



# 105<sup>th</sup> Battery

Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

a concise history



*Arthur Burke*

*Original 2005 Revised 2023*

## Preface

This booklet is a guide for all ranks of today's 105<sup>th</sup> Battery RAA to enable them to assimilate more easily the magnificent traditions and spirit of the unit which proudly acknowledges a lineage from 1916. It was written in 2005, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 105's reraising for active service in Malaya in 1955.

The origin of the unit was in Egypt on 8 March 1916 during the 'doubling of the AIF'. While the lineage was broken following the Great War, WW1, since that time, many changes, reorganisations and redesignations have taken place; but the spirit of the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery which began in the Great War was maintained between the wars, and during the Malaya and the Vietnam conflicts where it was 'dubbed' the Tiger Battery. It remains in the hearts of those who served in 105<sup>th</sup> Battery wherever and however it deployed.

The original 2005 edition author, Arthur Burke OAM (dec'd) was the Honorary Historian of the 105<sup>th</sup> from 1980 until his passing in January 2019. He served in 105<sup>th</sup> Battery as GPO in Vietnam in 1969-70, and then as Battery Commander in 1976-77. This booklet consists of a lineage overview, a concise history, and notes on the Meritorious Unit Commendations, Tom Simpson Memorial, the Ken Bade Room, 105<sup>th</sup> Battery RAA Association Inc, and a listing of former BCs and BSMs. To assist readers' understanding of the plethora of abbreviations used to condense this booklet, a list can be found at its end.

This work does not purport to be anything other than an aide-memoire. It is narrative, more so a ready reference to events and dates of import in the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery's history. As such, if quoting from it, one should be conscious that sources have not been acknowledged. Reference to this publication should be cited on any extracts as *"105<sup>th</sup> Battery RAA—a concise history Rev 3 2024"*.

The printing of the original booklet was made possible by a generous grant from the ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland.

Publications such as this must be dynamic to endure. As such, the original publication has been updated to include deployments of 105<sup>th</sup> Battery as a unit, sun-unit, including to Afghanistan and to domestic operations in civil emergencies to 2022.

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and the current unit logo with Citations

## Foreword

There have always been historical records kept by the 105<sup>th</sup> Batteries but little had been collated on the actual history of the unit itself until an article on the battery's history was published in an early edition of the DRA's Liaison Letter (now RAA Liaison Letter), and led subsequently the production of this Concise History.

The 2005 version 1 of 105th Battery Concise History Booklet was updated in 2022 (Revision 2) and again (Revision 3) in 2023 to memorialise the Battery's continuous service to Australia, and to include the Tiger Battery's service in East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq, on domestic operations in civil emergencies, and advanced operational training.

The late Arthur Burke has done a remarkable job to capture the rich history of the Battery in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, and it is the responsibility of 105<sup>th</sup> Battery – the Tiger Battery as current serving members to ensure that is updated further consistent with the ongoing service of the 105<sup>th</sup>, the Tiger Battery.

Readers are invited to offer further amendments to this History from the Gunners who have served or currently serve.

Suggestions for improvement(s) are also welcome, particularly on the structure and content.

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# Lineage Overview

<i>Year</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1916	105 <sup>th</sup> Howitzer Battery	2 Div, Egypt—France 5 AFAB
	9	
1919	9	End of war demobilisation
1921	105 <sup>th</sup> Battery (Howitzer)	V AFAB, Brisbane
	9	
1940	9	Disbanded in WW2 reorg
1955	105 <sup>th</sup> Field Battery	28 Comwel Bde, Malaya
	9	
1958	9	1 Fd Regt, Holsworthy
	9	
1960	9	4 Fd Regt, Brisbane
	9	
1965	9	173 US AB Bde, Vietnam
	9	
1966	9	1 Fd Regt, Brisbane
	9	
1969	9	1 Fd Regt, Vietnam
	9	
1970	9	1 Fd Regt, Brisbane
	9	
1991	(Awarded MUC)	for Vietnam service 1965–66
	9	
1999	9	Elements to East Timor
	9	
2005	105 <sup>th</sup> Medium Battery	1 Fd Regt, Brisbane
2009	105 <sup>th</sup> Battery	1 <sup>st</sup> Regt RAA Brisbane

