it had to have a projectile.

The cannon, weighing about 3.5 tonnes, was located on the concourse at the east facing wall of the Fort. The trunnions sat on a substantial timber frame, sitting flush on a second even more solid timber structure, with wheels, sloping towards the muzzle. That combination allowed the gun to be moved back for loading and cleaning and forward to be fired. It could be traversed through an arc of about 30 degrees.

(Clarify and rewrite next paragraph)

Movement back and forth was achieved using a block and tackle on each side of the gun. The equipment was attached to the front of the top frame and the rear of the lower structure. Two long levers – like long hand spikes familiar to all who served the towed 25 pounders and later 105mm field guns – were placed under the rear of the top frame to raise it and minimise contact and therefore friction with the lower carriage when sliding back to lower the barrel for cleaning and loading.

The first impression was that whoever was going to use those levers was going to require substantial weight and strength. They were soon to see for themselves.

The first step in the loading drill was to pull back the gun, the charge, wadding and ball placed down the muzzle and rammed home, the touch hole or vent cleared and the wick or other form of ignition inserted.

Geoff recalls that day dawned gloriously warm and sunny, with the detachment turned out in the uniform of the time being somewhere in the 1800s. It consisted of heavy weight navy blue trousers with red stripe down the seam, a jacket of the same material worn up to the neck, topped by a red and braid collar and with gold braid on the sleeves. Ideal for a hot summer day. Headwear was a pillbox hat with similar decoration. The only difference with the Officer's outfit was a peak on the hat: he also carried a sword.

The uniform was known as a “monkey suit” but it really made the ORs look like ice cream vendors from the years when the cinema was king.

Approaching midday, the fun began. It took three Gunners on the block and tackle on each side working in unison to haul back the gun. It was made more difficult by the fact that the Gun Sergeant (Roy Axford) was not the biggest of men, not in the physical sense anyway and his task was to push down on the two levers to raise the top frame and reduce the friction on the lower structure. Until he mastered the art, he remained suspended, looking like a gymnast about to go through his routine on the parallel bars, but having no effect on lifting the top frame. Much of the detachment's difficulty came from trying to control their mirth at the sight of Roy suspended in space.

The detachment finally loaded charge, wadding and ball and moved to their positions around the gun. The Colonel primed it with a wick. The Gunners could see little through the gap in the wall so Lieutenant Matthews took up his position on the parapet where he could ensure a clear line of fire when the moment came.

The Colonel gave us the all-clear and one of the Gunners placed his finger over the touch hole. Roy picked up the flame, which was rather like a Roman Candle left over from cracker night; now, that is a reference to nation wide community events held on the streets and vacant blocks of suburban lands, often accompanied by a bonfire, held many a year ago to mark occasions such as (British) Empire Day. He then gave the legendary order “Get your finger out”. The Gunner did as ordered and Roy touched the wick.

There was a satisfyingly loud bang and their job was about done. Well, not quite the end of the story, for there began a series of heart stopping events outside. While the detachment was carrying out gun maintenance, their colleagues who had come along for the ride and were watching events from the outside were now regaling the workers with stories of the home grown projectile in flight. It transpired that ships of the Royal Navy were in Sydney, with their ammunition ship directly in the line of fire. The ball was clearly visible and headed straight and true towards its unintended target. Visions of headlines screaming “*International Incident – British Ship Damaged (or sunk) by Friendly Fire*” flashed into the heads of those watching. Then the ball dipped towards the water and they began to breath again.

Then it skimmed across the surface! Panic!! Then it sank.

The story goes that the good Lieutenant was lifted off the parapet in a catatonic state and checked to see if he was still breathing normally. He was, but it was difficult to unclench his hand from his sword.

As a special experience, that was a *really* special experience for the Gunners. The next salute firing for the now experienced Gunners was to commemorate Australia Day – an event now regarded by the detachment as something having more than the usual significance. At that time, the holiday was taken on the closest Monday before or after 26th January and that was the day the salute was fired.

Events leading to the detachment's arrival at Fort Denison followed the earlier occasion and they rehearsed the drill. This time there was a television crew from the ABC on hand to record the event and an enquiry was made of Sergeant Axford and the exchange went something like

“Does it make much of a boom?”

“Sorry, what do you mean?”

“Well, I thought I would have a camera up there on the parapet, filming the actual firing of the gun”

“No, that would be fine mate: no trouble at all”.

Now, back to the gun. In view of their earlier efforts, Lieutenant Matthews was taking no chances this time. He ordered the gun be traversed to the right so that it was aimed more directly towards Lady Macquarie's Chair and also that the ball be cut more thoroughly, rather than just the slot that was put in the first one. His fervent hope was that this would allow the ball to at least come apart, if not disintegrate, thus limiting its flight and eliminating any potential damage. Ultimately, this had no effect whatever because the plastic used was quite stiff and still held its shape.

After some quick maintenance, the gun was loaded and readied for firing. The Gunner placed his finger over the vent and Roy was about to give the order when

“HOLD YOUR FIRE”.

Lieutenant Matthews' note of urgency was unmistakable. Through the small gap between gun barrel and wall there was a glimpse of a yacht sailing close by with its bemused crew gazing at the strange man in his odd outfit standing on the ramparts of Fort Denison waving a sword. How very, very peculiar.

“PROCEED”.

Viewers of ABC TV News that night were treated firstly to pictures of the cannon and crew, then of a microphone being shoved into Roy's face for the **“Get Your Finger Out”** bit. At this point it should be said that Fort Denison is constructed of sand stone and has a very resonant facade, the effect being that at the point of firing there was a sudden upwards movement of the camera, completely missing the actual discharge. At least the cameraman came to no harm.

It was rumoured that the yacht crew was last seen frantically paddling with their bare hands to get as far away as possible in case of any further discharge.

Geoff Linn concluded his recollections with the reassurance that there was no damage caused Lady Macquarie's Chair.

On 13 November 2015, Geoff Linn, our now veteran gunner, again visited Fort Denison as a private citizen for the firing of the one o'clock gun. He was ready for the shock wave even though it was a much smaller gun. What he remembered most was the physical impact of the sound wave, forcing his arms to drop and the image recorded being of a wonderful piece of well kept grass. He departed the scene for home, with much more sympathy with the ABC cameraman who tried to record the firing of the salute in 1967.

1967

In 1967 (Warrant Officer Class 2) Laurie Willoughby joined the Regiment as a Gunner and served as one of the famed Sergeant Collins' detachment. He was one of three of the Willoughby brothers who served with the Regiment and collectively made such a significant contribution to its years of success.

He was not on the guns long, for Laurie was an apprentice motor mechanic at the time and being a Gunner was the first step in transferring to the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. There were many others who took a similar path, including identity (Signals Sergeant) Terry Payne

who was an employee of the Sydney County Council. He later achieved the rank of Captain and headed the sub unit.

Transferred to the Light Aid Detachment (later to be known as the Technical Support Troop), Laurie's potential in the Army became evident in his second annual camp with the Regiment so he undertook RAEME courses at its Homebush depot. Success followed and he became battery section Corporal, 10 Battery and a couple of years later, Vehicle Mechanic Sergeant.

In the field, the LAD lived as comfortably as any with their washing machine and their refrigeration for food and refreshments. They usually took the opportunity to really turn on an exceptional morning or afternoon tea for the Commanding Officer's visit. It was always a good team and a one time member confided that deployment to 23 Field Regiment was regarded as a sought after privilege. So very often in an Annual Camp or Annual Field Exercise, they worked longer and harder than most to keep the Regiment on the move.

The US manufactured Diamond T wrecker was the principal and most impressive item on the LAD's inventory and in the field, was often in heavy demand. Laurie remembers recovering a tractor and gun from the field in Singleton and running out of fuel. Resourceful as ever, its team drained fuel from the vehicle being towed and any others who could spare a drop. Problem solved, at least until the big, thirsty, Diamond T could get to a refuelling site.

Another instance of LAD members' capacity to respond included driving a Studebaker tractor from Singleton to Belmore with no clutch. This feat demanded a driver have a good "feel" for the truck's engine and transmission. How do you get on with being stopped at traffic lights? Change down to first gear and switch off the engine. Leave in first gear and operate the starter to move off. Simple!

That vehicle had the then usual pattern of the hand brake operating a band around a tail shaft drum, described as a transmission brake. On this trip, it was greatly relied upon and finally demonstrating its displeasure at such treatment by the brake shoe type lining burning away as the truck arrived at Belmore.

The LAD undertook many tasks outside the ordinary. On one occasion they were tasked to clear a road over a hill to enable the Regiment to deploy into the allocated gun positions. Job completed in time, they waited to one side of the track to provide support for any vehicles that might have difficulty in negotiating the track. Time wasted. The Officer in the lead vehicle had done his map reconnaissance. Leaving the track at the base of the hill, he drove around it, followed by the guns of the Regiment.

In Laurie's time with the LAD he recalls that two female soldiers came on strength. One was a clerk, the other a draftsman and as with recollections of others in the Regiment, they displayed great dedication and efficiency in their allocated tasks. His recollection is that the LAD was headed by a Captain or Lieutenant and Warrant Officer Class 2, a staff sergeant, 5 sergeants, 3 corporals and about 12 craftsmen. As the numbers in the Regiment declined, so did the LAD or Technical Support Troop numbers until the stage was reached when support in the field was provided from RAEME Headquarters.

After 22 years with RAEME, Laurie was now progressing along the promotions ladder with QANTAS, which involved heavy schedules and trips overseas. Additionally, he was married and with a young family who demanded attention and were not happy with his absences attending to military as well as work matters.

It was time to identify his priorities and despite his enjoyment and respect for RAEME and 23 Field Regiment and the strong prospect of further progression, it was time to call it a day. As with so many of his contemporaries, he recognises that in many ways his was the correct decision, but it was made with many regrets. The old camaraderie and satisfaction in meeting the challenges of the military experience will long remain.

Vietnam exposed a serious weakness in the L5 – it was not sufficiently robust for sustained operations, even on the lower charges.

The result was that 23 Field Regiment once again lost its guns – the M2A2 - for a greater cause, this time Vietnam. Once again we were equipped with the 25 pounder, with the two six gun battery structure retained. The role was that of a General Support Regiment of Army Troops.

The well established and proven principles of fire support were not abandoned. Technically, there was now greater emphasis on Defensive Fire and Harassing and Interdiction Fire. Deployment of the direct support battery to a temporary fire support base for battalion operations deep into enemy territory became a feature.

Citizens Military Forces unit training now incorporated the lessons from South Vietnam, including the operations of the FSCC – the Fire Support Co-ordination Centre. This Centre had the task of co-ordinating fire support within the Task Force – artillery, mortars, air and naval support – and with adjacent formations. This created a significantly increased level of responsibility for the Commanding Officers of Artillery Regiments.

Many who served in Vietnam were National Servicemen. It is interesting to note, but seldom mentioned, that volunteers from the Citizens Military Forces served in Vietnam alongside Regulars and National Servicemen.

The Vietnam experience was a far cry from the Army's conflicts in past years and many lessons had to be learned. To this end approximately 600 Citizens Military Forces Officers visited operational areas. The visits commenced in January 1967 were of 14 days' duration and continued for the duration of our involvement. The results of those visits were a valuable supplement to the written word that formed the basis of unit training programmes.

The influence on training extended to the maps for Holsworthy artillery range being revised for training purposes by having long standing names for landmarks and features replaced by names troops would find in Vietnam. Some Vietnam style villages were constructed to familiarise those headed to the combat zone with conditions they would encounter in that part of the world. Our Regiment continued with its various fire and movement exercises with little regard for the changed names appearing on maps.

Australia's involvement in Vietnam was not popularly accepted – Sydney's Daily Telegraph, in particular, seemed to go out of its way to emphasise the negatives of America's activities and disregard the positives being achieved by Australia and New Zealand forces. Accordingly, the former status of the Services that were once held in such high esteem, suffered.

Volunteers for the Citizens Military Forces were not readily forthcoming and the "girlfriend factor" was a significant consideration. Once it was great to go out with a man in uniform, but now that uniform suggested that the wearer was probably a "Nasho" avoiding service in Vietnam or he might be one who was serving in Vietnam and thanks to the adverse media, that was seen as a stigma.

In the annals of the Citizen Soldier, Amphibious Observations seldom rate a mention, yet it had a significant role to play and as is usual, our Regiment made its contribution. This was the gunnery link between the Royal Australian Navy and the Army. Sea to shore target live firing engagements required "qualified" Army observers, that is, in the parlance of the day, Artillery Forward Observers.

One of our Officers, Brian Williams, was well known to the Base Gunnery Officer at HMAS Albatross and his services were much in demand, some times for weeks at a time, with six weeks being the maximum recalled. (Sergeant) Peter Burgess was a member of Brian's Forward Observer Party and recalls vividly one of the most memorable naval exercises that incorporated gunnery practice from ship to Beecroft Firing Range. This was late in 1969 when ships from many nations of the British Commonwealth took part. Seeing them all in line astern was a sight forever etched in the memory of those who were privileged to witness the event.

There were differences between Navy and Army drills and procedures that had to be accommodated, but they were not insurmountable.

For example, Navy did not use degrees or mils or yards or metres but "Stars" in the Forward Observer's correction to the fall of shot. Peter discovered that a star was about 3 degrees. Another

example was the use of codes by the various Navies, all supposedly based on Zulu time. As with any exercise, the wrong day's code is bound to be used by someone and this often resulted in extended trips to the comforts of HMAS Albatross for assistance in the decoding

Even with the Navy, things do go wrong from time to time. One instance was the township of Currawong being illuminated by star shell. Another involved a Canadian ship firing two 5 inch high explosive shells 1000 metres south of the impact area. They left furrows through soft dirt and exploded only approximately 300 metres short of an observation tower occupied by a seaman and an Artillery observer – ie Peter. The base of the tower rang from the many hits from shrapnel. Although not mentioned, there can be little doubt that there were substantial reverberations between the ears, also.

What Peter said at the time and whether a change of underwear was required is to be forever a mystery.

Navy also employed the disconcerting practice of collecting unexploded projectiles and destroying them in one pile. The result would have been spectacular, but obviously all this was before the days of OH&S concerns.

A bonus experience for the Forward Observer parties was the transfer from shore to ship by either a patrol boat or the mail helicopter.

Another fond memory for Peter was the way Navy looked after the Forward Observer parties. The presence of a Navy cook, always willing to prepare a meal or a snack, made life quite pleasant. On board ship, there was always plenty of food and good food at that and the accommodation provided was a far cry from the circumstances applying in the field.

Happy days.

In the late 1960s a Battery was undertaking a night deployment. No lights and as little noise as possible. Peter Burgess recalls that the Observation Post was on high ground overlooking the gun position and at a critical moment one of the Observer's Party activated a parachute flare he had unearthed near their site. Immediately, the Gun Position Officer's order to the gun position was "keep still – no movement". Then came a weary cry from the Command Post Sergeant "fair go – let's put our hootchies up while we can see".

1969/70/72

Our Gunners are certainly versatile. Among the Regiment's achievements is their record of being undefeated premiers of the Combined C.M.F. R.L.F.C. for 1969-70-71.

(Warrant Officer Class 2) Ray Carter joined our Regiment as a volunteer in the early 1960s and served for some 17 years. His enlistment was influenced by his brother who had joined the Engineers at Kogarah and was enthusiastic about the involvement.

As a Gunner in Q Battery at the Dora Street, Hurstville, depot, Ray's first bivouac at Holsworthy saw him as a range sentry; an essential task, but not the most inspiring of introductions to the joys of field gunnery. Better things were to follow when he qualified as a TARA (Technical Assistant, Royal Artillery) and took up his post on the plotting boards of the Battery Command Post.

With the rank of Bombardier he was posted to the Forward Observer party of Lieutenant Ron Becker as Observation Post ack.(assistant) a role that frequently doubled at the cook for the little band including signallers and perhaps, driver. The party was deployed for a field firing exercise and they duly set up the Observation Post and went about the technical and other tasks expected of a red hot Observation Post group, with Ray having the task of preparing lunch.

Ration pack cans were opened, water boiling and all was set for a fair imitation of a gourmet feast. Then along came the Directing Staff with the information that they were in the impact area. Closing lids on those items that could be secured and making the best possible, but quite inadequate, arrangements for the remainder, Ray and the party moved to a new location. Little trails of liquid and

solids marked the route taken. Not to be defeated, Ray displayed his usual initiative and salvaged what was left, presenting a luncheon worthy of a professional.

Ray's military career soon took quite a dramatic turn when he responded to the Battery Sergeant Major's (Tom Weaver) call for volunteers for cooking duties. Corporal "Crash" Craddock was Battery cook at the time.

Ray had done cooking training at the now defunct Australia Hotel in Castlereagh Street, but he was quick to assure all who would listen that the demise of the worthy establishment was no reflection on his ability to wield a mean ladle.

Soon after, he filled the role vacated by "Crash" Craddock and then his mettle was tested when, during an Annual Field Exercise, the civilian cooks employed for the occasion objected to the hours and working conditions. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ray Gay, sent them packing. Ray Carter, now a one man army, survived the ordeal with flying colours.

One very testing moment was making jelly for desert. He knew well that the usual household 85g of crystals required 500 ml of water, but what to do with the military issue of 3kg bags? He has never disclosed whether mental arithmetical gymnastics or plain good luck resulted in a very acceptable jelly appearing on the table – another crisis averted.

Bombardier, then Sergeant then Warrant Officer Class 2 in 9 months was Ray's rate of progression, when he became the Regiment's Warrant Officer Caterer. He was always very grateful for the support given by the Regimental Sergeant Major Warrant Officer Class I, Noel Forbes.

As a means of practical training for his cooks, Ray provided suppers on Monday training nights at Belmore. Sometimes they were sourced from rations left over from weekend bivouacs, sometimes the messes provided the funds for food purchases and sometimes the costs were met from a small charge per serving. The suppers were very popular with all ranks.

Early in Ray's career, the Wiles cooker was the cook's best friend in the field. Australian designed and built, the largest was a four wheeled, towed, wood fired, steam driven, complete kitchen /caravan. There was also the two wheeled Baby Wiles, also towed, having all the abilities of big brother. They were real gems; they had hot plates and ovens, basket steamer tubs, a "steam stick" and an urn. Steam was used wherever possible and there was little chance of spoiling food.

The "steam stick" from both was great for a multitude of purposes – from generating boiling water in a mug or larger cooking pot, to cleaning gun and small arm parts, particularly rifle barrels.

In the 1970s, the Wiles were replaced by the US Army's portable M37, operated by petrol under pressure. Used in Korea, these units did the job, but could not be compared with the versatility of the Wiles.

The wood fired sawyers were another kitchen utility, dating from the 1800s, replaced in the 1970s by a petrol-fuelled alternative. The new equipment was difficult to commence operating if one followed the written instructions; however, a cup of petrol poured into the system followed by a lighted match did the trick. This form of ignition resulted in a characteristic "whump" which informed the world at large that the kitchen was setting up for the day.

