

THE ARTILLERY NEWS.

DECEMBER 2008 - FEBRUARY 2009



Official Correspondence.

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R.A.A.A.T. NORTHERN HISTORICAL WING.

Our last informal bi-monthly Social Group meeting on 9th. October was held at Mt. Esk Nursing Home in the St. Basil's Room and commenced at 2.00 p.m... The change of venue was occasioned by the date clashing with that of the Launceston Show People's Day. and the consequent unavailability of the Museum's Friend's Room or car parking facilities at the Inveresk Railway Complex.

The informal meeting was attended by the usual group which consisted of: Norm Andrews (Co-ordinator), John McIntee, Gunter Breier, Marc Smith, Rick Wood, Eric Ryan, Trevor Giles, Graeme Petterwood and a former local - guest gunner Roy Machen.

Apologies were received from Bevan Filce, Des Salter, Joe Ferguson (*very ill and hospitalised*) and Tim Stewart. We also received notification that Don Beecroft was also in hospital.

Plans were discussed, and revised times arranged, for our trip to Hobart for the annual **El Alamein Day** service – (*see below*)

Norm confirmed that the **Kings Meadows Bowls Club** was available and had been booked for our Annual Dinner function and that the time - 6.00 pm. for a 6.30 p.m. start – and any other relevant details would be circulated to RAAAT

members in the usual manner. Cost, and the mail meal and dessert selection, is expected to be as last time and we expect the occasion to be just as enjoyable.

Venue - Kings Meadows Bowls Club

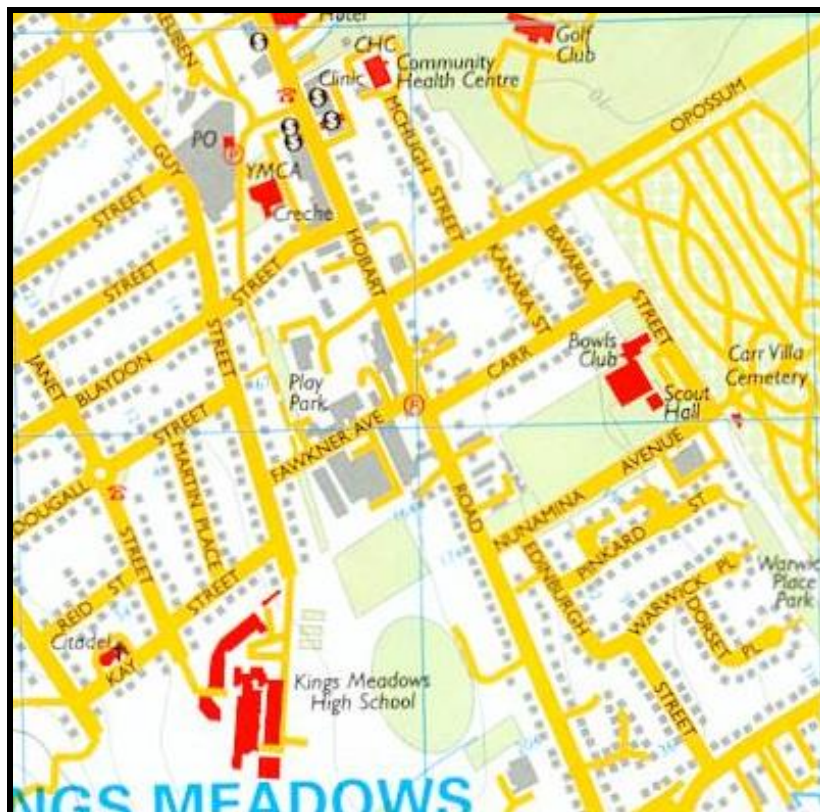
Date & Time - 22/11/2008 - Starting time will be 6.00 – 6.30 p.m.

R.A.A.A.T. members and our guests will be hosted in a private, enclosed function area. Traditional toasts and ceremonies will be undertaken during the evening. Several choices of meats and desserts will be available.

Club prices will apply if members wish to avail themselves at the private bar.

Parking - Carr Villa Car Park - Kings Meadows.

Opposite the C.T. Finney Funeral Chapel – access from Nunamina Avenue.



R.S.V.P. - BOOKINGS WILL BE NECESSARY TO ASCERTAIN NUMBERS.
ALL R.A.A.A.T. MEMBERS, GUESTS AND FRIENDS OF THE ARTILLERY ARE WELCOME
SO - REMIND A GUNNER FRIEND!

DONATIONS - Gifts to be used as 'GunCrew' Raffle/Lucky Door prizes are always welcomed as usual on the day.

FUNCTION MEAL COST - \$20.00 per person. Please enclose full payment with your postal notification of Booking when the official invitation arrives. Cheques, or money orders, should be made out to the Association.