**This publication is dedicated to all members of the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery at any time for their service given to our nation in peace and war.**

On 1 July 2005, the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its re-raising for active service in the Malayan Emergency. On that day, it was officially re-raised and rolled as a medium howitzer battery. On 8 March 2006, the 105<sup>th</sup> Medium Battery will recognise that 90 years ago, it first joined the Australian Army's order of battle as a fledgling howitzer battery in Egypt.

## **The Great War 1916–1919**

The proclamation of war on 3 August 1914 and the raising of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division Australian Imperial Force (AIF) denuded militia artillery units in Australia. The Force's expansion to form 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in Egypt lacked artillery—this was formed in Australia and its arrival in the Middle East increased artillery units (brigades) to six, each of three by four 18-Pdr gun batteries. By the end of February 1916, the AIF had doubled again and there were now 26 field batteries. The four Australian divisions were then brought up to the new British Army establishment on the Western Front in France—three brigades each of four field batteries and one brigade of four 4.5-in howitzers per division. The nine Australian batteries which had supported the ANZACs at Gallipoli thus grew to 64 within three months.

At Moascar near Ismalia on the Suez Canal, the 104<sup>th</sup>, 105<sup>th</sup> and 106<sup>th</sup> Howitzer Batteries received their first troops on 8 March 1916 and became the 22<sup>nd</sup> Howitzer Brigade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Artillery. It was a humble beginning. The military historian CEW Bean describes how the men came from 'ammunition columns and elsewhere' but despite this, within a fortnight the 105<sup>th</sup> embarked at Alexandria for Marseilles in France.

Following an 800-km train journey across France to Le Havre on the west coast, the 105<sup>th</sup> received four new 4.5-in howitzers and stores waggons from the huge British ordnance depots. With little time for training, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade was moved almost 250 km north-east to Fleurbaix in the Armentieres area on the French-Belgium border and on 10 April—less than five weeks after being formed—105 How Bty took over British gun positions in the front line. Historian C E W Bean records that the Royal Artillery left their old, worn guns in situ for the 105<sup>th</sup> and took over its brand-new guns in lieu! Tactically, the battery provided depth support for the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Artillery Brigade (AFAB) until relieved by 106 How Bty on 29 April. It then supported 5 AFAB.

Another reorganisation which affected the battery took place on 11 May 1916. The Army's howitzer brigades were disbanded and each howitzer battery replaced the fourth field battery in the field brigades. The displaced batteries were regrouped to form additional field brigades. The 105<sup>th</sup> joined the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Field (18-Pdr) Batteries as the fourth sub-unit of 5 AFAB and remained with that parent unit for the rest of the Great War.

An early 'kill' for the 105<sup>th</sup> occurred near L'Armee (3 km north-east of Fleurbaix) at 1230 hours on 20 June when two guns of a 5.9-in battery were hit using cross bearings from two of the battery's observers. Life for the 105<sup>th</sup> and its brigade began to follow a four-week cycle, spending approximately three weeks in the line then the next resting, refurbishing and retraining. Any spare time was occupied with sport, Australian Rules football being the most popular followed by cricket.

In support of the great Battle of the Somme to relieve the French at Verdun, the 105<sup>th</sup> was redeployed by rail some 80 km south to Amiens and then 45 km north-east into the line behind Pozieres on 27 July. The successes of the initial assaults resulted in heavy German bombardments on the Australian artillery units. Gnr J C Ewan constantly exposed himself to enemy fire to mend and keep communication lines open. For this gallantry and self-sacrifice, he was awarded the Military Medal and promoted to bombardier. On 21 August 1916, Lt L R Blake, though slightly wounded, completed a survey of the frontline trenches and provided invaluable information on which ground was held by the Australians. He was later awarded the Military Cross for this excellent work. [Blake was a geological surveyor from Brisbane and had been a member of Sir Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expedition. Sadly, he died on 3 October 1918 from wounds sustained during the attacks on the Hindenburg Line.]

