

# TAKE POST!

NEWSLETTER OF THE 2/3RD  
AUSTRALIAN LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT  
REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

June 2008



Members of the 'old guard' with some members of the 'new guard' at the Regiment's reunion at the Naval and Military Club. (Left to right: Colin Bragg – Secretary, John Hepworth – Treasurer, Deirdre Robinson – Editor, Lynton Rose – President, Ron Bryant – Past President, John Campbell – Past Secretary, Graeme Heddle - Committee member.)

## The Past President's Last Word

You will recall that in March, 2008, we advised members that publication of *Take Post* would be delayed because of our pre-occupation with forming the Remembrance Group to take over administration of our Association, whilst coping with other problems. This issue of *Take Post* is to bring you up-to-date with subsequent events.

I am pleased to report that the AGM, election of new office bearers, and the annual re-union at the Naval and Military Club went smoothly, to make for a happy day. There were a number of apologies from younger members because of it being a working day and also of many living in the country or interstate.

The attendance of 36 included veterans and members of the 'new guard', some being ladies whose company was welcomed. First business of the Meeting was to adopt the amended Constitution which paves the way for descendants and relatives to become members. The numbers for quorums at meetings were reduced. (Copies of the amended Constitution were sent to all members before the meeting.)

With the exception of our Treasurer, John Hepworth, who, as requested by members, is retaining that position for the time being, all other members of the former Committee stood aside to make way for a smaller and younger Com-

mittee. The retiring members were all thanked for their many years of loyal service and good comradeship. The following nominees were elected to office unopposed:

<b>President</b>	Lynton Rose
<b>Secretary</b>	Colin Bragg
<b>Vice President</b>	Matthew Heddle
<b>Committee</b>	Graeme Heddle; Anne Rae

Deirdre Robinson has accepted the position of Editor of *Take Post* and David Thomson, Keeper of the Banner.

I commend the new members to the committee and thank them for their interest. As shown by the Anzac Day commemorations, many of the younger generation in the community have an increasing interest in Australian war history, and of their forebears who served in wars. No doubt our new committee will endeavour to keep in touch with descendants of our old members with matters of common interest.

This edition of *Take Post* picks up matters which were intended to be sent earlier.

With best wishes to our new President and Committee.

**Ron Bryant.**

# Our New President – Lynton Rose

**L** ynton Rose is the son of the late Clive Rose. Clive was a foundation member of the regiment in 1940 and served in the Middle East and later northern Australia. He was assigned to Regimental Headquarters. Following the war he was involved in the formation of the regimental association, serving a term as president and in 1992 being awarded honorary life membership.

Lynton is married to Rhonda and they have two sons, Adam and Jonathan. Adam works in advertising and he and his fiancée Deanna live in Sydney and are to be married in December. Jonathan works for BHP Billiton in Melbourne. Last October Jonathan and his wife Emma had their first baby, the gorgeous Amy Charlotte. Amy is Rhonda and Lynton's first grandchild.

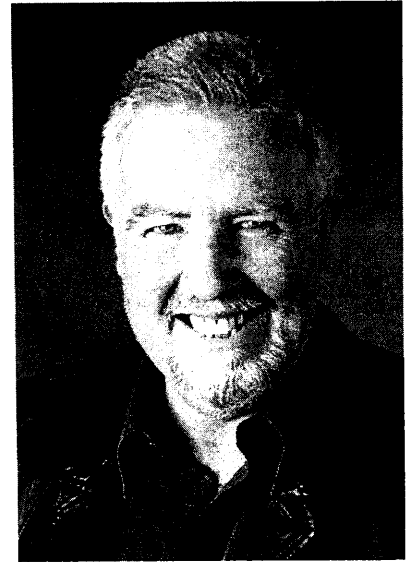
Lynton's professional career has been in commercial photography, advertising and tertiary education. Currently he works at RMIT University teaching tertiary programs within the School of Creative Media. Aside from his professional life, Lynton's interests include football, cricket, motorsport (he is a member of the Phillip Island Auto Racing Club), music, literature and the Arts in general.

Speaking at this year's reunion luncheon, Lynton said, "the 2/3rd has indirectly been a part of my life for as long as I can remember, due obviously to the very active involvement my dad took in regimental affairs and with the association over so many years. I know this connection exists for other members of the younger generation/descendants group as well. This was reflected in the

response to the 'call to arms' made last year for the next generation to carry on the work of the association."

