



Artillery WA

Official Newsletter of Royal Australian Artillery Association of WA (Inc), RAA Historical Society of WA (Inc) and the Hobbs Australian Artillery Memorial Foundation

WebSite: <http://www.artillerywa.org.au>

Email: info@artillerywa.org.au

Edition 2 / 07

June 2007



Dawn Service at the Memorial Wall – Hobbs Artillery Park –



Artillery Contingent led by Col Comdt Western Region Bill Ritchie

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION WA (INC)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome

The Annual General Meeting was held on 11th March 2007 at Hobbs Artillery Park and it was pleasing to receive the Honorary Auditors Report that the Associations Financial Position has slightly improved above last year.

As all members will appreciate the annual costs associated with Gunners Day requires financial support by and careful control and your Committee continues to keep within estimates. This is only possible by the work of the Committee members and the ongoing support of 7 Field Battery.

Committee for 2007 are:

President	Bruce Campbell
Vice President	Peter Rowles
Secretary	Tom Arnautovic
Treasurer	Gabby D'Uva
Assist Sec/Treas	Ron Jager
Committee	John O'Brien
	Ken Hepworth
	Wendy Mahoney
Hon Auditor	Capt. Hugh Zimmerman

We are pleased to report that Maj A. Dunjey and 7 Field battery is extending an invitation to members of the Association to attend the "Battery Dinner" on Saturday 7th July 2007. last year this event was attended by 58 of our members and their guests and enjoyed it all. Details for the Dinner are in this issue as well as a flyer is included.

It is recommended you take advantage of this invitation as it is well worth going to.

Ubique

Bruce G. Campbell
President



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RAA JACKET POCKET BADGE – Actual size of Badge is 100mm wide x 90mm high - CAN BE ORDERED THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION – COST \$25 EACH - PLEASE USE THE ORDER FORM IN LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

RAA ARTILLERY EMBROIDERED BERET BADGES – Actual size is 55mm wide by 40mm high - CAN BE ORDERED THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION – COST \$10 EACH - PLEASE USE THE ORDER FORM IN LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSLETTER.
(Please post request to Secretary for both items)

WELFARE FUND and OFFICER

John Walsh is the contact person as the Association's Welfare Officer. Anybody that needs to discuss any Welfare Funding can contact John via email at info@artillerywa.org.au or jfxwalsh@bigpond.com.au or by phone on 93836544, Wednesday mornings.

Access to Funds can be made by applying in writing using the Welfare Fund Form, which is available on request.
(From the Treasurer)

The Association reminds Members that access to the Fund to help Gunners financially at a time of need is strictly confidential and all applications are treated as such.

Anzac Day 2007



Some of the early morning crowd that attended the Dawn Service at HAP



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W A

Battery Commander's Report

7 Field Battery – The Gunners of the West

The last 6 months has been a busy period of time for the Battery – The 'Gunners of the West'. The Battery provides indirect fires and offensive support coordination to all units of 13 Brigade. The Bty has gone from strength to strength in recent years due to maintaining our manning levels, an increased standard of demanding gunnery training, and strong leadership from all ranks within the Battery.

In September of 2006, the Battery joined with 48 Field Battery for Exercise Tobruk, a combined live fire activity at Cultana, South Australia. This was the second time that such an audacious plan had been attempted by combining two independent gun Batteries from the 2nd Division. The benefits from such a plan included a greater number of gun detachments, more resources, and certainly a more exciting training area for the 'Gunners of the West'! The Battery performed very strongly and it was clearly evident that this type of combined Artillery practice is clearly the way forward. It is hoped to conduct a similar practice in late 2008 involving 7, 16 and 48 Field Batteries.

The Battery conducted its annual salute for the City of Perth as part of the Australia Day celebrations in January of this year. While the Battery conducts this activity annually, there was still a sense of anticipation surrounding the salute. Despite a smaller than expected crowd, the Battery still performed exceptionally well, and plans are in progress to ensure that the gun salute for the Queen's Birthday is an even bigger event.