The unit returned to the Ypres area in Flanders in September, but went back to the Somme in the Albert area (10 km south-west of Pozieres) in October 1916. A bitter winter set in and the mud and cold were almost unbearable. Gas warfare added to the misery of high explosive counter battery shelling of the gun positions. The Germans began to retreat to the Hindenburg Line in March 1917 and the 105<sup>th</sup> advanced north-east into the Bapaume area. On 8 March, the 105<sup>th</sup> fired 1000 rounds at the intense rate to cut the wire of the enemy's obstacles on the Grevillian Line (just west of Bapaume). This proved so successful that 500 rounds per day were allocated to the howitzer batteries for wire cutting. On 17 March at Bullecourt, 105 signals' Sgt J C Ewan MM took command of his battery's redeploying guns after all the officers had been wounded and many other casualties sustained by heavy shell fire, and was able to bring the guns into action. For this conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. [Ewan was later commissioned and received the Military Cross in August 1918. He was repatriated with wounds in October 1918, but served as a major in the Second World War. He was one of only six members of the First AIF to receive the rare combination of MC, DCM and MM.]

Another establishment change increased the battery from four to six guns on 3 April 1917, just before the Spring offensive. The attack on the Hindenburg Line commenced eight days later with the 105<sup>th</sup> area of responsibility primarily around Bullecourt (10 km north of Bapaume). Calls for fire were heavy and counter-battery shelling by the enemy increased. On 29 May 1917, a very tired 105<sup>th</sup> Battery was

brought out of the line for five weeks of rest, leave, equipment maintenance, training and divisional shooting. Refreshed and reinforced, the battery was then ordered to the Ypres area in Belgium—a 100-km road move which was completed on 20 July.

The Allied Spring 1917 offensives (Third Battle of Ypres) then led the 105<sup>th</sup> eastwards via Hill 60 on 31 July to the Decauville Tramway and Bellewarde Lake (near the Ypres-Menin Road) by 9 September. Counter-battery fire had been extremely heavy during this period and some guns in the brigade had been destroyed by direct hits. By the end of September advances were through heavy mud and one of the 105<sup>th</sup>'s guns was bogged over its axles. Mud and duckboards were the order of the day near Hellfire Corner in November and it was not until the 21<sup>st</sup> of that month that the 105<sup>th</sup> came out of the line for refitting, reinforcement and sport with the rest of its 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade. This five-month battle had only achieved an eight-kilometre advance.

A move back into the line near Armentieres on 21 December 1917 provided the 105<sup>th</sup> with the best environment experienced in 17 months—good billets, well-drained gun positions and firm roads everywhere, despite frosts and heavy ice. The end of the year brought increased shelling of the 105<sup>th</sup> and this continued into the new year—some 400 rounds were fired at the battery on 4 January. Air OPs were then successfully used to direct retaliatory fire onto the enemy. A period of great mobility now ensued as artillery was constantly redeployed rapidly to oppose the German's 'Fight to the Finish' March 1918 offensive in Flanders. The six-gun battery organisation was too clumsy for this type of warfare and it was necessary to leave a section behind on most occasions, thus effectively reverting to a four-gun establishment.

In early April the 105<sup>th</sup> entrained back to the Somme—at first to the Albert area and then to Villers Bretonneux in July. Casualties were now sustained not only from counter-battery fire and gas, but also from enemy bombing. Ammunition expenditure increased—the 105<sup>th</sup> fired 2000 rounds with a high percentage of gas on 28 July, four days of dumping preceded the Australian Corps attack on 8 August, and daily expenditure averaged 1200 rounds during the crossing of the Somme later that month. The artillery signallers laid line close behind the successfully advancing infantry and so optimised fire support to maintain the momentum.

