



The Germ Journal



Issue Number: 55
31 March 2015

Welcome to the March 2015 Edition of the Germ Journal (the Ex-104 Battery Member's Newsletter). To those Germs that receive the Germ Journal in hardcopy this edition has been mailed compliments of Max Vandyke.

Contact List Updates:

If any Germ has an E-mail address that is not recorded on the Contact List please let me know (corcorf@bigpond.net.au). It will save time and money if all I have to do is mail out electronically.

New/Change of address, etc.: -

Welcome aboard to;

Len Ketelaar email: roblenk@bigpond.com

Looking for updated email addresses:

Ernie Bryon, Tim and Lorraine Triffett, Jim Dunn, Bruce Johnston, Peter Dearing and Bob Braid seem to have changed their email addresses. So if anyone can help with a current email address, please let me know?

12 Field Regiment RAA Association:

Please note the 12 Field Regiment Association's latest Bulletin (No. 32. 5 March 2015) is available on line, so visit the website.

Royal Australian Artillery Association:

South Australian Gunners please note;

The SA Gunner Dinner has been booked for Friday 28 August 2015, no details yet, but a date for the diary!

Best wishes,

Geoff Laurie

104 Battery, 1 Regt. RAA:

I received the following note in February from Capt. Robert Best, BK 104 Bty.

I would like to extend to you the best regards on behalf of the BC, Major Matthew Barletta, and the current generation of Germs.

The battery has moved into a brand new facility at Gallipoli Barracks and now has the capability to establish a very small 104th Battery Museum/Historical Room. However, we are quite bare with regards to Battery Memorabilia. Are you aware of the current location of any significant memorabilia or historical artifacts that have been removed when the battery was disbanded in the 1990s? Or, are you aware of any members of the association that are willing to have historical artifacts that they own, displayed in the Battery for future Germs (acknowledging that the battery museum will only hold these artifacts on behalf of those members)?

By way of a warning order, we have commenced planning for the Centenary of the Battery's raising to be celebrated in March 2016. We are still light on detail but it will likely consist of a parade, a gun race competition and a formal dining-in evening. We would love to have past germs present as well!

Kind regards

Robert Best

Reunions:

All is quiet on the Reunion front.

Help wanted:

Hi Frank

Nick and I were wondering if you would mind putting something in the next Germ about a project we are working on. It's a book about leadership. Have attached the short piece we are sending out seeking information and some background on us.

Our contact details are:

Nick: Nicholas.Jans@gmail.com; phone 0407 008 721; Apt 409, 300 Pigdon St, Princes Hill, Victoria 3054
Noel: nturnbul@bigpond.net.au (03) 9646 4102; 64 Evans Street, Port Melbourne, Victoria 3207

We would be grateful for any responses and thoughts about the project, particularly any experiences which might be relevant both from service and civilian life.

Best wishes

Noel

Note. Please refer to the "Who We Are" and "Request for Assistance" PDF attachments that Noel has alluded to.

Items of Interest:

Contributions from around the country follow;

Rob and Rosemary Brooker's News: -

Hi all,

Life is fairly quiet in Canberra at the moment. Rob has been involved with the ACT Lawn Bowls Pennants and ACT Singles, but with no luck this year. Belconnen Bowling Club has started catering for dinner from Wed-Sat, so we have been having dinner there on Friday nights after the Badge Draw and walking home later.

We went to the movies after Christmas to see The Water Diviner and St Vincent plus Paddington Bear with our grand-daughters. Also enjoyed a couple of shows at the theatre - Mother & Son, very funny, and Sweet Charity with Black Diggers on this week, which has had great reviews elsewhere.

Pieter & Gay Leembruggen visited Canberra in January and we had a very pleasant lunch with them.

We will be in Europe in May for our first visit. We were scheduled to go to Scandinavia, Russia and Ukraine but there were a number of changes to the tour, so we are now going on a South of France River Cruise and bus tour of Spain & Portugal. That should be fun.

Planning has started for another Brooker family wedding with Trudi and Matt getting married on Nov 14th. The ceremony will be at the Sculpture Gardens at the National Gallery of Art with the reception at the

renovated Canberra Rex. Guess that will mean a new outfit for me! Our grand-daughters will be Flower-Girls and are very excited about that.

Regards to all.

Rob & Rosemary

Ray and Fay Carlin's News: -

G'day Frank,

Well, I am still getting over a broken rib, more than three months now, sustained on a shooting trip with my son at Mudgee whilst stalking goats across a very steep, rocky ridge.

Off to Dubbo in the van on 9 March 2015 for a week with the Prizemans and a former RAE splinter team member, John Van Munster and his wife, hoping to see the Dubbo Zoo, the Observatory and other touristy things up there.

Then, from 22-29 April, Gunner Bobby Shipard and his lovely wife will join us all in a trip down to Huskisson where we will stay at the Jervis Bay Caravan Park to visit Ben and march with him on Anzac Day.