An important point made at the reunion should be reiterated. The change of administration is in no way a takeover of the association. It should be seen as an opportunity for continuation. "The association belongs to the members of the 2/3rd and we, the new committee, understand and respect that. We will only ever act in best interests of the membership. In this regard we will need and will seek the wise counsel of Ron, John Campbell, John Hepworth, Cec Rae and other members of the committee who have done such an excellent job to date. Theirs are big shoes to fill and we encourage their input."

As I concluded at the reunion, "We cannot promise to do the job as well as the 'originals' but we can promise to give it our best shot, working together to keep the 2/3rd flame burning."



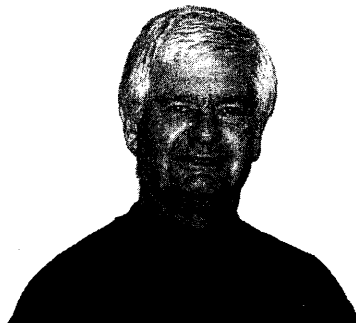
# Our New Hon. Secretary – Colin Bragg

**C** olin Bragg has been elected Secretary to replace John Campbell who has retired after twelve years in that position. John has given dedicated service and is well known to members who wish him good health in his retirement.

Colin, aged 66, is married to Ann, who is the daughter of former President, Jim Paton.

After graduating from Melbourne University (Bachelor of Commerce), Colin's early employment was in the oil industry (British Petroleum) and the computer industry (International Computers Limited).

For eleven years, he was employed as a Management Consultant with Price Waterhouse, before accepting the position of National Director of the overseas aid agency, Plan Australia, which he held for five years until 1986.



Moving to Shepparton in 1986, he was initially employed as the Executive Director of the Northern Victoria Fruitgrowers Association before retiring early in 2008 after 14 years with the Moira Shire Council where his responsibilities included the preparation of grant applications and the management of Council's business enterprises.

Now that he is retired, he intends to spend more time fishing and pursuing interests which lack of time has previously precluded, such as golf, music and painting.

He is a life long supporter of the Geelong Football Club.

Colin looks forward to contributing to the 2/3 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association and to continuing the commitment and dedication of its former office bearers.

# 2/3RD AUSTRALIAN LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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## Treasurer

John Hepworth

## Committee

Graham Heddle  
Anne Rae

## Newsletter Editor

Deirdre Robinson

## Keeper of the Banner

Dave Thomson

## WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

It is with sincere regret we report the passing of these former comrades:

	Bty
Roy Thomson	7
Grif Weatherley	9
Alex Barnett	8
John Bright	8

Lest we forget!

## Ode to Liquor and Longevity

The horse and mule live thirty years  
And nothing known of wine and beers.  
The goat and sheep at twenty die  
And never taste of Scotch and Rye.  
The cow drinks water by the ton  
And at eighteen is mostly done.  
The dog at fifteen cashes in  
Without the aid of rum and gin.  
The cat in milk and water soaks  
And then in twelve short years it croaks.

The modest, sober, bone dry hen  
Lays eggs for Nogs, then dies at ten.  
All animals are strictly dry  
They sinless live and swiftly die.  
But sinful, ginfull, rum soaked men  
Survive for three score years and ten,  
And some of them, a very few  
Stay pickled til they're 92.

## PETRONIUS ARBITER AD 66

'We strained hard but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be re-organised.

I was to learn that in life we tend to meet any new situation by re-organising, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.'

## ON TARGET

We received requests from member's descendants for the Regiment's history, *On Target*, but we have no further copies. If you have a copy which is no longer required, perhaps you could get it to our Secretary. If you happen to be a loner now with no family wanting your copy, don't let it be thrown out.

The Association will recycle it for you.

# From the Secretary's Desk 2008

Change is in the air and this will be my last 'From the Secretary's Desk'. I have enjoyed this column, passing on bits of info from you to others you may not have seen or heard of for many years. Gathering and researching details of your fathers, things that he never mentioned whilst alive, it has been a pleasure to do my best with all these requests. But time passes by, and it is time to hand over the running of this association to the younger generation. I know they will do it well.

I haven't had a lot of mail this year, but it was still a pleasure to get a letter from an old mate in the letter box or a voice on the end of the telephone, and so here are some of the things that occurred this past year.