After a brief break in early September 1918, the 105<sup>th</sup> came under command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division Artillery near Peronne (32 km east-north-east of Villers Bretonneux) for the assault on the Hindenburg Line. The unit returned to under 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in early October and the momentum of the advance continued. It was 20 October before the fatigued 105<sup>th</sup> was pulled out of the line to Buire (south-west of Albert). All Australian artillery units were in a tired state from constantly being required to compensate with firepower for the depleted numbers of infantry. The 105<sup>th</sup> was still recuperating at Peronne when the Armistice was signed. The War Diary sums up the atmosphere: 'After all these many weary months, the news was

hard to understand and take in, and probably the silence of the men generally expressed a stronger and heartier thankfulness than wilder jubilation would have done.'

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Artillery marched 85 km to Thuin in southern Belgium, arriving on 20 December at their best ever billets and the most hospitable villagers. It snowed Christmas Day but the fresh meat, 15 barrels of beer and a gift for every man brought home that the war had finally ended. On a 2 Div Arty parade on 27 December, HRH The Prince of Wales presented medals which included Military Medals for three 105 Bty members: Sgt J C Smith, Bdr C G Clark and Cpl C W Nevill. The battery's Centre Section Dance in their billet on 6 January was brought to a sudden end when the floor gave way. Race meetings became the order of the day during January with 105's Haricut Team winning the teams event in the 2 Div Race Meeting at Bomerece.

On 28 February 1919, the 105th Howitzer Battery handed in its guns to the ordnance system. Farewell dinners were held before each draft departed, and the battery account was finally settled with the supply system on 29 March. The last member of the 105<sup>th</sup> departed for embarkation to Australia on 30 March 1919 and the battery was demobilised.

## **Between the Wars 1921–1940**

When the citizen army was remodelled in 1921 so that, in framework it reproduced the First AIF, the 105<sup>th</sup> Howitzer Battery took its former position beside the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Field Batteries of 5 AFAB. (The establishment restricted 15<sup>th</sup> Field Battery.) The brigade was based at Kelvin Grove Barracks on the northern edge of Brisbane's central business district. Maj C V (Charles) Rees MC was appointed battery commander (BC) of the 105<sup>th</sup> on 1 November 1921.

Manpower was restricted to 25 percent of the war strength but the continuation of the Universal Military Training scheme provided recruits. Sufficient ardent spirits from the AIF volunteered to provide a strong cadre of officers, warrant officers and senior NCOs for the reformed battery. The 105<sup>th</sup> was eventually issued with two 4.5-in howitzers which the AIF had brought home from France.

Paid training was on the meagre scale of one six-day camp at Enoggera and four days at Kelvin Grove per year. Units were assessed during their six-day annual camps by the Artillery Schools of Instruction. The 105th's camps were combined with their sister howitzer battery, the 111<sup>th</sup> from 11 AFAB which was also based at Kelvin Grove.

To be effective, a keen officer had to be willing to devote all his leisure time to this exacting 'hobby'. One such enthusiast, Maj F N V (Frank) Williams, an AIF infantry officer was appointed an AFA lieutenant in 105 Bty on 1 November 1921. By 1924 he had become the BC as a lieutenant, was promoted captain in 1926, major



in 1930 and awarded the Efficiency Decoration (ED) in 1936. He remained with the battery till transferring to the Reserve of Officers in 1939. The brigade's regular staff of one major, one captain, two WO2 (Australian Instructional Corps—AIC) and a few rank-and-file were also very keen to maintain the standards of the artillery. WO2 (AIC) Ted Thorne was the devoted instructor in the howitzer battery.