What with a bit of fishing it should be a good trip before the colder weather sets in.

Have a good soldier's day.

Regards

Ray and Fay

Frank and Paula Corcoran's News: -

Hi all,

Not too much to report in the Corcoran household. Paula and I are off to the UK in May, so we have been busy arranging initial accommodation, car hire and buying the all important luggage.

I will be in Albury/Wodonga over Easter to referee at the U/14 Australian Water Polo Championships and Paula will follow up with a trip to Tassie once again to catch up with Grandson, Jordy. Paula or I travel to Tassie each month so he knows who we are. I guess we will need to make up our minds where we want to live and grow old over the next year or two.

I have already mentioned Noel Turnbull above. However, when we arrived back in Australia late that Sunday night in May 1969 Noel and I shared a room in Kings Cross for the night. I reminded him of it recently and received this reply, which I trust he does not mind me sharing it.

"Hi Frank

My memory of things Army is really odd. I can remember some things really well in great detail but others not all. For instance I remember the room well but had forgotten we shared it. We should have been out on the town but meekly went to bed and then flew down to Essendon Airport the next day. I remember my mother running along one of those old covered walks to the plane steps. I also remember that at Sydney I met Lbdr Skinner's sister. He got sick of writing to her and asked me to start doing so, which I did for months. My girlfriend had stopped writing. Only spoke briefly to her, the family wanted their son and brother back, but she was very nice. Always wondered what happened to her. Can't remember her name other than she was one of the GP acks' sister. He went on to a very senior career in the Tax Office. Also remember he used to do the cryptic crosswords from the Sydney Morning Herald, which his family mailed to him. Could never do those damn things. He also functioned as an additional check because he worked things out in his head as well as plotting them on the map and got rough approximations.

Cheers

Noel.”

My mother ran to the plane steps too when I arrived home in Woomera. I imagine there were a lot of Mums that did that.

Regards to all.

Paula and Frank

Phil and Glen Johnston's News: -

Hi Frank, Paula, all the guys and partners,

Thought I should write at your first prompt as we are overseas and Internet is a bit iffy. Glen and I, and a bunch of other people have just completed another volunteer stint in Cambodia. In the main it required a permanent water supply to be installed in children's toilet blocks at a secondary school. This was achieved with a pumping from a dam, storage tanks and gravity feed. The bulk of the labor set about cleaning and painting classrooms. Worked a treat, students, teachers and volunteers all happy and nobody was hurt or injured, a big plus. Although there were a few tender tummies at times.

Now in Borneo for a little R & R. As with the Cambodian Kingdom, Borneo at this time of the year is hot but without the humidity that comes on in the wet season. We have already done the war memorial here in Sandakan depicting the waste of so many lives. The Orangutans are a standout and well worth the trip alone. I was fortunate to take a stroll while Glen and friends were doing a longer trek down a remote track in a jungle area. Having just stopped to turn and head on back there was a rustling in the tree foliage and a Ranger leaping through from branch to branch. Just fantastic and gave a nice warm feeling inside.

The next week or two will be spent up some unknown river and then to Mt Kinabalu, where Glen and friends are to walk to the summit. She is a little perplexed as it is a tough walk and the temperature drops to minus 2 at the top. I fortunately drew guard duty to watch over the baggage in some seedy bar in town that will possibly have a little cold beer. There is also another memorial to see, which is at the end point of the aforementioned death march. After that it is Singapore to see my eldest daughter Skye and family, then home.

On the health side, I had an op on my leg late last year. It is a new technique on amputees to connect a prosthetic direct to the bone. Result is great, far better than the old socket style and as near as I can ever get to a real one.

Was fortunate to spend time with Deadly, Jacko, Frank and Fleggy late last year and sink a few.

Look forward to catching up with all you guys soon, keep well and happy.

Phil and Glen Johnston

Charles and Jackie Robinson's News: -

2015 so far from the Robinsons at Lismore.

Christmas just gone was spent at Broadbeach on the Gold Coast, it would have to have been one of the very best Christmas's we have ever had.

January, we had a few days in Brisbane and we were staying at the same hotel as the Soccerroos. They seem to me to be a very pampered lot.

February, we had a week in Victoria. Visited Echuca, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong to name some places but finished up in Melbourne for a few days. From a tourist's point of view Victoria is a brilliant state, has everything. It's almost like little bits of Europe rolled into that little state. A must see is the Shrine of Remembrance. We have been to Melbourne many times but for some unknown reason have never visited the shrine properly before. We must have spent at least 3 hours there, staff are super-friendly and informative.

My sister now lives at Maroochydore so we will try to get up there on a sort of regular basis, which is ok because we really like the place anyway.

On a final note has anyone heard any info on the reunion in Canberra next year?