**Rex Emmett 7 Bty** actually sent two letters, that's a first I think Rex! Rex has left Ouyen and now resides in the Mildura RSL Retirement Village. A good decision Rex. It's a bit far for you to go to Bairnsdale fishing now Rex, but I am sure there must still be a few fish in the Murray that you can give a bit of a hurry up to! David McDonald, son of **Robert McDonald Sigs**, couldn't make it to 2007 Anzac Day, but came down from Canberra for the first meeting of **the Remembrance Group**, and again came down for the AGM and reunion lunch on the 24th April. I am not sure if you marched on Anzac Day David, I was not able to this year. Your interest and participation is very much appreciated, thank you. **Alf Sutherland 7 Bty** writes of his fading memories of **Campo 57** and the 'Hair Raid Incident'. This incident is recorded on p. 141 in 'On Target'. Alf wonders if there is anyone out there who may have better memories of it, and the antics of the two guards. Drop me a line or write to Rex if you have a recollection. It was good to

hear from **Bob Phillips 8 Bty** again this year. Joyce and I will be coming to Noosa for the last two weeks this August Bob, so I will look you up, it will be great to see you again after many years. I was pleased to read that you and Phyl made it to the Anzac Day March in Tewantin this year. Your article on Tobruk was well received. Well done! Congratulations to **Arthur and Betty Spiller RHQ** on their diamond wedding celebrations. We will give you another plug on the 70th Arthur. **Dan Hawkes 9 Bty**, another faithful correspondent sends greetings to his old mates, from himself and other 9 bty mates living around Sydney. **Frank O'Toole 9 Bty** reports that he sees **Jack Hunt 9 Bty** from time to time. You will be sad to know Frank, that your mate **Grif Weatherly** passed away during the year. Once again Gwen had written the letter for Frank. Many thanks Gwen, you are a gem. James Coghlan, one of the sons of the four **Coghlan Brothers 9 Bty**, and his son Simon, have joined the new Remembrance Group. Good news James, the group can only go from strength to strength. James tells me that as well as memories of his father and uncles he also appreciates his maternal grandfather Capt L.A. Blackman MC who landed at Anzac Cove, later serving in the battles of the Somme. Thank you for your letter James.

Again this year your Committee has been very appreciative of the subscriptions sent in and the many substantial donations from so many of you. Thank you so much.

I think that is about all from me so I will sign off now. My best regard to you all,

**John S Campbell**  
(The retired Secretary!)

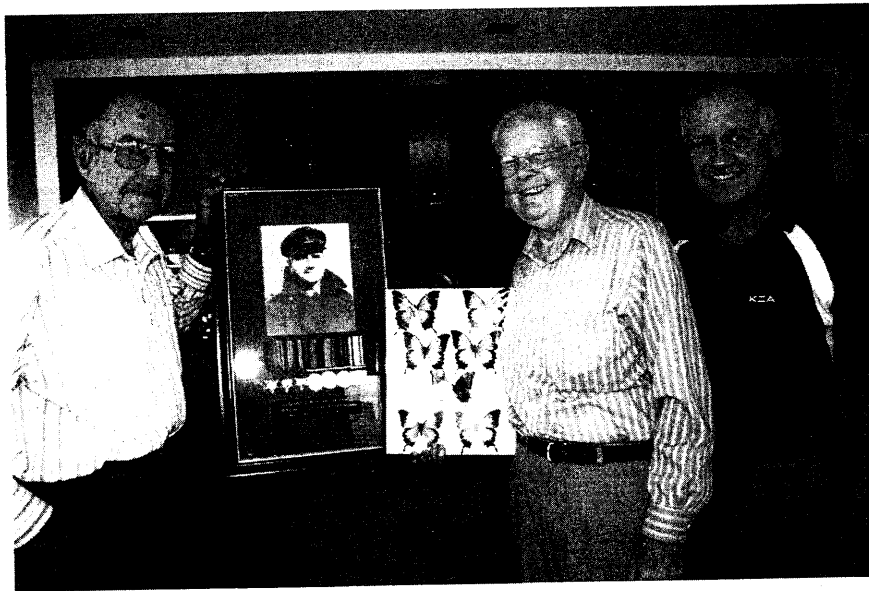
## The 9th Australian Division

**T**here has always been a lot of discussion about the origins of the 9th Australian Division, which was actually created on the 23rd September, 1940. Major General H.D. Wynter was the first Commander, however he became seriously ill in January 1941 and was replaced by Brigadier Morshead, who was promoted to Major General.