In 1924, the Government introduced a five-year defence programme and whilst there were modest improvements within the field army, there were few new equipment or training day increases for artillery. The election of Scullin's Labor Government in 1929 suspended compulsory service and introduced a voluntary scheme. The militiamen were paid for eight days training in camp and eight days home training at Kelvin Grove. The establishment was increased to approximately half the war strength and two more howitzers brought 105's armaments to four.

Two camps were conducted in 1930, the first at Enoggera in April and the second at Lytton in June. The March 1931 camp was held at Bellevue Station, Cominya near Ipswich. Horses were in short supply but a local patriot, Mr Lord lent some to the battery. Unfortunately, these animals had not been ridden for some time and it took two detachment commanders, Sgt Don Kerr and Bdr Ted Allinson many weary hours to reconvert them to suitable mounts and team horses. [Kerr was commissioned and became the gun position officer of the 105<sup>th</sup>, in 1957 commander of the Artillery Group Royal Artillery Northern Command, and finally the CMF member of the Military Board, Maj Gen D R Kerr CBE ED.]

The Great Depression and a further change of government in 1932 brought no budget improvement so the 1932 and 1933 camps were restricted to Lytton. The brigade held a technical course at Rosewood in June 1934. To save travelling time and man-(and horse-) power, a commercial truck contractor, Luya Julius was engaged to transport the guns to the bivouac site. The course was most successful and visitors impressed by the standards included the Commander 1<sup>st</sup> Military District, Brig Ralph and the CRA 5 Div, Brig C V Moriarty.

The battery trekked 80 km west to Franklyn Vale station at Mount Walker in September 1934 where a new artillery range was opened by the Assistant Minister for Defence, Mr J Francis. A joint 105<sup>th</sup>/111<sup>th</sup> camp was established in what Don Kerr described as 'a sylvan spot beside the Bremer River'. By the end of the camp, some 200 rounds had been fired and Kerr recalled that they 'came close to the standard of seasoned artillerymen'. The firing was controlled by Maj Williams from a dugout OP and was conducted under the watchful eye of Instructor in Gunnery, Maj J H Russell.

In acknowledgement of the gunner citizen forces' contribution to national defence, the title of Royal Australian Artillery was granted to the militia on 31 January 1936. The battery's parent unit was retitled 5<sup>th</sup> Field Brigade RAA (Militia).

The annual activity in 1937 was known as a Drivers' Camp. Concentrated

equitation and driving training was held at the Rosewood Showground and the concluding shoot was conducted at Mt Walker.

The modernisation of the military forces began as the nation arose from the Great Depression. The 1938 camp saw 14 Bty's guns towed by Fordson tractors and the remainder of the unit was horsed. This was termed a Gunners' Camp. The first attempt at full mechanisation came on the weekend of 2–3 September 1939 when the brigade bivouacked at Fraser's Paddock, Enoggera. The guns were towed by vehicles hired from local carriers, Jackson & Spring. These were flat-topped three-ton lorries and the draught pole of each limber was passed between the vehicle tray and the chassis, then lashed into position with rope. A motley collection of Fowler's Rent-a- Car utilities and members' motor cycles and family cars delivered the battery staff.

After the Munich crisis in 1938 and the ensuing recruiting drive by Prime Minister Hughes and Defence chief Blamey, the battery was brought up to its war strength with volunteer enlistees. The calling out of the Citizens Military Forces (CMF) in September 1939 led to Maj Williams (now 54 years of age) being transferred to the Reserve of Officers. Lt M J C (Cyril) Cahill assumed command on return from a gunnery course at Puckapunyal just before the October 1939 camp. He had brought the latest gun drill book back from the course and after his sister had typed it out on duplicating masters, he had it reproduced. Cahill covered the reproduction costs by selling the manual at three pence (cents) per copy. A very high standard of gunnery was attained at this camp.

In 1939 the Caloundra Range was established on a beach 100 km north of Brisbane. Marmon-Herrington gun tractors were issued for the brigade's four-week long October camp. Because the guns still had iron wheels and wood spokes, they were railed to Palmwoods, collected by the Marmons and towed at a maximum of 20 kph to Caloundra. Each 10 km, the column halted and the gun and limber axles had to be regreased. The battery staff arrived in comparative style in rented utilities and cars.

