



The Germ Journal



Issue Number: 51
31 March 2014

Welcome to the March 2014 Edition of the Germ Journal (the Ex-104 Battery Member's Newsletter).

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;

Hugh and Yvonne Ritchie, email address: hhritchie@bigpond.com

Changes;

Ron Casey's updated email address: cracajacs@ozonline.com.au

Ric Hampson's updated email address: erhampson2@gmail.com

Ernie Bryon, Peter Whitehead and Bob Braid seem to have changed their email addresses. So if anyone can help, please let me know?

12 Field Regiment RAA Association:

To all members of the 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association:

We have received an email containing a copy of an article in "Airburst" – the official E-letter of the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company.

Attention is drawn to the feature article headed "***We need you to help us meet a vision***". This is an exciting and innovative project which involves the restoration and creation of a WWI Quick Firing 18 Pounder Gun, mounted on an original limber, and pulled by a team of live horses. It is intended to provide a memorial to both the men and horses who served in the "artillery war". As well as being an awe-inspiring achievement, the project is well-timed to support next year's centenary of the Gallipoli campaign.

But like all these noble projects, the enormous vision of its creators can't be realised without money. A staggering \$350,000 is needed which must in part include donations from supporters and proud military personnel like us.

So, if after reading about the project you'd like to help with a donation, visit the following website for a Donation Form, http://artilleryhistory.org/documents/donation_form.pdf and obtain details of how to make your donation.

Alternatively, if you know someone who may be a worthwhile sponsor, please let Scrubber know. He can be contacted on Email: 18pdr@artilleryhistory.org

Gentlemen, we are proud Artillery. This is an exclusive artillery vision, and Scrubber needs our help. What about it?

Trevor Bryant
Secretary 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association.

Royal Australian Artillery Association:

I received the following flyer from the RAA Association of South Australia. The SA Germs may be interested.



ARMY MUSEUM OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Keswick Barracks, Anzac Highway Keswick

**AMOSAS HISTORY LUNCH
"Afghanistan—Our Longest War"
Wednesday 21st May 2014 at 12 noon**



Come along and enjoy a marvelous lunch followed by interviews with 3 experts who will be 'interviewed' on their experiences in Afghanistan

- The history and culture of Afghanistan
- Australian deployments in Afghanistan
- Lessons learnt from the war fighting

This lunch is part of the History Month celebrations of History SA "About Time"

Lunch is held in Building 34A at Keswick Barracks from 12 noon to 2pm. Make sure you book now to ensure a place. 180 places available for the lunch. So please book and pay to reserve your seat and table!

Cost: \$25 per person

Payment required by: **7th May 2014**

Cheques made payable to AMOSA Foundation

Post or deliver your cheque to:
AMOSA

Keswick Barracks

Keswick SA 5035 Or payment by EFT:

Account Name: AMOSA Foundation
BSB No 803 205 Acc No 205 150 18



ARMY MUSEUM OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Phone: 0413 270 370

E-mail: amosafuctions@gmail.com

... to AMOSA Foundation)

I/we will be attending the History AMOSA Lunch to be held on 21st May 2014.

Names of Attendees: 1.
 2.
 3.
 4.

I would like to sit with the following persons or the table organiser

.....

Contact email for my group Phone

Your ticket will be available for collection at the door of Building 34A on the day of the luncheon

Reunions:

12 Field Regt. Reunion Sunshine Coast August 20 to 24, 2014.

Further Information, contact Neil Mangels on nma77081@bigpond.net.au or phone on 03 6292 1409.

Expressions of interest in a 12 Field Regt. Reunion in 2015.

I received the following note from Stockers.

I have just had a call from Peter Burke, Headquarter Battery 1971 Tour and he is looking for expressions of interest for 2015 ANZAC Day Reunion of 12th Field Regt, in either Townsville or Brisbane. I suggested that he give Flood a call and I would pass this information onto Frank for the Germ Journal.

His contact details are.