In 1942, Leslie Morshead was knighted and in 1943, promoted to Lieutenant General and given command of the Corps. Brigadier G.F. Wooten took command of the Division and was promoted to Major General. During its life, the Division took part in some of the most momentous actions in the Second World War, in particular the Siege of Tobruk (which was the longest siege in British military history), the July battle and the final battle of El Alamein (23rd October 1942 to 5th November 1942). This final battle was considered to have been the turning point in the final victory in Europe.

After returning home and being re-equipped, the Division took part in the campaigns in the jungles of New Guinea and Borneo. Battle sites that come readily to mind are Finschhafen, Lae, Pabu, Jivenaneng, Sattelberg, Tarakan, Labuan and Beaufort. The Division suffered 2,732 killed in action, 7,501 wounded and 1,836 taken prisoner. The 9th Division was the most highly decorated of all 2nd A.I.F. divisions, receiving 393 awards for bravery, including seven Victoria Cross. The Division also received a total of 681 mentions in despatches. The Division was declared redundant on the 10th February, 1946.

# The Sentry's Log



## Butler's butterflies in 1945

Frank Hands (8) and Ron Bryant (8) visited the home of Dr Barry Butler and his wife Denise.

Barry is the son of the late Keith Butler, an original member of 8 Battery. Keith died in 1988. He was a school teacher before and after World War 2, as a principal in several rural Victorian towns. He spent some years in Corryong, and retired from Gardenvale Central. He enjoyed all his posts, but Corryong was a favourite.

He was a gun-sergeant during the Siege of Tobruk in 1941, engaged in numerous actions against Italian and German enemy aircraft. Because of his knowledge and ability, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant.

While serving in New Guinea in 1943, Keith, as a Troop Commander, took the opportunity of putting together a remarkable collection of tropical butterflies, including the beautiful iridescent Blue Emperors.

Barry still has the collection preserved in good order. Several of the butterflies have been reproduced on Australian postage stamps.

At the cleared site of a troop of huge long-barrelled 3.7 inch anti-aircraft guns ready for action near Buna, it appeared incongruous to see 'But' as he was known through the gun-sites, chasing magnificent butterflies, swiping with his long-handled net, completely ignoring raucous shouts from the heavy anti-aircraft gunners at this intruder.

Keith often struggled through swamps and tropical forest in pursuit of unusual specimens.

He was also an avid collector of stones, minerals and postage stamps.

'But' was a good soldier, a good officer, and with so many interests, must have been an interesting teacher. ❖

### Alison's Heron

Congratulations to Alison Campbell Rate, daughter of our Hon. Secretary John Campbell, who won third prize in the Age 2006 short story competition. Over 1700 entries were submitted. The story 'The Heron' was published in the Age, January 19, 2008. Alison writes professionally. She also writes contemporary worship music for her church. She is chief executive of Open Doors Counselling, so is familiar with problems of bereavement. Her short story 'The Heron' reflects this.

### Another Priest!

Readers may remember in last year's *Take Post* the story 'A Tale of Five Priests'.

Another who had an association with our Regiment was Padre Dawes who joined us at Werribee Racecourse. He became a Major-General as Senior Methodist Padre.

After WW2, he returned to Victoria to become Moderator of the Methodist church. Padre Dawes was a fine man who became a good friend of all of our men.

# Am I My Brother's Keeper

**Robert Knight**

Members of 'A' Troop, 7th Battery, 2/3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, knowing John and Bill Knight during their camp life and service at Maleme airfield in Crete, will have no problem in answering their philosophical question regarding both John and Bill in the affirmative.

As identical twins and both ranked as Bombardiers in camp, there were times such as when John, who was more confident of procedures, assumed Bill's identity in posting the sentry at a Changing of the Guard ceremony. In Crete, the personal ties were even more apparent, and the 'brotherly care' aspect was revealed when, after a period of action and the gun-site had calmed down, each of the twins would take the opportunity to move towards the other's gun-site to be assured all was well before returning to his own gun-site. Even Prisoner-of-War life couldn't break the bonds, as indicated by the following story of Robert Knight, son of the late John Knight.

**Les Harris (7th Bty)**



John Knight and Snowy Myers at the Ziegel Mill in Germany.