The 105<sup>th</sup> commenced full-time duty in March 1940. The battery was issued with its own motor vehicles and after three months, the teething troubles of conversion had disappeared. The Buderim and Maleny countryside resounded with the sounds of the battery's manoeuvres. Smoke ammunition became available and the first Australian 4.5-in smoke shoot since World War 1 was fired by the 105<sup>th</sup>.

The battery was supporting infantry brigade manoeuvres at Haigslea near Ipswich in late 1940 when news of the wartime reorganisation of artillery brigades to field regiments each of only three field batteries was received. The spirit and the standards of the 105<sup>th</sup> were as high as they had ever been. It had just won the annual sub-section competition among all the Brisbane artillery batteries and the 1888 Silver Trumpet Trophy once more belonged to the 105<sup>th</sup>.

In December 1940, 105<sup>th</sup> Battery (Howitzer) was disbanded. Most of the

men in the battery joined the Second AIF, including a number who went to the 2/10<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment and became prisoners of war in Malaya. Others were absorbed into the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment (7<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery) whilst BC Cahill became CO and took his BSM and several other SNCOs to the 1<sup>st</sup> (later 101<sup>st</sup>) Anti-Tank Regiment (home service in North Queensland). The remainder moved to the sister field batteries of 5<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RAA and saw home service in the Brisbane Line and Townsville. Thus, the lineage of the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery ceased during the Second World War.

## **Post Second World War 1947–1954**

The Army Post-War Plan was approved by Cabinet in 1947 and enlistment for the post-war CMF began in July 1948. This plan did not allow for a 105<sup>th</sup> Battery but the other permanent and militia artillery forces became one Regiment, the Royal Australian Artillery on 15 September 1949.

When the North Korean People's Army invaded the Republic of Korea on 25 June 1950, the Government instituted a National Service Training Scheme of compulsory service for all 18-year-olds, and committed elements of the three Defence services to the United Nations forces in Korea. Ground forces comprised one infantry battalion. The 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RNZA equipped with 25-Pdrs was provided by New Zealand. Until the Armistice became effective in July 1953, Australian artillery officers served in infantry and staff appointments, as Air OP pilots and a very few in artillery appointments.

## **Malaya 1955–1957**

Freed from commitments to the Korean War by 1954, Australia joined the newly-formed South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and agreed to the establishment of a British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR) in Malaya. Talks with the British led to the creation of an integrated 28<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group which included an Australian infantry battalion and an RAA field battery.

Gunners of all ranks began assembling at George's Heights on Middle Head, Sydney in April 1955. Not original perhaps, but this was 'M' (for Malaya) Battery being raised for active service in the Malayan Emergency. Within the RAA, all regular and independent batteries were renumbered sequentially from 100 (A)—similar to the Great War's howitzer batteries. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1955 at Old Holsworthy, 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery was raised from the members of 'M' Battery.

Initially, the two main aims of BC Maj B L (Bruce) Bogle were: to procure copies of the new establishment and equipment tables to bring the 105<sup>th</sup> up to the manpower and equipment levels required for active service overseas; and to weld the incoming gunners into a professional team before departing Australia. Training commenced in earnest with loan stores until the battery's equipment was issued on 26

August.

July saw the 105<sup>th</sup> on its first major ceremonial parade when they provided a Guard of Honour at Mascot Airport for General Sir Gerald Templar, Chief of the British Imperial General Staff and a former commander of the British Forces Malaya.

