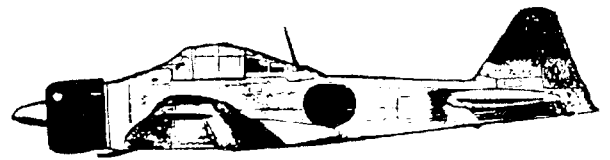


2nd/3rd AUSTRALIAN LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT  
REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER  
If undelivered return to:  
C.J.E. RAE  
Tal Tal, Tucks Road,  
Shoreham, Vic. 3196

# “TAKE POST!”

Newsletter of the  
2nd/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft  
Regiment Association



## RE-UNION NOTICE

The Re-union will be held on Wednesday 24th April, 1991 from 12 noon until 5 p.m., lunch and drinks provided. The subscription this year is \$15 (being subsidised by the Association).

The venue is the same as last year, namely the Air Force Convention Centre, 4 Cromwell Road, South Yarra. (Vehicle access through Howitt St.)

*Cec. Rae, Hon. Secretary.*

## NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the A.F. Convention Centre, 4 Cromwell Road, South Yarra at 11.45 a.m. on 24th April 1991, (just prior to the Re-union).

It is proposed that the Constitution of the Association be amended in terms of the resolution circulated herewith.

Nominations for the Committee must be lodged with Secretary 7 days before the meeting.

*Cec. Rae, Hon. Secretary.*

## 2nd/3rd AUSTRALIAN LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT REGIMENT ASSOCIATION.

**President**

JIM PATON

**Hon. Secretary**

CEC.RAE

Tal Tal, Tucks Road, Shoreham, Vic. 3916.

**Hon. Treasurer**

JOHN HEPWORTH

**Newsletter Editor**

RON BRYANT

6 Blanche Avenue, Parkdale, Vic. 3195.

**Committee**

LES HARRIS, TOM DAWSON, ROY WILLIAMS,  
CLIVE ROSE, DICK HAWTING, BRUCE TULLOCH,  
JACK DELAHUNTY, DAVE THOMSON.

**W.A. President**

GORDON CONNOR

6 Exton Place, Spearwood, W.A. 6163.

A few copies of our history, “On Target”, remain.  
Obtain your copy at the Re-union, for \$29.00

**PLEASE ADVISE OF YOUR CHANGE OF  
ADDRESS**

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a wonderful experience it was to welcome 175 good men and true at our last re-union. A first rate attendance marked by a strong interstate contingent. The feeling gained was that everyone appreciated the sit-down meal and your committee is working towards a repeat performance. The Association this year is again subsidising the cost to a considerable extent.

1991 marks 50 years since the Battle of Crete, the commencement of the Siege of Tobruk and the Western Desert and Syrian Campaigns, so do your level best to attend on 24th

April and march on Anzac day. This country needs a resurgence of the Anzac spirit and the more we show that it is still alive, the better. One final point - Editor Ron Bryant whose address is on the front page, will be glad to receive notes for future newsletters with news of our gunners, or of interesting stories, events or photos which missed "On Target" but which should be recorded. Looking forward to seeing you at the re-union - meantime, best wishes to each one of you.

*Jim Paton.*

## THE BLOWER

Only those who were Prisoners-of-War could fully appreciate the significance of the Blower mentioned on page 142 of "On Target". A model was on display at the recent P.O.W. Association exhibition in Myers. Jack Henry, using the basic essentials, made up a sample in its crude form.

Lack of facilities for heating food in Red Cross parcels during the severe European winter inspired the invention. Bill Dellar describes it as consisting of a base board, to which another board was fixed at right angles. Near one end of the base board, a cylindrical fan box was placed, whilst near the other end, a cylindrical tin fire box was placed, the two being connected by a wind tunnel.

When the handle of the fan box was turned, the vanes inside propelled a draught of air along the tunnel, producing a fierce blaze in the fire box to cook food or rapidly boil water with a minimum of fuel.