I am the son of R.L. (John) Knight who with his identical brother, W.J. (Bill) Knight were members of 7th Battery.

In late May 1941, my father John and his twin Bill were taken prisoner by the Germans in the battle of Crete. They each were on different guns protecting Maleme aerodrome.

From Crete they were taken to a town called Hammelberg about 260 km north of Munich on the edge of the Black Forest. They were then sent to a work camp Stalag 13C at Massbach. This was to be their home for the next 4 plus years - their dormitory was an old music hall.

Dad was assigned to work in a flour mill about 3km out of Massbach. The flour mill which was driven by water was called the Ziegel Muhl and was owned by the Liebleins. Also at the Ziegel Muhl - which means stone mill - there was a barn where some dairy cows were shedded. The mill is about 200 years old. Herr Lieblein was an old man whom Dad nicknamed Churchill - he was rotund and

smoked cigars. His son was at the front. His daughter in law Traudi was there and her daughter of about 4, Hanni. Also helping at the mill was a Polish girl Lottie Scabotzca.

Dad's bosses were good people. Dad's twin worked on a farm however and he had a bad boss. Being absolutely identical twins the Germans could not tell the difference - and nor could I till I was about ten years old. So the twins swapped jobs from time to time to enable Bill to recuperate from dysentery and tetanus in the better working conditions in the mill.

Dad used to talk of the good times and never the bad times. He talked of how he used to bounce Hanni Lieblein on his knee. Each day at 6.00 am a guard would take him to the mill and then pick him up to walk back the 3km to camp often in knee deep snow. Of interest is that in those days the ground was covered in 6 feet of snow and today the snow only lasts a couple of days.

In April 1945, the Germans decided they would march



Bill Knight (left) and John Knight being welcomed home by their mother after four years as prisoners of war.

the prisoners in the camp at Massbach to Austria some 600 km away and hold them as hostages. They thought they could use the prisoners to bargain with either the US or Russian troops. Dad and his twin decided after a short time on the march they were too crook to make it so together with a Scotsman they escaped one cold wet night by going through the wire. They hid in the forest and gradually made their way back to the Ziegel Muhl where Dad knew Lottie would look after them.

Lottie was amazed to see them and hid them in the barn in a loft above the cow stalls. She fed them by pinching food although my father said that Traudi Lieblein, the daughter-in-law, knew they there. For three weeks Lottie looked after them. Unfortunately the Scot got sick of the food and made a run for it but did not get far.

One morning my father lifted a tile on the roof and looked out and to his amazement on the bridge over the river and pointing its turret at them was a tank with a star on it. Dad asked Bill what a white star meant because they did not want to give themselves up to the Russians. It was the Americans – so to the amazement of the Liebleins they came out of the loft and were liberated and then repatriated back to England. They were in Trafalgar Square for the VE Day celebrations.

My wife Meg and I went to England in 2007 and part of our trip was to go to Massbach in Germany which I had heard so much about from Dad, and to find where he was a POW and the mill where he worked.

We flew into Munich and then drove to Rothenburg, a beautiful walled city of medieval times. Massbach is about 60 km north of Rothenburg. The day we drove to Massbach we had very mixed feelings. I should say my Dad and his twin (whom he worked with all his life in the family engineering business) had both died several years ago.

On finding Massbach we found a little village of about 1,000 people about the size of the town we now live near – Foster near Wilson's Promontory in Victoria. In the little village we noticed a building with 3 flagpoles and so I went to see if anyone knew

where the Ziegel Muhl was. Of course this is not a tourist town and so no one spoke English and when I tried to explain that my father had been a Kriegs gefangen schaft (POW) – they were less than helpful. Just as we were about to leave the building a lady came in and said, 'Can I help?' in English. She had married an American serviceman and spoke excellent English. We told what we were after and in a short time she told us where the Ziegel Muhl was and where Hanni Lieblein - the little 4 yo during the war still lived. She said if we waited 5 minutes she would drive there and we could follow her.

She took us to the Ziegel Muhl – there it was – I was shaking. The present owner was very friendly and I saw where my father had worked and where the US tank had parked on the bridge and the loft where they hid. The barn with the loft now has pigs in it instead of dairy cattle. The mill now uses the water to generate electricity which is sold to the grid. It uses electricity to crush grain for the pigs. I had very mixed emotions.