Charles and Jackie

John and Jan Thornton's News: -

Those Germs who were attached to Whiskey One Company (1NZIR) May 68-November 68 will recall the OC Major Peter Hotop. John was recently in touch with Peter's wife Nelda, who wrote to John in regard to Peter's failing health and provided an update on Whiskey Company generally.

Dear John

Thank you for your lovely email to Peter. It was nice to hear that you enjoyed working with him in Vietnam. Unfortunately, Peter is suffering from Alzheimers and his memory is not good. He no longer uses the computer so I am acknowledging your email and thought you might be interested to hear how close the company has stayed.

Since 1993 we have had company reunions every two years. Needless to say the numbers are not as good now, we have lost 71 members of the original company. Barrie Sinclair the 2IC turned 81 last month, Peter had his 80th birthday last August. Both were celebrated with a lunch and members of the company between 30 and 40. We had our last reunion two weeks ago in Whakatane, where one of the company members is president of the RSA. It was probably one of our most successful reunions with about 55 sitting down to dinner on the Saturday evening. Over the years we have held reunions in New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Taupo (about 4), Tolaga Bay (north of Gisborne), Gisborne, Hamilton and Wellington. We also have a small group who live between Wellington and Wanganui who meet for lunch every two months. So after all this time we still have a lot of contact with each other.

I was in Terendak while Peter was in Vietnam, but there were only about 14 wives in the company there. However, I think I am the only 'original wife' left (Barrie Sinclair's wife died 5 years ago), but the partners and wives are a very supportive bunch. The 3 platoon commanders, Grant Steel lives in Melbourne, John Dennistoun-Wood has no contact with us at all and Brian Barley of course died not long after his return home.

Peter has always been extremely easy to live with and I am very fortunate that he continues to be like this. Many Alzheimer sufferers' personality changes but Peter is still the same Peter. He is getting very slow, has never been keen on walking and does not wander from home, which is great relief for me. He goes to a care centre twice a week which gives me a couple of free days. At the end of this month we are going to Sydney for 6 weeks where our eldest son lives with his family. Three grandchildren aged 2 – 7, which we both enjoy and look forward to.

Allan Wood who I understand served with 4RAR Tracker Platoon keeps in touch with the company and has attended some of our reunions. I will pass on your name at our next luncheon later this month.

Once again, thank you for your kind email and notes to Peter. He read them but I am not sure he really took them in. Hard to know.

Kindest regards.

Nelda Hotop

You may also wish to view W Coy web site www.WCoy.net.

I enquired in February how John and Jan were holding up with the bushfires in the Adelaide Hills and if they were in any danger. John's reply follows;

Hi Frank,

Many thanks for your enquiry, we're fine but we had a few exciting moments on Saturday. The fire started on Friday at Samson Flat, near One Tree Hill, which you'll remember is on the southern edge of the Barossa Valley. As Saturday morning progressed strong northerly winds drove it in our general direction and we heard reports that indicated ember strike at Gumeracha, 30-35 Km to the north of us but around lunchtime the wind shifted and by early afternoon we had a most welcome cooling southerly! (It turns out that a house or houses were lost at Gumeracha).

As the news reports have said, it's still burning in difficult-to-access terrain (heavily-timbered State Forest and water catchment) but there is a combined force of 500 people from SA, NSW & Vic patrolling the boundaries, plus water-bombers and Elvis the sky crane in action as well. Wednesday was threatened as being the next time conditions will be particularly severe but we have our plans in place should the need arise. Our corner of the Piccadilly Valley was extensively cleared to market gardening in the early 20th century, although the upper slopes are still fairly heavily timbered with remnant eucalypts.

Our warmest regards to you, Paula, Kath and Jacko.

John and Jan

Brian Tidyman's News: -

G'Day Frank,

Last week I had to attend a Dedication at Woodgate RSL Sub-Branch, which is between Hervey Bay and Bundaberg. The Army rep was an Artillery Captain and after the Service was over I spoke to him and it turned out that he is an FO in 104Bty 1Field Regt based in Brisbane. After I told him I was an original Germ he was rapped and invited me to tour the Bty and meet with all members. As I live in Hervey Bay I will wait until the State RSL AGM in Brisbane in July and organise a tour. The Captain told me that they have a Germ mascot and also receive the Germ Journal. Once I have been I will send you a report of the tour and hopefully some photos.

Regards,

Brian Tidyman

Bob and Liz Shipard's News: -

Hi Frank,

We have recovered from our stay in the mountains. We lately have just been working around the garden (nice big crop of vegies this year) and repairing the lawn.

Have had most of the family down here since Christmas. Over the next two weeks will have two sons and their families, plus niece and her family over Easter.

We are currently planning our next trip to some where a little bit warmer than here at winter, possibly Fraser Island QLD.

Bob and Liz.

General:

Next Edition will be June 2015.

Up the Ol'Red Rooster.

Frank Corcoran