Anything in excess of the necessary one cup of petrol, though, could be followed by a substantial explosion and the sight of the contraption's chimney attempting to escape earth's gravitational pull.

When a quite senior and experienced cook added too much milk to scrambled eggs, the messy liquid goo was never going to result in anything like that listed on the menu. What to do? Add custard powder. The result was worse than the stage one. Now, the cook could not even pretend it was a mix for egg-nog.

Following Ray's direction, it did not do much to improve the surrounding landscape, either.

Whatever might be said about others, Warrant Officer Caters can have their problems, too. The scene was base camp, the occasion followed upon the Sergeants' Mess formal; the task, prepare breakfast for three messes. Let's have something requiring little attention and little skill – how about boiled eggs and devilled kidneys?

Ray set the eggs in a steam basket on the Wiles and the devilled kidneys in a steam cooker. Inspections on progress were interspersed with the occasional glass from the bar. The final inspection before delivery to the messes indicated that the eggs were done and the devilled kidneys were ready to grace the plates of the hungry hordes.

After delivery, our hero was ready for a quiet snooze before morning tea to help make up for his lack of sleep the previous night. Then came a call from the Orderly Officer to visit the Gunners' Mess, then a call from the 2IC (Second in Command of the Regiment), soon followed by a mass representation from the Sergeants' Mess.

At the Orderly Officer's suggestion, a Gunner demonstrated that the egg for his breakfast was in much the same condition as it had left the chicken and the devilled kidneys were in the pristine condition they would have been in the butcher's shop.

It transpired that a few eggs on the top of the steam basket were cooked as were the top few centimetres of the main dish, everything else was in its original condition. The cause of the problem was never identified, but it was one occasion when bread, butter and jam ended up as the breakfast menu. Ray made up for it next morning, but then, memories tend to recall disasters, not compensation for disasters.

(Gun) Sergeant Max Parker was another who found his way into the Catering Corps. A butcher by trade, he was called in to assist Ray Carter during an Annual Field Exercise when, to quote Max "the civilian cooks were not playing any more".

When the Quartermaster Staff picked up the rations, the meat was in carcass form, which was usual – whole pig, sides of beef, lamb. Cutting up for cooking was not the job for an amateur and Ray inveigled Max into doing the honours. From this involvement there followed an Army career change and he went on to become the Q Battery Sergeant Cook. As Sergeant Artillery, he went on to a basic cooks course, Corporal's course and Sergeant's course. He served 12 years with our Regiment, then was posted to 4 Royal New South Wales Regiment, did his Warrant Officer Caterers and Trade Testing Officers course at the School of Catering in Victoria and served another 10 years with 4 Royal New South Wales Regiment.

Max recalls the four wheel and two wheel Wiles cookers which served as the cookhouse, a tarp providing cover for a kitchen work and storage area, the easily assembled Billy Hut of timber, canvas and fly wire for food storage, kerosene household refrigerators, a trench fire for eggs and the hotboxes of the day - a two man lift - for transporting meals. Let us not forget the grease trap and those of the battery who maintained them and the ablutions and the presence, at times, of blowflies in large numbers.

With a two wheeled Wiles for a battery, it was common to prepare meals on the move, but where there were two or three moves a day, the hours were long and demanding for the cooks.

On one particularly demanding fire and movement exercise the BK (Battery Captain), Don Smith, made history early one morning showing great initiative by walking behind the battery Wiles making his breakfast on the readily accessible hot-plate. With the BK thus adequately nourished, the first deployment of the day was as good as one would ever observe.

The Wiles has an interesting history. James Fletcher Wiles of Ballarat in Victoria (1883 – 1939) was a young soldier serving in the South African campaign who recognised the advantages of a mobile kitchen and that steaming vegetables was better than boiling them. He designed a horse drawn travelling kitchen boasting detachable wheels for lowering the floor and making for greater convenience for cooking. Eventually it was accepted by the Defence Department and 300 saw service in World War I.

Of particular value was that the kitchen could be operational on the move and meals available promptly during unit deployments. Interestingly, the sides of baking trays were turned in at the top to avoid cooking liquids from spilling which had the effect, when on the move, of basting rather than roasting meat.

His sons further developed the four wheeled towed design, a stationary model and by request developed "The Junior Mobile Cooker", having just two wheels and suitable for towing by a Jeep or similar vehicle. Both were used by Australian, British and New Zealand forces.

Over 3000 of the three types were produced for use both here and in Korea and Vietnam. In 1980 the Wiles cookers were phased out.

Following upon the Wiles, for a brief period, Max recalls the cooks used field cookers about two foot (60cm) square, sitting flat on the ground, drip fed with petrol from a jerry can suspended from a tree or similar support. They were unpopular and when raining and in the open, burning fuel floating on the water could create impressive rivers of flame.

The subsequent US Army's portable petrol stoves were later converted to gas and further steps towards modernity saw gas barbeques and walk-in refrigerators and freezers on issue to the Regiment. Despite these developments, Max made the important observation that only with the Wiles could meals be prepared on the move and the battery fed promptly at the next occupation.

Most annual camps have had their newsletter and the Daily Bugle of 18 February, 1970 reported the second chunder storm in the first week

Major Chunder Storm Claims Picquet

The 2IC paid the highest tribute to WO2 Carter's cooking yesterday with a dramatic and colourful display of aerial chundering. Selflessly sacrificing his lunch, Major McLaughlin discharged his tribute 300 yards south of the campsite to shouts of "Geronimo" performed by his co-passengers on the chopper.

The only casualty during the performance was the main gate picquet who is still under sedation mumbling over and over again "Rain isn't lumpy, or at least it wasn't once, was it?"

1972

Even with the support of those seeking an alternative to overseas service as National Servicemen, most Citizen Military Forces units were struggling to maintain efficiency. With the end of Australia's involvement in South Vietnam, there came the end of National Service on 14 December of 1972 and with that there resulted a further substantial weakening of the strength of the Citizens Military Forces.

There were few so called "optees" with our Regiment and their loss had little effect on our viability.

Up to this time, the enemy and Australia's likely military commitment overseas, were fairly clearly identified. For years now, experience and training had been for counter insurgency operations in a jungle environment. Now, in 1972 there was no readily identifiable enemy. Defence of Australia was the key and therefore there was a return to the training programmes of limited war in open country, regimental deployments subject to an air threat and resupply by road.

With Britain and the USA withdrawing from South East Asia, Australia was looking decidedly lonely.

This situation was reflected in the 1972 Defence Report that envisaged a high degree of military self reliance for the country.

In the field, the loss of expertise in the "proper" use of artillery up to Divisional level was identified as a major problem. This return to the old ways was made difficult by the memories and lessons from the Vietnam experience.

The development and maintenance of standards became a rigorous pursuit and the Army introduced the Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTREP), from which was developed the Royal Australian Artillery ARTREP. This tested thoroughly all aspects of artillery procedures in the field; standards were set and independent assessments made every two years for ARes (Army Reserve) units. Regular units were assessed annually.

Captain James Turpie was a one- time Quarter Master (Australian Regular Army) of the Regiment. The 29 July 1971 edition of the fortnightly publication *Army* records his retirement, after a 45 year career, as the longest serving soldier in the Australian Army. In 1934 he was enlisted in "A" Field Battery and commissioned in 1942 when a member of 110 Tank Attack Regiment

Humour of the times was demonstrated by two entries in 10 Battery's "Green and Orange"

It has been reported that due to 10 Battery members being known as the International Battery – French, Maltese, WOP, Australian, Pommy, Irish, Italian – in future the ROs will be read out by the BSM with interpreters of each language present.

There were other considerations, too

Did anyone notice that only the green flag was flying over the Battery on the last firing weekend? That accounted for the good shooting I suppose, even though there were too many Protestant numbers one.

This year the Annual Camp was at Tianjara and the last with the Regiment equipped with the 25 pounder. (Sergeant) Peter Burgess recalls that brand new Studebaker gun tractors were released from storage for the occasion and as would be expected, the distance travelled as recorded on the speedometer was only into double digits at the most. He also recalls that ammunition available exceed all expectations, with supplies delivered to gun platforms by semitrailers.

The Commanding Officer and Battery Commanders made the most of such an opportunity, with increasing complex fire plans and Regimental fire missions regular experiences, resulting in much being learned and relearned at all levels of command. It was great training and the level of training benefited the Regiment for years to follow.

This year saw the presentation of The Queen's Banner to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery at Victoria Barracks. Members of the Regiment and those of other regiments provided the Ground Holding Party.

1973

In 1973 the Regiment again lost its 25 pounders. These were replaced by the refurbished L5 105mm Pack Howitzers that had seen service in Vietnam. The gun was designed by the Italian firm OTO Melara and was in service with the British Army. The role of the Regiment was changed to Close Support.

The gun was designed for use in mountainous terrain and could be broken down into twelve loads for carriage across country or movement by helicopter. Compared to the standard field gun of the day, it was lightly constructed with pins securing the several major components such as the split trail. In towed configuration, its narrow wheelbase demanded a maximum road speed of 30k/h and 10k/h cross country. Normally towed by a Land Rover, drivers became expert at backing the gun up ramps and onto the back of trucks for travelling any distance on made roads.

The split trails could be set to narrow, medium or wide positions. There were three sections to each leg, so a variety of configurations was possible. The wide position and use of the three sections per leg was for normal deployment. In gun pits or in other locations where space is restricted, two sections per leg and either narrow or medium positions could be used to meet the requirements.

The usual high firing position could be changed to a low firing position by the rotation of the stub axles. In the low firing position it had a very menacing and impressive profile.

Its weaknesses were displayed in Vietnam when prolonged firing on the highest charges resulted in damage to the spades, elevating gear boxes and the arcs. When issued to our Regiment after refurbishment, they were in great condition.

Ron Wee Wan recalls that an early lesson learned by a Number One was to ensure that the Number Seven (an ammunition number) had the strength and build of an ox. His task in assembly or dismantling of a leg of a trail was to lift the heavy second or middle section of the leg to enable the insertion (or removal) of the pins securing it to its adjoining section. Weaklings need not apply.

1973 also saw the Regiment change over from “37 pattern” webbing equipment to “56 pattern” on the weekend of 17/18 February. (*Q Instruction 1/73*)

In many ways, the new webbing was a marked improvement on the old. Initially, though, the array of straps and questions of their purpose and how and where the packs were worn were a major puzzle requiring patient explanation from those more experienced.

In 1973 the Army commenced a reorganisation.

One of the first moves in the new Whitlam (Labor) Government was a deep examination of Citizen Military Forces matters, including its role. This was the first independent, major review of the Citizen Military Forces ever undertaken by government.

Dr T B Millar, Director, Australian Institute of International Affairs at the Australian National University, plus five others with a knowledge and understanding of the Citizen Military Forces, were given responsibility for the task by the Minister for Defence, Lance Barnard. The much anticipated Millar Report was presented in March 1974. While several of the recommendations were accepted and implemented within a very short time, others took longer – over thirty years.

The Citizen Military Forces was now to be known as the Army Reserve. The aim of the change of name was to identify the citizen soldier as part of the “total force” concept and not as a separate identity, unrelated to the Regular Army.

It was to operate under the same functional command structure as the Regular Army with direct representation in each of the three commands.

Other significant recommendations included the formal training of Officers and Non Commissioned Officers being removed from the responsibility of the unit and others related to condition of service, rights for compensation if a member were killed or injured while on duty, pay and a very welcome initiative in the eligibility of members for Defence home loans after six years’ service.

Protecting the employee and his employment while on part-time military service was one area of consideration that helped satisfy a long felt want by citizen soldiers not employed by government.

The structure for 2nd Division Field Force Group (Sydney) under Major General G J Maitland was

Colonel Artillery	Colonel R T Smith
7 Field Regiment (113 LAA amalgamated)	Lieutenant Colonel C B J Hogan
23 Field Regiment (18 LAA amalgamated)	Lieutenant Colonel S P Wheeler
133 Divisional Locating Battery (Manly)	
four Army Reserve infantry battalions	

About this time, the manual work of battery command posts in the Army Reserve for determining the data to be applied on the guns by use of plotting boards, range tables and graphs of several varieties, was replaced by computer technology in the shape of the Hewlett Packard 25 calculators..

First introduced in the 1970s into the Regular Army, FACE (Field Artillery Computer Equipment) marked the beginning of a new era in Gunner circles which would develop to the stage in 40 year’s time where, in broad terms, global positioning systems would eliminate the manual survey requirements for the guns and the Forward Observer’s target information would be entered into a

computer for calculation of gun data and transmission direct to the gun(s) for engagement of the target. As a technical centre for the gun position, the Command Post was to become a shell of its former self.

On 20 October of this year, Her Majesty The Queen opened the Opera House and again, the Regiment played a significant role in a variety of ways. Indeed, in a couple of instances in particular, it made its mark. Members of 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment provided a party to operate the World War II search lights taken out of storage for the event. Additional training was incurred to learn about operating techniques, and here, the old hands really came into their own.

Power generators were in good condition and the mysteries of creating light of the required brilliance by adjusting the carbon rods were soon revealed and mastered. Also covered were the intricacies of deployment and the patterns to be followed in illuminating the Opera House and the night sky. To answer your question, yes, it all went well on the night.

The Regiment was also involved in security and the formal military ceremonial events. Rumour has it that a team from the Regiment was looking for a souvenir to mark the historic occasion, but it had to be something special and something and the audacious means by which it was to be achieved would be associated with the event years, even decades, later. The story goes that at a carefully selected moment towards the end of the day, Sergeant E S marched a party down a length of Macquarie Street, paid the appropriate compliments to the Australian flag and with due ceremony lowered it, folded it and marched back to the dispersal area with the flag in safe custody.

It is reported that a Colonel observed the ceremony and complimented all concerned on their exemplary drill.

There must be some truth in the story, because the flag was in safe care up to the time the Regiment was removed from the Order of Battle in 2012.

The Commander, Royal Australian Artillery, 2nd Division, Brigadier R Q O Macarthur Stanham ED, was farewelled at a formal dinner on 1 December, 1973. Earlier in his military career, he was Commanding Officer of the Regiment from August 1962 to 16 August 65.

1974

Granting of the Freedom of Entry to the Municipality of Burwood to 23 Field Regiment took place on Saturday 6 April 1974 at 1430hrs. A Gunner with close associations with the Regiment, His Worship the Mayor of Burwood, Alderman R A R Smith MBE ED conferred the Freedom of Entry.

This time honoured ceremony stems from a time in Europe when bodies of armed men were not permitted to enter walled cities without permission of the citizens. However, a body of men trusted by the citizens not to bring harm upon the city could be given the valued right to enter without seeking special permission for each occasion. To inform the citizenry as to which armed group had been granted the privilege, a formal ceremony was developed over time for permission for the privileged to enter *in full panoply with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, band playing and Colours flying*.

Under Command of the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel L D McLaughlin ED, the Regiment paraded with 20 Officers, 20 Warrant Officers and Sergeants, 80 rank and file, all in Greens ceremonial, 12 x 105mm L5 Pack Howitzers and 12 x Trucks $\frac{3}{4}$ ton GS. The Queen's Banner of the Royal Australian Artillery was paraded with the Regiment.

Parade music was provided by 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment band and the Provost Corps performed escort duties from Belmore Training Depot to Burwood and return.

The Principal Official Guests were the General Officer Commanding 2 Division, Major General J M C MacDonald MBE ED, The Colonel Commandant Brigadier Sir John Pagan CMG MBE ED, and the Commander Royal [Australian] Artillery 2 Division Colonel J W B Johnson ED – a former Commanding Officer of both 23 Field Regiment and 7 Field Regiment.

Resplendent in Mayoral robes, Alderman Smith inspected the parade and the band. Then followed the Mayor's address, acceptance of the scroll by the Commanding Officer and his address in reply, the Colonel Commandant's address and the Regiment's salute to the citizens of Burwood.

The Regiment marched off and exercised its right of Freedom of Entry.

Then followed afternoon tea in Burwood Park, the Beating of Retreat by 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment Band and a cocktail party for guests, council members and Officers of 23 Field Regiment at Burwood Council Hall.

It was a great occasion in pleasant weather conditions, well supported by the local community.

We now turn our attention to 18 Light Anti Aircraft RAA based at Kogarah and the notification that, on promotion in 1975, the next Commanding Officer was to be Lieutenant Colonel S P Wheeler. The Officer Administering Command, Major Barry Glover, was in the process of arranging a handover parade of grand proportions and incorporating a lengthy list of dignitaries. Then came the bombshell – the demise of 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment followed by its amalgamation with our Regiment.

That Regiment had a proud history that traced back to 1925 and 1 Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery, being the first Anti Aircraft Battery in Australia.

Those members who elected to remain with their new Regiment were allocated to the newly established 1 Battery – thereby acknowledging the members' Anti Aircraft heritage - with Major J C Dunnel as Battery Commander.

In the way that administrative requirements can lead to strange situations, the promotion and appointment as Commanding Officer 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment appeared in Routine Orders but the Commanding Officer was transferred to Bardia Barracks (Ingleburn) as permanent secretary and President Mess Committee of the Officers' Mess.

Almost before he had time to settle into the role, Lieutenant Colonel S P Wheeler was appointed Commanding Officer 23 Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery, inheriting two Regiment's worth of signals equipment and vehicles. The Quarter Master staff - as is to be expected - were keen to keep their paperwork to a minimum and so attempted to convince the new Commanding Officer that all except the usual allocation be returned. From past experience the Commanding Officer knew how difficult it could be to obtain such items at short notice to meet emergent situations and so he decided to retain the windfall until formally required to return it.

The value of that decision was soon realised when, soon thereafter, it enabled the Regiment to meet promptly an unexpected Regular Army requirement for a full battery of guns and personnel. It also meant that we were able to help very quickly, other units seeking use of the equipment we had readily available.

The amalgamation of the regiments also resulted in the band also coming under the wing of our Regiment for administrative purposes. Particularly in terms of promoting the Regimental and Army profiles the band did a great job over many years.

The history of bands makes interesting reading. Bands really became a potent element in World War I and together with amateur or professional concerts and stage shows for the troops lifted military and civilian morale in times of great stress. Robert Holden, in his book "And the Band Played On" noted the existence of various types of band supporting the Army – the brass band, Army Service Mouth Organ Band, the Army Service Drum and Fife Band, an Australian Convalescent Depot Orchestra and Mounted Division and Light Horse band, among others.

Membership of the bands included soldiers serving in the front line, professional musicians recruited for that role alone and capable musicians who also served as stretcher bearers. However, the last mentioned suffered such great casualties that the double role pattern was soon discarded.

There are many World War I records of battalion bands marching long distances repeatedly, day and night, to assembly lines for groups of troops relieved from front line duties and heading back to a base

camp for rest. Their presence and commitment provided a great boost to morale for battle weary soldiers. A bandsman serving at the time recorded the words of the great poet and author, Rudyard Kipling, that the band is the soul of the battalion. The sentiment was echoed time and again in soldiers' letters to family at home.