Materials used were empty food tins; both top and bottom cut off, cut one side, then flattened; both long sides beaten over to clench into another such sheet, the joint being further sealed by denting with a nail. The tools were a hammer (being a stone), a punch (nail) and a knife (sharpened hoop-iron).

Bill Dellar re-calls that while the Italian Major at Chiavari permitted use of the blowers, the German Commandant at

Lamsdorf ordered their destruction by the guards. Following a complaint that destruction of desperately needed food was unjustified, the Commandant agreed such food could be removed before the blower was destroyed. One P.O.W. seeing an approaching guard, moved his dixie so that the handle was over the flame and "scooted" off. Following instructions, the guard removed the dixie first, only to have his hand burnt by the hot handle!

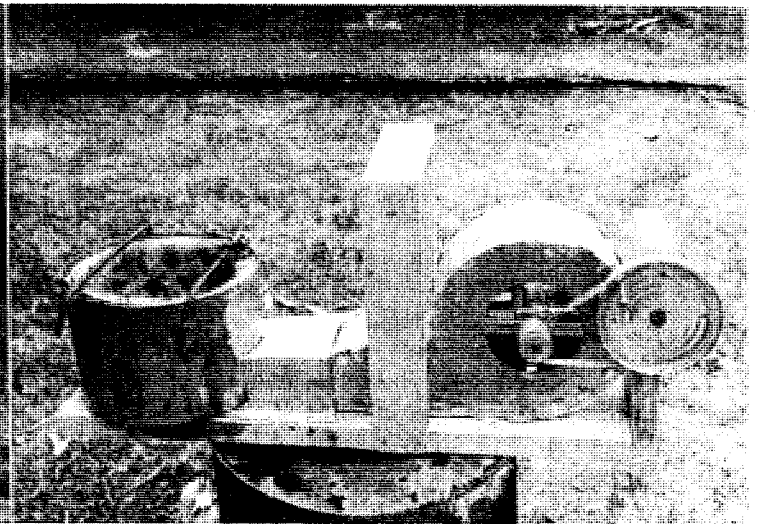
This story reminded John Nicholson of the endless search for fuel. He recalls the occasion when their group of prisoners moved into a hut accommodating about 80 in Stalag 3b in Germany. There were brick walls, iron roof, no timber window frames; but there were wooden three-deck beds. One of these in a corner remained un-occupied. The weary "new-chums" were aware of noises during the night, but were surprised to find at day-break that this bed had disappeared - shaved away for fuel.

By standing on other top bunks it was possible to remove ceiling panels and reach the pine rafters, where sharpened scrapers removed the wood for shavings to stroke the blowers. As a result, the ceiling eventually collapsed!

Tom Clifford's skill in converting cans of Red Cross parcels into useful utensils earned him the title of "Tapping Tom" for his incessant tapping, but also an ultimatum to limit his activity to three hours a day or else!



*Jack Henry 7 Bty with a "blower" similar to the models he and other P.O.W. made from tins, scraps of material and crude tools to heat Red Cross gifts.*



*Reverse side of the "blower". varieties of tins available produced different models, but the principle was the same. Clay lined the fuel box.*

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Legacy is seeking recruits from the younger active veterans of World War II and from among the veterans of Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, and United Nations Peacekeeping forces. These younger men are needed to help look after "Australia's biggest family".

"We really do need fresh manpower" said Legatee John Horan a former N.C.O. with 3 R.A.R., a Vietnam veteran who joined Northern Branch of Legacy only four years ago. "We cannot expect the veterans of World War II to carry on forever, and it is up to us younger ones to take over from them. We owe it to our deceased comrades and we owe it to their families".

Legacy is a voluntary, independent organisation of returned ex-servicemen dedicated to the care of widows and children of comrades who died on active service or subsequently.

It was founded in Melbourne in 1923 by a group of World War I veterans who recognised the need for an organisation to accept the legacy of caring for the widows and children of comrades-in-arms who had not survived the war.

These few men formed themselves into a body which later became the Legacy Club, and from this small beginning the Legacy ideal spread rapidly throughout Australia.