On September 7 this year, the Battery will be holding a Dining In for all past SNCOs and Warrant Officers of the Battery. Further details are available from WO2 Stephen Morrow at stephen.morrow@defence.gov.au



BC 7 Bty 3 Fd Regt RAA laying a wreath at the Dawn Service

The Battery plans to continue to lead the way for the Artillery units of the Second Division in 2007. The Battery is looking forward to combined arms LFX with 11/28 RWAR in June of this year, which will provide an excellent opportunity for the Battery to display its firepower potential to other units of the Brigade, as well as practice the Forward Observers in the coordination in all aspects of offensive support. The Battery has a solid year of training ahead including live fire practices at Lancelin, small arms shooting, and the opportunity for individuals to deploy later this year to Butterworth, Malaysia as part of 1 Combat Engineer Regiments Rifle Company Butterworth 3 months rotation. The introduction of the High Readiness Reserve, as well as 13 Brigade's responsibility to provide a Reserve Response Force, mean that the 'Gunners of the West' will have ample opportunities in the future to perform strongly and display the commitment to soldiering that is inherent to all members of the RAA.

A. Dunjey
Major
Battery Commander

You can Now pay your Membership Fees by Direct Debit!

Members can go to any bank (or do it by electronic transfer) and make a deposit quoting The RAA Association's BSB and Account Number and your Name. The Funds will automatically be transferred to the Association's Account along with your name.

It's that Simple!!

If you choose this method please quote:

RAA Association of WA (Inc) – (Note: Some banks may required the full wording)

Commonwealth Bank

BSB Number: 066 163

Account Number: 0090 2583

*Please do not forget to include your name, so we know who the payment is from.
Thank You.*

WARNING ORDER

LFX ATTENDANCE

There is a possibility that members can again attend an LFX with 7 Fd Bty as they did last year, in Lancelin.

The date is August 18th 2007.

As before Association members will be making their own way up & onto the range with an escort from the range boundary detachment.

Please submit your interest to Peter Rowles at rowles@highway1.com.au for co-ordination

Those people interested will be contacted with the details, should the event go ahead.

Advertising



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Anzac Day 2007



Anzac Day – Gunfire Breakfast -



Anzac Day – Fellowship -

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

Those men with the Fuzzy hats



Part of the Artillery Contingent



Wendy Mahoney and Ronnie Roach





THE AIMING POST

The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society Of Western Australia (Inc)

President's Report:

The Society is continuing to maintain and increase the number of visitors to the Open Days at the Leighton Battery Tunnels and with other special tours assists in the exposure of this complex.

This is only achieved by the Volunteer Guides who in addition to monthly Open days also contribute time associated with the number of special tours which continues to expand. We hope in the future to increase the number of Open days per month and you will be kept aware of progress.

At this stage the finalisation of Site Lease with the Town Of Mosman Park is still progressing and the Committee is keen to see this finalised.

As you will have noted in this edition elsewhere 7 Field Battery is holding its Annual Dinner and by courtesy of the Battery commander an invitation is extended to all Members to attend the Dinner on Saturday 7th July 2007. We hope to see you at this Event where the 2006 set a standard enjoyed by all.

Yours Sincerely
Bruce G. Campbell
President

News Flash News Flash News Flash News Flash News Flash News Flash

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It's that Simple!!

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RAA Historical Society of WA (Inc) - (Note: Some banks may required the full wording)

Commonwealth Bank

BSB Number: 066-103

Account Number: 00903744

**Please do not forget to include your name so we know who the payment is from.
Thank You.**

BRIGADIER ARNOLD WILLIAM POTTS DSO, OBE, MC “WARRIOR OF KOKODA”