We then went to where Hanni lived. Her mother Traudi is long dead. Unfortunately Hanni was not at home but I left her a message and have written to her. Unfortunately after the war the Liebleins were ostracized by the village because of what they did for Dad and his brother and other prisoners so Hanni has led I think a solitary life.

We also found the site of the camp in Massbach – Stalag 13C. It is now a football field. The schloss above the village is now a music camp for school children. There is nothing on the football field to say the part it played. For that matter one never sees any mention of WW11 in Germany in the area we were in. There is a memorial in the corner of the football field but it is a memorial for those from the village who lost their lives in WW1.

It did not take long for the village to hear that we were there – and when we went to the Post Office for Hanni's correct address and to the bakery for lunch, everyone was pleasant.

It was a very special day for me and brought memories of my father flooding back. ❖

## Middle East – April/May 2007

by John Hepworth

**M**y son, Douglas and his wife Anne, were going to Gallipoli. They asked me to accompany them. I suggested we extend the tour to North Africa. Anne was enthusiastic to see where her father had served with the RAF ground crew in 1941 and 1942 in North Africa.

Gallipoli was a wonderful experience, but not to be repeated – it was too strenuous. Security was strict, all roads closed where VIPs were involved. Tourist buses (I guess about 500), were kept well clear of the ceremonies, with the exception in our case of DVA and Veterans. For the Dawn Service, we were driven from the bus park to a special stand for Veterans and a carer – at 1.00 a.m.! Doug and I froze in the cold wind, even with the plastic coats and a sheet which were issued to us. The service was most impressive, as were the services at Lone Pine and the UK Memorial later in the morning. We were the only ones driven to Lone Pine – thank goodness, because it's uphill all the way. Minister Brendan Nelson gave three separate speeches, which were excellent. He looked for AIF people and shook my hand.

We flew from Istanbul to Tripoli for three days. Explored Leptis Magna, the ruins of a grand Roman city dating from BC, then Sabratha, another ancient city ruins. Both of these cities are about 20 km each side of Tripoli, which was the third city. Went into the War Cemetery, then flew 500 km down to Sabha. Next day, we went out to the Sahara and were driven in 4WD wagon 300 km up the Desert Lakes – amazing oases in a totally sandy desert. All the time in Libya, we had a security officer allotted to us. He was for our protection and he kept surveillance over us, ensuring that we did not take photos at airports, check points and military installations. He was in civilian clothes and not visibly armed, although I'm sure he was 'tooled'. The locals certainly knew what he was, because when we had to cross a road from the bus, he walked into the traffic and stopped it with a flick of his finger. Any other stoppage attracted massive tooting. For the Sahara, a second officer joined us.

We flew to Benghazi after a 4 hour delay at Tripoli airport. As we were driving to Derna, the delay meant we only had time to go into the War Cemetery. Benghazi is now an 'oil' city of 500,000 people. Driving through, we didn't even see the harbour. There was nothing I recognised.

On to Barce, where I was on the airstrip with a gun at each end and a green oasis in otherwise desert. It's a bigger agricultural area now, once again – nothing I could recognise. We were overnight at Derna. Went through the ancient ruins of Apollonia and Cyrene, then on to Tobruk. We were in Tobruk for 2 nights, easily the worst hotel on the trip, but the best in Tobruk. An impressive foyer and reception, but the bedrooms with an ensuite were totally

run down. I had to be moved because the bathroom was disgusting!

Next day we went to the War Graves Cemetery at Knightsbridge, which is outside the perimeter, then inside the tank trap to Figtree, which is exactly as I remember it. I went there with Wilbur Reid to see the gun crew nearby. (I can't remember the site or who was there.) Drove up to Hill 209 which we explored. The whole area is just as it was 66 years ago, littered with grenade casings and shell and bullet casings. The Germans built an observation mound. Unfortunately a dust haze obscured the view, but the Germans would have had a panoramic view of the whole of Tobruk. We didn't go out to any of the other battle fields, so I couldn't look for my gun site east of Pilastrino. Only 4WD wagons can be used out in the desert and care has to be taken because of possible mines.

Tobruk town has a population of about 100,000 and is again an 'oil' city. The harbour is attractive with neither wrecks nor a salination plant. The original buildings were all destroyed except for the Roman Catholic Church, which is now a museum. Rommel's bunker after the fall in 1942 is still there.

