



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION (NSW) INCORPORATED  
NEWCASTLE BRANCH  
Affiliated with the Royal Artillery Association, Woolwich, London

## **NEWSLETTER**

**OCTOBER 2008 NUMBER 59**

### **Up Coming Events**

**Singleton Live Fire viewing** – Singleton Range – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2008

**St Barbara's Day Service and Luncheon** – Garrison Church Sydney - 7<sup>th</sup> December 2008

**Efficiency Shield and Book Prize Presentation** – 113 Field Battery – 2000 hrs - 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008

## Presidents Yearly Report 2007- 08

Well here we are at the end of another year for the Branch, I do not know where the year has gone, it seems only yesterday that we were sitting at last year's Annual General Meeting. This year there is not a great deal to report.

The year started with the presentation of the Efficiency Shield and Book prize to gunner Reece Stewart from 113 Field Battery in December 2007.

The Gunner Dinner was held on 20th September this year, the Guest of Honour being Lieutenant Colonel Grant Palmer, Chief of Staff, 8 Brigade, the Dinning President was Major Greg Applewhite, Battery Commander 113 Field Battery, and the Toast to the Regiment was given by Lt Andrew Wallin from 113 Field Battery who spoke on the Battle of Coral and Balmoral.

Also attending this year's Dinner was Colonel Don Tate, President of Royal Australian Artillery Association (NSW), this was Don's last official function as President as he will be retiring from that role in October at the Association's AGM.

The dinner this year was not held in its usual location, up stars in the Mess building, but instead in the new kitchen and dining area at the end of the main building. The Gunner Dinner catering was provided the Army and what a meal we had, looking around, while the dinner was in progress I noticed a lot of meals only half eaten as the plates were overflowing with food. I would like to thank the stewards from 236 Cadet Unit, without their help it would be very difficult for the dinner to be held. I would also like to thank the Army Catering staff of 8 CSSB Adamstown for a great job 'well done'.

To the people of the Committee that helped set up on the Saturday morning and come back on Sunday morning to clean up, you know who you are, I thank you. Planned attendance for the dinner was 45 but due to illness and other unforeseen circumstances we sat down to eat with only 40 people, all of which had a good time.

I have decided not to nominate for the position of President for the coming term but would like to thank all the people over the years that have given me their assistance in running the Branch, for without their help my job as President would have been much harder than it was. I enjoyed my time as President and have met a lot of new acquaintances over the years, some of which have become close friends.

In conclusion I would like to thank the members of the outgoing Committee for without their assistance, thought out the year, the Branch would be no longer in existence. I would like to congratulate those members that will be elected to the new committee for 2008 - 09.



President  
Newcastle Branch  
12 October 2008



## 113 Field Battery, RAA (An Update)



As this year draws to a close 7 Field Regiment, 113 Battery personnel are returning from an intense Combined Arms Training Activity (CATA) in Queensland and are looking forward to one final Live Firing Exercise to be conducted next month.

The end of 2008 will also see some postings take effect with key personnel changes within the Battery, Sergeant Jon Lowe has moved on to take up a position of supervision and liaison with Hunter region Army Cadet units and Captain Greg Applewhite, Battery Commander, 113 Field Battery will take up a posting in Sydney for 2009.

WO2 Glenn Ryan, SMIG, 113 Field Battery has decided to retire from the Australian Regular Army at the end of 2008 and settle in the Newcastle area with his family, hopefully we will see Glenn return to 113 Battery as a Reserve soldier in the near future.

This year has also seen Battery members participating in operation exercises such as Op Resolute and OP Anode with more members signing up for the High Readiness Reserve. 7 Field Regiment with a major input from 113 Field Battery also ran a Reserve Response Force training course a Singleton earlier in the year to qualify 8 Brigade soldiers in the skills needed to participate in RRF activities.

The coming year will most likely see some major changes and challenges for the Battery, as it will for many Reserve Artillery Regiments, with the possible introduction of the 81 mm Mortar equipment. As with the introduction of any equipment, training and qualification courses will need to be run to get all soldiers 'up to speed'.

