



RAM-RAMBLINGS

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Newsletter of 107 Field Battery RAA Association. www.107fdbty.com

PATRON : Maj P.J. Meakin. Battery Commander : 107 Field Battery RAA.

APOLOGY FOR THE LATENESS OF THIS EDITION.

The editor severely damaged his left thumb while cutting up scrap wood on a bench saw in his back yard for the fire place. He has spent 5 hours in micro surgery and five days in hospital as a consequence. The Secretary, on the other hand, has completely revamped his house using a plethora of power tools with only minor cuts and abrasions. It is easy to see where the strength lies in this Association.

REUNION HOBART APRIL 2009

Even before the dust had settled on the wonderful gathering in Sydney in April 08 where many Rammers got together over three days of fun and fellowship the next event is ready for launching.

Some of you Rammers may have already heard that the 107 Field Battery RAA Assoc is hard at work arranging the next gathering of the Black Sheep in Hobart in 2009.

At Sydney 2008 Peter Turner put up his hand to host the next gathering down south. Secretary Hilton said OK so long as Peter put the ground work together. Within a couple of week of returning home to Hobart Peter put his FO Ack training together and had the area scouted and Operation Hobart 2009 was a goer. You can learn more about Hobart 09 from the registration forms attached to this newsletter.

PARIT SULONG: MALAYA AND THE BATTLE OF MUAR.

SYDNEY 08 also brought together many ex Rammers who hadn't seen each other for many years. This started some interesting conversations and one of them was about Parit Sulong in Malaysia where a number of the Association members had travelled with the tour that Bill Jones and his wife arranged in 2007.

For those who aren't aware Parit Sulong is one of those sites across Asia and the Middle East where small numbers of Australian and Commonwealth troops fought rear guard actions against overwhelming enemy forces so that the main body of troops could escape. Parit Sulong was at the southern end of what became known as the Battle of Muar and it is where the Commanding Officer of the Allied Force gave the order to the gathered Australian, British and Indian troops to head for the bush and it was "every man for himself" until they got back to Singapore. It was also at Parit Sulong following that order that the ill and wounded had to be left hopefully at the mercy of the Japanese. The Japanese however executed the 104 ill and wounded allied soldiers and then burnt their bodies. Some of those left behind eventually escaped and told the story.

Some of the 107 Field Battery Assoc members who visited the site in 2007 were dismayed at the neglect that they encountered around some of the significant features of this site and although the Department of Veteran Affairs had erected a memorial to the memory of all those who had paid the supreme sacrifice in the Battle of Muar the Police Station and the surrounding building that had played a significant part in the massacre were falling into disrepair. When the committee was discussing this matter following the Sydney reunion Jon Eaton, who was on the touring group in 2007, commented "It is interesting to note that when I asked one of the local people if the spirits of these long dead murdered Australians are still there, he answered "YES".

I like some others asked what this might have to do with this association and on one level probably not very much. However a significant number of gunners were involved in the Battle of Muar and the 2/15th regiment was fully involved against the Japanese tanks. Much of the action was over open sights. Four members of the Regiment were amongst those executed.

Graham Parlour has taken a particular interest in this matter and I am sure would be interested in hearing from any other Rammers who might like to be involved in some way in restoring this site that the Malaysian Government has designated as of historical interest, but has in recent times neglected.

You can contact Graham directly through the membership list or through the website either via the Secretary or the Editor.

From the Pen of the Prez

Greetings from a cold snowy High Country New South Wales. As normal for my winters, I am truly ensconced in my Jindabyne hutchie, travelling up to Perisher Valley each day to face the difficulties of manoeuvring the Subaru on an icy car-park. The first difficult week of the season is over with NSW School Holidays ended. I can now go see The Dark Knight in relative peace and don't have to leave home before stand-to to get a reasonable run on the road up the mountain.

But to matters Association and Militaire. I am very disappointed by the woeful administrative abilities of Army in getting the Combat Badge out in a reasonable time frame. This is not brain surgery in the days of easily manipulable data basing. Perhaps they should have re-recruited Neil Layton and Sammy Galea (to turn the Gestetner and watch Neil work). I reckon it would have been done in no time. "nuf said".