At the War Graves Cemetery, I found the graves of Jim Fellows, Don Evans, Val Morrow and Sam Hardingham. It is unfortunate that Don Evans' head stone is not properly inscribed with his VX. This was very emotional because they were all around me within feet of the bomb. Keith Wallis, Blondy Taylor and I were more than lucky we were not with them. Our tour director organised a little service and Vince, a Vietnam veteran and I, as the only servicemen, laid a wreath at the memorial. I recited the Ode and after a full minute of silence, 'Lest We Forget'.

From Tobruk, we drove to El Alamein. At the border of Egypt our security man left. We transferred to an Egyptian bus through no man's land between the two border controls. From there to Alexandria we acquired an Egyptian army truck with six fully armed soldiers to follow us. This was because there had been highway hold ups and robberies in isolated areas. At El Alamein we went to the cemetery and into Rommel's bunker. Then on to Alexandria and two war cemeteries, then Cairo. There we went to the cemeteries, the Pyramids and the Museum. All of the ten cemeteries that we visited are beautifully maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, based in London.

We had an excellent tour, very well organised, but very strenuous at my age. Activities on every day from early morning. I was looked after particularly well by Doug and Anne – but all the other members treated me as a fragile relic! It was a wonderful experience with many reminiscences of 66 years ago. ❖



# A DIFFICULT ENCOUNTER

The following is an account of events recorded in the diary of Emilia Zampese, late February, 1945, as quoted in a letter to Malcolm Webster, dated April 18th, 1989.

These are her words as translated.

I also have a terrible entry in my diary. It was a beautiful early spring day, the warm sun had almost dissolved the last of the snow of that terrible winter. You had already left the area and been gone for some weeks, however, I always knew, more or less, where you were. All that remained for us was to hope and pray that everything would be right and turn out well in the end.

The Nazis and Fascists, although on the retreat still did not accept defeat. On the contrary, were looking for a place to make a last stand and had stationed themselves in the commune and villages of Portula in Northern Vercelli. Amongst their several areas of enquiry and investigation they had listed my name therefore, pouncing on me like an earthquake by placing flame throwers in front of my house. My mother and father were forced to stay in the house and wait while two members of the Nero Ponzeccchi Brigade (Black shirted Fascists) grabbed me and between them dragged me to the opposite side of the village. There were three of us women seized altogether from our village and subjected to interrogation. Waiting for us were officers of the Fascist Police and the German Gestapo. I was interrogated last; that experience, although only lasting half an hour, I assure you seemed the longest half hour in my life. You can imagine the continual and repeated questions and they warned me if I wrongly answered their questions, the program, or plan, was to burn my house down with me and my parents inside. The interrogators inferred that they knew everything about me. I thought maybe this was bluff and that they had only little knowledge about my activities.

However, they knew I was helping the Partisans, but in particular Australian and English escaped P.O.Ws. They demanded to know all about you. They knew your name, Malcolm Webster, which was rather surprising as you operated only under the battle name 'Sydney'. They wanted all names and facts about you all but in particular about you. I became very tired with the con-

tinual questioning I looked at the German officer and asked permission to speak, he granted my request. I asked him was he the only member in his family and the German race engaged in this ridiculous war. The other interrogators were trying to stop me speaking, but he signalled me to continue. I said to him, "do you know that we young people did not want this war." Once again I felt tired.

I then told them, "Is it not true that Italians and Germans fighting in this war had mothers and fathers waiting and worrying at home, not to mention wives. So too have the Australians and English. Who knows how many went away to war never to return, isn't this right?" At the beginning' he stared at me with cold, impassive eyes but in time he seemed to be more understanding. All I was saying seemed to interest everybody present. In conclusion I said that the present world is a comedy and we were all the absurd puppets. Other particulars I will explain when I see you again.

It was important that it finished well so I asked them to do what they want with me but let my parents go free as my parents had had only a very hard life, working, suffering and many tears. He then called the guards that were outside the door and ordered them to take me home and to withdraw everything.

This fortunately suspended the proposed execution. I then went down to Vercelli but in the midst of all that confusion of people, I could not find you. The rest I will tell you; it was a unique and bad closure, isn't it true? ❖

## Epilogue

A difficult encounter indeed for a lady who had been assisting partisans. Emilia Zampese proved a good friend to Mal Webster (7 Battery) and has visited Australia twice in the last 20 years.