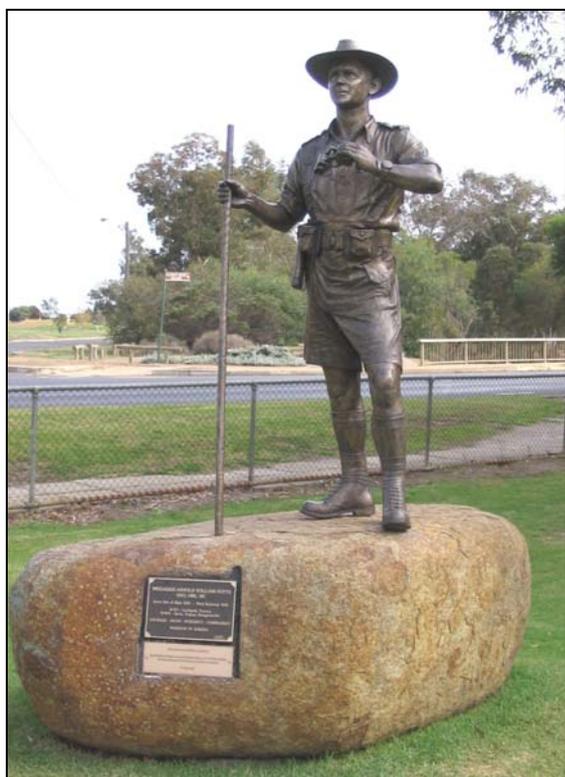
Readers will be aware of the considerable publicity connected with the recent unveiling of a life-size bronze statue in honour of Brigadier Potts by the Governor General Major General Michael Jefferies at Kojonup on Sunday, 6th May 2007.

Member Malcolm Higham was present on the occasion and writes:

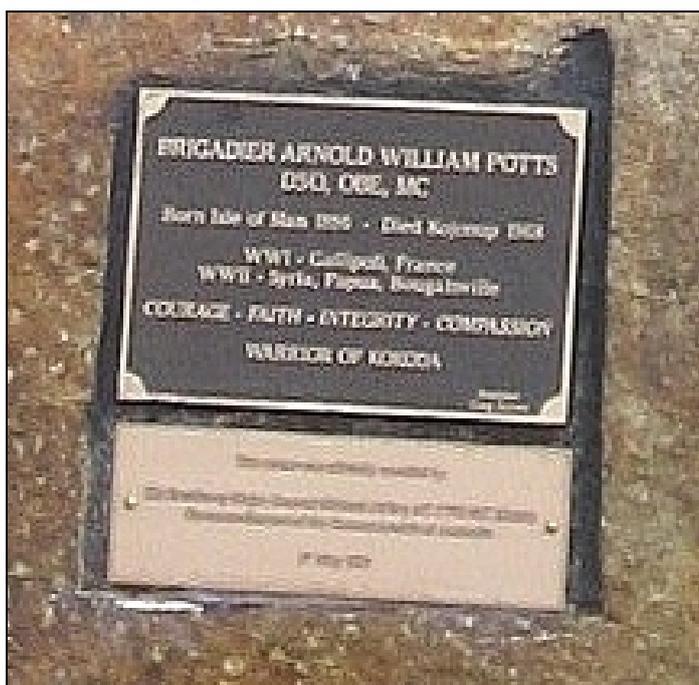
I was one of over 1100 people privileged to witness the unveiling of the Memorial to the late Brigadier Arnold Potts erected in the Apex Park at Kojonup, the district in which the Brigadier farmed after returning from World War 1 where he served with distinction in Gallipoli and France. Brigadier Potts is best remembered for his epic and gallant fighting withdrawal over the Kokoda Track through the Owen Stanley Ranges of Papua during those fateful days of 1942 as a result of which the far numerically superior Japanese forces were halted when virtually in reach of Port Moresby.

Against appalling odds, the Battalions under Pott's command fought and held the Japanese until the fighting withdrawal became a victorious advance. Members of the 2/16th, 2/14th, 39th and 53rd Battalions regarded Brigadier Potts highly and considered him the Saviour of Australia. In a fitting tribute to his leadership, a number of surviving members of the 2/16th Battalion were present at the unveiling and spoke emotionally of their experiences on the Track and of their admiration for their leader.

Brigadier Potts will be remembered not only for his outstanding military career but also for his and his family's contribution to the Community.



The Statue of Brig. Potts



Close up of the plaque

BEREAVEMENT: M. C. (MIKE) HALL

Members who knew Mike will be saddened to learn that he passed away on Friday, 25th May 2007 after a lengthy period of poor health. A WW2 Anti-Aircraft Gunner veteran, Mike joined the Society in August 1990 and was responsible for the donation of funds from the City of Perth Sub-Branch R&SL towards the acquisition of Interpretation Signs for Leighton Battery Heritage Site. Until his health deteriorated, Mike and his wife Dorothy were great supporters of the Society.

Mike's funeral service was conducted at Karrakatta Cemetery on Thursday, 31st May 2007.