Additional personnel were marched-in from 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment in anticipation of the arrival of the new establishment table. However, the advance party had already embarked on 1 September and arrived in Malaya before the establishment was finally received on 20 September. Eight 25-Pdr guns were drawn from 2<sup>nd</sup> Base Ordnance Depot on 29 September, cleaned and made ready for shipping at Georges Heights. The battery was ready to depart. Key appointments included:

BC - Maj B L Bogle

BK - Capt R J A A Riddle

CPO - Lt P T F Gowans

ACPO - 2Lt C A Cunningham

BSM - WO2 A T Hook

BQMS - WO2 P H B Pritchard

ASM - WO2 L Hildabrandt

A Tp Comd - Capt G M Salom

B Tp Comd - Capt R A Sunderland

A Tp GPO - Lt J M McNeil

A Tp Ldr - Lt G F B Rickards

A Tp TSM - WO2 R R Matthews

B Tp GPO - Lt R H Kennedy

B Tp Ldr - 2Lt R Medcalf

(replaced by 2Lt K F Towning)

B Tp TSM - WO2 F A Pellatt

On 6 October 1955, 105 Fd Bty embarked on the Cunard Star Liner MV *Georgic* and sailed at 1230 hrs to become the first Australian artillery unit to serve on active duty overseas since World War 2. A gunner stowed away but was discovered and put ashore with the pilot on Thursday Island. The BC was also officer-in-charge of the ship's troops and kept the soldiers busy with courses of rigorous exercises, lessons in Malay and lectures on Malayan conditions and ATOM (British doctrine—Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya). Two-up schools, crown and anchor and poker were banned (or at least driven below decks), but whist or bridge for small stakes was allowed. Capt Ray Sunderland was the ship's adjutant and recalls the problems of segregation of soldiers from the rather high number of female ship's stewards, some of whom were keen to make their favours available to the men who were 'off to war'.

The *Georgic* arrived at Penang on 19 October and the battery disembarked next day and proceeded to Butterworth. The members were temporarily accommodated in tents and watched the Australian camp, later to be named Quebec Lines, grow up around them. In true British tradition, the officers' basha huts were the first to be completed, followed by the officers' mess. It was 7 November before the first training commenced and by 28 December there had been nine changes, cancellations or postponements of moves for the guns to commence live firing, mostly due to the Australian government's reluctance to commit troops to operations.

The families of British troops were occupying the only quarters available at Penang. Their arrival was based on a strict point priority system administered by the

British and they were called forward as accommodation became available. The first Australian families arrived on 24 January. Officers' families were temporarily accommodated in the luxury E&O Hotel in Penang whilst the other ranks' families were housed in the Runnymede Hotel Officers' Hostel. Eventually a new all ranks married quarter area was constructed for the Australians between Georgetown and the Penang Swimming Club. These quarters were named the Garden Estate, Tanjong Token.

The battery's base was Quebec Lines, Butterworth and here the headquarters remained. On 1 January 1956, A Tp deployed 105 km south-east to Salak North in Perak state and provided support to the Malay 1<sup>st</sup> Federation Infantry Brigade. On the same day, B Tp deployed 37 km east to Dublin Estate in Kedah state in support of 2 RAR. The troops were accommodated in rubber tappers' quarters on the plantation. At 1900 hrs, the BC at last fired the first round from BDR R Nevin's gun to initiate the 105th's participation in the Malayan Emergency. Neil Smith in his 1989 publication *Mostly Unsung* cites the harassing fire which followed against Communist Terrorist (CT) units Kulim № 2 and 4 as 'the first Australian Army unit into action' for the Malayan campaign. This is supported in 'Australian Guns Open Fire in Malaya', an article in the *Age*, Melbourne, 20 January 1956.

The basic tasks were predicted harassing fire on suspected CT locations by day and night, and engaging CT cultivations with concentrations using air and ground observers. Other tasks included food denial checks, local patrols, internal security operations and tactical reserves for operations in an infantry role. An example of this last task was Capt Ray Sunderland leading patrols to determine the effectiveness of air strikes on CT camps. The majority of gun positions were generally within 30 km of the initial operational bases. Most of the firing was from roving gun positions which were occupied from 12 hours to two days. Such deployments were usually section or single gun affairs from which about 100 rounds per gun were fired.