I would also like to thank the Royal Australian Artillery (NSW) – Newcastle Branch for there support throughout the year and especially for there input into this years Gunner Dinner in Newcastle and take this opportunity to invite all Association members to 113 Field Battery on 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 at 2000 Hrs for the annually presentation of the Efficiency Shield and Book prise.

Grant Nicholls  
WO2  
Battery Captain  
113 Field Battery, RAA



# MILITARY OF THE HUNTER

## CITIZEN DEFENCE FORCES OF NEWCASTLE AND THE HUNTER VALLEY A HISTORY - 1855 TO 2005



### Book Launch

**Bullecourt Barracks, Military Road, Adamstown  
2.00pm Saturday 8 November 2008**

**All Welcome**

The Minister for Defence, the Honourable Joel Fitzgibbon, will be launching a new book entitled “Military of the Hunter - Citizen Defence Forces of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley – A History: 1855 to 2005” at Bullecourt Barracks, Adamstown on Saturday 8 November 2008.

This book is the result of three years of research and collaboration by a group of former Reservists and is published by the Reserve Forces Day Hunter Region Council as a finale to the celebrations, in 2005, marking 150 years since the origins of the first Volunteer defence units in our area.

The book includes:

- The Origins of our citizen Defence Forces in Newcastle and the Hunter;
- The histories of the units, sub-units and detachments in this area;
- Details of Newcastle and the Hunter’s AIF Battalions in World War One and World War Two;
- Details of recent overseas operational deployment by our Reserves;
- Over 450 pages of interesting facts and information contained in a hard cover;
- 32 pages of colour photographs; and
- Approximately 70 black and white photographs.

The Book traces 150 years of Citizens Defence Forces in Newcastle and the Hunter which commenced with a meeting of Newcastle citizens in 1855. There was a concern at the time about the safety of our city and its important harbour and port facilities in the light of the then Russian threat.

A feature of the book is the history of the various reserve units in our area through many conflicts and organizational changes through to the structure of our current Defence Reserve units in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. Two of these sub-units can trace their ancestry back to the units whose origins date from the meeting in 1855.

Following the Book Launch, light refreshments will be available and copies of the Book will be on sale at the special Launch price of \$35.00 (RRP \$45.00).

Enquiries: Reserve Forces Day Hunter Region Council  
Laurie Kelly 4943 6690  
Terry O’Brien 4942 8459



Note – Book order forms can be down loaded from [www.raanewcastle.com/noticeboard.htm](http://www.raanewcastle.com/noticeboard.htm)

## Newcastle RAA Association Gunner Dinner 2008

This year's gunner dinner was again held at Bullecourt Barracks, Adamstown with an excellent meal provided by Sergeant Lindberg and his catering team from 8 CSSB Adamstown.

Lt Col Grant Palmer, Chief of Staff, 8 Brigade, as the guest of honour, enjoyed the company of RAA Association members as well as Officer's and Soldiers from 7 Field Regiment.

Lt Andrew Wallin from 113 Field Battery delivered the toast to the Regiment with all in attendance having a great time.

A special thanks to David Roberge from Newcastle Gunworks for his display of the Boys Anti Tank Rifle.



# Artillery Facts

## Gunner's Birthday

'Gunners have always and rightly regarded 26th may 1716 as the birthday of our Regiment'

## Mastergunners

'Mastergunners continued to supervise the care and maintenance of guns in parks and coastal fortifications. One of the high appointments, of Master-Gunner, St. James's Park survives as the title of the senior colonel-commandant of the Regiment, and the title of Master Gunner is still used for WO I instructors in gunnery'.

## Why we have Detachments

'A company of those days was in no respect like a battery of today, complete with all the equipment and vehicles required for its mission. It was simply a pool of trained artillerymen ready to man the guns of a field army, in a fortress or fixed coast battery and, for a time also the heavy mortars mounted in the bomb-ketches of the Royal Navy. The necessary officers, NCOs and men were detached from the company, hence the gunner term of detachment for a gun's crew'.