# WIND in his face

Ian Rutter

Young Arbuthnott was a quiet sort of fellow. At least we all thought so until he joined the Army and was given a motorbike. He had courier duties carrying important despatches for the Colonel and the Colonel's lunch on occasions.

The wind in his face and the exhilaration of speed touched something in his nature that had never been touched before. A strange excitement gripped him. The urge to live dangerously - although others on the road didn't share his zeal. He could get close enough to a marching group to scatter them. He knew exactly what he could do on a motorbike.

But it had to end. They finished the war and took away his bike. He had to accustom himself to a more sedate life and it wasn't easy.

For a time he was a lost soul. And then he discovered golf and golf buggies. Once again he could experience the thrill of wheels and what the Army had taught him. He could career along the fairways recapturing the excitement of those early days.

All would have been well - nothing worth mentioning happened - just a few infringements and a few complaints. Until the wet year. At the lake hole he got too close, skid-

ded in the mud and joined the water fowl. The bike was submerged to the seat and he sat there on the surface of the water, deep in thought, waiting for someone to extricate him. He would have thought that someone would have helped and had a very cheery word for him. But no-one seemed to notice. They must have thought he was a pelican. I don't know how long he sat there.

But then it happened again. It was the time when the television people were doing a commercial at the lake to show off his new season's bathers. There were quite a lot of shapely young things grouped around the water and his mind must have wandered and he took his eye right off the ball. The bike and he went straight in to renew his acquaintance with the water fowl.

They talked about it in the club house. They'd nod their heads "Not again," they'd say "young Arbuthnott can't keep out of that lake. He can't be trusted on a buggy."

The upshot of it was that again he lost his wheels and reverted to being a lost soul.

However there was a happy ending. He heard about the little conveyance that runs along footpaths with a little flag on top and so far there have been no incidents but then he has only had it for a fortnight. ❖

## 16 Air Defence Regiment

Our *Take Post* of 2006 reported on developments of "Air Defence" which supersedes the old term "Anti-aircraft". It also mentioned the remarkable developments in equipment compared with our old guns.

A brief history of "Air Defence" follows: The 16th Air Defence regiment (16 AD Regt) is the youngest regiment in the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery (RAA). Its origins can be traced to the formation of two independent batteries, 110th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery and 111th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, at Woodside. The amalgamation of these two batteries on 2 June, 1969 was the formation of the 16th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment (16 LAA Regt).

At this time the Vietnam War was at its peak and many personnel were deployed with other units (Field Artillery and otherwise) in Vietnam. Although no Australian LAA unit served in Vietnam, personnel from 16 LAA Regt manned 40 mm Bofors guns during this time on the landing craft of the 32nd Small Ships Squadron while on operations in South Vietnamese waters. In 1971, acute manning shortage restricted manning to only one Battery (111 LAA Bty), although 110 LAA Bty was not disestablished and was still on the Australian Order of Battle.

Discussions throughout the 1970s about the requirement for Low Level Air Defence in the Army resulted in the Australian Government committing to the purchase of Rapier

in 1977. 110th Air Defence Battery was raised on 1 July 1978 and the unit was renamed 16th Air Defence Regiment the same day. 16 AD Regt Workshops was raised to provide repair and recovery support for the Regiment. 110 AD Bty received the first Rapier equipment from 1979, and it was officially brought into service in 1980 and the Radar Trackers (providing all weather, day/night capability) arrived in 1981. In December 1984, replacement for Redeye was announced, and in March 1987, RBS 70 was introduced into 111 AD Bty (Lt).

In 1991, RBS-70 detachments from 111 AD Bty were deployed aboard HMAS *Success* and *Westralia* for operational service during the Gulf War. This was repeated in support of the International Coalition Against Terror aboard HMAS *Kanimbla* and *Manoora* during 2001/2002 and more recently a RBS-70 detachment was used aboard HMAS *Kanimbla* during The Coalition War disarming Iraq.

In May 2003, 16 AD Regt was allocated 83 million dollars to be used to replace the Rapier Missile system with an upgraded RBS-70 system. This replacement was completed in 2005. In August 2003 a contract was signed for a new simulator trainer to be built at 16 AD Regt. This new simulator is state of the art and allows far more realistic training for the operators of the RBS-70 system. ❖