On other matters military, what is happening to the mindset of our military leaders, both uniformed and professional? I heard the Minister for Defence call the Taliban "cowards" for using roadside bombs when commenting on our latest casualties in Afghanistan – what absolute rubbish! (the correct term is **off-route mine** by the way – a roadside bomb is a Datsun Bluebird that is parked in the gutter and won't start). The use of improvised or manufactured explosive devices by remote or direct detonation is a very valid tactic and is certainly not cowardly – it's bloody clever actually. You move your tactical thinking to match the enemy's capabilities and tactics. Their country has been invaded after all. Don't tell me we in Australia would not use the same tactics, as well as cluster bombs, anti-personnel mines and every other scurrilous tactic we could if we were invaded. War is a nasty dangerous business – playing by some set of rules on the battlefield went out the window with Jousting Tournaments. I am not making political comment nor would I ever denigrate the efforts of our servicemen serving in difficult circumstances but they should remember we have done it all before and really did learn some lessons – if there is a road not under your total control, DON'T drive on it – if there is a track DON'T walk on it.

Which leads me to what we really do seem to need now. Where are the Veterans in politics? I'm not talking about pretenders, but blokes who have been there when the Figure 11 actually shot back, or, heaven forbid, shot first - the ones who had to decide when to squeeze the Claymore clacker or roll up their shattered mates in a Shelters Individual for the journey home. We need at least a couple of these in Parliament to add more than rhetoric and political convenience to the debates on when, where and actually whether to go to other places and put our people in harm's way and when you are on a loser, or realise you have been blatantly conned and need to cut your losses.

Although, I will not be able to get to Tassie, please make the reunion if you can. If it weren't for my 2 RAR reunion, I would certainly love the excuse for a sea voyage and another round of beers with friends. As well, let's out-do the other associations with our pavers. I won't be satisfied until we are all there in stone.

Well, enough from me, winter makes a bit feisty. We have the premier minor unit association in the business and a great network – let's keep it that way.

Noddy

WHO WAS PETER BADCOE VC TO 107 FIELD BATTERY?

Your committee's claim to Capt Peter Badcoe being the foundation BC of 107 Field Battery in the modern era has come under high level challenge in recent times. This challenge has taken the form of a quizzing of the 107 Fld Bty Assoc Secretary Hilton Lenard by several former RAA Officers at an OCS Reunion in Canberra in May and a rather spirited attack in the 105 Field Battery RAA Assoc Newsletter "Tiger Rag". No one has written to this Association for an explanation of why we have made the claim, which makes the "Tiger Rag" article somewhat curious.

The "Tiger Rag" claims under the heading

Quote "Peter Badcoe VC":

"A well meaning former member of 107th Field Battery wrote pointing out that there was no mention in TR30 p8 of Peter Badcoe being the "first BC of 107 Fd Bty (held the rank of Captain) when the Bty was re-raised at Holsworthy in 1965".

Unfortunately, this statement is not true and the facts are:

1. Badcoe transferred to RA Inf as a Captain on 30th July 1965.
2. 107th Field Battery was officially raised on 1st August 1965.

The belief that Captain Peter Badcoe was the first BC of 107 Fd Bty has been fostered by, in advance of this subunit of 1st Field Regiment being brought onto the Army's order of battle, the CO Lt Col RMC Cubis:

- A. ordering lines to be prepared from within 1st Field's resources, and
- B. setting up an unofficial '107 Field Training Battery' made up from within unit resources
- C. telling Badcoe (the Regimental intelligence Officer) that he would be (unofficially) known as 'BC' and Lt Len Cooper (the Assistant Quartermaster) (unofficially) known as 'BK'

A posting order was raised to appoint Peter Badcoe as the BC of 107th Field Battery to be officially raised with effect 1 August 1965, but he declined this posting and pursued his changing corps to RA Inf with the hope of going to Vietnam as an adviser in the Training Team. As can be seen from facts above, this transfer came through before 107th Field Battery was officially raised.