Incidentally, Rudyard Kipling won the Nobel prize in literature in 1907. All who have served are familiar with the Recessional – God of our fathers, known of old / Lord of our far flung battle line / ... - and many will be familiar with his most famed novel “Kim”.

While there had been an Artillery Band for many decades, the 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment Band was formed in 1958 as a corps of drums. It was not long before the Bandmaster of 45th Infantry Regiment Band was encouraged to transfer and form a brass band. With him came a dozen or so colleagues and in 1959 reed players joined. It then it commenced as a concert band, building up to about forty bandsmen.

Over time there has been a succession of bandmasters and drum majors. A former Navy Chief Petty Officer was bandmaster at one stage. There have been name changes also, commencing, in 1976, with the amalgamation of the Regiments when it became 23 Field Regiment Band and in 1977, the 2nd Division Field Force Group RAA Band. In 2013, with the removal from the Order of Battle of 23 Field Regiment and its successor, 23 Light Battery coming Under Command of 4/3 Royal New South Wales Regiment there was a further change. The new title was 4/3 Royal New South Wales Regiment – 23 Light Battery Band under “our” Bandmaster, Lieutenant Commander Ross Griffiths RANR. The reference to 23 Light Battery was deleted by 2016. Some years earlier, the Lieutenant Commander brought a fresh sense of purpose and professionalism to the Regimental Band and this renewed enthusiasm was further developed.

The Band is a real credit to all concerned. Historically, many band members have also been members of other major bands (e.g. NSW Police, NSW Fire and Rescue) or members of small groups playing for pleasure or financial reward. Most have provided and maintained their own instruments.

There have been unfortunate instances where, during Regimental Annual Field Exercise activities, some bandsmen considered that they had been a source of work parties rather than musicians, while gun line personnel have usually regarded the situation as nothing more than everyone doing his or her fair share of tasks associated with an Annual Field Exercise.

However, bandsmen have acted as the enemy on Regimental exercises, with quite a degree of success and have joined with other Regimental personnel in bushfire fighting.

Separate, combined bands Annual Field Exercise activities have proven to be much the better course rather than with the Regimental Annual Field Exercise, but even in these circumstances there have been times when some members of the band have been less than happy with the duties required of them in, for example, bringing the accommodation allocated up to an acceptable standard. Gun line personnel have been quick to say that that is just part of life in the Army.

From time to time, the bandsmen have been of the opinion that they had not been viewed favourably by the cadre staff, alleging that over time there have been quite concerted efforts by them to have the band disbanded or transferred elsewhere, thereby reducing the cadre staff's administrative commitment. Whatever the truth of the matter, successive Commanding Officers have been very supportive of the band and its value to the Corps and the Regiment.

Higher up the chain of command, in 1998 there was a push by top administrative and military brass to get rid of most Army Reserve bands. This time the bands had an important ally in the Howard government and the intention was blocked in the early stages. Under pressure from the later Gillard government for the Australian Defence Force to implement savings of \$20 billion over 10 years, in mid 2011 a decision was made in the upper echelons of the military supporting the removal of 14 regimental bands in the Army Reserve nation wide, “effective immediately” by repossessing the instruments. The claim was that this was in line with the Strategic Reform Programme. Only one Army Reserve band was to survive – the Royal Australian Corps of Transport Pipes and Drums.

Major General Jim Barry, president of the Defence Reserves Association, came out fighting, criticising the bases of the decision and asserting that the public relations presence of military bands would vastly outweigh the cost of supporting them. Other regimental association, including our own, were also quick off the mark as was the Federal Opposition in Parliament. The Department of Defence was made to rethink the matter and the future of the bands was put on hold.

Special mention must be made of what could be readily described as a major crisis for an incoming Commanding Officer. When Lieutenant Colonel K J Broadhead RFD assumed command of the Regiment at the end of 1984, one of his first priorities was to examine each component of his command with a view to rectifying weaknesses and build upon strengths. He found that the band had some long outstanding matters of concern that demanded prompt attention, so corrective procedures were initiated.

In the following April, a junior Non Commissioned Officer of the band wrote a lengthy submission to the Commander, 2nd Division outlining what he considered were longstanding and important matters requiring immediate resolution. Although the bandmaster was aware of all that was being written, there was no notification or discussion involving the Regimental chain of command.

The numerous matters raised included the band's training facilities, location and the adequacy of lighting, a change in the weekly parade night, status of the band whether military or brass, civilians dressed in military uniform performing in public with the band, perceived pay discrepancies, the payment of allowances, morale and the cadre staff's attitude towards the band as a whole.

The result was the involvement of Headquarters 2nd Division and Headquarters, Royal Australian Artillery 2nd Division. No mean feat for a junior Non Commissioner Officer to create such an impact at such a level.

To give an idea of the significance and number of the matters raised, the Commanding Officer's detailed written response to the Commander 2nd Division occupied twelve pages. Some of the matters raised were capable of fairly prompt resolution, but it appears that these could have been resolved at the Regimental level had they been brought to attention in the normal way and had the Commanding Officer's intentions on taking up command had the opportunity of being implemented as he had intended.

It has been observed that in the eyes of some of those personally involved at the time at the unit and higher levels, the junior Non Commissioner Officer's letter and the circumstances surrounding it demonstrated a betrayal of trust by the band in their Commanding Officer who, quite clearly, had their best interests at heart.

1975

Last out of the field are Catering and "Q" personnel. This is as it was when leaving Tianjara at the conclusion of an Annual Field Exercise.

Tianjara was an artillery range about 20km south-west of Nowra with access from the Braidwood Road near Nerriga. Always remembered for its wet and wild weather, Gunners had used the range from 1943 to 1980, when it was closed as a firing range and incorporated into Morton National Park. Our Regiment was no stranger to the area.

The last truck out was driven by a Battery Sergeant Major with Ray as passenger. As was fairly usual, the truck was overloaded with a collection of all manner of stores and equipment that could not be loaded or had not been loaded onto other vehicles.

The truck experienced repeated engine problems and travelling home along the Princes Highway there were frequent signals from passing or approaching traffic, which both thought was a reflection on their slow passage. On the climb out of Kiama they were forced to stop. Looking back, they saw the reason for the attention – there was a plentiful supply of items as far as the eye could see that had fallen from their load. Unable to do anything about it, the occasion was a windfall for scavengers.

The NRMA of the Regiment, our unit members of the Technical Support Troop of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers came and managed to get the truck to Wollongong where it was parked at a petrol station for recovery next day, with the driver providing security. Ray went to the Police station and requested additional security for the vehicle and its contents. The duty member of the constabulary was less than enthusiastic in attending to the Army's needs, but did ask Ray about the contents of the load.

The usual mundane things were mentioned like clean and soiled clothing, tables, chairs and kitchenware. Ho hum. Then Ray listed, quite casually, the number of rifles and sub machine guns and the several thousand rounds of ammunition. The effect was electric and the whole station suddenly came to life.

The Battery Sergeant Major/Driver swore that a police patrol inspected the disabled truck at least every half hour throughout the night and until recovery the next day.

During Ray's stewardship of Regimental Catering, he created a great reputation for himself and the Regimental cooks in general. He could even claim Royal Patronage. When The Queen visited to open the Opera House, Ray was one of those catering for the troops involved in the ceremonial occasion and located in the vicinity of the site of the next day's formal activity. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee spread over the area and the Duke of Edinburgh, who had left nearby Government House for a stroll to see the sights and observe the activity on the forecourt and the harbour, approached Ray for a cup.

The aroma of freshly brewed coffee has broad appeal and the Duke was as tempted as any of us to sample the brew. The Duke did not comment on the quality of his sample, but seemed well satisfied with his freebie.

During Annual Camps civilian cooks and other staff were employed to support the Citizen Military Forces personnel in feeding the Regiment. Peter Tremain, who enjoyed his years with the school Army cadets and joined the Regiment in 1948 has a story to tell. As an Officer, he was tasked to command an end of camp convoy of ten trucks from Singleton to Belmore. No great problem here, but one of the trucks carried all the civilian cooks employed for the camp, many of whom were without any doubt, alcoholics.

All went well until Swansea where there was a stop for lunch. Ignoring completely the orders from a 22 year old junior Officer, the cooks headed straight for a pub. It took a lot of determination and effort to get them back on their truck, which then became their platform to abuse passing motorists and generally make a nuisance of themselves.

It was obvious that stern action was required. Peter stopped their vehicle on a lonely spot on the highway and ordered them all out, bag and baggage. He told them it was the end of the line for them and ordered the driver to prepare to move off. The cooks realised their predicament and pleaded for mercy, promising to behave. To the surprise of all who knew of their reputation, they kept their word.

Peter was another who saw the Army as a career and in 1952 transferred to full time duty. He marched into 12th National Service Training Battalion as Officer Commanding 12 Platoon, C Company, Holsworthy and after a variety of postings and a wealth of experiences retired with the rank of Colonel in 1991.

Lieutenant Colonel S P Wheeler assumed command of our Regiment in December

Alan Whiteley recalls his time as a driver at the Kogarah Depot, which accommodated RHQ, the Technical Support Troop and the Regimental Band. An annoyance that has stayed with him for many years was that on the Monday night parades, those drivers were given tasks not expected of their mates at Belmore or Ingleburn.

A particular grievance was the fitting of new tyres to Regimental vehicles, which would take up most of an evening. So far, no real problem, but when these "home training" vehicles were provided on loan to other units – particularly 7 Field Regiment RAA – it was frequently the case that they would be returned with tyres well worn. Apparently some units had wheel swapping down to a fairly fine art. Worse, from Alan's point of view, was that the Australian Regular Army Transport Sergeant chose to

ignore the problem and thereby maintain good relationships with his Australian Regular Army colleagues in other places.

Our sister Regiment, 7th Field Regiment at Willoughby achieved a significant “first” by completing the restoration of a Boer War 15 pounder gun with the detachment in the uniform of the time. Under the Commanding Officer, affectionately referred to as “Harry de Horse” who was said to have initiated the project, there was even a team of horses to deploy the weapon .

There was always a sense of friendly rivalry between the two Regiments and there is a number of Officers and Non Commissioned Officers who served in both. They also made their contribution in maintaining the great and healthy relationship between the two.

This year saw yet another occasion when our Regiment came to the fore in the eyes of the public when we fired a twenty-one gun salute in Canberra for HRH Princess Anne to mark her arrival in the nation’s capital. The guns were the L5. Australian Army “The Soldiers’ Newspaper” reported the event in its 15 May 1975 edition.

1976

Another recommendation of the Millar Report of 1974 was implemented in 1976 with the first nationwide standardised recruit course conducted at Pukapunyal. This was seen as providing a common standard between both Regular and Army Reserve soldiers and thereby helping to avoid distinction between the two.

In 1976, the Government’s White Paper “Australian Defence” emphasised self reliance in the deployment of Australia’s forces. It did not envisage major operations overseas in partnership with senior coalition forces. However its failing was that it did not outline a strategy for the defence of the continent. The Services filled the gap with their own assessments of how best to fulfil their roles.

Continental defence implies strongly that government placed greater emphasis on the RAN and the RAAF than the Army.

This year saw the release of “Action in Reserve” a 16mm, 12 minute colour film that replaced an obsolete recruiting film “Citizen Soldier”. In the making of the film, cameramen from the producers, Film Australia, took extensive footage of our batteries in the field during a 5 Task Force exercise in the Singleton area earlier in the year. Most of the units taking part in the exercise, including the RAAF, also had starring roles.

In general terms, little is said or known about 133 Divisional Locating Battery but its role was to locate enemy guns and mortars by use of microphones deployed in a pattern, facing the potential enemy positions. The pattern of sound waves was then interpreted to locate the guns and that information was conveyed to our own guns in range for what is known as counter battery fire. The Regiment often provided a gun and detachment for their sound ranging exercises.

They were always regarded as good weekends by our Gunners for it usually involved frequent redeployment. After one or two rounds were fired at designated targets, fire and movement was again under way to keep the Locators on their toes. After both sides settled down to their roles, our Officers were often impressed as to the accuracy of the Locators and the speed with which the information was obtained .

1977

This year, the Commonwealth Government established Committees for Employer Support of Reserve Forces (CESRF) in all States. The basic role of the committees was to make employers conscious of the need for and importance of, Reserve Forces to Australia, encourage employers to allow Reservists on their staff adequate time for training activities and encourage employees who have volunteered for service in the Reserves.

The National and State committees are made up of representatives of employers, trade unions, servicemen and community groups. Over time, the committees have introduced a number of valuable

initiates, including the holding of CESRF funded Employer Nights by units and arranging for employers to observe their employees in training at home and in performing in their military roles in countries overseas such as Malaysia.

In the Returned and Services League of Australia (New South Wales Branch) publication “Reveille” for May-June 2013 there is an article by one who took part in “Operation Boss Lift” and spent four days with Army Reservists serving in “Operation ANODE” in the Solomon Islands. Among other activities, he observed training and practice for riot control, viewing a section on patrol, participating in an ambush operation and observing a section attack and withdrawal.

He wrote in glowing terms of the soldiers’ professionalism, their general demeanour and the welcoming approach of the Solomon Islanders – in short, the Army Reservists were wonderful ambassadors for Australia. He regarded the experience as eye-opening and moving in a number of ways. His conclusions; attendance was of great value and the defence of Australia is in very good hands.

These and other initiatives have demonstrated to employers in a very effective way the added value the military provide to their employees in terms of new skills, self reliance, self discipline, loyalty, initiative, and further developing one’s sense of responsibility.

The committees’ activities seldom attract media attention but they have been very active and very effective in their role.

Commanding Officers can always point to occasions during their tenure when the Army at large expects the immediacy of response from an Army Reserve unit that would be expected of part of a Regular formation. This expectation can be more than a little demanding from time to time, but our Regiment has a proud record of meeting the challenge. It will be recognised that the training levels of a Regiment fluctuate over a period with emphases placed on particular skills or levels of operation ranging from the basic to the more complex. Equipment levels between Army Reserve and Regular forces can also be significantly different in their immediate availability.

A case in point was when Lieutenant Colonel Wheeler was required to provide an Arty Tac for Brigadier Evans at (Regular Army) 1 Task Force at a time when our Regiment was at the early stages of a training cycle. During his Army career, part of which was on Full Time Duty, the Commanding Officer had a broad range of experiences at the higher levels of the Artillery structure, so the task did not present a problem. He had been in a full Headquarters and knew what was required, so he led a scratch support team for the job.

Properly kitted out, on time and in a couple of Land Rovers, the Commanding Officer and his party reported for duty. Talk about the poor relations. The Regular units had their APCs with seemingly 44 aerals per APC, mobile command posts, camouflage, machine guns and all the equipment one would find in a serious deployment.

The Commanding Officer occupied his position next to the Brigadier, with communication with his Arty Tac by relay. As it transpired, Arty Tac did its job well despite the difficulties. They were thanked for their contribution and sent on their way at the conclusion of the exercise. Compared with the Regulars, the Army Reserve again operated on a shoe string, but again did the job and did it well.

Another significant instance of great and unexpected demands being placed on the Regiment was the provision, in a matter of weeks, of a four gun battery for two weeks to bring the Regular 8/12 Regiment up to strength with its third battery for a major exercise in the Singleton area. The task fell to Major John Dunnel, Battery Commander, 1 Battery.

He and his team went to work with a will and, with the help of a World War I General Kitchener recruitment poster – “We want YOU” with the pointing finger – raised the volunteers for the four guns. Z Battery was born, with Bob Withers as BK (Battery Captain) and John Featherstone as Gun Position Officer. To match the speed of redeployment by the better equipped Regulars, the Command Post was located permanently in the back of a truck.

The enthusiasm and professionalism of Z Battery personnel during the fortnight earned the praise of the Commanding Officer, 8/12 Regiment. The Battery returned home with heads held high – once again we had proved we could hold our own with the best.

Major John Dunnel was a product of the Officer Cadet Training School and his first postings were to the gun position, of which he knew precious little – really thrown into the deep end - but he was a quick learner and performed well. In his days as a Forward Observer, 11 Battery, John recalled that he was often criticised for being too slow in his pronouncements on the fall of shot and his ordering a correction to the guns. However, despite the alleged shortcoming, he had a dream run on one particular occasion when his performance resulted in the winning of the prestigious Gordon Bennett Trophy.

He also made a name for himself when his battery was in convoy on the Putty Road headed for Singleton and a Quartermaster truck broke down. Recovery arrangements were overtaxed so members of the battery used their initiative and arranged for the faulty truck's trailer to be transferred to a ¾ ton vehicle. Next step was for the Studebaker gun tractor to tow the truck and to the truck in tow was hitched the gun. Highly unorthodox, indeed probably illegal, but the remaining 90km was covered with no incidents. Another success.

John was later Battery Commander, Headquarters Battery and being as ambitious as any of his peers, was looking for promotion. The next step was the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, so, with his nomination for what was then known as Tac 5, commenced the coaching course at Walgrove prior to the assessment by Regular Army Officers at Kanungra in Queensland.

In keeping with the experience of so many others, he found the assessment process at Kanungra very demanding, requiring long hours of commitment to complete assignments followed by the presentation of solutions or orders to a very critical group of senior Officer assessors. John approached his Tac 5 experience in a relatively casual way – or at least, as casual as one can in such circumstances – with a view of regarding it as a learning experience, prior to a real effort for the next round, the next year.

Perhaps this was to his advantage, for he was one of the two out of every three candidates who passed. Looking back on his achievement, he said with deep feeling, that on learning of his success he did not need an aeroplane to fly home.

What he did not do was to take the risks of one of the earlier very personable and capable Commanding Officers of our Regiment who, during his Tac 5, presented his orders as a solution to a fairly complex operation. When asked why he had not allocated tasks to his available tanks, his response was that he was saving them for the victory parade. Apparently this was one occasion when the assessors were lost for words.

It was never revealed whether it was an oversight because of time limits or simply a case of armour not being an essential ingredient of the plan. The overall quality of his work though, meant the he was one of few who passed.

1978

This year, Lieutenant Colonel M E P (Mick) Burge assumed command of the Regiment, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience from his days as a Regular Officer. He had a magnificent and well deserved reputation, which he further developed in the world of commerce.

A product of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, he was commissioned in 1957. After being awarded his Bachelor of Science degree he had a variety of Artillery Regimental postings, followed by a period as a student at the School of Artillery, Lark Hill, United Kingdom and a posting as Battery Commander 104 Field Battery, in South Vietnam during which time he was Mentioned in Despatches.