Ph: 02 9670 3540

Email: pv85@bigpond.net.au

Stocker's.

Items of Interest:

Contributions from around the country follow;

Rob and Rosemary Brooker's News: -

This year has been relatively quiet so far. Trudi, our second daughter got engaged to Matt just before Christmas and they are about to move into a new home together. They said buying a home is enough planning at the moment so we don't know when they intend to marry.

Rob and I went to Lord Howe Island for a week at the beginning of this month for a 3 Day Quadrangular Bowls Competition with ACT, NSW, Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island. We had a lovely time with great weather, lots of walks, tours and eating out. The ACT came 3rd in the bowls and were happy as NSW was 4th.

We planned to go away for Anzac Day this year, but will now stay at home in Canberra for the march. Prince William and Catherine will also be in Canberra at that time. In May we are going to Tasmania for the first time, for a 3 week holiday, so we are looking forward to that. We will take our car on the Spirit of Tasmania, so hope that will be fun.

We have had a bit of rain after a hot summer, so have done more work in our new garden, which is starting to look great.

We spoke to Ric and Toshiko recently and they are well.

Regards,

Rob and Rosemary

Ron and Jan Casey's News: -

Well I have finally got around to writing. Lee Stockley passed on the last Germ Journal so have got myself into gear. I was shocked to hear of Col (Buck) Jones' passing. Still the Journal makes for good reading and as you say will cut costs. Had some problems with emails and computer before, so if any further changes to addresses I will notify ASAP however, at the moment all's OK.

Cheers.

Ron

Frank and Paula Corcoran's News: -

Paula and I are somewhat preoccupied now that we are grandparents. We had a great 10 days over Christmas at Bicheno Tas. Little Jordy is now 6 months old and is quite aware of his surroundings and knows who Grandma and Grandpa are. Nadia has been over twice since the New Year so he gets spoilt on a regular basis.

Quite separately Jacko, Neil Graham and I have been attending an Artillery Luncheon here in Melbourne for a couple of years. They have a continual slide show going throughout the luncheon and it has been the same show, all pre-Vietnam, as are most of the attendees and features some lovely Aussie scenery. If I see another Gun under a gum tree I'll scream. I contacted them post the last Luncheon and asked if they would be interested in anything a bit more up to date, like 104 Battery's 68-69 Tour of Vietnam and obviously they were. So with Deadly Denham's help (he was a bigger shutterbug than I was) I put a number of slides together and to the best of my knowledge/memory put place names, etc to each. I received a notice that the March Luncheon would feature the 104 Battery slide show. Unfortunately the old Gunner that was in charge of the slide show forgot the 104 Battery slides so it was same old, same old again.

It's good to see 104 has been raised again. It appears that Defence are using the names of previous units rather than creating new numbers/names. As a Nasho I was only in the Army 5 minutes however, there is not a day goes by that I don't think about my time in 104 and it all feels like it was yesterday. I can't explain it, I had a great 40 year career in Civy Street and now that I am retired I don't dwell on it one little bit.

Stay safe.

Paula and Frank

Mick and Jan Crawford's News: -

Had a long chat with Ric Hampson today (3 March). He still has a few medical problems but it was great to catch up.

We both expressed our disappointment that the Artillery Museum had been moved out of North Head and talked about the difficulties of recruiting guides and attracting visitors to Puckapunyal, should the Museum ever move there.

Otherwise all is well up here in "Paradise" at Smiths Lake.

Mick

Graham and Jude Floyd's News: -

MARCH OFF 104TH FIELD BATTERY

ARTHUR BURKE

To the nostalgic tune of "Auld Lang Syne", the 104th Field Battery drove off the 1st Field Regiment RAA parade into suspended animation on Saturday afternoon, 2 July 2004.