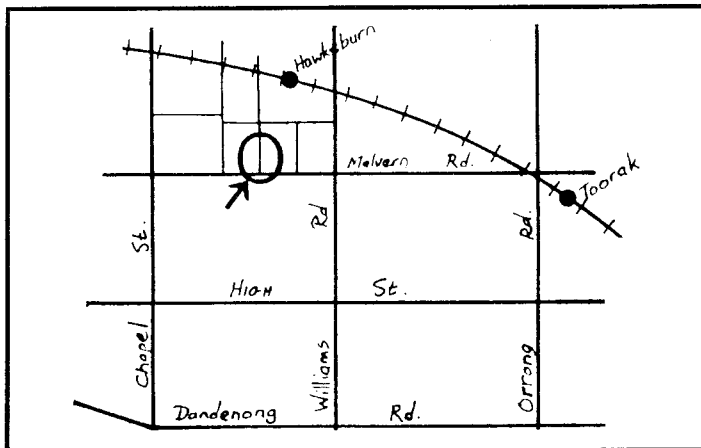
Today, there are forty-seven Legacy Clubs in Australia, and between them they look after the welfare of 114,000 widows and 3,000 children of those who died on active service or subsequently.

Each member of Legacy, known as a Legatee, is allocated the responsibility of looking after the welfare of a certain number of widows and children. As well as supplying the warmth of personal advice and friendship to a bereaved family or widow, each Legatee is concerned to provide practical help on a continuing basis to ensure that the widows under his care are properly housed and cared for and that "his" children develop to their full potential.

"There is a real job to be done", said Legatee Horan and the rewards come in terms of comradeship and practical achievements".

Legacy urges any ex-serviceman with overseas service who may be interested in finding out more about this work to contact The Executive Officer, Legacy House, in his Capital City.

**Editor's Note:** Association members can help Legacy by mentioning this message to any ex-serviceman who qualifies and is willing and able to help maintain Legacy's excellent work.



## Written in Libya, 1941

Long weary months have passed away  
 Since we left Australia's shores  
 And sailed across the rolling seas  
 To fight in Freedom's cause.

The tide of war has taken us far  
 Beyond our furthest hopes,  
 To a land of sand and heat and dust  
 And barren rocky slopes.

The sun sets o'er the Libyan Hills  
 Turning gold the tallest palms,  
 Painting a picture far removed  
 From the rattle of sabre and arms.

And as we watch, our thoughts return  
 In fancy - so it seems  
 To Australia, land of trees and flowers,  
 Where golden sunlight streams.

No day goes by but what we think  
 Of the happy homes we miss,  
 Of friends and familiar faces,  
 Which we would like to kiss.

We think of all the pals we knew,  
 And haunts we used to go,  
 Of how we'd like to be there now,  
 Knowing what now we know.

We wonder if Melbourne's just the same,  
 Her streets so trim and neat,  
 Or if Young and Jacksons shifted  
 Up to Lonsdale Street.

We wonder if they still play 'ball  
 When Saturday comes around  
 And who will win the premiership  
 On good old Melbourne ground.

We think of all the fun we had  
 When to the Cup we went,  
 And walked dejected home again  
 When all our cash was spent.

But most of all we think of the day  
 When our job is truly done,  
 We turn our faces to the East  
 And greet the rising sun.

Bound for good Aussie soil,  
 The land that we adore,  
 And when we touch old Melbourne town,  
 From her we'll stray no more.

For it's only when you're far away,  
 And your thoughts begin to roam,  
 That you realise the wisdom of:  
 "There is no place like home."

- Sergeant F. A. Le Sueur, 8th Battery  
 (Frank died of illness and was buried at  
 GAZA War Cemetery.)



**RE-UNION LOCATION**  
**A.F. Convention centre**  
**4 Cromwell Road, South Yarra**  
**(See Melways)**  
**Vehicle access via Howitt Street.**

## JOHN HOWMAN, OF 9 BATTERY, TELLS WHY THE 2/3 A.A REGIMENT SAILED TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN DECEMBER 1940.