Returning to Australia in 1968 he was posted as Senior Instructor, Field Wing, School of Artillery North Head, later to be Commanding Officer/Chief Instructor of the School. In 1976 he retired from the Australian Regular Army, joined Qantas Airways and later, to maintain his involvement in matters military, the Army Reserve as an instructor at 2 Training Group, Bardia Barracks. Promoted Colonel in

1981 he was Commander Divisional Artillery and in 1984 Deputy Commander 2 Training Group. He suffered a fatal heart attack on 7 April, 1985.

Alan Whiteley recalls that an early decree was that in the field, the Commanding Officer would be the last to be fed. So it came to pass that on the first occasion in the field the Commanding Officer was late fronting up and as provision had not been made for this contingency, he went without the meal set for the occasion. A plate was prepared very hastily, but it was not the standard issue. There is no record of a repetition of the problem.

Alan Keith Whiteley's name appeared in the Queen's Birthday Honours List published in The Sydney Morning Herald of 3 June 1978 being the recipient of the British Empire Medal. Proud as he was for the recognition of services rendered in the Army, he was always reluctant to say much or indeed, anything about the circumstances leading to the recognition.

Gunners will know that the sign of a good Gun Number 1 was the existence of a well provisioned "goodies box" to supplement ration packs and generally make life a little more pleasant and comfortable. After all, the detachment had a tractor and there was always space for a box of essentials. It is not unusual to find a gun number employed in or having contacts with grocery chains or suppliers and some of the goodies boxes were, to say the least, well provisioned.

The new Commanding Officer was not at all supportive of this approach to the Gunners' welfare, for his view was that rations should be adequate and if inadequacies were masked by external supplies, there would be no complaints about quantity or quality and therefore no recognition of an emerging problem. Oh, well, he was entitled to his viewpoint.

1979

As a consequence of the Government's White Paper "Australian Defence" and its lack of direction for the defence of our continent, 1979 saw a major reorganisation of the army, with the emphasis on improved reaction times with light scale ground forces that were air portable and air mobile. Training was directed towards low level contingencies involving insurgency threats on mainland Australia.

The "spiritual home" of the Regiment, 700 Canterbury Road, Belmore gained another tenant this year in the relocation of 133 Divisional Locating Battery from 68 Davies Road, Padstow. Belmore was also the training depot for 11 Battery. By 1985, Captain S J Cairns, Training Officer for the Locators was sufficiently emboldened to make a formal proposal to have the Register of Assets Account for the depot transferred to his Battery, citing a number of perceived advantages. The Regiment's Commanding Officer of the day, Lieutenant Colonel K J Broadhead RFD had also been Battery Commander of the Locators and knew where the shoe pinched. He would have none of it and with support for the Regiment from higher headquarters, the proposal did not proceed.

El Alamein Night was still on the social programme of the Officers' Mess, this year being commemorated on 2 November

1980

It was early in the 1980s that the Regiment embarked on an emphasis of fitness for all ranks. This influenced some to give up their interest in the Army. However, it was in the kitchen where the impact was felt most and this was to have a long term and adverse effect on the Regiment. The Warrant Officer Class 2 Caterer had a team of qualified, very good and enthusiastic cooks who could cater for a formal dinner and do everything asked of them. They were a credit to the Regiment and the Army. Whatever their abilities in the kitchen, in general, they could not be classed as athletes and the decision was made that those regarded as unfit in a military sense had to go. This decision included the Warrant Officer Caterer.

There were those that argued that these soldiers had an important training role and some concessions should be made because of their important role in the life and efficiency of the Regiment. The argument was not accepted and the Army lost some of those comprising a very talented and capable team. In the longer term it may have been inevitable that the Regiment would be compelled to lose these personnel for reasons of fitness anyway, but that is conjecture. The viewpoint of many who were

-serving at the time was that the reasons for keeping the team were far more compelling than the reasons for dismantling a capable and valuable asset.

(Relocate Revell entry to page 41(+) and press release from Minister for Defence) -

Gail Revell recalls that it was in 1980 when as a twenty-year-old she enlisted in the Womens Royal Australian Army Corps, was posted to 10 Battery at Ingleburn and when the Womens Royal Australian Army Corps was disbanded, transferred as a Gunner to 10 Battery at Ingleburn. As the only girl in the battery at the time, the continuing feature of her military career was forever having to prove herself in her ability. Although life was challenging, she looks back on her six years as enjoyable and rewarding in many ways.

An early challenge was assembling the newly acquired uniform and webbing which for most, is quite a jigsaw puzzle on first encounter – especially the lacing of the boots. Initial efforts were by trial and error and the anticipated criticism from Non Commissioned Officers, her saviour was fellow Gunner Alan Field who calmed her fears and went out of his way to ensure she met Regimental dress standards.

Not one to back away from a challenge she undertook a variety of courses including those for clerk, signaller, driver, instructor, M2A2 gun number, recruit counsellor and recruiting.

As a signaller she had roles at both the Battery Command Post and with the Forward Observers. One memorable moment at the gun end during a live firing exercise was when she received the order Check Firing. Passing on the order immediately to the Gun Position Officer, he acknowledged and to Gail's dismay and despite her frantic efforts to reinforce the significance of the fire order, the Gun Position Officer ignored her endeavours and the guns fired. The Gun Position Officer was summarily ordered to the Observation Post, quickly followed by the signaller's log book. He returned very pale of complexion and much chastened.

Another experience was the deployment of a gun battery position with one gun firing very close to and over the Command Post. Gail recalls the noise as being ear shattering. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel A English was visiting the position soon thereafter and promptly corrected matters, making it very clear as to what he thought of the deployment.

Being the only female in the Battery, personal hygiene in the field could have been a real problem, but Battery members again came to the fore by a member providing appropriate security at the required times; the impromptu system worked well and Gail was very grateful for their courtesy and consideration. There was consideration shown in other ways, too, for language and personal behaviour had regard to her presence, but in all other ways she was just "one of the boys".

Again in the field, Gail's allocation for her hootchie was a little distance from the main battery lines. Early in an Annual Field Exercise, she walked the short distance for the day's morning roll call and noticed in the distance the troops in line wearing great coats. Thinking that as she did not have one of those it was time she obtained her issue, she then noticed that the troops' legs were bare, she then noticed that two officers were walking slowly along the line. Then her eyes met the eyes of the Medical Officer. She stopped and so did he. A brief pause and he dismissed the troops. She had walked into a short arm parade. One of the Services' unique and time honoured medical inspections had come to an abrupt halt.

Gail had a variety of postings including that of Driver/Operator, was a gun number with Sergeant Jim Pearson as No1 and as signaller, served under Sergeant Doug Godbee.

In transport, her claim to fame is having three Rovers break down on the run from Holsworthy to Singleton.

Recruiting was her principal activity for over three years, setting up recruiting stands in shopping centres during week days and weekends and still attending the normal battery training parades. Gail found recruiting under Major Alan Raisbeck very rewarding particularly when those newly enlisted were obviously of high calibre and eventually made a significant contribution to their Regiment.

Gail's six years with the Regiment are recalled as a great six years, serving with great people and friendships from those days that have endured and blossomed.

1981

Major General K R Murray AO OBE RFD ED QC, who had commanded the 2nd Division Field Force Group from July 1978 following upon his command of 5 Task Force commencing in 1974, re-raised the 2nd Division in July, 1981. A spectacular parade was held at Victoria Barracks to mark the occasion, with 23 Field Regiment well represented.

Major General Murray relinquished that role in April, 1982.

The year saw Lieutenant Colonel A W (Tony) English as the Commanding Officer of our Regiment until 1984. His military career commenced with the Australian Army Cadet Corps at "Churchie" Grammar School, Brisbane. He later enlisted in the Queensland University Regiment and was commissioned in 1964. In 1968 his career as a Gunner commenced.

He was a veterinarian by profession and transferred to Sydney in 1978. Appointment as Commander, 133 Divisional Locating Battery followed soon thereafter. In 1979 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and in pursuit of his professional career, took a position in Scotland. There he was attached to Aberdeen University Regiment OTU and had the opportunity to serve with 49 Regiment, Royal Artillery in Germany.

In 1987 he was promoted Colonel as Commander Divisional Artillery 2nd Division and from 1988 to 1997 was Commander Land Command Artillery. Because this position was usually the role for a Regular Officer, further promotion was widely anticipated but did not eventuate. Significantly, he oversaw the RAA Air Defence support to the RAN during the 1991 War.

He retired from the Army in 2000, after 38 years service and after a long and debilitating illness, died 8 July 2015 aged 71. In his professional life Colonel English AM RFD earned a Bachelor of Veterinary Science (H1) and PhD from the University of Queensland, was an Associate Professor at University of Sydney Veterinary School at Camden, near Sydney and in June 2006 appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to veterinary science. This is an edited version of the information supplied by Lieutenant Colonel Ken Broadhead, also a CO of the Regiment, (1984/1987) that appeared in "Cannonball" (spring 2015 No 90) Journal of the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company.

In 1981, the Regiment's Army Reserve strength was Officers 21, Senior Non Commissioned Officers 32, Rank and File 150 making a total of 203. To these figures should be added Australian Regular Army personnel 16 and the Band, 33 – a grand total of 252.

1982

Major G Stuart Staziker ED was one of those irrepressible soldiers who was always looking ways to improve the efficiency and status of his unit. A one time National Serviceman, he progressed to Battery Commander 10 Battery, later 2IC (Second in Command) under Lieutenant Colonel M Burge and later still as Commanding Officer 7 Field Regiment.

His claims to fame include his visit to Vietnam and service with BOAR (British Army on the Rhine) while on duty with the Royal Artillery.

Under his guidance and with a number of enthusiastic supporters, the 23 Field Regiment RAA Association was formed in 1982. Stuart was elected President, with Lieutenant Colonel K K Bryant ED – Commanding Officer 1970/71 – Vice President. Other office bearers were Secretary, Major J C Dunnell: Treasurer, Captain I Davis: Registrar, Warrant Officer Class 2 J Hand: Assistant Secretary, Warrant Officer Class 1 B A Willoughby: Assistant Treasurer, Warrant Officer Class 2 L Ball and Committee Members Warrant Officer Class 2 R Carter, Warrant Officer Class 2 L A Willoughby, Sergeant P Burgess, Sergeant E W Selby, Sergeant P A Hamill, Bombardier G T Carpenter, Mr K A Willoughby.

Warrant Officer Class 1 Barry Willoughby was later to serve many years as President and with his many involvements with the RSL, the Navy and Army Cadets, the Royal Australian Artillery Association and the Reserve Forces Day Council, the interests of our Regiment and our Association have been enhanced substantially.

Barry and from time to time, the members of the committee, have maintained close contact with successive Commanding Officers and members of our Regiment. Equipment for the Regiment is purchased from Association funds as required together with other purchases such as shirts carrying a woven Artillery badge for the Regimental Band. The handsome John Hand Trophy is presented annually to the member of the Regiment who excels in a promotion examination – won on one occasion by the Regimental Sergeant Major – and the Association tie displaying miniature colour patches of 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment AIF has been adopted as the Regimental tie.

Association members support Regimental social and formal occasions and the Regiment reciprocates to the extent that the training programme permits.

Commemorative plaques recording the history of our Regiment and the plaque formerly at Warwick Farm Racecourse recalling the formation of 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment AIF now installed at the Kogarah Depot were initiatives of the Association, as was the installation of the plaque in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra in memory of members of 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment AIF. Additionally, support for the Reserve Forces Day parades in Sydney and Canberra resulted in the institution of the Association's formal and solemn annual wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier, Canberra.

1983

The Annual Camp for this year was held at Singleton. Unconfirmed records show that the attendance totalled 205, comprising Regimental Headquarters/Headquarters Battery 46; 10 Battery 69; 11 Battery 74 and the Technical Support Troop 16.

Exercise Kangaroo 83 in Western Australia saw the reintroduction of the use of the brigade structure.

This year saw a new appointment into the Army – that of Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army. Warrant Officer Class I Wally Thompson formerly Regimental Sergeant Major 1 Brigade was the first incumbent. A new rank insignia identified the appointment. The role was to provide an important means of establishing and maintain a direct link with all other ranks and providing advice of all matters relating to them.

These included professional standards of training, morale, customs of the service, discipline, dress, equipment, enlistment, education assistance, pay and allowances, conditions of service, promotion and posting policies, welfare and amenities.

Warrant Officer Class 1 Wally Thompson served many years with distinction.

1984

The taxation of Army Reserve pay came to the fore again in 1983, with a six page notification from Staff Officer Grade 2(PERS) Headquarters 2 Div providing guidance on the issue of income taxation applying from 1 December 1983 on one half of the pay and allowances paid to Army Reserve members. Group Certificates were to issue for the year ended 30 June 1984, with tax deducted at the low rate (about 15.5%).

For those receiving an average or higher income, this meant, of course, that there was the potential that they would have to dig deeper into their pockets to satisfy the increased demands of the Taxation Commissioner. There was much dissatisfaction in all ranks and there were those who decided to

“forget” to submit the Group Certificate from the Army with that from their employer. A fruitless exercise and for some, an expensive fruitless exercise.

As in the past, any suggestion of taxation of pay also tended to encourage members to leave the Unit.

A special edition of the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette was published on 16 March 1984 (No 5108) authorising 1600 soldiers to wear the new Defence long service medals. The Reserve Force Decoration is the only new long service award to carry post nominals.

The new medals are awarded for long and efficient service which aggregates 15 years from date of enlistment or appointment. Qualifying service need not be continuous and each additional five years' efficient service may earn a Clasp to the medal. Members of the Defence Force, Regular or Reserve, serving on or after 14 February, 1975 are eligible.

Those wearing, or entitled to wear, the National Medal are entitled to wear both.

This year, the fourteen day annual camp under Lieutenant Colonel A W English was held at Singleton, with the gun batteries deploying three guns each and Headquarter Battery deploying a Regimental Command Post.

Some years later a Forward Observer recalls an occasion when the Commanding Officer, a Battery Commander at the time personally escorted him and his party to the site of an Observation Post. A very big problem – the site was heavily wooded and the impact area impossible to see from the ground. The solution? A set of tree climbing leg irons. These were produced by the Battery Commander who pointed skywards and left the area.

Where there is a will there is a way and after a dutiful search for an appropriate tree the Forward Observer set up his rather unique Post and successfully performed his role.

Excluding Regular personnel, numbers in attendance were Regimental Head Quarters/ Head Quarter Battery and Technical Support Troop 44, 10 Field Battery 38, 11 Field Battery 43; to these numbers should be added civilians employed for cooking duties and another for hygiene duties, 6 personnel.

This year saw the introduction of The Royal Artillery Quick March as a replacement of The British Grenadiers, being an adaptation of that march with The Voice of the Guns. The new march avoided the repetitive nature of the old and gained ready acceptance.

One of the first personal commitments for Lieutenant Colonel K J Broadhead RFD on his assuming command on 1 November 1984 was initiating the creation of the “Rogues Gallery” of former Commanding Officers of the Regiment. The commissioning of the Gallery followed upon a Regimental parade at 2000hrs on Monday 30 November 1987. The 2nd/3rd Anti Tank Regiment Association provided financial support for the project, which yet again demonstrated the continuing and close relationship between the Regiment and those who had served in World War II.

During this period of mid 1980s a distinguished Citizens Military Forces Gunner was Commander, 2nd Division. Major General Rodney Graham Fay ED gained his Commission serving with 11 Field Regiment RAA, Northern Command in 1955. In 1971 work commitments brought him to Sydney, briefly, for the first time and then again, permanently, in 1977.

A person of solid build and a commanding presence, with a good sense of humour and an impressive knowledge of matters military, including military law, he proceeded through a range of senior appointments, including CRA (Commander Royal [Australian] Artillery). He was also Honorary ADC (aide-de-camp) to Her Majesty The Queen from 1983 to 1985. This role resulted in fairly numerous trips to Buckingham Palace and he was able to relate at length and in detail some of the impressive ceremonial occasions with which he had been involved. Among his other attributes he was a great host, had a charming personality and was a great storyteller.

1985

Until 1985 all female members of the Regiment wore Women's Royal Australian Army Corps uniform embellishments. In that year and after 35 years of existence, the WRAAC was disbanded as a separate corps of the Australian Army.

In September 1985 the nominal roll for Head Quarters Battery was 37 members (Battery Commander Captain R J Walker), for 10 Battery 59 (Battery Commander Captain A J Kariks) for 11 Battery 47 (Battery Commander Captain P Chapman) and the Technical Support Troop 14 (Officer Commanding, Captain R B King).

In this year the term "Annual Camp" was replaced by "Annual Field Exercise" and for Lieutenant Colonel K J Broadhead RFD, it was his first as Commanding Officer, held at the Royal Australian Navy Air Station, Nowra over the period 12/25 October, 1985. The location had a very significant advantage in that extra duties for all ranks were at a minimum and maximum attention could be given the need to rectify the lack of depth in some trades in the Unit.

Live firing was conducted on Beecroft Range on 22/24 October.

The RAA Band, numbering some 35 members, also attended for the first week, then supported a major recruiting drive in Sydney during the second.

1986

In 1986, Mr Paul Dibb – an academic and consultant to the government – submitted a report, generally supporting the approach adopted by the army in its assessment of the need to be prepared for low level contingencies and its restructure. In 1987, the government White Paper, The Defence of Australia, largely reflected his views and promoted the policy of defence in depth.

The same year saw an appointment of significance to the history of 23 Field Regiment. A former CO, later CDA, - Commander, Divisional Artillery - Colonel A(Tony) W English, was appointed Commander, Land Command Artillery. The much anticipated promotion did not eventuate. Subsequent appointments have been to Regular Officers.

Detail to be obtained from Col English

The impact of the on again/off again exercise of taxation of Reserve pay reintroduced in 1983, was this year, manifesting itself quite clearly. The Reservist was taxed on half the Army income and received increased allowances such that the net result was a loss of one per cent. The government was taking with one hand and giving back with the other. Surprisingly, the losses to the Regiment occurred principally among those who would not have been touched by the tax – the Gunners.

One of the recommendations of the Dibb Report was that the 1983 decision to reintroduce taxation on Reservists' pay be rescinded.

Manpower losses to the Regiment meant that, while there were good numbers in the Battery Commander, Forward Observer parties, and the Command Posts, there were only sufficient gun numbers to man two guns in 10 Field Battery and one in 11 Field Battery.

As has long been the tradition of the Regiment, at that time the quality of Officers and Senior Non-Commissioner Officers was good and the Commanding Officer expressed the view that the Regular Army staff was the best he had seen in an Army Reserve unit.

The decline in numbers prompted the Commanding Officer to write a personal letter to all who had left the unit over the previous few years, outlining the situation and identifying the advantages to them in rejoining. He also increased the Unit's emphasis on recruiting being undertaken by Lieutenant A Papp and Warrant Officer Class Two T O'Neill who had succeeded Warrant Officer Class Two B Willoughby. Much consideration was given the introduction of new initiatives to promote the Regiment.

The long standing problems associated with the Army's centralised and slow processing of potential recruits were also tackled with vigour, particularly in the testing for psychological suitability, its duration and apparent inconsistencies in aspects of the process.