UBIQUE

Everywhere Where Right and Glory Lead

THE BATTLE FOR SLATER'S KNOLL BOUGAINVILLE'S 'LONG TAN'

Reg Kidd - 4 Bty. 2 Aust Fd Regt

Each year in August Vietnam Veterans celebrate the battle of 'Long Tan'. This is held to have been a 'defining point' in the Vietnam campaign and probably rightly so. In this battle a company of Australian troops was ambushed in a rubber plantation by a force of over two thousand Viet Cong regulars.

In the ensuing fight the Australians held on to their positions tenaciously supported by artillery fire from New Zealand and American batteries. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the attackers. They were relieved by supporting troops in Armoured Personnel Carriers (A.P.C.'s). The Viet Cong retired in confusion leaving over 250 dead and taking away hundreds of wounded. The Australians suffered 18 killed and 42 wounded out of the 108 Company personnel.

Friday 14th August 2006 was the 40 anniversary of this battle. It was celebrated nationally throughout Australia with gatherings in each state and newspaper articles telling the story of the battle.

Strangely, there is a parallel to this action in the Bougainville campaign. The battle for 'Slater's Knoll' in south Bougainville was fought between elements of two companies of the 25th and 9th Bns. part of 7 Bde. which had fought in Milne Bay together with 5 Bty. 2 Aust Field Regt. and nearly three thousand Japanese troops assembled to inflict a major defeat on the Australians. This battle was the largest single clash with the Japanese and opened up the way for Australian forces to advance further south in the campaign to eliminate the Japanese - a result found later to be quite unattainable.

Probably no-one in Australia, except those who were actually involved on Bougainville, ever heard of 'Slater's Knoll' and certainly it is not celebrated anywhere. Like most of the fighting on Bougainville it has been swept 'under the carpet' by governments unwilling to accept responsibility for this ill conceived and poorly supported campaign which cost over 2500 Australian casualties.

But let us get back to the story of the battle. We are indebted to a detailed account of this action in the book 'The Final Campaigns' by War Historian Gavin Long and the Japanese account of this battle is fully recorded in the Intelligence Report prepared by 23 Aust Bde. after their discussions with the Japanese General Staff following the cessation of hostilities.

The Japanese were well aware that Australian troops, probably nearly two Divisions had relieved the American 'Americal' and 37th Divisions at Torokina. Friendly natives had kept them informed. However, they considered that the Australians would continue to remain inside the Torokina perimeter in the same

manner that the American troops had done so since November 1943.

They were quite surprised when Australian patrols started to move aggressively north towards the Soroken Peninsula, east along the Numa Numa trail towards Kieta and most importantly south towards Buin. This seemed to be their main thrust involving two Brigades and an Artillery Regiment (2 Aust Fd. Regt)

Lt. Gen. Kanda, the Japanese GOC decreed that the Australian drive to the south must be halted before they reached the 'garden' areas where over 35% of the Japanese forces were cultivating tropical fruits and vegetables helping to maintain their almost total self sufficiency. It was decided that the Puriata River would be the point where the Australians would be halted and driven back to Torokina with such heavy casualties that they would not venture out again.

For this purpose an attack group of about 2600 troops was to be assembled drawn from the Japanese

- 13th Infantry Regiment
- 23rd Infantry Regiment
- 6th Artillery Regiment
- 4th Medium Artillery Regiment

Committed to this action by the Japanese were- 1000 troops from the two Infantry and Artillery Regts

- a mobile reserve of 900 troops.
- 700 troops to act as carriers, handling munitions and supplies
- and to provide a further mobile reserve.

A total of 2600 well equipped and well supplied troops under the command of Lt.Gen Akinaga. The Japanese redoubled their efforts to ascertain the strength and location of the approaching Australian troops with heavy patrolling throughout the area.

The Australian 25th and 9th Bns. were allotted the task of crossing the Puriata River and occupying the area known later as 'Slater's Knoll'. Advance companies were to dig in and prepare the way for the crossing by the rest of these two Bns

By the middle of March 1945 one company of the 251b Bn. had crossed the river and was dug in on Slater's Knoll. A company from 9 Bn. had also crossed and was occupying ground near Slater's Knoll with platoons in weapon pits about 400 metres in advance of the main body.