The next informal meeting of the R.A.A.A.T. Historical and Social Wing will be held 11th. December 2008 at 2.00 p.m. at the Museum Friend's Room, Inveresk. All former Artillery personnel, or friends of the Artillery, are welcome to visit and chat.

A reminder – If you are aware of any memorabilia or old photographs that have connections with Tasmanian Artillery and may be in danger of being lost to history – please contact the Association and let us know or allow us to put them into safer-keeping.

CALENDAR & TRANSPORT WOES

For the first time in years both timing and transport problems have taken a toll on attendance at several of our functions.

There comes a time when time and place just won't match up conveniently for busy people. This year was one of those times - in several instances, in fact.. Venues became unavailable, transport became unavailable and people were unavailable. Is it that we were disorganised - or is it that we have a lot more to do and fewer people to do it with ?

Perhaps it was a random combination that came together – like the perfect storm - to thwart us and show that to achieve a positive result we really have to put in some huge strides at times to make our Association work. It doesn't just happen!

First it was on – then it was off – then it was on again.

Transport availability is always an issue that needs to be resolved when older Northern members desire to travel any distance to attend a reunion or a memorial service - particularly **El Alamein Day**.- which has special significance to all Tasmanian Artillerymen.

This remembrance service and the gathering of old gunners is traditionally held in the state capital, Hobart, on the actual anniversary of the famous battle - whenever possible - October 23rd.

This year, the Royal Hobart Show People's Day clashed with our event and took precedence. The Show period extended from Thursday 23rd. until Saturday 25th.

Of necessity, the Association, the other Gunner groups and individuals, then had to take the only day option available to mark our Service of Remembrance at the Hobart Cenotaph - that being, Wednesday 22nd. October 2008.

Unfortunately, the small bus usually provided for the old gunners and carers who reside in Launceston, 123 miles away, was unavailable for the revised date and some of our members opted to make other arrangements to get there privately – if possible. However, that option was not available to all – and apologies were received from those who would find the trip out of the question - except by bus.

An effort to obtain transport, resulted in commercial cost estimates – which were not within the Association's budget capabilities to meet. – and certainly they would have been an unacceptable impost – even by sharing the cost - on many of our members who are now making-do, as most elderly people are, in this financially uncertain era.

At virtually the '*last moment*' - through the blood, sweat and tears of John Wise, Norm Andrews and others - a small bus did become available and those Northern members, who hadn't opted out and committed themselves to other plans, had the means to make their trip to Hobart after all.

Unfortunately, contacting everyone who may have preferred to have taken the bus ride, even at such short notice, was difficult and a few of us missed out.

The following brief report and photo is courtesy of our R.A.A.A.T. Secretary Norman Andrews OAM., who was fortunate and made the trip.

“A smaller than usual group travelled to Hobart by bus departing at 0730hrs and arriving at about 1030hrs after a refreshment stop on the way.

Mount Wellington had an excellent snow cover well down into the foothills; and the wind was chilly coming up the bay direct from Antarctica

Our group from Launceston supplied two flag marshals for the cenotaph in Harold Mullins and Charles Tee with Rick Wood laying the wreath in Artillery colours and the HAMST 25 Pdr firing two single rounds at the appropriate time during the short service which was attended by the general public and veterans of the 9th Div who took part in the battle of El Alamein some 66 years ago.

The group then adjourned to the Waratah Hotel for a series of toasts and a counter meal, where the members mixed in well with the Veterans partners and/or carers and HAMST. Reminiscences of the Battle and 2/8th Fd Regts part in the campaign were again part of the table discussions..

We, as a group, were back in Launceston just after 1700hrs having had a pleasant day. The members of the group all expressed the desire to do it all again next year on Friday the 23rd Oct 2009.”



***I. to r. Back: Des Salter, Marc Smith, Harold Mullins and Norm Andrews.
Front: Charles Tee, Rick Wood and Don Hurd.***

****Hopefully, we will have also convinced those people who put dates on calendars – that our date means that they are able to celebrate their date!****

Private Thoughts During The Ode

By Gerry Hinks

I sometimes sit and talk a while, or tell a joke that brings a smile –
Maybe round tables tightly packed, I watch some polished night-club act –
Then suddenly, when lights go low, and cigarettes no longer glow
I stand and face the torch so red, in silent tribute to our dead –
Men caught up by the hand of fate, t'was they who made this country great
They saw the need – they paid the price – they made the supreme sacrifice.

They did not flinch when called to war, their country called, they knew the
score –
Knew what it meant – that last embrace – a parting kiss on a tear stained face
–

Nor did they query how or why, but realised that some would die
Some would return to meet their folk with shattered minds and bodies broke
They were prepared, when all seemed lost, to give and not to count the cost
Onward they strode – their only need, a better world – a cleaner breed
That mum, the kids – yes you and me – would benefit, eventually.