## Ubique

'In the year 1833 it was decided that artillery units should discontinue bearing their individual distinctions and the Regiment as a whole was granted instead the privilege of bearing the Royal Arms over a gun, with the motto Ubique ('everywhere') to denote its active service in all parts of the world, followed by Quo Fas et Gloria Ducunt ('whither right and glory lead')'.

## The Right of Line

'In 1756 it was laid down that 'the Artillery take the right of all Foot on all parades' and likewise of Dragoons<sup>1</sup> when dismounted – a privilege that was probable base on the position of the battalion guns on the right of the Battalion when in action, and which has survived to the present day.'

## To SPIKE a gun

'To spike was to drive a large nail or spike into the vent so making it impossible for the captor to fire the gun'

Extracted from the book "The Story of The Royal Regiment of Artillery" by Brigadier – General C. A. L. Graham DSO (7<sup>th</sup> addition published 1983)

<sup>1</sup> A dragoon is a soldier trained to fight on foot, but transport himself on horseback. In other words, they move as cavalry but fight as infantry. The name derives from their primary weapon, a carbine or short musket called the dragon. Sometimes dragon carbines are said to be called as such because they "breathed fire" — a reference to the smoke they emitted when fired.



## RAA Association – Newcastle branch members

You are Invited to an afternoon on  
Singleton Live Firing range to see 113 Field Battery, 7 Field Regiment in action



**When** Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2008

**Where** Members to make there one way to Singleton Range

**Timings** 11am until 3pm

**Numbers are strictly limited** – those interested must contact the Secretary by phone 0249712003, mobile 0408970655 or email [secretary@raanewcastle.com](mailto:secretary@raanewcastle.com) by **4<sup>th</sup> November 2008** to secure your booking.

## THE UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER

The Unknown Warrior was buried in Westminster Abbey, London, on 11th November 1920; he was intended to represent all of those who died for 'Home and Empire'. The idea of burying an Unknown Soldier as a memorial to the dead was conceived by a British Army chaplain, the Reverend David Railton. During World War I (the 'Great War') whilst at Armentieres, he had noticed a grave that bore a penciled inscription, 'An unknown soldier of the Black Watch'. It was not until 1920, some two years after the War, that he was able to put forward his plan for a National Memorial of an Unknown Soldier.

The bodies of six unknown British soldiers were brought together at the Chapel at Saint Pol; they came from the battlefields of Aisne, Marne, Cambrai, the Somme, Arras, and Ypres. A blindfolded brigadier general selected a body and it became the Unknown Warrior. The body was placed in a coffin of British Hampton Court oak and, with a bearer party of five British soldiers, two Canadian soldiers, and an Australian from the Light Horse, it commenced its journey home. The five remaining bodies were then reburied in the Military Ceremony at Saint Pol. When reburied at the Abbey, the body was laid to its final rest in soil from Ypres, soil on which so many of his fellow troops had both fought and died.

Since that time there had been a longing for Australia to have a separate tomb for its unknown soldier, and it was finally decided in 1991 to bring an Australian digger back from the battlefields of Europe. It was planned that the entombment at the Australian War Memorial would coincide with the 75th Anniversary of the Armistice in November 1918. It was then decided that the soldier chosen should come from France or Belgium, as it was here, during the Great War, that Australia suffered its greatest losses in war. After negotiations between the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Australian War Memorial, and with support from the Federal Government, permission was granted for a body to be removed from French soil.

The soldier was selected from the Adelaide Cemetery at Villers-Bretonneux in northern France. This cemetery was chosen because 54 per cent of the graves there are Australian and 117 of these are of unknown soldiers. 90 percent of the bodies in Adelaide Cemetery were brought from small graveyards and isolated positions on the boundary of the town. Meticulous records kept by the Commission, with notes clearly detailing clothing and equipment buried on the bodies some 75 years earlier, ensured that the body selected was an Australian soldier. There exists a close link between the town of Villers-Bretonneux and Australia; the town was the scene of bitter fighting in 1918 and the Australians made a significant contribution to its recapture and defence. In 1938 Australia erected its National Memorial near the village to commemorate all Australians who died during the War, and ANZAC Day services have been held there every year since. The Memorial stands on a hill at the rear of the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery and on its walls are inscribed the names of 11,000 dead Australians whose bodies were never found.