The post Second World War version of the 104th was raised on 1 September 1965 as a medium battery during the expansion of the RAA for the Vietnam War. When the 107th Field Battery left 12th Field Regiment RAA for service in Malaysia, 104th replaced it in a field role on 1 April 1967. It deployed to Vietnam with this unit in May 1968 for 12 months in direct support of 4RAR/NZ. It returned for a second tour in 1971 again as the direct support battery for 4RAR/NZ. The 104th returned to Australia in December and was the last RAA unit to serve in the Vietnam War.

When the 8th and 12th Regiments amalgamated in November 1973, 104th Field Battery went into suspended animation. Re-raised in November 1977 as part of the 8th/12th, it acted as an infantry company in the Army force which secured Bowral (between Sydney and Canberra) for the Commonwealth Heads of State Conference following the bomb blast at the Sydney Hilton Hotel in February 1978. The Battery again went into suspended animation on 11 June 1979. When the Army Reserve Integration became the flavor of the time in mid 1980s, the 104th emerged once again as an Army Reserve sub-unit of 1st Field Regiment RAA at

Enoggera. It became part of the Ready Reserve Scheme in 1997 until that was also terminated in 2000. From that time it has remained at Enoggera with progressively decreasing numbers.

An establishment review of the 1st Field Regiment last year amalgamated it with 13th Field Battery and at the RAA Regimental Conference in October 2004, it was agreed that the combined sub unit would be known as the 13th Field Battery primarily because this was the last remaining element of the once proud 5th Australian Field Artillery Brigade and later 5th Field Regiment RAA which had its home in south-east Queensland since 1921 (apart from its suspended animation 1946-54)

The "Germs" as they proudly call themselves, were once more removed from the Army's Order of Battle on 2 July 2005.

PHOENIX RISING

24 January 2014. 104 Bty is rebuilding almost from scratch and will be at full strength by the end of the year when 7 Brigade comes on line as the "Ready" Brigade.

104 Bty

1 Regt RAA

Enoggera

You can put us down, but you can't keep us down!

After 1971 Arthur had written, "but the Labor Party's election win in December that year saw it home for Christmas"

It was on the 18th August 1971 that PM McMahon announced the government's decision to withdraw the task force from Vietnam.

Not long after that date the then BC of 104, Keith Towning, asked me to forgo my R&R as we would be home by Xmas! He had to fly in with a resupply to B Coy 4RAR/NZ to find me; not sure if I am over it yet.

Flood and Jude

John and Barbara Herbert's News: -

All's well. We are at Seymour at the moment, having a Barbie with the local veterans at the memorial wall tonight. Here with a small group of Jervis Bay veterans. They're mainly navy ... enough said.

Hope all are well. Nearly happy hour so I must be off.

Cheers

John and Barb

Gordon and Sue Johnson's News: -

Good day fellow Germs,

Not much news at the moment. We have ANZAC Day again shortly so it will be good to go into town and catch up with some of the boys. Then of course we have the 12 Field Re-union in August.

Good health to you all.

Cheers.

Johno and Sue.

Phil and Glen Johnston's News: -

Hope this finds all the arty boys and their families well and happy.

Having just spent a month baby sitting two of our grandchildren in Singapore, thought I would share some thoughts of Singers.

On every trip through Changi airport I am reminded of the bulk of 104 battery 'boys' touching down there on our way to Vietnam. I can also recall that we had to pack and change to a white shirt on arrival so that we did not look like an army unit and maybe at that stage we did not. Possibly looked more like a Qantas choir from some future advertising campaign. The country, 'Singapore', continues to grow in size, not by aggressive military means but by re-claiming acreage from the sea. What was coastal front some 20 years ago is now near city centre. The whole containerized ship handling area is moving further around the coast. To buy a car here, which is a little more expensive than Australia you then need to add another 80 to 90 thousand dollars after rego as a tax or disincentive to driving on Singapore roads. That car will only have a life of 10 years and will be scrapped and you start the full process again and including paying another 80 to 90 grand once again. Fortunately trains and busses work a treat as you would expect. The non-tolerance of unsociable behaviour can have stiff penalties. Saw a couple of stories in the newspaper of licenses being cancelled for 8 years and one for 24 years. By that time we may not even have cars. Also saw the mention of caning for one fellow that was into thuggery and pimping. Do think that that will still be around in 24 years?