I bow my head and close my eyes, and then a voice within me cries
*“Please help me God, if you are my friend, to appreciate and comprehend
Just what these men have left for me – the right to speak – my country free
The laughter of children – noisy and gay – the strong, sweet smell of new
mown hay
These everyday blessings, simple and good – help me to appreciate them as I
should*

*Please help me understand Calvary, and why they crucified you on a tree
Give me each day my daily bread – bless my country, watch over her dead
Grant them thy peace, and, please in thy will
Assure them that I am remembering still”.*

Gerry Hinks served in the British Army in Burma; migrated to Australia after
the war and has lived in Burnie for several years.

6 FIELD GUNNERS ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON – OCTOBER 2008



As many members of the **Royal Australian Artillery Association of Tasmania** also hold dual membership in the **6 Field Gunners Association**, it is of interest to the '**Artillery News**' as well – and we would like to briefly report on the Annual Meeting and luncheon function held by the Gunners in October 2008.

The weather was fine, the City-South Football Club venue at Youngtown was available (*without a football crowd to contend with this year*) and the attendance was very good considering the average age of the invited guests and their partners.

Mr. Harold Mullins – the Gunners Secretary and acting MC in the absence of the President **Ray Tilley** (*a victim of ill-health at present*) was ably assisted by **Mrs. Ray Tilley**. As many of us know, Mrs. Tilley has been working tirelessly behind the scenes for some time - and her efforts were officially recognised at this gathering by standing ovation and she has now been 'promoted' to become an honorary '**Gunner**'.

Congratulations! - The Association does not bestow this honor lightly!

Mrs. Heather Mullins - who did a lot of the hard work by seeing us in and collecting and collating all the necessary information and cash for our membership renewal and the meal, issued us with name tags in case our memories failed us - also deserves due commendation. - **Fine job, Heather!**

If it wasn't for the efforts of our partners, carers and committee volunteers – no doubt we would be a much '*poorer*' organisation. **Thank you all!**

The Annual Meeting got under way after the traditional Last Post and Reveille bugle calls and the reports were presented.

A warm welcome was extended to several new members and those who had renewed their commitment after an absence.

The brief schedule that we observed allowed us to catch up of news of some of our gunner mates and discuss those few matters of relevance that needed to be addressed. All motions raised, and seconded, during the meeting were passed, in the affirmative, by the members' show of hands. No doubt the Gunner's Meeting official Minutes will be distributed, in due course, through the usual auspices.

The luncheon meal was excellent, and, as on previous occasions, the guests showed their appreciation by consuming their selection from the two main courses and desserts with gusto! Again, this year, the meal was subsidized by the Association and the impost on members was minimal.

The dining staff at the venue are also to be thanked for their jovial participation and their service in complying with some of our guests' special needs.

The traditional toasts to Her Majesty, the Regiment and Absent Comrades were made during the appropriate breaks in our fine repast and, it was great to see our peer and comrade, **Mr. Ivan Dean MLC.**, had found the time, from his busy duties as Launceston City Council Alderman and Member of the Legislative Council, to attend the function.

Ivan took it upon himself to act as event photographer, along with well-known Gunner and RAAAT stalwart, **Mr. Marcus Smith** - who also snapped a few shots of the group. These will prove to be historical photographs and I hope copies will be available for this publication in due course.

We regret to advise, that the list of members now '*lost to memory*' or unable to attend due to ill-health, or other circumstances, has grown longer - and those comrades will be sorely missed as our ranks thin, even further, in the years to come.

However, the old originals are not forgotten and never will be - as long as the link between the newer generation of Gunners and the old remains strong and we are able to continue to gather and pass on the traditions that have been established. We might change our weapons from time to time but our history and traditions will survive somewhere in this world.

UBIQUE (Everywhere.)
QUO FAS ET GLORIA DUCUNT (Where Right and Glory Lead)



LEST WE FORGET



TX 5511 S/Sgt Donald Walter Cohen
2/8th. Field Regiment, 9th. Division. 2nd. A.I.F.
April 20th. 1918 – September 13th. 2008 (Age 91)

It is with deep and sincere regret that we advise that another illustrious name has been added to the long list of gunner comrades who have gone on before us.

Don Cohen was admired by all who knew him as a personal friend - he was a respected former member of our organisation - and a stalwart of local business and the sporting community in Launceston for well over half a century. He was one of the good blokes - and he will be sorely missed by his extended family and his many surviving friends of all ages.

His well-attended funeral service was held on Thursday September 18th. 2008 at C.T. Finney Centre, Kings Meadows. – *LEST WE FORGET.*

The Artillery News.
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Mr. Peter Gutwein (Liberal MHA - Bass).
Henty House, Civic Square, Launceston 7250.**