I had joined the 1st A.A. Regiment at Sydney in May, 1940, when the Germans ended the Phoney War. There were fears that the Japanese would enter the war also. It was decided to send some Ack Ack to Darwin, and two sections from 2 Battery sailed for Darwin on June 6th 1940, on board the "Orungal", which did the Darwin run during peace time.

We remained in Darwin until orders arrived in December for us to return to Sydney. The rumours had us arriving in Sydney and trans-shipping immediately to a convoy bound for the Middle East, with no leave allowed.

However, the Darwin wharfies decided to have a strike on some obscure matter, and our sailing was delayed. This meant that we would be too late to arrive in Sydney to join the convoy. Our Regiment not being up to full strength without us, was replaced by the 2/3 A.A. Regiment from Melbourne, and that was why the 2/3 A.A. Regiment sailed to the Middle East in December 1940.

## FROM A 1941 NEWSCUTTING A.A. CREW'S BRILLIANT RECORD

This war's most extraordinary anti-aircraft battery, and one that has destroyed enemy aircraft worth hundreds of thousands of pounds is described in a despatch received today at Army headquarters.

Cabled on Wednesday from Cairo by Lieut. Roy Macartney, of the Military History and Information Section in the Middle East, it says:-

"In addition to the recent announcement that R.A.A.F. had destroyed 140 enemy planes in Europe and the Middle East, may be added those shot down by an A.I.F. light anti-aircraft battery.

"Arriving in Palestine in January under Major P. W. Stokes, of Melbourne, the battery was sent into the Western Desert within a week. At Tobruk they captured a number of Italian 20 m.m. guns which they set in order and readjusted themselves. Moving on to Benghazi, they shot down their first machine, a low flying Dornier, on March 5.

"During the following months the battery, while covering the withdrawal to Tobruk, and during its siege, shot down another 23 enemy machines. In addition to these confirmed successes, 14 more were probably destroyed, 60 were badly damaged, and 100 hit.

'Their work is all the more magnificent when it is realised the battery was firing without sights on the Italian guns.

"They claim to be the most economical unit operating with the A.I.F. because, in addition to the captured Italian guns, they are using an almost limitless supply of Italian ammunition."

Gunner E. J. Courtney, of Melbourne, a member of this unusual battery, who was recently awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry during a dive-bombing attack on Tobruk, was the first Australian anti-aircraft gunner to be decorated during this war.

## OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE, THEY ONLY FADE AWAY.

There is nothing the matter with me,  
I'm as healthy as I can be.  
I have arthritis in my knees, and when I talk,  
I talk with a wheeze  
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,  
but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

Arch supports I have for my feet,  
or I wouldn't be able to be on the street,  
Sleep is denied me night after night,  
but every morning I find I'm all right.  
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,  
but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

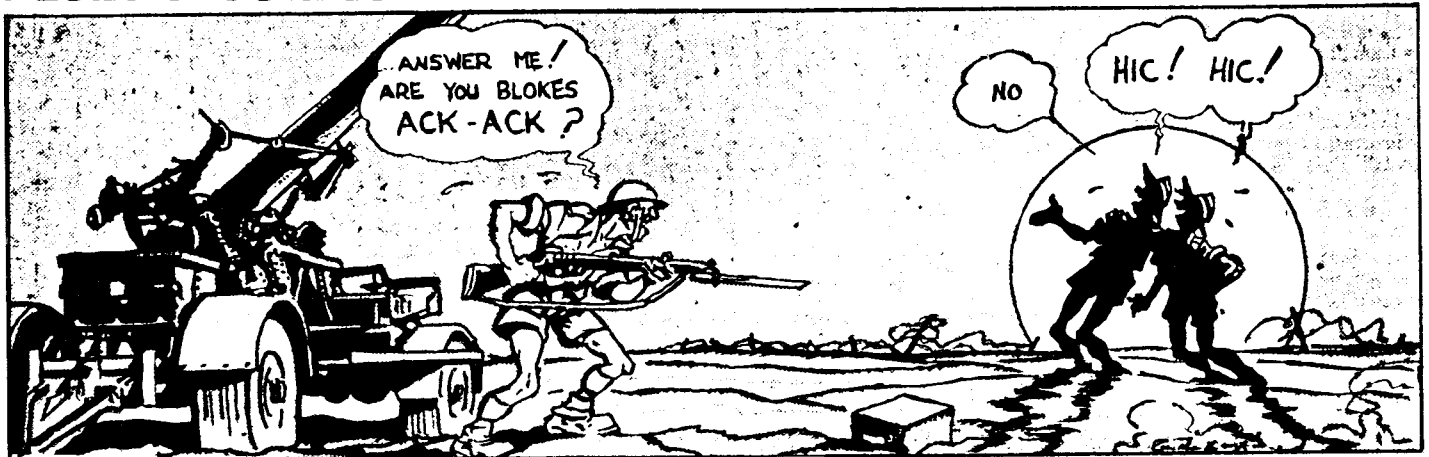
The moral is this as my tale I unfold -  
that for you and me who are growing old,  
It's better to say "I'm fine" with a grin,  
than to let folks know the shape that we are in.