The Unknown Soldier was selected from Grave 13, Row M in Plot III, of Adelaide Cemetery, and the remains were exhumed at 8 o'clock on a chilly morning on 2nd November 1993. A police cordon was placed around the Cemetery and a three-metre high cloth screen shielded 20 graves. The intact skeletal remains were placed in a copper casket that was then sealed. The casket was placed in a coffin constructed from Australian timber that was, in turn, encased in a outer coffin of Tasmanian Blackwood.

*PTO*

## *THE UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER (continued)*

At 10 o'clock the coffin was transported four kilometres in a specially prepared vehicle, with a French Military Escort, to the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux. Here a French Bearer Party, led by a French piper, carried the coffin up to the Memorial itself. Six ceremonial Pallbearers flanked the coffin; these were the Military and Defence Attaches representing Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, India, and South Africa. The coffin was placed upon a catafalque and here His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, as the President of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, accepted the body from the French on behalf of the Commission. The coffin was then officially delivered to the guardianship of the Australian Ambassador.

A new Bearer Party now took charge of the coffin, consisting of two warrant officers class one from the Australian Army and two warrant officers each from the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force. This Party would now accompany the Soldier all the way home, to his final resting-place in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The coffin was now adorned with the Australian National Flag, a bayonet and a Slouch Hat, it was carried to a room at the base of the Memorial Tower where an Australian Army Guard of Honour protected it. Later the coffin was moved to the Menin Gate at Ypres, for a short ceremony to commemorate the role that Australia played in the defence of Belgium during the Great War.

On 5th November, aboard a QANTAS 747 aircraft especially re-named "Spirit of Remembrance", the Unknown Soldier, after some 75 years, commenced his final trip home.

He arrived at Sydney on the morning of 7th November, where the coffin was transferred to an RAAF C-130 aircraft for transportation to Canberra. In Canberra the Soldier was laid in State for four days in King's Hall, in Old Parliament House, and here, for the first time, the Australian public were able to pay their respects.

On the morning of 11th November, on a warm, sunny day, the Unknown Soldier commenced the final leg of his long journey. The Bearer Party, flanked by 13 World War I veterans, carried the coffin from King's Hall to a 15-pounder BL gun carriage. The Cortege then moved along King George Terrace, across Commonwealth Avenue Bridge over Lake Burley Griffin, along Parkes Way and up towards Anzac Parade. The bells of St John's Church pealed, along with church bells across the country from Broome to Byron Bay, and a field marshal's compliment of 19 minute guns sounded out across the national capital. The procession moved up Anzac Parade to the Australian War Memorial, accompanied by the combined bands of the Royal Military College and the Australian Army Band Kapooka, playing Chopin's 'Funeral March', the 'Dead March' from *Saul*, and 'Flowers of the Forest'.

The Chief Mourner was the Governor-General and the Chief Pallbearer was the Prime Minister. The Official Pallbearers were the Leader of the Opposition, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force, the Chief of the Naval Staff, the Chief of the General Staff, the Chief of the Air staff, the National President of the Returned and Services League, and the Vice-Chairman of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Altogether there were 32 Official Mourners, including the Mayors of both Villers-Bretonneux and Ypres.

The route from Old Parliament House to the War Memorial was lined by thousands of people, with over 25,000 more at the War Memorial itself, whilst millions of Australians across the country followed the proceedings on either TV or national radio.

*PTO*

*THE UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER (continued)*

Upon reaching the War Memorial, the coffin was placed on the Stone of Remembrance and the Commemorative Service was then commenced. During the Service the Chairman of the Australian War Memorial Council accepted the remains and then, after the Catafalque Party withdrew, the Soldier was carried up into the War Memorial, past the Pool of Reflection and into the Hall of Memory. The Principal Chaplain for the Army read the Prayer of committal and the coffin was lowered into the tomb by the same Bearer Party that had accompanied it through France.