From a captured document obtained after a patrol clash with the Japanese it was learned that the Japanese were consolidating in strength preparatory to a major assault on Slater's Knoll. On the 28th March the eight guns of 5 Bty. 2 Fd. Regt. were emplaced at the approaches to

the river crossing and they were aware that enemy patrols were very active around their perimeter. The Battery had registered targets in the Japanese areas and was scheduled to cross the river once Slater's Knoll had been secured.

During the next few days the situation was quiet but on the 30th March (Good Friday) the 25th Bn. position was attacked by a large party of Japanese. They were beaten off but attacked again with a bayonet charge. At this stage only 16 men in the forward position were still capable of resisting so they withdrew to a new position carrying their dead and wounded with them. 25 Bn. strength at Slater's Knoll was now reduced to 83 and Japanese attacks continued unabated around this group and the positions occupied by the 25th and 9th Bns.

At this critical stage it was decided to commit tanks to the battle. Four Matilda tanks from the 2/4th Armd. Regt had been landed at Toko near the mouth of the Puriata River after shipment by LST from Torokina and were now on the far side of the river. They were speedily waterproofed and began the hazardous crossing assisted by bulldozers. Three tanks were safely hauled across but the fourth became stuck midstream and had to be temporarily abandoned.

These three tanks moved up to Slater's Knoll just as the Japanese opened another fierce attack on the besieged Australian defenders. When the Japanese came under fire from the tanks they fled leaving 94 dead around the defended positions killed by infantry fire and the tank attack.

Five walking wounded were escorted out of the Australian perimeter. Eight Australians had been killed and fifty eight badly wounded in the fighting from the 30th March to the 1st April. On the night of the 4th and 5th April nearly 200 enemy shells fell around the 5 Bty. 2 Aust Fd. Regt. perimeters. The Battery was now firing on previously registered targets, mainly Japanese artillery positions.

On the 5th April the Japanese resumed their attack with fresh troops. Wave after wave charged forward and were repulsed. The Japanese dead lay in heaps piled up in front of the Australian weapon pits. Two tanks were again brought up and mopped up groups of retreating Japanese. The next day patrols discovered that the Japanese had completely withdrawn from the area so bulldozers were brought up to bury the Japanese dead. 290 Japanese were counted around Slater's Knoll itself piled up in front of the weapon pits and altogether about 620 were collected in the other areas where the fighting had occurred and buried in several common graves near Slater's Knoll.

The Australian casualties from the 25th and 9th Bns. during the period early February to 5th April 1945 were 10 Officers and 179 Other Ranks killed or wounded.

The battle for Slater's Knoll proved the effectiveness of tanks in a jungle situation. Their appearance was both timely and effective and helped to counter the greatly superior numerical strength of the Japanese attackers. The battle for Slater's Knoll was a 'defining event' in the Bougainville campaign, but, as stated earlier it has never been celebrated and is only known to the remaining Bougainville veterans.

Slater's Knoll was named after Private C.R. Slater of 25 Bn. who was wounded on this feature during a Japanese artillery attack when during March some 600 shells were fired on to the 25 Bn. position. Although badly wounded he elected to stay at his post until relieved.

Throughout this battle the Japanese used their artillery on the Australian positions but it was mainly inaccurate and showed that they lacked trained observers to register fall of shot and to adjust their barrages on to targets. The Japanese had no lack of artillery both field and medium calibre guns but did not appear to understand the basic principles of the use of artillery as an offensive weapon to spearhead an attack.



BOUGAINVILLE. 1945-03-30. TWO BULLDOZERS TOWING A B SQUADRON, 2/ARMoured REGIMENT MATILDA TANK THROUGH THE PURIATA RIVER AFTER IT HAD BECOME BOGGED IN THE SOFT SAND BOTTOM.