Although not for the first time did a Commanding Officer dig into his pocket to pay for publicity for recruiting purposes, the situation moved this Commanding Officer to do just that. Full marks.

Again on money matters, the Reserve Artillery was required to train Gunners using no more than twenty eight days per year. A formidable task, particularly when all ranks should be proficient at the basic Infantry skills needed by all soldiers, but then this was nothing new: the Reservists were forever expected to do more with less.

The Annual Field Exercise was held over the period 11/24 October, 1986, deploying first to Holsworthy Range, then to Singleton.

Ammunition allocated was	HEM 557	1000 rounds
	HEM 513	60
	520	40
	Illumination	60
	BE Smoke	82

“Singleton Jottings” issued by 12 Field Battery, fielding four 105mm M2A2 guns (a temporary combination of 10 and 11 Batteries for ARTREP purposes) dated 17 October, 1986, carried an interesting entry –

The Padre and the 2IC have been seen preparing curried soup and baked beans with curry. Is that why they travel in the same vehicle? Alone?

12 Field Battery was reported to have had a total of 101 personnel for the assessment.

The Commander, Field Force Artillery, Colonel D M (Don) Tait, a Vietnam veteran, in his biennial evaluation undertaken during the Annual Field Exercise reported that the Regiment performed well and exhibited an admirable degree of professionalism and pride. The previous year's Annual Field Exercise devoted to rectifying observed weaknesses in standards appears to have paid off handsomely.

At that time, Colonel A W (Tony) English, Commanding Officer of our Regiment during 1981/84, was Commander, Divisional Artillery.

Army humour came to the fore in “Singleton Jottings” –

If maps are marked with green for obstacles and yellow for contamination, why are School of Artillery armbands green and yellow?

The infantry do not understand their orders, the Armoured Corps ignore them and the Gunners make their own arrangements.

Infantry and Armour occupy, Artillery conquers.

The toot paper at Singleton rates as the third grade. You do not know the three grades? There is soft, super soft and yuck

Overheard in the OR's lines – If I wasn't such a passive bloke I'd have a severe case of the trots.

This year also saw the introduction into the Army Reserve of fitness tests, known as Physical Training Tests (PTT).

1987

Colour patches were reintroduced for Units that could claim a lineage to those that had a colour patch under the World War I system where they first made their appearance as a means of identifying Australian Army Units. In 1995 the system was modified for Units that could not make such a claim.

The origins are to be found in Divisional Order No 81(A), issued at Mena, Egypt, on 8 March 1915 –

562. In order the better to distinguish the several units of the Division, coloured patches of cloth 1 inch wide by 2 inches long will be worn on the sleeves one inch below the shoulder seam. Except in cases of Headquarters of Brigades and the Divisional Artillery, the Engineers and Army Medical Corps, badges will consist of two colours, the lower indicating the formation, the upper the unit etc. Light Horse (4th Light Horse) and Artillery badges will be divided diagonally, the others horizontally.

The shape of the colour patch indicated the level of the formation to which a unit belonged. The combinations of particular colours or particular colour arrangements of colour combinations indicated the function of a unit.

The Artillery tradition – not always observed – is that red (the colour of the flash of the gun) should always precede blue (the colour of the smoke of the gun).

Second AIF units were authorised to adopt the colour patches of their correspondingly numbered first AIF colour patches, but because of changes in the structure of the Army over time, the process was not as simple as that and in 1940 another instruction was issued. Second AIF battalions would wear the patches of their first AIF battalion forebears, superimposed on grey backgrounds and in the shape of the second AIF division to which they were allotted.

At the beginning, the allotted shape of the 9th Division was an oval, but after the successes at Tobruk, its Commander, Lieutenant General Morshead changed the shape to a modified “T”, probably the most readily recognised of all of Australia’s allocated colour patch shapes.

The colour patch system remained in place until 1949 when embroidered shoulder titles, formation signs and lanyards were introduced.

Then followed another change when, in July, 1987, the Chief of the General Staff approved the wearing of colour patches on the right side of puggarees on hats with a view to fostering the Army’s heritage.

The posted strength of 11 Field Battery, located at the Belmore Depot, totalled 55 in April 1987, comprising Officers 10. Warrant Officers and Senior NCOs 8, Rank and File,37.

At that time the Depot was shared with 133 Divisional Locating Battery pending its disbanding. Fronting Canterbury Road, the Depot grounds once extended down to Harp Street, but slowly the lower areas of the site were given over to townhouses for married quarters to the extent that by now little was left as a training area. It was now obvious that plans were in hand for the closure of the Depot, but enquiries elicited no definitive response as to the time frame.

Field firing exercises – whether over a weekend or an Annual Field Exercise - have long been the icing on the cake for all ranks and the greatly anticipated reward for the days and nights of depot training and “dry runs” that is, exercises in the field without firing the guns. While gun ammunition has seldom been plentiful, the particular exception being the days of the 25 pounders, usually there has been enough to exercise all levels in use of the types of ammunition available to the Corps in Australia.

The following are examples of missions that our Regiment have fired fairly consistently –

- Registration (High Explosive fused Quick and Time)
- Immediate neutralisation (High explosive and Controlled Variable Time)
- Adjust and record a point (High explosive and Time)
- Adjust and record an area (High explosive and Time)
- Quick smoke
- Quick actions (High Explosive)
- Illumination

Coordination illumination
Regimental missions
Defensive Fire and Final Protective Fire targets (pre-recorded)

Battery and Regimental fire plans have also kept Officers and command posts at a respectably high level of proficiency. In the 1970s there was an occasion during an Annual Camp when the CRA (Commander Royal [Australian] Artillery) a Brigadier, paid a surprise visit to the Regiment during a fire and movement exercise. Of necessity his first stop was to meet the Commanding Officer who was visiting an Observation Post to assess the quality of training in progress.

As luck would have it, a Regimental Fire Plan had been prepared and “H” hour was imminent but there was time to brief the CRA and for him to examine the Plan before the first round was due. He was well satisfied with all that he saw.

Now, to conserve ammunition the requirement on this occasion and for most fire plans was for one round from one gun of each battery to be fired for the beginning and end of each serial. On this occasion something went awry. All guns commenced firing the Plan as it had been written. Afterwards, the Commanding Officer said that although his heart was in his mouth when he realised what was going on, he did not attempt to correct the situation because the fall of shot was magnificent and something he and the Brigadier would probably never see again in peace time.

The CRA likewise was suitably impressed and complimented the Commanding Officer and his Regiment on an outstanding demonstration of expertise. There was a penalty, though and that was that nearly all the ammunition allocated for the Annual Camp had been expended. All was not lost, for when word spread – and a happy CRA was bound to tell a few stories around the traps – there was a surprise resupply, the source of which or the person who authorised it, was never made known.

Tactical Exercises Without Troops (TEWTS) have long been a familiar feature of the Regiment whether at Regimental, Brigade, Division or Corps level. As a component of Officer training, at the Regimental level they often included Senior Non Commissioned Officers.

Regimental TEWTS were usually held in the Camden/Campbelltown areas, around Warragamba, in the Holsworthy Artillery range, in the vicinity of Bulli Pass or down the South Coast around Nowra. On one occasion a TEWT was held on the historic Camden Park Estate. The Commanding Officer of the day had seen extensive service in the Middle East in World War II and was very knowledgeable, but was not noted for his sense of dress. During the course of the TEWT there came the time when those attending assembled around a small hillock to hear an address from the CO. As it transpired, hardly a word spoken was remembered by the audience; they were too entranced by the appearance of this Officer of significant stature standing with one foot on the cattle pasture and the other firmly planted in a healthy dollop of cow droppings.

TEWTS conducted by 2nd Division were held at strategic locations around Australia and were prepared by the Planning Cell located within Divisional Headquarters. In 1987, Exercise Rum Corps was held in the Lismore/Tenterfield Area. The hundred or so in attendance included representatives from other States and Territories, New Zealand and the US Army, Army Reserve and National Guard. Transport from Sydney was by aircraft and accommodation was in Army training depots.

The Commander hosted a cocktail party for visiting VIPs and local dignitaries on the Saturday night at the Royal New South Wales Regiment training depot, Lismore. Dress for TEWT participants was field dress and all were required to attend. He was a great host and despite the very ordinary setting the occasion was an unqualified success.

One of the most significant exercises of this nature for Commanding Officers, Officers Commanding significant sub units or postings of special significance and higher ranking Officers was in 1985 when the General Officer Commanding Field Force Command conducted “Torres Trek” over the period 13/19 May. The aim was to familiarise participants with the Cape York region.

Participants from all the Services, both Regular and Reserve, numbering in excess of 120 were accommodated on HMAS Tobruk. The ranks ranged from Major (or equivalent) to Major General, of which there were four.

1988

The Military Tattoo held at the old Sydney Showground in the years following the end of World War II, were a very popular source of entertainment for the population at large and the Regiment was not short of willing participants. With the advent of the National Service schemes and the country's involvement in Vietnam, enthusiasm for things military waned. However, there have been subsequent, but infrequent tattoos.

(Sgt) Peter Burgess recalls events during those in which he and other members of the Regiment participated in 1986, 1987 and 1988 at the Sydney Entertainment Centre.

For the first two years they competed in the "Cannon Race" against 1 Field Regiment, 4 Field Regiment, 8/12 Medium Regiment (all Regular units) and 7 Field Regiment (Army Reserve). At the time we were equipped with the M2A2, but in the 1986 tattoo the competition gun was the markedly more challenging L5 Pack Howitzer with which we would be equipped some years later. The team from the Regiment had three weeks to familiarise themselves with the weapon, helped along by a couple of members who had trained on it previously.

With guns in the travelling position, the competition commenced at the far end of the Entertainment Centre. The guns were stripped, with components placed on a waist high platform, then moved to ground level and reassembled with the gun in the low or anti-tank position and a blank round fired. Next, was a move forward about 15 metres, another blank round fired, then forward another 10 metres, revert to the travelling position and then Detachment Rear.

The whole process took about 7 minutes.

The Regimental team performed well and in the grand final competed against 4 Field Regiment. The Regulars had a narrow win. Although our team completed everything correctly, the winners completed the exercise first, even though they could not close the gun correctly. We were not the winners, but the detachment performed remarkably well and Regimental honour was upheld.

The effort was rewarded by his congratulations and a compliment in writing from the Commander, 2nd Division, Major General R G Fay RFD ED, acknowledging the enthusiasm of the detachment, the impediment of a short preparation time and the high degree of drive and determination exhibited.

The Commander, Field Force Artillery wrote in similar terms.

Particular credit was due to the trainer, Warrant Officer Class Two P M (Blue) Maher, a Regular Army soldier and the Sergeant Major Instructor Gunnery, 10 Field Battery and the Numbers One involved, Sergeant Peter Burgess and Sergeant M (Mick) Ridge of 11 Field Battery.

During the team's training and one of the performances, injuries did occur. One member dropped the gun barrel on his foot, resulting in broken and crushed bones, while another required some 34 stitches to a gash in his arm. The latter injury was suffered at the commencement of a live performance and the trail of blood, ending in a pool, was not noticed until he was escorted from the area by the Master Gunner supervising the competition. That soldier exemplified the quality of commitment we in the Regiment tend to take for granted.

As Peter Burgess commented during his recalling of the event, considering all that was done by the team and in our exercises in the field, it would appear that OH&S (Occupational Health and Safety) issues were not of real concern at that time.

For 1988, Reserve Artillery units were not permitted to compete in a gun race, so some of the Regiment entered and competed against Infantry units. The challenges involved Infantry basic manoeuvres including scaling obstacles and fire and movement exercises. While they did not win, they were not disgraced either, leaving in their wake some quite experienced Infantry.

In March of this year, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel J D Christie RFD hosted one of the first Julis Dinners to commemorate the introduction to the Middle East of members of 2nd/3rd Anti Tank

Regiment AIF at Camp Julis in Palestine. Held in the Officers' Mess, Kogarah, it says something for the potential for the night to note that "stretchers and sleeping bags will be available".

1989

The prospect of only low level commitments suggested that the prospects of the need for regimental or divisional roles for artillery were no longer a consideration of significance. No role for the Gunners whose expertise, commitment and professionalism has so often turned the tide of battle for centuries? Not likely, said many but 2013 saw significant changes to the structure of the Army Reserve.

Exercise Kangaroo 89 was a great demonstration of the value of Artillery and it confirmed for many the idea that there was a role for the Army Reserve Gunner. Conducted across the top of Australia from Cape York to the Kimberleys, it was demonstrated that artillery could be deployed over long distances quickly and effectively to concentrate fire as and when required.

To maintain technical and operational expertise, firepower deployment and co-ordination involving all the Services has been a regular and extremely valuable feature of Regular Army training since. Army Reserve structure and training continued within the divisional and brigade concepts.

1989 saw the Belgian designed L1A1 from the 1960s replaced by the F88 Austeyr – short for "Australian Steyr" – the Australian version of a rifle designed and manufactured in the 1970s by Austrian rifle manufacturer Steyr Mannlicher GmbH & Co KG. The Austeyr comprises a six component modular design and makes extensive use of injection moulded glass fibre reinforced polymers and advanced alloy components. In the two decades since its introduction, the rifle has been in a continuous state of redesign and rebuild.

The 4 kg assault rifle is equipped with a 30 round magazine for the 5.56mm ammunition and can be fitted with a 40mm grenade launcher.

Also in a battery's armoury is the F89 Light Support Weapon 5.56mm Minimi. Designed in Belgium in the 1950s it weighs 7 kg, has optic sighting and is supported by a bipod. Gas and spring operated, it is air cooled, magazine or belt fed, with a normal rate of fire of 60 rounds per minute, rapid rate 120 rounds per minute and muzzle velocity 930 metres per second. Each weapon has a second 0.57m quick change barrel weighing 2.1kg. This model fires a 5.56mm x 45mm round, with another model from the FN Herstal factory using the 7.62mm round.

Effective range is 400 metres – 600 metres with an observer.

1990

In the 1990s tight budgetary restrictions created significant difficulties for units with great uncertainty about the training days available as well as access to training areas. 23 Field Regiment did not have to resort to the cancellation of an Annual Field Exercise, but this was the case elsewhere.

A new order of dress for field training was now being introduced in the form of Field Dress Disruptive Pattern Combat Uniform (DPCU), embellished with rank insignia, a personal name tag above the right breast pocket and the Australian Army Badge just below shoulder height on the right sleeve.

The big development for the Regiment this year was preparation for the introduction of the British designed, Australian built L119 Hamel 105mm gun. Here, we stepped back into history, for as with the famous 25 pounder, this weapon also carried a platform, providing rapid 350 degree or 6400mm traverse. Unlike the 25 pounder, though, which required a simple dropping of the platform and pulling the gun onto it by the towing vehicle, the Hamel first required the removal from the gun of one road wheel, the dropping of the platform, replacement of the road wheel, then the short tow of the gun.

New Zealand purchased the first of the guns off the assembly line and therefore there was much we could learn from their experiences. Exercise "Tasman Reserve 90" (New Zealand) was the result, with the administration processes commencing in November 1988. It was conducted from 2nd March to 18th March 1990 with the live firing exercise taking place over 10th to 12th March. The exercise also provided training with equipment and facilities not available in Australia.

(Warrant Officer Class 2) Terry Gordon, was the Battery Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve contingent designated 12 Field Battery 23 Field Regiment RAA hosted by 4 Medium Battery 16 Field Regiment RNZA based at Papakura where training commenced.

Terry's recollections were that both were limited to 120 all ranks and were made up of members of 23 Field Regiment RAA, 7 Field Regiment RAA, 41 Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment, 2/17 Royal New South Wales Regiment, 4/3 Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment. The 10 members of our Regimental Band were stationed at Christchurch.

The Royal Australian Air Force provided the transport on 2nd March from Australia to New Zealand, landing at Royal New Zealand Air Force base at Whenuapai. The Artillery Training Ground at Waiouru, also the site of the National War Memorial, was reached by road via Rotorua which Terry described in quite an understated way as a very scenic trip.

Battery Commander was Major J C Kirkwood, soon to be Commanding Officer of our Regiment. Other key personnel as remembered by Terry were Battery Captain, Captain P I Broad: Forward Observers, Captain R Wilson, Lieutenant M Shaday, Lieutenant D Clark: Gun Position Officer, Lieutenant A Dunand: Section Commander, Lieutenant B Stevenson: Sergeant Major Instructor Gunnery, Warrant Officer Class 2 M Neat: Battery Leader, Warrant Officer Class 2 G Cowin: Battery Guide, Warrant Officer Class 2 J Hurcum: Signals Sergeant, Sergeant P Merlino.

Numbers 1, Sergeant B Allen, Sergeant M Banham, Sergeant D Leak, Sergeant J Hopkins, Bombardier D Waddingham, Bombardier R Horton.

Pay, Staff Sergeant K Ollerenshaw: Transport, Staff Sergeant C Lewin: Battery Quarter Master Sergeant, Staff Sergeant W Read: Observation Post, Sergeant A Morrow, Sergeant D Faulks: Cook, Sergeant Aiston: Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Sergeant J Fisher: Band Master, Sergeant K Skues.

The Exercise was well conducted and varied in its challenges and highly regarded by all the participants. Before 12 Field Battery commenced its return to Australia and as a gesture of appreciation, the hosts were presented with our Regimental plaque and some 60 cartons of Australian beer. That should have kept them occupied for a while. Then followed a couple of days leave exploring the north and south islands of the country. In summary; a great experience for all and memories to last a lifetime.

The Regiment has also had its New Zealand connection in Lieutenant Michael Bright who came to Australia in 1960 and was posted as Gun Position Officer, P Battery, with Captain L McLaughlin, later our Regiment's Commanding Officer, as his Troop Commander.

He was a National Serviceman in his home country and remembers well the Artillery range used by the Tasman Reserve 90 personnel for that was where he did his National Service training in 1953. His training on the guns was as a Number 3 (gun layer) on the 25 pounder.

He recalled that the range provided a great view of the fall of shot from the gun positions. When their divisional Artillery was employed, incorporating three Field Regiments and the Medium Regiment the impact of the fall of shot was memorable, especially so as truck loads of ammunition were available as a means of diminishing war stocks.

In New Zealand he was posted to Divisional Headquarters which included training in the planning of creeping barrages and he completed the Officer Training Course of six weeks duration. On promotion to Second Lieutenant his posting was Gun Position Officer, at the time a role of real significance in Gunner terms, which suggests he was one who really stood out in a crowd. Later he completed a six week course to qualify for promotion to Captain.

Michael's New Zealand's qualification were not accepted for promotion in Australia's Citizen Military Force and although encouraged on numerous occasions to gain promotion, as with so many, the demands of his civilian work were such as to discourage him from proceeding. The technical aspects of gunnery appealed most to him and he excelled in the positions of Gun Position Officer, Regimental Survey Officer and Forward Observer. As Forward Observer he was instrumental in retaining the

Gordon Bennet Trophy for the Regiment on at least one occasion while there were occasions when the judges “got it wrong”.