How do I know that my youth is spent?  
Well, my "Get up and go" has got up and went.  
But I really don't mind when I think with a grin,  
of all the grand places my "Get up" has bin.

Old age is golden I've heard it said,  
but, sometimes I wonder as I get into bed,  
with my ears in the drawer, my teeth in a cup,  
my eyes on the table until I wake up.  
Ere sleep overtakes me, I say to myself,  
"Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf"?

I get up each morning and dust off my wits,  
and pick up the paper and read the "Obits",  
If my name is still missing I know I'm not dead,  
so I have a good breakfast and go back to bed.

## BLUEY & CURLEY



## WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

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

R.G. HARTLEY	RHQ
P.L. PAYNE	8
Ken SPENCE	9
Mick PREECE	9
K.O. GRIFFITHS	8
L.A. GRIFFITHS	8
David SYME	8
Alan MIDDLETON	8
John WILKINSON	9
Wally PARKINSON	Workshop
Norm KLIPPEL	7
Bill CRAIG	9
Vic. BOWEN	Workshop
Wal RULE	9
R.S. HILL	8
Doug HERD	9
Jack TINHAM	8

## BY THE WAY

Charles Kruger (8) had a major operation last year but with plenty of determination, in his old athletic style, came up at the 1990 re-union in good form.

Jim Bourke (8) now lives in Katamatite, Vic., since he retired some years ago from farming. Sadly, Jim lost his wife in January this year.

Bert Cox (8) had a bad turn with illness, but fought back and is in fairly good shape again.

Whereabouts, or what happened to Norm Littler? If you know, please contact Peter Jensen, 399 South Street, Samson, W.A., 6163, Tel. (09) 337 5767.

One of our men had occasion to visit another of our old gunners recently, by appointment. On arrival at his mate's place he found the gunner with his digger hat on, brim turned up neatly at the side, with his service rifle at the slope ready for action. After smartly presenting arms, they agreed that we 70 year olds should have been going to the Gulf War as we oldies had a shorter time span to risk losing than the young men!

What happened to the men transferred to:-  
109 A.A. Regiment, September 1942.  
121 Aust. Light A.A. Regiment, March 1943.  
235 Light A.A. Battery, October 1942  
Could anyone please let us have the stories?

## South Australian members of the Regiment!

There is a 2nd/2nd, 2nd/3rd A.A. Regiments Club (S.A.) If you wish to make contact, attend a re-union, or to march on Anzac day, get in touch with Jim Allen, 9 Strathspey Avenue, Hazlewood Park, S.A. 5066, (Tel. 379 1876).

Good to hear that Stan Baker (8) is still going strong - now living at Tweed Heads, NSW, and he may get to our re-union. Stan mentioned that Artie B. (Crash) Hillman is living at Bridgewater

(Vic). Bill hasn't been crash-hot lately, but we hope to see him at future re-unions also. Bill sold a two-stroke motor-bike to the gunner who used to let his girl-friend drive the bike while the gunner rode pillion. The gunner must have liked the position to take that risk.