Now in Cambodia and working with our Australian Aid team (PVI). I offer the following for the interest to some and not to preach or self inflate. It uses up a bit more of Frank's available space as well.

We're a self funded mob of 100 or so members with nothing to sell, i.e. religion, politics or the light on the hill. Basically a fly-in, fly-out renovation team.

There are two jobs scheduled for this trip. The first, school near Sihanoukville with about 1000 kids per day, 6 days a week, 500 in the morning and 500 in the afternoon. It has one functioning squat toilet. A toilet block for boys and one for girls both blocked-up months ago due to no water tanks to either, to hand flush the pans. No maintenance at the school at all. Really smelly, deplorable conditions. Our fix to this health problem was to purchase and install a poly tank atop a concrete tower. We were then able to draw water from a nearby dam by means of a small pump and gravity feeding the water through 120 meters of poly pipe to tanks in each toilet block for hand ladle flushing. To use up the bulk of the 14 volunteers we have also washed down and painted two class rooms to brighten things up.

The second job is a school for handicapped kids at Chhuk near Kampot, where a kitchen with thatch sides and assorted tin 'bits' is being replaced with brick and metal roof, so a total rebuild. A concrete path to enable wheelchairs to move (where there was only dirt) and laying of 48 square meters of ceramic tiles on the classroom floor. This job is too remote to take a team into with regards accommodation, reliable food and cold beer so we are using local contractors and project managing the job. Lots of little things like language, customs and materials add to the fun of the job. There is no Bunnings here, but there is a tinker come blacksmith always around these towns.

I will try to insert a couple of snaps to give a better picture of the jobs. Frank I'm sure you will have the technical ability to adapt for the news letter. Phil, refer attached.

Looking forward to April 25 in Melbourne and sharing a glass or two with anyone who may be in town around that time.

Phil and Glen

Hugh and Dianne Polson's News: -

Hugh's contribution is attached in PDF format.

Charles and Jackie Robinson's News: -

Robinson's news from Lismore

Not much to report for this edition, still hot and dry in Lismore, our front lawn looks like a dust bowl. I have all the wood cut and split for the winter just waiting for our first cool night and I will be ready, think there

might be a long wait. There is nothing like at a log fire burning away while enjoying a few glasses of red and some cheese and bikkies.

We will be going to Sydney for 4 days over Anzac Day, looking forward to that, these days only get to see our Sydney friends once or twice a year.

Jackie has had her 1st ever visit to a hospital (just a day procedure) and she now knows why I rave on about those little hospital sandwiches, they are so nice she ate them all and didn't bring any home for me.

I am waiting for a call from the hospital as I need my legs ballooning again. I really want that done before Anzac day so I can enjoy the March. At the moment it takes me 2 stops to get to the top of our street, you would think that after 13 years of not smoking things would get better.

Nothing else to report so cheers.

Charles and Jackie

Bob and Liz Shipard's News: -

Frank, did not forget, how is the family, getting used to being a grandparent?

Liz and the family are fine. We are currently at Huskinsson with Ray and Fay Carlin and Dave and Sharon Prizeman. With all their fishing experience we have caught nothing in seven days.

Caught up with Ben (old fore & aft) he is still sharp as ever. We all went to dinner with him at Vincentia Golf Club. The following day we took him up to Kangaroo Valley for a day trip. We then went back to his place and played snooker on his table and using his rules. We are meeting up with him this afternoon (Sat 22/03/2014) for a coffee. He still looks great and active, one the last true gentlemen around.

We are heading to Canberra then home for six weeks then, off too North Queensland for two months.

Cheers to all Germs

Bob and Liz.