He was posted to 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment prior to its amalgamation with the Regiment to assist in the transition and after 22 years as a Gunner concluded his time with the Regiment in 1975. His time as a Gunner in New Zealand only counted for half his service in calculation for the award of medals but he did qualify for and receive the prized Efficiency Decoration.

1991

The granting of the Freedom of Entry to the Municipality of Rockdale was held on Sunday, 14 July 1991 at 1.30 pm. The official enclosure was in the Ador Avenue Reserve, corner Ador Avenue and West Botany Street, Rockdale, with official guests invited to attend afternoon tea in the Town Hall.

The occasion also marked the 120th anniversary of Rockdale Municipal Council a name that came into general use in 1884, when the Rockdale Railway Station was opened. Prior to that, the area came within the boundaries of the Municipality of West Botany and known variously as Frog Hollow, Muddy Creek, Rocky Point and White Gum Flat.

1992

As a means of bolstering numbers in the Regular Army and its preparedness, the Ready Reserve Scheme commenced in 1992 for designated Regular units. The Scheme required soldiers to undertake a year of full time Defence Force service followed by four years of part time service with an annual obligation of about 50 days.

In the mid1990s the dress code was modified to provide for the Corps or Unit badge to be moved from the hat brim and displayed on the front of the hat KFF puggaree. The Australian Army Badge was now to be displayed on the turned up left side of the hat brim. The colour patch would continue to be displayed on the puggaree on the right hand side of the hat.

The Regiment received and exercised the Grant of the Freedom of Entry to the City of Rockdale in 1992. A former member of the Regiment, Major General Rodney Fay AO RFD ED, Colonel Commandant, was parade host and Brigadier Brian McGrath RFD, Commander 5 Brigade represented the Commander 2 Division.

Colonel “Silver John” Argent OBE OAM ED was in attendance, providing a unique link between the war time unit and its post war successors.

The Regiment was inspected by the Mayor of Rockdale, Alderman Peter Bryant, also a former member of the Regiment.

Commanding Officer, Lt Colonel John Kirkwood headed the 22 vehicle parade past the Town Hall with the band of the Regiment providing further spectacle to an impressive and historic occasion.

1995

The 7.62mm L1A1 Self Loading Rifle was replaced by the F88 Austeyr Assault Rifle. The Austrian weapon, designed in co-operation with the Australian Army, had an optical sight and proved to be a compact and easily handled weapon. Australian manufactured, it fired the NATO-standard 5.56mm round weighing 12g..

Weighing unloaded 4.3kg, it was a gas operated weapon with a muzzle velocity of 930 metres per second and a length of 790mm. Weapon and bayonet had an overall length of 980mm.

Also introduced was the 5.56mm F89 Minimi Light Support Weapon. The F89 was gas and spring operated, air cooled but could be belt fed or have 100 or 200 round magazines, was heavier at 7.00kg and was equipped with a bipod. Effective range was 400 metres, but with an observer this was

extended to 600 metres. Rapid rate of fire was 120 rounds per minute with normal rate 60 rounds per minute. As with the F88, it had an optic sight

After a decade in service, The Soldiers' Newspaper, ARMY, in its edition of 11 November 2010, reported that the Staff Officer Small Arms Policy and Safety had found it necessary to highlight the necessity to monitor carefully the rates of fire for these weapons and with the F89 Minimi, to ensure that barrel changes were carried out after the designated number of rounds had been fired.

He stressed that automatic fire at very short ranges for the F88 Austeyr was most effective at bursts of two or three rounds. His further comment on longer bursts was that they were almost impossible to control and generally wasted ammunition. This was in the weapon pamphlet, anyway. While the weapon pamphlet gave the maximum rate of fire at 90 rounds per minute for a maximum of two minutes, he was making the point that this did not translate into firing six 30 round magazines on fully automatic as quickly as possible during that time frame.

1997

The School of Artillery, North Head, was closed this year and relocated to Bridges Barracks at Puckapunyal in Victoria.

1998

Sergeant Don Friend, a member of the Regular Army cadre staff, recalled a significant event in the Regiment's history when, in 1998, a section of 10 Field Battery was allocated for the Goulburn/Canberra area. Initially, some parades were held in the old 4/3 Infantry Battalion training depot in Goulburn. Later, the section occupied a garage at HMAS Harman, Canberra and the Goulburn Depot was allocated to 1/15 Royal New South Wales Lancers.

In 2001/2002 the section moved to larger accommodation which provided improved facilities, including a mess.

This was not enjoyed for long. While HMAS Harman was being developed as a Multi User Depot, the section moved to Duntroon – to the “Love Shack” would you believe.

In 2005 the section returned to HMAS Harman, but in many ways the new facilities were not as good or as convenient as previously.

Commanding Officers of the Regiment based in Canberra utilised this depot as an alternative Headquarters when attendance at Regimental Headquarters at Kogarah was deemed unnecessary or not possible because of work commitments. Battery Commanders of 23 Light Battery have also taken advantage of the facility. Undoubtedly, such presence on parade nights must have done wonders for the assiduity of the Section Commander and the diligence of the Non Commissioned Officers and Gunners.

On Wednesday 1 July 1998 the first of the parades commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reforming of the Citizens' Military Forces after World War II were held in Sydney and other capital and major cities. The route was from Hyde Park to Victoria Barracks with the salute being taken at Taylor's Square by Chief of Army, Major General Peter Cosgrove. Our Regiment was represented by the guns under tow, a marching contingent of serving members followed by members of the Association led by Major Wally Reed, behind the Association Banner carried by members of 23 Regional Cadet Unit, Kogarah.

The Reserve Forces Day Committee reported that 7,000 took part in the Sydney parade which included serving Reserve members, past CMF-Reserve members of the RAN, Army and RAAF, members of the Militia and Regular Force members who were serving or had served with the Reserve.

Elements of the US Army, Marine, Navy and Air Force Reserve Forces and representatives from the UK also marched. Following a concluding ceremony at Victoria Barracks, demonstrations of precision marching and other military skills, with a detachment of Light Horse a highlight, complemented the socialising by participants and their families.

Talking with our equivalents from other nations was more than just interesting; in some cases it was somewhat revealing. Long serving members in the US, for example, were said to be eligible for a form of superannuation on retirement.

Sunday 11 October 1998 saw the decommissioning of the “home” of the Regiment; the depot on Canterbury Road, Belmore. For many old gunners it was a nostalgic occasion. Some years prior, Regimental HQ had moved to the site of the old 18 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment at Kogarah with 11 Field Battery remaining at Belmore, later moving to a multi-user depot at Sutherland.

The service of decommissioning was well attended, with those who would never trouble with other reunions travelling from interstate and other distant parts. The address of welcome was given by the Commanding Officer Lt Col J B Wynen and the stowing of plaques from the building and grounds was entrusted to the Regimental Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer Class 1 W L Parker.

Chaplain W E Phillips’ message was timely and appropriate – if we do not learn from the mistakes of history, we are doomed to repeat them.

The future of the Belmore Depot had been under consideration for some years. Recruiting had been poor compared with other sub-units of the Regiment. In 1987, an assessment by the Commanding Officer noted that the posted strength was 55, comprising 10 Officers, 8 WO/NCOs and 37 rank and file. A significant observation was that the Belmore/Canterbury area, with its largely ethnic population, was not a good area from which to draw/entice recruits

The suggested alternative location for 11 Battery was with 10 Battery in Mt Olympus Lines Holsworthy or a move to Wollongong, subject to a feasibility study. At the time, the Belmore accommodation was shared with 133 Divisional Locating Battery, but this unit was soon to be disbanded.

700 Canterbury Road, Belmore held a strong attachment to those who had served with the Regiment for it really was its spiritual home. The loss of the building was the loss of a lot more than the bricks and mortar. It marked the end of part of the life and life style of the Regiment.

It was here that keys were held by senior Non Commissioned Officers to the messes, gun park, transport office, signals lecture room and equipment, the Regimental survey room, command post stores, Light Aid Detachment (or Technical Support Troop) – in reality, everything and everywhere.

The reason was the enthusiasm for which members had for their particular responsibility in the Regiment. Before a weekend or live firing exercise and in addition to the paid parades for the purpose, Gun Sergeants would have most of their detachments performing sights tests for their gun and general maintenance of the weapon, the Signals Sergeant and team would be sorting, checking and repairing equipment and so it went in other areas. Much the same happened on the days following return from the field and periodically through the year.

Detachments for the firing of a forthcoming salute, or for other occasions when a group might be participating in a ceremonial occasion could also be found polishing their performances for the big event.

Members changed from civilian dress into working dress at the Depot.

Officers also participated from time to time, but it was generally acknowledged that the Sergeants and Warrant Officers regarded this as their domain, which they guarded jealously. A comment at times heard from a higher headquarters was that they could telephone the Regiment at almost any hour of the day or night and the call would be answered. That did not do our reputation any harm at all.

All this was entirely voluntary – getting paid was not a consideration when doing what they all enjoyed doing and being with those who enjoyed each other’s company. This was a demonstration of the tight bond that existed within the Regiment and which, incidentally, often continued outside Regimental activities.

Security? Not an issue. There was no signing on or signing off. All those with keys acknowledged their responsibilities and locking up at the end of an unauthorised activity was carried out even more diligently than for the paid parade. Thefts or damage to property were a great unknown.

1999

In 1999, for the first time, current and former members of the CMF and Reserve Forces marched as an organised group on Anzac Day. NSW State President of the Returned and Services League of Australia, Rusty Priest – a former Warrant Officer and Gunner who had served with 130 Divisional Locating Battery and with which unit 23 Field Regiment had a long and close association – was quoted as saying “We must make sure the Anzac Day march and tradition continues for our children and grandchildren”. Our representation together with representatives from other Reserve unit associations is recognised as a way of achieving that objective.

The 23 Field Regiment Association contingent was led by Association President Warrant Officer Class 1 Barry Willoughby, with the banner again being carried by members of 233 Regional Cadet Unit, Kogarah.

The crowds lining the streets of Sydney received the volunteers with as much enthusiasm as was granted those who had served in Malaya, Korea, Vietnam and other major conflicts.

In recent years the operational settings and tempo has changed significantly, requiring further consideration of Australia’s role for the Australian Defence Force. New Zealand has decided to structure its defence capabilities in favour of its land forces to undertake the peace keeping/peace making duties which are now emerging as a major commitment. The Air Force and Navy will perform a support role, but with reduced combat capabilities.

Australia is a medium power and therefore does not have the same freedom of movement as its smaller neighbour. It must retain a range of defence force capabilities to provide choice in its response to regional and/or international requirements.

That having been said, it is clear that a meaningful role for the gunner and the guns is lacking at the moment. As a good global citizen and a strong supporter of the principles of the United Nations’ Organization, Australia has provided military personnel in support of a number of UN operations.

These included Cambodia, Western Sahara, Somalia and East Timor. No guns were sent overseas, but gunners were there performing most tasks with the exception of the serving of the guns.

Regular Gunners have served in Afghanistan with the Royal Artillery. The first six months of the twelve months deployment was spent training in England and Northern Ireland.

The Government White Paper, Defending Australia, released in 1994, confirmed that the Australian Defence Force role was the defence of northern Australia. In that context, there is a clearly defined role for the artillery. What is also clear is that the Gunner must be more versatile in his training than has been his experience to date.

In World War II, members of 2/3 Anti tank Regiment acquitted themselves well as infantry in the Islands campaign. With that behind us, it is clear that not only must the Gunner be a professional in that role, he must also have the breadth of training to become quickly a professional in an alternative role. This is a big ask, but not one that is beyond the capacity of a member of 23 Field Regiment RAA.

If history is any guide the international situation will again change and in time, artillery will re-emerge as the principal provider and the crucial element in determining success on the battlefield. Whatever the weaponry, the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery has identified itself as a technically proficient, dependable, cost effective and versatile component of the Australian Defence Force.

Campbelltown’s The Chronicle of 5th October 1999 carried a photograph of one time Regimental Second in Command, Major Phillip Chapman setting out on a 2000km trek, on his own, from Appin to Geelong, retracing the trek by legendary explorer Hamilton Hume together with companions Hovel and

six convicts 175 years earlier. His aim was to raise money for a charity which supported overseas aid and development.

2000

Following upon legislative amendments, Reserve soldiers can now be called out for continuous full time service in combat, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, humanitarian and civil aid and disaster relief.

2001

This year witnessed a very impressive Centenary of Federation Reserve Forces Day Parade. Behind our Banner, Association members marched 70 strong headed by uniformed serving soldiers of our Regiment, followed by the guns. The Artillery contingent commander was our Association's patron Colonel A W (Tony) English and our President, Warrant Officer Class 1 Barry Willoughby, marched on the Tri-Service Banners at the ceremony at Victoria Barracks

2002

For the first time since World War II, an infantry company of Army Reserve personnel deployed overseas on operations, this time in East Timor. The 96 soldiers formed A Company 5/7 Royal Australian Regiment.

2003

This year saw the establishment of the Reserve Response Force, being a role for the Army Reserve in the war against terrorism. The Force was to be employed primarily as formed units to cordon off areas or provide protection of sites complementing other operations.

In 2003 new DCPU insignia for display on the chest was introduced for all ranks, including private soldiers. This took the form of a rank slide that incorporated the word "AUSTRALIA".

Australia in 2003 was overdue for a review of defence strategy. The impact of the events in the USA on 11 September 2001 and subsequent events closer to these shores in Bali 2002 demand a detailed consideration of the outdated defence of Australia doctrine.

It is obviously the case that the Australian Defence Force must have the ready ability to deploy overseas at short notice and participate in coalition operations with friends and allies. The threat of international terrorism demanded the ready availability of versatile and multipurpose forces, structured to meet a particular task.

As had been the case for well over a century, the Royal Australian Artillery Association (NSW) Inc continued to keep its membership informed of developments in matters of defence, particularly as they related to Artillery. In 1981 the RAA Historical Society was formed and the inaugural meeting held at the School of Artillery, North Head.

The Association and the Society were very active in the further development of North Fort, the museum and the acquisition and installation of a "disappearing gun" which was part of the original fortifications, but sold for scrap after being decommissioned.

The American M2A2 and the Italian L5, both with split trails, had met the Government's requirements at the time, but research continued over a number of years for a more modern weapon which could be manufactured in Australia, have an improved range over the existing guns and have an air lift capability.

The Hamel gun developed by the UK met requirements. It could fire the 105mm round and from a Gunner's perspective did not have the disadvantage of a split trail. Although more robust and more reliable than the L5 it was to replace, it could not be carried under the Iroquois helicopter; it required the Blackhawk for the task.

In 1981 the Government announced its decision and by the end of 1988 the first guns were being issued to the School of Artillery and Australian Regular Army units.

2005

Members of 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment AIF, when joining with 23 Field Regiment and its Association members for social or other occasions, would often express their appreciation of the value they placed on the ties that bind. Surprising in a way that there were times of unabashed emotional moments by the old soldiers in acknowledging that value which many regarded as a something very personal. There was one particular occasion when this writer witnessed such an occasion when one who had served in the wartime Regiment spoke with great emotion about many fine men he knew and had known who did not have a successor peace time unit, such as he did, to carry forward hard won tradition that meant so much to those who had experienced the demands, expectations and sacrifices of war time conditions.

The ties that bind were evident once again on 26 November when, on the initiative of 23 Field Regiment Association, the plaque at Warwick Farm recording the formation of 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment AIF at Warwick Farm on 25 July 1940 was relocated to our Depot at Kogarah. This move was an initiative of the 23 Field Regiment Association.

The News Bulletin for March 2006 of 2/3 anti-Tank Regiment AIF Association, recorded that the rededication ceremony was held in the presence of in excess of 150 serving members of our Regiment, members of the two Regimental Associations and wives, widows and relatives of those who had served in the war time unit.

Lieutenant Colonel Schon Condon, Commanding Officer of our Regiment gave the welcoming address and stressed the strong alliance between the two Regiments. Then followed speeches by Bert Bryant of 2/3 Anti-Tank Association and Barry Willoughby of 23 Field Regiment Association before the impressive formal rededication ceremony, the unveiling of the memorial and the planting of two magnolia trees. The Band provided the support and colour for the occasion.

The Bulletin reported that those attending then retired for afternoon n tea in the pleasant surroundings of the (Bombardier) James McMahon DCM mess facility. The occasion held great significance for the old soldiers.

2007

The long tradition of members of the Regiment taking the opportunity or making the opportunity to serve on exchange with units of the British Army or those of the British Commonwealth of Nations continues with Dr Garth Pratten soldier, academic and author, who had taken up a position in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2007. In our Regiment's Unit Journal for 2009, an article by Captain Pratten outlines his time on exchange with A Company, 3rd Battalion the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. His aim was to maintain his military skills and be exposed to the tactics, techniques, procedures and equipment of Britain's Territorial Army.

He was given command of the mortar platoon, facing the familiar problems of maintaining morale and motivation in his platoon members and developing effective training programmes while contending with cuts in training days, slashed ammunition allocations and questions of reorganisations in the wind.

He was lucky enough to deploy to Afghanistan twice to teach at the United Kingdom Joint Theatre Education Centre, visit both Kandahar Airfield and Camp Bastion and conduct oral history interviews with British, Canadian United States and Australian personnel. Later he returned to Kandahar to take up a position as the war diarist at the headquarters of Regional Command South.

A significant moment in his time in Britain was during a ceremonial engagement in 2008 marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Territorial Army. With the unit marching through the streets of the medieval city of Canterbury with swords drawn, there was a cry from the crowd of "Good on you, Aussie!". An incident to be long remembered.

Military discipline has long followed our inherited traditions of the British Armed Forces. Minor transgressions were and continue to be, dealt with by the alleged offender's CO. The more serious of matters were the responsibility of the military's own courts which could conduct trials at home or in the field.

The courts derived their authority from the United Kingdom's Court Martial Act of 1688.

However, with the words "transparency" and "independence" becoming key words in so many field of formal endeavour, the Howard Government in 2007 established the Australian Military Court. In 2009 the High Court upheld a challenge to the constitutional validity of the AMC and that court was found to be invalid.

The system of courts martial was reinstated promptly.

A new Military Court of Australia commenced its operations in 2011 as a separate court created under Chapter III of the Constitution. Judges will have had military experience but will not be either Permanent or Reserve serving members. Obviously, the court will be independent of the military chain of command and members may be required to accept deployment outside Australia.

2008

Gunner Scott Condon was one of those enthusiastic members of the Regiment who attempted to take advantage of all the opportunities that the Corps, the Army Reserve and the Army had to offer. In return, he made a significant contribution to the spread of knowledge and experience available to his Unit.