**Tom Hill 7th Battery** died July 1990. At Tom's funeral at Yarra Junction on the 12th July, Roy East was asked to speak by the family. He referred to his long association with Tom from the day at Werrabee when Tom starred as full forward against Roy in a football match. Later, they shared experiences as P.O.W. and especially during the long winter forced-march before the advancing Russian forces - an association concluded at the graveside.

## INTERSTATE WIVES.

How many members of the Regiment met their wives as a result of the army service? Les Harris, who caught up with a former gun-crew member Laurie Brown (7 Bty) and his wife on a recent visit to Adelaide, was interested to learn that Laurie's romance blossomed when, on his return from the M.E., he was billeted at the home of Shirley's parents in Paradise. There were many more marriages in Perth of course, which accounts for our strong troop in that fair city.

## PERSISTENCE REWARDED

"BRNO (Brunn) was a Concentration Camp"  
(Take Post, March 1990)

AT the Ringwood RSL Clubrooms on June 13, 1990 Mr Roy East was presented with a cheque for \$10,000 by Brian Flynn, Deputy Commissioner of Veteran Affairs Department.

The cheque was compensation for illegal internment in a Nazi Concentration camp.

Roy East was a member of 7th Battery 2/3 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment when taken prisoner in Crete. That was the start of the remarkable story of Roy East's life for the next four years.

The "Concentration Camps Committee," reported: "That Mr Roy Edward Lander East is eligible to receive a non-taxable payment of \$10,000 as compensation for having been illegally interned in a Nazi Concentration camp during World War II and having been subjected to brutal treatment while in the Nazi Concentration camp.

"He was an Australian veteran of World War 2 in that he served in the Australian army. He was interned illegally at Brno, which was an aussenkommando of Auschwitz concentration camp. The Committee notes the advice of the International Tracing Service of the Red Cross that internment in an aussenkommando of a concentration camp should be treated as equivalent to internment in the concentration itself.

"From Mr East's medical records it is obvious that he suffered brutal treatment while in the Nazi concentration camp."

After the presentation Mr Brian Flynn, Mr Eric Crockett, members of Roy's family and friends joined Roy in a congratulatory drink. It is coincidence that Jack Delahunty, Ringwood RSL Vice President, was a member of the same Regiment as Roy, fortunately as a member of the 9th Battery and not the 7th Battery, that suffered such heavy casualties and in excess of 100 prisoners-of-war taken during the campaign in Crete.

## 6th Australian Division, 50th Anniversary Tour of Greece and Crete, May 1991.

This 20 day tour will cost about \$3,950 per person and the cost will cover airfares, hotels and most meals. If you are interested, contact the tour operators, Allsun Holidays - Olympic Airtours, Toll Free Telephone 008 227 472. Extensions to the holiday can be arranged.

## Memorabilia

The Director of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, requests veterans of the campaigns in Greece and Crete to forward to him any souvenirs, photographs, diaries or other memorabilia so that the stories of the campaigns can be shown adequately to the people of Australia now and in the future. Anyone who is interested in donating material should contact the AWM direct or obtain a form from the Secretary, Cec. Rae.

The Royal Australian Artillery Association is seeking donations of material for a museum of artillery memorabilia. Please send material to the RAA Association, Artillery Depot, Batman Avenue, East Melbourne, 3002, with a description of where the item came from.

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

### BEIRUT

John Howman and mates were sited at the end of the breakwater on Beirut harbour. Beirut had been declared an "Open City". The weather was warm and they went for a swim which was only possible if the large areas of oil floating on the surface were avoided. Suddenly, a snake's head appeared out of the water. They made a dash for the rocks through oil regardless, and from this point of safety looked back finding that the rest of the snakes body had surfaced - It was a large turtle!