Lee and Rosemary Stockley's News: -

We received some great news on Australia Day this year with Rosemary being awarded an OAM for her service to the Welfare of Veterans and their families. She is very humble and proud and we will be going to Government House on 2nd May for the Investiture ceremony. Have just returned from a very relaxing 2 weeks in Bali and have rebooked to go back in October.

At the end of March we are off to Tasmania to attend an Ex- WRANS Reunion. This will be a first for me but Rosemary lived there for 6 months in 1974. We will be hiring a car in Launceston and travelling down to Hobart where the Reunion is being held. Hope to see a lot of the state in the week that we have there and have arranged to meet up with a couple from a bus trip through Britain and Ireland in 2011.

At the moment we are both very busy with Club and Sub-Branch duties so looking forward to the end of the month.

Hope this finds all the Germs and their partners in good health and again Frank thank you for all that you do to keep us in touch.

Ubique

'Stockers' and Rosemary

John and Jan Thornton's News: -

Hi Frank and fellow Germalistas,

For once, you're getting a contribution from me because I am the opposite of a 'captive audience': I am a 'captive correspondent' and here's why... I have just been released from Stirling District Hospital after joining Jacko as a member of the 'hip' group, in my case the left one. Five more weeks of rehab lie ahead. So I have no excuse not to write and lots of time to do it: be afraid, be very afraid!

OK, when we were all together last April, you may remember that I was about to have my right knee replaced and I had delayed the op so that I could attend the reunion. That procedure, in May, went well – indeed I haven't had any trouble with the knee since - BUT I had no sooner finished rehab from that when my left hip started to go out, as if in protest! I soldiered on but by last Xmas I had developed such a limp to compensate that I went back to my GP and the orthopod, with the result that I am even more 'bionic' than before and the fun over another round of rehab lies ahead.

In the meantime, Jan and I did have two trips away: flying to Sydney for a week in July and then a 5,000 Km road trip in October. We drove across the Hay Plain, climbed up onto the New England Tablelands, then down to the north coast of NSW to spend a week at Lennox Head, a top spot, which is unspoiled when compared with 'mini-Surfers' at nearby Byron Bay. We had a couple of memorable meals: Town at Bangalow and The Fish House at Coolangatta both got five stars from us.

We then drove to Armidale for the annual Aust Garden History Conference, before returning to Adelaide via Sydney, Wagga and Mildura. The last stop was memorable because our night there just happened to coincide with the annual Aust 'Street Rod' Convention, a petrol head's dream: some of the machines are truly amazing! But the comfort and ease with which our Peugeot 508 covered the distance meant that we wouldn't swap for a 'deuce coup' or Model A under any circumstances.

Summer has been brutal in Adelaide, even up here at Piccadilly. For those who visited our home during the first tour reunion, you can imagine my watering routine, starting at 06:30 and running through to 20:30, with only a few hours break between 12:00 and 16:00. Fortunately, the bore pump didn't miss a beat.

And I have continued volunteering one day a week at TPI-SA in Richmond. They are a good bunch of blokes and include quite a few ex-infantry who served in 1, 3, 4, 5 and 9 Bns on the tours that overlapped with ours in 68-69 and 71. I see Blue Biglands name in the current membership list but he hasn't been to a meeting for a while.

Jan and I are now into our fourth year of 'retirement' and liking it better all the time. Our plans for WWI commemoration don't include Gallipoli in 2015 but I am pretty keen to be in Belgium for the centenary of the Battle of Polygon Wood in Sep 2017, as I had a great uncle who was a CSM in 53 Bn and was killed during the battle.

So that's a round-up. Stay safe and well: we look forward to catching up with you all again soon.

Cheers.

John

General:

Finally, I know we are all getting older and the creaks and groans are ever increasing. Please let me know if you are aware of anyone who is not well. As I have said previously, a phone call out of the blue and from an old friend could quite easily be the best medicine.

Thank you all for the interesting and informative contributions. Happy reading everybody.

Next Edition will be June 2014.

Up the Ol'Red Rooster.

Frank Corcoran