In its issue of 19 December 2007, the Campbelltown Macarthur Advertiser carried a half page coverage featuring the then 23 year old Gunner from the Regiment, one of 120 Army Reserve soldiers from 5 Brigade and 8 Brigade, on a three month training exercise, Rifle Company Butterworth, in Malaysia.

This exercise was one of a number that gives employers of Army Reserve personnel the opportunity of observing the training and challenges the Army provides for their employees. The name, Operation BossLift, also shows that the Army has a sense of humour.

The press article gave a brief coverage of a three day survival training exercise in the southern state of Johor Bahru, the weather and jungle living conditions, the setting of traps to snare wild animals and eating bush tucker. Gunner Condon was recorded as being enthusiastic about the quality of training received during the three months and the life skills all gained during their time in Malaysia.

When yet another opportunity arose, this time to assist in the preparation of troops comprising Rotation 16 before deployment on Operation ANODE, he was one of the first to offer his services.

Operation ANODE represents Australia's commitment to the Solomon Islands government in assisting to defuse civilian unrest in the Islands. Those who have served there say that the population at large do not see themselves as Solomon Islanders; their loyalty is to their area, town or village; the result is a degree of ethnic tension. There is also seen to be much corruption in government, because a prime minister will have a role in government for family and extended family members.

The company strength Army Reservists helped provide the necessary stability for the community at large. Maintaining stability was particularly important in events such as the conduct of the nation's general elections through joint patrols with the Participating Police Force and the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. As with a long tradition of Australian soldiers in peace keeping and other roles in countries overseas, their mere presence, reaching out and managing a firm but friendly relationship with the community at large has done much to engender confidence and strength of orderly governance in the community.

The aim of the training was to provide some experience for members of Rotation 16 of the various scenarios they would be likely to encounter in the Solomon Islands. Gunner Condon was one of the "Islanders" for the exercise from 7 to 20 July, 2008.

Set in the High Range of the Townsville Field Training Area, the “Islanders” set up home in a village, with shops, a church, housing, a marketplace and prison. In all, the setting and the “Islanders” provided a fair representation of Island life and its problems. The final task was to provide experience in anti riot duties for a court hearing. That was not a problem; after all, there was a number of Gunners providing the experience.

Coconuts there were aplenty and with hotboxes forthcoming for every meal our “Islanders” fared rather well. The cold weather was hardly similar to the Solomon Islands, but there were compensations by way of beach fishing, or rations further supplemented from crab cages made from chicken wire.

In 2010 Gunner Condon had his contributions to the Army recognised for a job well done when he received the Soldiers’ Medallion for dedicated service.

The final, 30th rotation of Australian troops completed its mission with the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) when about 90 Reservists, mostly from Victoria’s 4Brigade arrived home on 1 August 2013.

In 2008 AFTADS (Advance Field Artillery Tactical Data System) was introduced into 8/12 Medium Regiment RAA. As described in The Royal Australian Artillery Liaison Letter Spring Edition, 2011, the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System is a computer programme that combines gunnery prediction with a number of mapping, planning, command, control and communications functions that allow the artillery commander to conduct fire support planning and execution on the one computer. Being designed and developed in the USA and UK, of course it does not support some Australian doctrine, but Australian Gunners have long been adaptive to changing conditions and it is widely regarded as an amazingly powerful joint fires system.

One key feature of AFTADS is its capacity to link into Air Force and Navy systems to make joint-fires a reality.

On the question of semantics, the noun “fires” is said to be NATO inspired.

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1 Regt RAA moved from Sydney to Brisbane in January, 2011. A Bty was the first unit to be equipped with the 155mm M77A2 and new capabilities such as inertial navigation systems built into the gun have replaced the traditional means of orientating and directing.

“Army” of 3 March 2011 carried an extensive outline of the changes being implemented in the Royal Regiment, with the word “Field” now omitted from the title of gun regiments and batteries. Regular Army regiments are now organised into three observation post batteries supported by a single gun battery of three four-gun troops of 155mm towed howitzers (M77A2), each with integral command and artillery reconnaissance capabilities.

Each Regiment will now provide a brigade level Joint Fires and Effects Coordination Centre (JFECC) and each observation post battery provides a battle group JFECC and three combat joint fires teams. The operations battery provides the higher level coordination for the Regiment and fire support for the brigade. A combat support battery provides the sustainment and administration and logistical support.

The M77A2 is in service with the US Marine Corps, the US Army and Canadian forces. Weighing 4500kg, it is capable of firing four rounds per minute for two minutes, then two rounds per minute sustained. The effective range is 24km with standard 155mm ammunition, 30km with rocket assisted projectiles and up to 40km with Excalibur precision guided projectiles.

The Excalibur precision guided projectile is capable of being used in close support with friendly units. There are those both Regular and Reserve, serving and retired, who question the new equipment’s capacity to provide the danger close support to Infantry and others that has been the hallmark of the old 25 pounder and latterly, the Hamel. The concern is that the new equipment, alone, establishes a weakness in Artillery’s ability to provide the support necessary on the battlefield.

The lightweight design allows the gun to be deployed by fixed wing or rotary aircraft, the CH-47 Chinook.

In an address to members of the Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales, in January 2012 Lieutenant Matthew Seabrook, a Regular Officer, spoke of his reflections as a young Artillery Officer. He made the points that AFTADS is yet to be introduced for Infantry mortars, but a critical observation was that the Regular Regiments have a heavy, broad range of commitments and there is great difficulty in allocating the time to maintain training commitments on the complex AFTADS. The new system will also see the loss of the technical primacy of the Battery Command Post, with the communication of fire orders going direct to the gun or guns.

By inference and apart from the cost of supplying this equipment to Army Reserve Artillery units, it would be seen to be impossible for Reservists to qualify as operators of the complex AFTADS and maintain that qualification. This is obviously the reason behind the continuing push by Army to have Army Reserve Artillery Regiments lose their guns and be equipped with mortars. Let us not lose sight of the fact that the Army Reserve must be a balanced force and there is no balance in a division or brigade without guns. There are strong arguments for their retention, together with the existing command post systems and equipment.

2009

For female soldiers, the trades policy was reviewed in 2009 with the intent of broadening employment opportunities for these soldiers. In a first for the Australian Army, four female soldiers marched out of their initial training at Kapooka in April and in May, 2010 commenced training at the School of Artillery, Puckapunyal, as Artillery air defenders on the RBS-70 weapon system before posting to 16AD Regiment, Woodside, Adelaide.

There are implications for our Regiment in this further easing of the non-combat roles strictures for female soldiers, but their employment as gun numbers is still over the horizon somewhere. However it should be noted that in their other roles in our Regiment, in large measure they have excelled in their performance of duties and acquitted themselves admirably.

A significant impact on our Regiment in the field was a change in the latrine structures. The male only membership meant that these facilities were almost as basic as the days of the Roman legions. In camp sites in the scrub were strategically placed “piss-a-phones” – metal funnel shaped items with the wide opening about knee high and the other end dug in. The “throne rooms” could be Engineer constructed, with the pans sitting on a timber framework over a deep trench, dug either by a backhoe or by manpower, often with covering. When on bivouac or fire-and-movement, battery personnel would dig a shallow trench latrine; no pans, but with the luxury of toilet paper placed on a sturdy stick broken from a tree and protected from the elements by a suitably sized tin from the kitchen. Its companion was a soft drink bottle containing detergent for hand washing, also on a sturdy stick.

With the battery on the move, the watering of a nearby tree provided the source of relief, while anything more serious saw the necessity for the digging of a hole of suitable depth and dimensions. There were times when the situation on a gun position required the digging of a hole, but in wet weather those experienced in these circumstances knew to select ground sloping away from the gun platform or command post. It is surprising what is buoyant in even a moderate flow of rain water.

This year, Reserve Field Regiments converted from the 105mm M2A2 and L119 howitzers to 81mm mortars.

Although the move did not come as a complete surprise, for the possibility had been canvassed for some years, both serving and former members were dismayed at the prospect and Commanding Officers were faced with the significant challenge of maintaining *esprit de corps*. The Regimental Association assisted the Commanding Officer of the day in helping to meet this unwelcome distraction, for many had served when 3 Light Regiment RAA was equipped with the British 4.2inch mortar. Yes, mortars they were say the older Gunners, but they were **Gunner** mortars, not the lighter and far less effective **Infantry** weapon.

However, our Regiment accepted the challenge and over the next year or so, over half the Gunners completed the month-long conversion course.

2/10 Field Regiment in Victoria conducted the first trials in the move from guns to 81 mm mortars and WO2 Mark Henneberry was tasked to travel south to assist OPSWP 2/10 Field Regiment and SMIG 38 Field Battery in writing Training Management Packages and provide feedback on the types of changes and implementations required for a smooth transition to the new platform.

Being an Infantry weapon, the team had a major and demanding task in accommodating the change from outdated and inefficient Royal Australian Infantry doctrine to a standard appropriate for RAA Directives. The Gunners would now introduce a new ECN 161 trade stream for mortars specifically whereas the Infantry have long regarded mortars as a skill only.

A Regular soldier of wide experience, WO2 Mark Henneberry was yet another great asset to our Regiment. His knowledge, ability and standing were such that in 2009 he was one of six posted to the Australian Instructor Support Team for four months for EX MOJAVE VIPER, later to incorporate another battalion a renamed EX MOTAVE VIPER, an exercise at Twenty Nine Palms, California, to assess United States Marine Corps battalions and their ability to conduct combined arms warfare. About one month thereafter the battalions deployed to Afghanistan.

His Gunner knowledge and experience were invaluable. He was impressed by what he saw, but our higher levels of training for junior Officers, our higher levels of safety in live firing, Infantry performing what would be to us, Artillery roles and a general lack of understanding of Artillery effects on targets were standout observations.

In our Unit Journal (2009) he wrote that the relationship between the exercise force and he was always good. Apart from the novelty of an Australian being in the Fire Support Coordination Centre, his assessment was that Australians were seen as knowledgeable, trustworthy and reliable. In his experience, Marines of all ranks would ask for an opinion and always seek assistance. Mark never felt he was an outsider.

The support the Army Reserve provides to the Regular Army and Australia is greatly understated but was again highlighted this year with the opportunity given the Regimental 2IC, Major A Wendt to deploy to Iraq for six months. He served his time as a Staff Officer to the Commander of the Joint Headquarters Advisory Team (JHQ-AT) embedded in a US command in Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I). This subordinate command to Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) had the mission to “generate and replenish Iraqi Security Forces (ISF – includes Iraqi police) in order to increase Iraqi ability to assume responsibility for population protection and develop Iraqi security institutions capable of sustaining security with reduced Coalition involvement”.

JHQ-AT had a concentration of Coalition officers including Australians, Britons, Poles and Romanians commanded by an Australian Brigadier. Travel with the Iraqi Chief of Staff (equivalent to our Chief of the Defence Force) and the most senior of Iraqi Officers was the order of the day. Especially memorable was the country which ranged from desert and gibber plains to the south, to snow capped mountains and forests in the north.

During his time on deployment Major Wendt witnessed the impact JHQ-AT had on Iraqi capabilities including some important steps they were taking to reclaim their country from the insurgents. He regards it as a great and valuable experience, especially to see first hand the high value placed on the Australians by members of the Coalition and the professionalism of our Officers and soldiers.

The Army’s contribution to the fighting of bushfires covering 45 000 sq km in Victoria in 2009 – known as Black Saturday - was covered in the United Service Journal, Winter 2016 (page 15). It is recorded that the peak operational strength of Defence was some 800 military personnel. More than 1,250 ADF personnel provided assistance over the seven weeks of the operation.

(WO2) Phil Pollard, working at the request of the Victorian Coroner and supported by a mixed company of soldiers from all around Australia, was allocated the task of finding the remains of persons missing. Our Regiment’s contribution was a reserve contingent under (WO2) Graham Williams.

2010

Good news for our Association was just around the corner and in 2010 the announcement was made that our Regiment would keep its 105mm Hamel for another two years. The reason? Cost apparently. There was no stockpile of 81mm mortar bombs and requirements were ordered from overseas as operational requirements dictated. This situation, coupled with the move for Regular Army Artillery units to be equipped with 155mm weapons meant that there was now sufficient 105mm ammunition for the ARes.

There was much quiet celebration, but there still lingered concern about the future of Artillery and perhaps Armour in the ARes. There were strong indications that there may still be some survival challenges ahead.

In October, 2010 the Defence Minister, Senator John Faulkner, announced approval for the purchase of 35 M777A2 155mm lightweight towed howitzers for Regular units of the Royal Australian Artillery. Four batteries of the guns were to be provided under the first phase of the Artillery Replacement Project.

Major General Jeffrey Sengelman, Head Modernisation and Strategic Planning – Army, writing in the RAA Liaison Letter, spring edition 2012 asserted that the operation of a common M777A2 Light Howitzer will allow the RAA to remain interoperable with the US Army, the USMC and the Canadian Army.

The gun is air portable under CH-47 Chinook helicopters. In comparison, the 105mm Hamel it is replacing, is approximately half the weight and may be underslung by S-70 and MRH-90 helicopters and inclusive of ammunition crates when underslung by a CH-47.

Informed Gunners of our Regiment were concerned about the introduction of the M777A2 and the new range of 155mm projectiles, fuzes and propellants as the sole calibre available to the Regiment. This, despite the fact that during World War II and the years that have followed, the equivalent of the 25 pounder and the 5.5 inch medium gun have been seen as the desirable mix. The new gun is the equivalent of the old medium gun. The smaller calibre has a higher rate of fire and provided the intimate fire support demanded by the supported arm. This is generally not possible with the larger calibre – it has a different but complementary role and provides the flexibility that has been a hallmark of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery..

Broadly, from experience in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan it has been the smaller calibre that has carried the day in the provision of continuous indirect fire support. A one size fits all philosophy is courting disaster on the battlefield in the eyes of many knowledgeable Gunners and it ignores the lessons of recent history. A chilling combination of considerations.

It is worth mentioning that in Afghanistan, Regular Army Gunners were integrated very successfully into Royal Artillery 105mm Light Gun batteries – the very calibre the Australian government is taking out of service.

Procurement of the much anticipated self-propelled artillery is to be the subject of a separate approval.

Following a review of garrison dress, 2010 saw the introduction of a new dress code, with General Duty Dress DPCU (formerly Dress Order 4A) being mandated as dress of the day. Other changes included the adoption of one Army button and approval for elastic-sided black leather ankle boots such as those made by R M Williams and Baxter to be worn with polyester and service dress uniforms except for ceremonial parade orders of dress. The boots are to be a private purchase.

Successive Commanding Officers have been supportive of the Regimental Association attending our Regiment's live firing weekends. An enthusiastic band of roundly two dozen of members attended one such occasion at Singleton on 20th November 2010.

Association (and Regimental) photographer (Gun Sgt) Ron Weewan secured some quite exceptional pictorial records for the archives and waxed lyrical about getting back to the guns and the almost

intoxicating smell of cordite. He records that the day was bright and sunny, blessed with an azure sky, dotted here and there with balls of cotton wool that passed for clouds.

Our stalwarts, who were joined by a group of employers and potential recruits, visited the Observation Post, had a barbeque lunch at the gun position, saw the Command Post in action and got close and personal with the guns. Lessons were learned, changes from old practices discussed and noted and the olfactory senses did a great job in encouraging memories of the past and the reliving of significant events in military careers.

2011

An unlikely, but welcome benefit for Army Reserve personnel was introduced in 2011 which provided for the granting of paid reserve days to recuperate on return from deployment, exercise or operational service. Amendments in the Pay and Conditions Manual also provided for the potential for payments if the member has to perform Defence duties immediately before or after a weekend or similar break and it is not practical for him or her to return home. COs and Activity supervisors hold the delegation to decide when the benefits may be granted.

From this year also, major changes to ARes pay processing were introduced with a move from monthly to fortnightly pay cycles and a transition from the reserve payroll system CENTRESPAYII to PeopleSoft Global Payroll. The introduction of online payslips and the ability to record attendances online will follow.

On 26 July 2011 Major General C D Williams AM, Commander 2nd Division, addressed members of the United Services Institute of New South Wales. He observed that the 2nd Division has around 11,000 personnel plus around 1,000 Regulars. There are about 1,000 Reservists in various headquarters and elements such as the 1st Commando Regiment within Special Operations Command and regional Force Surveillance Units. There are six brigades – east coast 4th, 5th, 8th and 11th Brigades, each of about 2,000 to 2,400 personnel, 9th Brigade in South Australia/Tasmania and 13th Brigade in Western Australia. The Division commands all university regiments.

The Army Reserve age and length of service profiles are said to be remarkably similar. The irony for our Regiment, struggling with recruitment challenges and our Associations' observations from first-hand reports and other evidence that recruits are being steered away from Gunner Regiments, was the Commander's statement that numbers have stabilised, with eased recruitment in balance with greater retention.

The General outlined the provisions of Plan Beersheba which the government has approved and the Army is implementing. In summary, the Army Reserve, committed to current operations such as in the Solomon Islands and East Timor is no longer the strategic reserve; it will be smaller; the Reserve's six light infantry brigade groups will be a paramilitary force intended primarily for post-conflict stabilisation tasks as in East Timor; the Infantry will be without Armour or Artillery support. The conclusion must be that, although training for war fighting, two of the essential elements for deployment on war fighting tasks are absent.

The ANZAC Day march through the streets of Sydney was well attended by both serving members of our Regiment, who, at the invitation of the Association preceded the former members; each numbered about 70 personnel. The contingent was led by the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel W A Young, and our Association president, Barry Willoughby.

Near the conclusion of our reunion at the Rugby Club in Pitt Street, we assembled around the Commanding Officer who outlined the effect of Plan Beersheba. Both 23 Field Regiment and 7 Field Regiment would cease to exist within about twelve months. A new, but yet to be determined Artillery structure would replace the existing model, with each Regiment being reduced to a Battery of mortars under the administration of separate Infantry battalions. To retain our lineage with 2/3 Anti Tank Regiment AIF, the Commanding Officer has sought to have the new Battery identified as 9 Battery, the first Battery raised by the war time unit, with each section of mortars allocated the numbers 10 and 11, again retaining the link between new and old. The white lanyard would be retained.

The Commanding Officer made the important point that the new weapon would enable the Army Reserve access to emerging technology which could not be possible with the time commitment necessary to maintain proficiency in its use with the new guns. Mortars would also provide greater opportunities for promotion through the Non-Commissioned Officer ranks.

From an Artillery perspective, Plan Beersheba increases the gulf between the Regular Army and the Army Reserve – the two should be fully complementary if they are expected to successfully execute Government policy. However, with the Army Reserve component a number of discrete Mortar batteries, their integration into Regular Artillery units is hardly feasible. Importantly, Gunner observers of the Army Reserve, if acquainted only with small calibre mortars, must, of necessity lack the vision for the application of firepower in its broadest sense. This is a significant limitation with the expectation of integration with the Regular Army and a question that required early resolution.