### BETTER TO BE BORN LUCKY THAN RICH.

Lieutenant Fitzhardinge when in a forward position in the Western Desert was awakened in time to scramble from his valise and take cover as an enemy plane sneaked in at dawn and strafed his position. On examination, Bill found cannon shell had scored a direct hit on his still warm valise. (What comfort - a valise!)

At Lae, Japanese aircraft would glide in at night to bomb the area. The first warning would come when the plane's engine came to life. This meant take cover quickly because bombs were already on the way. Gunner McClintock was too slow in moving to cover and realised he couldn't make it for bombs were already exploding nearby. So he dropped to the ground as a "daisy-cutter" detonated right beside him. Unbelievably, he was unscratched.

## INTELLIGENCE FROM BENDIGO.

In the Obituary column of Take Post last year, Geoff Manning's name appeared. Geoff was killed at Maleme, Crete, on 20th May, 1941. His widow, Jean, left Australia after the War and following a career as a graphic artist, settled at Majorca in the Balearic Islands off Spain. After living there for thirty years, she returned to Australia a couple of years ago and met Les Harris through Legacy. As Jean eventually settled at Castlemaine, Les contacted Dave Humphreys, who with his wife Helen, has been

keeping in touch with her. Jean was on the John Jost Show a year or so ago. It was learned that Jean and some other student artists painted the original murals in the Florentino in the late thirties.

Harold Dickenson's (7) widow Margaret, who lives at Bermagui now, sent Dave Humphreys photos, including one of particular interest, being Dave's old gunsite on Maleme.

Tom Baker-Williams (7), a school friend of the late Jim Grice (8) and who was captured in Crete, is now a successful dairy farmer at Lockington. Sadly, Tom lost his wife Joyce last year. he has two daughters in Melbourne and is a proud grandfather.

Bob Marmion, the leader of the Bendigo group which is working on the Bofors project, reports that the parts they have been waiting on have arrived from Sydney and they progress; but a strange situation has arisen. It appears that a collector of firearms at Kyneton was interviewed by the police who found amongst the collection a Bofors! The police say it is a machine gun. Argument against this is, because it is over .5 calibre, it is "ordnance". Hopefully, it will be resolved sensibly in time; but evidently it is causing a stir in collector's circles.

## TOP HATS IN TOBRUK.

Doug Simson sent in the book - "Top Hats in Tobruk" - which is virtually the personal diary of Lieutenant Kenneth Rankin who was in charge of a Troop of the British 51st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment's gunners using 3.7 inch guns during the Siege of Tobruk.

The "Top Hat" was the insignia of the Battery, painted on its guns and trucks, a relic of the early days of the war when it was stationed in Hyde Park in the West End of London. Whilst there were many similar experiences to those of our 8th Battery, such as the difficulties with sandstorms, wind, heat, dust, flies, fleas, and enemy action, there were also interesting differences.

Including other sites, Lieutenant Rankin's four-gun site was directly attacked by Stukas on the 27th April, 1941. It appears that the gunners took cover as well as they could. The site was heavily bombed, with the result that several gunners were killed, the total casualties being 25. This incident prompted the order to all anti-aircraft gunners in Tobruk to the effect that guns had to be kept firing regardless of the intensity of direct attack. This policy proved worthwhile as no such heavy casualties occurred again in gunsites during the Siege.

Kenneth Rankin tells of frequent nerve trouble with the British gunners. They were involved in far more night work than our men, causing continuous sleepless nights. Being nearer the harbour, they suffered more frequent bombing. However, they did not incur anything like the shellfire from enemy artillery as did our men who were protecting field artillery.

The author was critical of several of their officers who could have improved their performance. Rankin himself was a Christian Scientist and received comfort from his studies and beliefs. The book has much more detail than "On Target", reporting on almost every air raid. He had a high regard for Australian soldiers. His troops seemed to fare food-wise better than us, at times having good access to the food dump!

He sighted many more British planes during the Siege than we ever did. Perhaps he was nearer the perimeter or coast than we were, as many of the British planes were noted as passing by one way or the other.

It is a fine book for anyone with an interest in the life of an anti-aircraft gunner.