Badcoe went on leave in mid June 1965 after returning from an exercise at Tianjara and only appeared back in the unit for farewell drinks wearing the accoutrements of RA Inf and the rank of major. This would have been after he marched into the Infantry Centre and was promoted major on 10th August 1965.

For the record, Lt Len Cooper administered command of the unofficial 107 Fd Trg Bty from mid June 1965 till 107 Fd Bty was officially raised on 1st August and then administered command of that unit till he handed over to Major Don Quinn in October 1965." *End quote.*

As I have found out in military circles there is always more than one side to any story. The author of the above article in the "Tiger Rag" acknowledges that Cubis anointed Badcoe as the BC of 107 Fd Trg Bty and never then proceeded to replace him prior to Quinn taking command in the Oct 1965. I would say that on paper Badcoe was "Acting BC" whether he actually took the role actively or not. What do others who were around at the time think? Please let the Ram Rambling's know?

Editors note: Can someone please let me know what the correct style is for unit designations. I have noted that in some places writers use 107th Field Battery while others use 107 Field Battery. In the above article both forms have been used. I believe it ought to be 107 Field Battery, as the adding of the "th" could indicate a position in an order of proceedings rather than a name or label which I believe it is. Please let me have your ideas? Editor.

Treasurer's Report:

To date 117 members have renewed their 2008 subscription with 87 life subscribers. Subscriptions for 2008 remain at \$15 and the life subscription is \$150. The membership renewal form is enclosed. Any questions or corrections contact hiltonlenard@hotmail.com. The Association's accounts are in a health state. All the life subscriptions received and all interest earned to date are held in two investment accounts totalling \$14,688. The accounts earn premium interest. With more members taking the Life Subscription option we may need to draw on some of the interest for the Association operating costs. But be assured that the intention is that your life subscription will be effective for life. In addition the Association's general account averages over \$1,000 dollars. Our major expenditure is the newsletter production and distribution of around \$800 annually and administrative costs of around \$400. The surplus enables your Committee to commit to projects such as the Banner purchase, your individually numbered membership Key ring, RAM Cap, RAM Pin, Reunion planning & deposits and other projects considered worthwhile, without the need to get members financial commitment in advance. Your ideas are also appreciated, so communicate with your State and Regional representatives.

Secretary's Report:

Since the last RAM (special May) Ramblings we welcome three new members, Dick Lawler-Perth, Ken Foster -central Victoria and Gordon Pound-Northern Tasmania. Dick served in the Battery in Malaysia and Ken & Gordon in Vietnam.

ELECTED POSITIONS (Executive)

President: Warren Feakes – Wanniasa ACT – m: 0417 209 360
Vice President: Barry Pearce – Meredith Vic – h: 03 5286 1545
Secretary/Treasurer: Hilton Lenard – Batemans Bay NSW - m: 0418 695 345

State/Territory Representative for:

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NSW: John Shelly – Kiama – 0438 332 555
Victoria: Ken (Doc) Barclay – Mildura – 0428 251 364
Tasmania: Les Mullan – Launceston – 0408 449 006
SA: Adrian (Wally) Walford – Modbury – 08 8265 1976
WA: Ken Beaman – (Ken is withdrawing from this duty so a replacement from WA is required)
NT: Jim Wright – Palmerston – 0419 842 158
ACT: Peter Moat – Weetangera - 0419 594 610

NON-ELECTED POSITIONS (Appointed by the Committee)

Editor RAM Ramblings: Barry Pearce – Meredith – h: 03 5286 1545
Webmaster: Doc Barclay – Mildura – h: 0428 251 364
Historian: Hilton Lenard – Batemans Bay – m: 0418 695 345

Regional Representative for:

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Southern Qld: Neil Lunney – Tewantin – m: 0419 712 136
North NSW: Col Lowe – Tamworth – 02 6761 8936
Sydney: Brian Tapp – Narrabeen - 0410 543 743
Southern NSW: Ian Hughes – Sanctuary Point – 0417 140 250
Eastern Vic: Noel Paterson – Box Hill – 03 9890 7020
Western Vic: Barry Pearce – Meredith – h: 03 5286 1545