BEYOND THE WIRE – AN ANZAC EXPERIENCE

Readers will recall the flyer in the last issue of ARTILLERYWA advertising the display of WW1 memorabilia in the Burt Memorial Hall in support of the St. Georges Cathedral restoration fund. Malcolm Higham, a Society Member, volunteered as a Guide during the display and has provided the following report:

- **Beyond the Wire** was an exhibition to remember the men who fell during the First World War in France and was held in the Burt Memorial Hall, erected in 1918-1919 to commemorate the sacrifice of the two sons of Septimus and Louisa Burt of Strawberry Hill, WA. Francis Burt was killed in action on 15 July 1916 whilst serving with 12 Battery 35 Brigade AFA and his brother Theo of the 4th Infantry Battalion on 24 April 1918 during the Battle of Villers Bretenneaux. The building was funded by the Burt family, originally to remember the two sons but when it was dedicated it became a Memorial to the 44 members of the Anglican Community of St. Georges Cathedral who lost their lives during WW1. Among the 44 were three Foss brothers, Cecil, Henry, and Earnest – surely an enormous loss to one family. The exhibition was organized by Paul Bridges and the Army Museum of WA, assisted by the WA Arms and Armour Society, the Military Historical Society of WA and the RAA Historical Society of WA, and was open to the public from 23rd April to 3rd May. Whilst attendance on ANZAC Day was pleasing attendance on other days did not do justice to the tremendous effort of the organizers and the many volunteers who manned the display.

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Fred Ingram – 6 Heavy Bty RAA, Darwin Coast Defences, AIC, AIF, CMF. 8 AA Group, 11 Coast Maint Tp, 25 Med Coast Bty, 11 LAA, 22 Constn Sqn Western Command Diving Team + lots more!

I interviewed Fred on 18 October and 1 November 1989 at Hobbs Artillery Park, Karrakatta (sadly he has long since gone to that Officers' Mess in the sky)! Fred had such a diverse military life, the main highlights for us gunners being the installation of the guns at Leighton, Pot Shot,

Scrivener Bty, Rottnest, Garden Island, and Scotchman's Hill etc. He also cleared the land for the building of the Northern Military Camp and built the roads at Lancelin (and Bullfrog Well even gets a mention)! The following is a summary of the highlights from our 4 tape interview. Accompanying the tapes will be a bound synopsis (including photographs and other memorabilia).

- Enlistment into 6 Hvy Bty RAA, uniforms/pay/training; first live firing, "ship's bell" incident;
- Darwin posting – building new Larrakeyah Barracks, contact with Aboriginals, leper colony, Chinese vegetable grower, Shandy the dog, battle practise mishap;
- RSM 1 Arty Svy Co, outbreak WW2, S.M. Hayward MC, 2/1st Recon Regt, FSM Fremantle Fortress;
- Location, and installation of guns at Potshot, Rottnest, Garden Island, Scotchman Hill, East Fremantle oval,
- "overseas service" on USS Goldstar;
- Rottnest Island Board, Rottnest Motel, recreation on Rottnest, a horse named Coffin Head, CO – "Streaker", Archbishop of WA, over correcting incident, Legacy children, turkey incident, Oliver's Tearooms;
- runaway bulldozer, dummy gun battery Park Station, makeshift equipment, South Coogee bushfire, disarming soldier, WRAAF at Guildford Aerodrome, searchlight girls, Brig's inspection at South Fremantle gun site, Stoinas incident at Buckland Hill, exercise Dhufish at East Fremantle, training VDC, misfire, practise at Fish Rock;
- clearing area to build Northam Military Camp, Muresk Ball, musical rides using 25 pdrs, guards of honour (Governor and Japanese Admiral);
- dismantling heavy equipment, Italian POWs, problems live firing at Leighton, recommended improvements to Leighton Bty, reduction in rank, death of OC, Personnel Depot Guildford, 1 AGRA Qld, 22 Constn Sqn, change of corps;
- construction of Lancelin military roads and air pads at Nungarin and Northam, 26 Water Transport, trawler;
- Western Command Diving Team, Army Ordnance Stores Bushmead, resignation from Army, rigger – State Shipping Service, dealing with difficult individuals, advice to young gunners.

Wendy Mahoney
(E&OE)

If you are interested in borrowing any of our completed gunner interviews, please give the Historical Society a call to arrange collection any Wednesday morning. Alternatively, you are welcome to listen to the cassettes in our library. If you are unable to attend in person, we would be happy to post them out to you.

Why is oral history important Because:

When an old person dies a library burns to the ground. (African proverb)



Nothing like starting young in the 'Two Up' ring

To purchase Embroidered Jacket and or Beret Badges - Cut below and return to the RAA Association

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