There was a sense of dismay in all who heard the Commanding Officer's outline of future events, but for some years there had been a sense of inevitability about such a move and now it was on its way. To lighten the occasion, the serving soldiers gave a rousing three cheers to Association members that echoed around the building and adjoining laneway; the gesture was deeply appreciated by those who had served.

In April of this year the final of six rotations of Australian gun detachments with the Royal Artillery in Helmand province, Afghanistan, returned home. Gunners from 1st Field Regiment served with 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery equipped with the 105mm Hamel L118 light gun deployed in support of operation HERRICK. They had been away from home for 14 months.

Brigadier N H Eeles ADC, Director Royal Artillery, wrote to our Head Of Regiment, Brigadier David Coghlan AM in glowing terms about the dedication and commitment shown by all our Officers and soldiers of the several rotations.

Since March 2008, an Australian gun detachment has been deployed to the province to support their British counterparts as part of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF). Australian Gunners have also served with distinction in other roles as part of our country's presence in that country.

The media release by the Minister for Defence, Stephen Smith and Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon on 27 September 2011 announcing the removal of restrictions on combat roles for women had significant implications for the Regiment. The new policy, intended to be fully implemented within five years, recognised the principle that determination for suitability for a role should be placed on ability, not gender. This followed upon a previous government's decision in the mid 1970s to broaden the opportunities for women by opening a range of categories and positions in the Australian Defence force seen as appropriate for their employment.

Routine Orders Part II by Captain S L Black, Administering Command 2 WRAAC Company, Belmore, record the transfer of a number of female soldiers to the Regiment in 1976 including Private E P Partridge and Private D K Lowe. Other female soldiers who are recalled as having served with the Regiment include Jean Burden, Sue Shannon, Jenny Nielson, Dorothy Evans, Therese Liston, Beverly Evan, Gemma Brown, Noelene Golden and Denise Low.

Dorothy Evans featured in an article in the St George and Sutherland Shire Leader of 5 July 1978 promoting the Regiment and the role of women in it. The range of vacancies available was listed as radio operator, driver, clerk, cook and medic. Almost as an afterthought, mention was made that males aged from 17 to 35 were also required by the Regiment to train as "surveyors, gun crews and mechanics".

In those early days of direct female enlistment, most trained as signallers under Sergeant Len Thomas who remembered them as great signallers – conscientious, reliable, accurate and keen to learn. Others trained as clerks, drivers or driver/operators while a small number transferred to the Catering Corps. Over time and in all areas of Regimental activity, the female soldier earned a proud record of achievement.

2012

In the Queen's Birthday Honours for 2012 Lieutenant Colonel Paul Timothy Landford was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC) for outstanding achievement as the Commander, Combined Task Force 635 on Operation Anode in the Solomon Islands from August 2010 to August 2011. In the citation, special mention is made of his highly effective interactions with other agencies involved in the Mission and his valuable contribution to relationships between Defence and employers of Defence Reservists. The latter reflects particularly well on a onetime professional Gunner followed by his time as Commanding Officer of our Regiment. Incidentally, it was while Commanding Officer that he was selected for the position in the Solomon Islands.

The Australian Defence Force mission to support the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands ceased on 1 July. The Australian led Combined Task Force 635 included rotations of military personnel from New Zealand, Tonga and Papua New Guinea.

After decades in service, this year saw the replacement of the Land Rover by the first of the six wheeled versions of the Mercedes Benz G-Wagon, specifically developed for Australia's needs. Costing on average \$220,000 each, they are part of Army project Land 121 to standardise up to 12,000 new vehicles. Deliveries commenced in July 2012 and continued until 2015.

The most significant change for the RAA under Plan Beersheba was the restructure of the Army Reserve from Field Regiment and Independent Field Battery constructs into Light Battery sub-units equipped with 81mm mortars under command of Army Reserve Infantry battalions. Accordingly, the end of the year saw 23 Field Regiment RAA removed from the Order of Battle.

2013

The demise of the Regiment resulted the establishment of 23 Light Battery with personnel allocated over two depots. The head quarters remained in the Sydney suburb of Kogarah comprising the majority of the clerical and technical staff and in HMAS Harman, Canberra, were the six 81mm F1 mortars and their detachments. Space previously occupied by the Regiment at Multiple User Depot Sutherland and at Holsworthy Army Base near Liverpool was vacated.

The 81mm F1 Mortars have a maximum range of 5.8km and a planning range of 5.3km. (CHECK)

The new Light Batteries retain their lineage with their former Regiments. The RAA hat badge was retained and the white lanyard retained for the ceremonial uniform. The mirror image colour patch of the famous 9th Division of World War II as worn by members of 23 Field Regiment was replaced by the colour patch of the parent Infantry battalion, in our case, 4/3 Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment of 5 Brigade. The rectangular colour patch, white over light green, was the colour patch of the World War I 4th Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade.

The Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Sasse, made very clear his view that 23 Light Battery had inherited a great reputation and great traditions and its members should preserve and promote their specialist skills and abilities. This was an auspicious start for the Battery now under command.

However, in the RAA Liaison Letter 2014 – Spring Edition – the Deputy Head of Regiment observed that 2nd Division continues to bring a real sense of professionalism to the mortar capability within the reserve Infantry battalions. Then came a caveat: he expressed the view that their real battle remains in ensuring their Gunner identity and their role is firmly in the minds of Infantry battalions.

The new Order of Battle identified six Light Batteries, being one for each of the Army Reserve Brigades. The allocations were 4 Brigade – 2/10 Light Battery (5/6 RVR): 5 Brigade - 23 Light Battery – (4/3 RNSWR): 8 Brigade – 7 Light Battery (2/17 RNSWR): 9 Brigade – 6/13 Light Battery – 10/27 RSAR: 11 Brigade – 5/11 Light Battery – (9 RQR): 13 Brigade – 3 Light Battery – (11/28 RWAR).

The Light Batteries were embedded into the battalions to provide the integral fire support to the Army Reserve Battle Groups to reinforce the three Australian Regular Army, similarly organised, Multi-role Manoeuvre Brigades as provided under Plan Beersheba. Each Light Battery had a Command Post with

the M32 hand held computer and as a minimum two Joint Fires Teams (JFT) and a Joint Fires and Effects Coordination Centre Tac (JFECC).

The first Battery Commander, 23 Light Battery was Major Daniel Burns, formerly Battery Commander, 10 Field Battery of our Regiment, based in Canberra. In an interview with (Major) Vic Rae, editor of the Royal Australian Artillery (NSW) Inc newsletter "Gunfire" and published in the 2/2014 May edition, Major Burns outlined briefly the implementation and aim of this component of Plan Beersheba.

The Battalion and the Battery are part of Army Reserve Battle Group Waratah comprising 5 Brigade and 8 Brigade. This Battle Group follows the Force Generation Cycle partnered with Australian Regular Army 7 Brigade, based in Brisbane. In 2015, elements of 7 Light Battery and 23 Light Battery, (Battle Group Waratah), took part in a readiness exercise as part of the certification of 7 Brigade.

Major Burns made a point very strongly in that the conversion from guns to mortars has meant retraining all members of the Battery for rank and trade over about two and a half years – a significant issue and a huge task for an Army Reserve sub-unit.

The battery's manning at the Other Ranks and Non Commissioned Officer level was seen as good, but the critical shortage of junior Officers was a matter for concern and for early resolution.

A JFECC main was first trialled within 7 Light Battery and 23 Light Battery, which had an extra Joint Fires Team and tested as a combined call sign, with 7 Light Battery and 23 Light Battery deployed as part of Exercise Hamel 2014. Exercise Hamel 2014 was the first real test of the Joint Fires concept for the Army Reserve.

Lieutenant Colonel Warwick Young – previously Commanding Officer 23 Field Regiment – was the first to head, within Headquarters 2nd Division, the Joint Fires Cell under the new structure. The Cell had responsibility for governing the Light Batteries, overseeing all RAA training within the Division, various technical and administrative support functions to the Light Batteries and the provision of technical advice. Major Stu Seabrook was the initial Australian Regular Army Staff Officer Class 2 and the Master Gunner, Warrant Officer Class One Shaun Graham.

In the RAA Liaison Letter 2013 – Autumn Edition - the Head of Regiment, Brigadier Peter Gates, CSM, acknowledged the criticism of the changes in the Regimental structure in 2nd Division but expressed the view that ongoing debate served little purpose. As he saw it, the Regiment was well equipped and had a clear role. The Gunners needed to demonstrate their ability to adapt to the opportunities the changes presented and did themselves a disservice were they to remain unhappy with their lot and reluctant to embrace change.

The year also saw another step in modernity with the School of Artillery Communications and Support Wing ceasing all training on the analogue communications systems and all ranks being trained exclusively on the new suite of digital communications equipment.

ARMY newspaper of 15 August 2013 carried a coverage of the new radios and satellite Battlefield Management Systems. The article explained that the BMS electronically tracks units in the field and each node with a radio and BMS terminal can be seen on the digital map. Compared with previous systems of communication, it represents a significant improvement in situational awareness, command, control and reporting.

This brings to attention a viewpoint expressed by Major Simon Hampas - a Regular Army Officer who had field experience in the Middle East and at the time of his writing Brigade Major, 7 Brigade - echoing similar views held by many older members of the Army Reserve. In the RAA Liaison Letter Spring 2014 edition he posits that the Royal Australian Artillery is developing an over reliance on technology and networked systems which represent a critical vulnerability.

Currently our communication systems and fire support systems are dependent on GPS. There are options providing jam proof operation which include computer aided astronavigation and miniaturised inertial navigation systems. Another option is operating as the Gunners did in Afghanistan with radio,

map and the barest of equipment – a setting remembered well by Army Reserve personnel. Major Hampas emphasised that these are skills not easily gained and we are the poorer if they are lost.

This year saw the lace up patent leather parade boots being replaced with a fully stitched, elastic sided boot with a full grain leather design supplied by the iconic R M Williams for general duty and ceremonial dress. Older soldiers will remember that to be wearing patent leather footwear was once a chargeable offence.

At the beginning of the year, the Army had 47,135 personnel, comprising 30,235 Regular and 16,900 Reservists. The further implementation of Plan Beersheba is intended to see greater integration of the 2nd Division units with the Regular Army and the expectation that more Reservists will be serving in operations overseas.

The newly elected Coalition Government, under Prime Minister Tony Abbott, had a major task in handling the Defence budget. There had been severe financial cuts to the Army Reserve by the previous Labor Government. A major problem arose after the promised 2009 white paper funding promptly disappeared on the quest by that Labor Government for a budget surplus: the situation was exacerbated when the match between resources and aspiration took another hit when the 2013 white paper of the same government added more aspiration but no extra money.

Australia has long depended on its close alliances with great and powerful friends for protection. Soon after the commencement of World War II, because of the weakening of former ties with the United Kingdom when that country was fighting for survival and had little or nothing to spare to support us, we had to look to the United States of America. It cannot be denied that such ties were in their interests also.

Over time our two countries have developed great respect for each other's military capabilities and have developed a magnificent degree of military cooperation. In a presentation to the Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales in 2013, Chief of the Australian Defence Force, General David Hurley AC DSC gave an impressive example involving the Army. In the United States Pacific Command with headquarters in Hawaii, he spoke of a seconded Australian two-star Officer as Deputy Commanding General for Operations of the United States Army in the Pacific. A point to be made is that it caused quite a stir when an Australian turned up in Japan and Korea leading United States delegations.

There was also one of our one-star Officers as Plans Officer at the same headquarters. General Hurley's address is recorded in the Institute's journal "United Service" Volume 64 No4 for 2013. On retirement in 2014 he became The Queen's vice regal representative as State Governor of New South Wales, replacing the much admired and long serving Professor Marie Bashir.

In the RAA Liaison Letter, Spring Edition, 1913, the Regimental Master Gunner Warrant Officer Class One Bob Thompson OAM made a heartfelt call for members of other Corps to have regard to the significance of the gun and the customs and traditions associated with it.

He made the point that many of the guns on display in unit locations around the country are retired guns and not merely garden guns. He believes they should be viewed as laid up colours and should at all times be treated accordingly.

His research has shown that in the early years of the Royal Artillery, from which we have inherited many of our traditions, the equivalent of today's Queen's Colour was carried on one of the guns in the Artillery train. Normally the Colour was carried on the largest gun in that train, which became known as the Colour Gun or Flag Gun. The practice of carrying the Colour on the gun ceased towards the end of the eighteenth century, when the guns themselves came to be known as the Colours.

Today, when no less than a battery with its guns is parading on a ceremonial occasion, the leading gun represents the Colours of the Royal Australian Artillery. Compliments and respect due to Colours are paid when this gun passes the immediate front. The exception to this is the obligation of the Reviewing Officer during mounted parades: in taking the salute of each detachment commander, he salutes all guns.

With missile launcher vehicles, a pennant should be flown from the lead vehicle. Units and sub-units whose principal equipment is not a gun, do not have Colours. The Banner of Queen Elizabeth II is used in lieu on ceremonial occasions. However, the guns take precedence over the Banner of Queen Elizabeth II when both types of unit are on the same parade.

In the same edition of Liaison Letter a retired Gunner has taken issue with the move to more urbane terms to assist non military people gain an improved understanding of the Profession of Arms. No longer a Chief Clerk in the Orderly Room, but an Office Manager in the Shopfront. In some units, even Fleet Managers instead of Command Officers and one to which the writer takes a particular dislike is the Warrant Officer Gunnery Course being “civilianized” to Manager Operations Offensive Support Course. He asks a rhetorical question – where is this going to end? Indeed.

2014

Army newspaper of 5 June reported that fire support for 4/3 Royal New South Wales Regiment and 2/7 Royal New South Wales Regiment in Exercise Polygon Wood was provided by 23 Light Battery and 7 Light Battery, with live fire missions being conducted at the Singleton Training Area. The Exercise also provided training for joint fires teams and the joint fires control centre attached to Battlegroup Waratah Headquarters.

Sergeant Tim Youngman recalled that the pace of the Exercise was steady as the Light Battery followed up the Infantry combat teams in readiness to provide offensive support.

A very enthusiastic Gunner David McLaughlan made the important point that the Battery has shown how Gunners can take an Infantry weapon and make it their own. He acknowledged that it was not easy at first because in the transition from the 105mm Hamels they had to abandon many of the old lessons learned over many years on the gun line. His conclusion though, was that the Battery members were adapting well and ensuring that Artillery, using mortars, has a place in the Army Reserve.

2015

The Head of Regiment, Brigadier Peter Gates CSM has made the important point that the centenary of ANZAC year also represents 130 year of service for the School of Artillery. For many serving or retired of the Australian Regular Army and the Army Reserve, recollections of their often many times at the School, the standards of instruction and the lasting enhancement of their professional development will be long recognised and appreciated.

In another development, Warrant Officer Class 1 David Grundell Master Gunner at the School’s New Equipment Training Team received the CSM in the Australia Day honours for his part in introducing the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System. Digitised artillery calls for fire are now standard across the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

The role of mortars and the experience flowing from the 155mm M777A2 on issue to the three Regular Artillery units was canvassed by Lieutenant GAJ Hinchliffe, 102 (Coral) Battery, 8th/12th Regiment RAA in the Royal Australian Artillery Liaison Letter of August, 1915.

Significantly, he suggests that the role of Reserve artillery units in supporting Regular artillery units will not be possible while they are training on and using mortars and while the Regular units have highly technical equipment such as the M777A2.

He further posits that the M777A2, while presenting as a highly portable, highly networked gun platform on paper, struggles to provide all its stated virtues in reality. As compared with, say the familiar 105mm L119, it has a greater logistical footprint in keeping with its associated need for generators, fuel, batteries and associated maintenance. Its light weight frame, digital cables and attachments together with its overall weight and inability to maintain an equivalent rate of movement as compared with mechanised vehicles provide significant limitations on its deployment.

Well, the author did not pull any punches, but the question must be asked as to what can be drawn from the view expressed.

The M777A2 has proven very capable at delivering precision munitions and is ideally suited to airborne operations and for use in fire support or forward operating bases. From that observation flows the question as to what artillery will be available to the commander of the landing force facing an opposed amphibious landing. In the absence of something like the proven and robust 105mm L119, there remain the mortars.

In recent years, the Army's focus has been on low intensity operations. However, its core capability must be for war – a consideration that should not be ignored by a Commonwealth Government and its advisors. The existing Artillery support for such an increase in intensity is obviously singularly inadequate.

It is intended to digitally upgrade the current F2 81mm mortar system, highlighting the intention by the Army to retain the weapon for some years to come, perhaps in company with the 60mm mortar. Upgrading to the 120mm weapon appears to be not contemplated

Members of the Light Batteries and the subsequent Batteries of 9 Regiment RAA., take heart!

In 2018, the Gunners regained their status with a ceremonial on Saturday 14 April 2018 to mark the raising of 9 Regiment RAA. at Victoria Barracks, Paddington. The Regimental RHQ is located in the Kogarah Barracks, previously occupied by 23 Field Regiment with Captain James Wood, Adjutant. The post parade all ranks function was held on the front lawn of the Victoria Barracks Officers' Mess. The Chief of Army, Commander Forces Command, the Commanders of 1 and 2 Divisions and a broad range of Senior Officers attended. With no Regimental Funds to meet the costs, all Gunner Associations were asked to contribute to the cost.. In fact, many a Gunner member of the Army Reserve and Regular Officers, N.C.O.s, and staff with Batteries and others with ties to the Army Reserve, made a personal contribution as well.

When each Light Battery supported an Infantry Battalion, the Gunners wore the colour patch of the Battalion they were supporting. On the raising of 9 Regiment R.A.A., the colour patch worn was that of 23 Field Regiment R.A.A., being that of the famous 9 Division A.I.F., of World War II. Batteries were identified by the Regimental number from which they once former part

The Commanding Officer of 9 Regiment RAA, was Lieutenant Colonel Lachlan F Serle, a Regular Officer. The sub units comprised all the Light Batteries in Australia, now identified as Batteries, with their old Unit number.

As mentioned earlier, 3 Anti Tank Regiment CMF was a unit of 2 Division. The 2 Div Despatch of 26 July 1988 Volume 1 Number 1 records that, with a number of restructures of Regular and Reserve units there followed –

1960 restructured into 1 Pentropic Division and 2 Division Headquarters disbanded

1965 reformed for the second time, 2 Division returned to its role as the major Citizen Force in New South Wales

1974 retitled 2 Division Field Force Group

1981 2 Division returned to the Australian Army's Order of Battle

NB No references available to me at the moment of changes from 1981 to date

MATTERS FOR FURTHER ENQUIRY

BAND

CO profiles

CO RECOLLECTIONS

Guns and mortars – times of different equipments between batteries and within Batteries

NEWCASTLE BATTERY

RAEME

Female personnel

DEPOT locations and histories

**NB The sources of information are shown against each paragraph of text.
These will provide for a suitable bibliography.**

Wal Reed