Three rifle volleys were fired, and after the Prayer of Dedication the Governor-General placed a sprig of wattle on the casket. A ninety-three year-old veteran of the Great War then sprinkled soil from the battlefields of Pozieres over the casket; the Ode was read, followed by the Last Post, and two minutes' silence. Finally, at the completion of the ceremony, the Australian National Anthem was played.

After three days, the Tomb was sealed with a huge slab of Turkish marble. The inscription on the face of the slab reads '*AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER KILLED IN THE WAR OF 1914-1918*'. The sloping glacis around the tomb bears the legend '*HE SYMBOLISES ALL AUSTRALIANS WHO HAVE DIED IN WAR*'.

*An extract from the book 'Look Backwards' by Chris Jobson*



Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Australian War Memorial Canberra

## From the Editor

Your new committee for 2008 -2009 as voted at the recent AGM is as follows.

**President** – Ray Clarke  
**Treasurer** – Dale Hogan

**Vice President** - Stan Newton  
**Secretary** – Grant Nicholls

### Committee Members

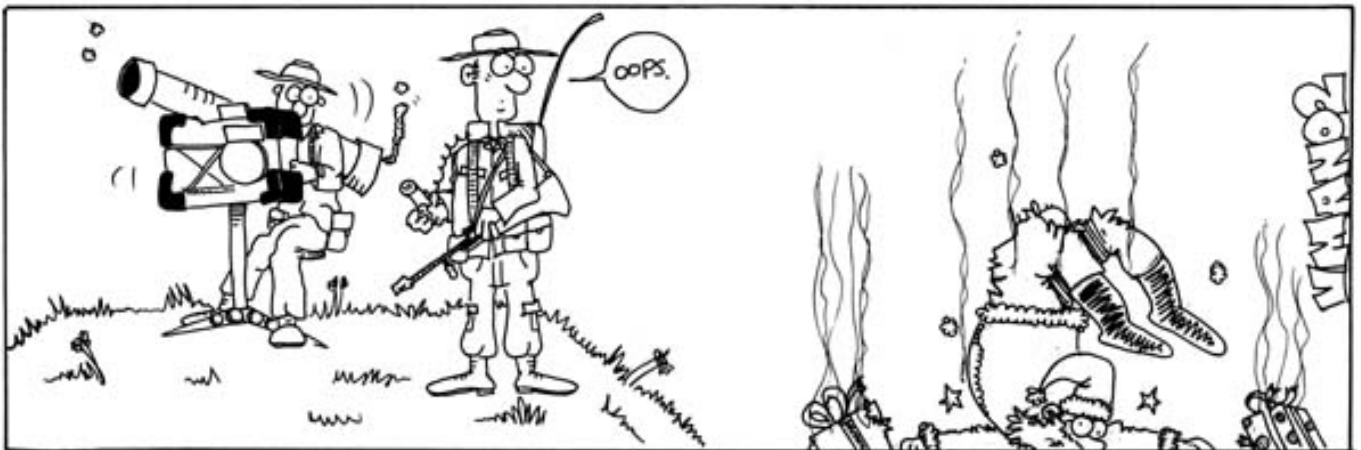
Ian Craig  
Mardi Weston  
Jon Lowe

**Battery Representative**  
TBA

Immediate Past President – Doug Roworth

(anyone interested in getting involved please contact the Secretary – Grant Nicholls on 0249712003 or [secretary@raanewcastle.com](mailto:secretary@raanewcastle.com) )

A reminder that the Association has copies of a CD put together by Mr Vic Rae that contain all the issues of 'Gunfire' from 1955 – 2006 and the Newcastle newsletters from 1989 -2006. Please contact the Secretary, Grant Nicholls, on 0249712003 if you would like a copy posted out – numbers are limited.



*Disclaimer: The editor accepts absolutely no responsibility for any errors, omissions or other shortcomings of this and other issues of this Newsletter.*

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