Our Association membership has a net gain of three to 147 financial members. Like an updated membership list, then contact the Secretary. Current Association membership covers all states, NSW/ACT 58, Qld 41, Vic/Tas 22, SA/NT 13 and WA 10. Plus we have Paul Gaff in San Diego, USA. Membership also covers most periods of 107 Fd Bty recent times, with 28 having served at Holsworthy, 70 in Malaysia, 70 at Townsville (1969-70), 88 in Vietnam and 50 at Townsville post Vietnam. Many have served in more than one location.

Historian's Report: Your Association's second publication, "The Black Sheep in Malaysia" released at the Reunion at Sydney is available in CD&DVD twin set **and** an updated CD "The Black Sheep at War" at \$30 (for members) posted in Australia, from secretary@107fdbty.com or PO Box 199 ERINDALE, ACT 2903. A third publication, "The Black Sheep at Holsworthy" is planned be released at the Hobart Reunion.

Army Combat Badge update. Captain Thomas Adams, Staff Officer Head of Regiment Puckapunyal, has not been contactable of late so there is no update on the progress of the ACB. When information on the badge is received it will be passed on.



I received this promotion for this interesting item of household equipment from a friend. Apparently the DeWalt Company are manufacturing this model nail gun.

I guess every back yard shed ought to have one?

Doc Barclay has sent through this important piece of information for all Vietnam Veterans. Please read it and follow it up. Prostrate Cancer is something we all need to take seriously. Thanks Doc for continuing to care for us all.

PROSTATE CANCER and AGENT ORANGE.....the last word

Dear David,

The article below is the largest and most accurate study to date and I believe will be the final word on the topic of prostate cancer in service personnel and their to exposure agent orange.

There should be no Vietnam Vet who goes untested in this country by the end of this year. Of the 58,000 or so who participated in that war, the number carrying cancerous prostates will be several thousand and they must be found and treated as there is no reason why they should die from that complaint if treated in time. Their deaths will be through sheer neglect on our part or on their own; so it is imperative that no blame be laid at our door through a failure to notify those personnel so exposed.

If some Veterans out there are sick of hearing about this matter and they have done nothing.....tough!

This information is so hot off the press it has not yet appeared in official medical journals but will do so in the 15th September, '08 edition of CANCER. May I commend this article to you for publication as I believe it is the definitive study in this matter and imperative that our veteran population hears this news once again.

Many Pension Officers around the country will be aware DVA has already accepted the link between the cancer and herbicidal exposure. What many do not appreciate is that this was done on statistical results, generously weighted in the veterans' favour by the assessing panel. This new research now fully supports what was formerly only a high index of suspicion, regarding the connection between disease and herbicide.

So my advice to every male who was in Vietnam, afloat or ashore, for whatever duration of time, go and have your LMO check your Prostate and seek a Prostate Specific Antigen blood test at the same time. This will need to be done for the remainder of your life at three yearly intervals. No buts just do it!

Kind regards,

Rod.

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PS. The term metastatic disease means that the cancer has spread beyond the prostate into bone, lung, liver. The prognosis in these cases is less than ideal; so we need to catch it earlier than this stage of development.

This publication was compiled and edited by Barry Pearce, 19 Creamery Road, Meredith Vic. 3333

for the 107 Field Battery Assoc. Care is taken with the correctness of all articles produced, but no responsibility.

President – Warren Feakes (ACT) :VicePres. Barry Pearce (Vic) : Secretary Hilton Lenard (NSW) :

Committee : Jim Wright (NT), Ken "Doc" Barclay (Vic), Neil Layton (Qld), Adrian Walford (SA), Les Mullan (Tas).

John Shelley (NSW), Peter Moat (ACT)

Contributions to future editions can be e-mailed to editor@107fdbty.com Please consider any news or events.

Ram Ramblings is published three times a year, April, August & November.