Dhoby (washing) and char (tea-making) wallahs (locals) were attached to each troop. These mainly Indian gentlemen also did laundry under contract and sold everything from a razor blade to a negligee. The British ration scale allowed for tins of 50 cigarettes from the Lord Nuffield Foundation. Battery members also had their share of brushes with other locals—animals. It is told that two unnamed gunners allowed two net-wielding natives to capture a tiger (obviously off its guard). The soldiers had hoped to use it for a battery mascot but their idea was howled down by authority. Then there was the story of the B Tp pig mascot, Digger which had been held at Tanah Hitam since it was a piglet.

One of the few times during which the battery shot as a single fire unit was during its initial calibration at Port Dickson in Negri Sembilan in January 1956. Another was in February 1956 when B Tp joined with A Tp and battery targets were fired at CT villages in support of 2 RAR operations.

Local leave was allowed in the nearest sizeable town when operations permitted. Married and accompanied men were granted four days stand-down per

month and were normally moved via the signals delivery service vehicle for two days each fortnight. Annual recreational leave was taken twice per year which meant that up to ten men per troop were always absent on leave. Favourite Malayan leave centres were the Union Jack Club and Sandy's Soldiers' Home in Singapore, the Sandcroft Leave Centre in Penang and Camp Butterworth.

During September 1956, a severe tropical storm almost totally destroyed the B Tp base camp at Tanah Hitam. This camp had originally been built for the Police Field Force and was quite substantial, certainly better than the basha huts at Butterworth. However, it was no match for the fierce tropical elements at that time.

Both troops returned to Butterworth for rest and retraining during December 1956. They acquitted themselves well during the annual administration inspection by the brigade commander and his staff and ended the year with a swimming carnival, children's Christmas party, a unit dinner at the Runnymede Hotel in Penang and the officers served the other ranks Christmas luncheon in barracks. The troops returned to operations in January 1957: A Tp in support of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Lincolnshire Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Royal Malay Regiment and 2 RAR; and B Tp in support 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers and various other units. B Tp spent six weeks from early May providing internal security at Butterworth. Its final deployment was in support of operations on the Malay-Thai border.

There were numerous ceremonial occasions. The most spectacular was A Tp's procedure-perfect 101-gun salute to mark Malaya's independence from British rule (Merdeka Day) on 31 August 1957. This 101-gun salute is claimed as an RAA first by the 105<sup>th</sup>. In chronological order, others included: a 27-man guard for Remembrance Day 1956 when one gun fired a single round at the start and another at the finish of the two minutes' sacred silence; the novel British requirement for an Annual Administration Inspection parade on 6 December 1956; the 21-gun Queen's Birthday salute on 13 June 1957; and the salutes on 31 October 1956 for the Duke of Edinburgh who was en route to open the Olympic Games in Melbourne.

A Tp was withdrawn from operations on 7 August 1957 and B Tp joined them in Butterworth on 13 September. The battery had made a significant contribution to defeating the CT by driving them into corridors where they were ambushed by the supported infantry. The battery fired more than 88 000 rounds during its two-year tour of duty.

The only death for the period was Bdr D K Sutton who was killed in a civilian car accident on 1 August 1957. He was buried with full military honours in the Taiping Cemetery. On 28 September 1956 at the Bongsu Forest Reserve in South Kedah, six members of a B Tp gun commanded by Bdr Piggott were wounded from a bore premature. (Much of the ammunition fired in Malaya at this time had been recovered from former depots in Korea.) Bdr J K Maloney and Gunners L W Bolton, D M Cubillo, J B Muncaster, A Sawyer and J E Suthers all recovered but the gun was a write-off. One of the many vehicle accidents involved the A Tp Comd's Ferret Scout Car which overturned when only the driver, Gnr R W Finch was in the vehicle.

Lt Cunningham was the first to come upon the scene and, finding the driver in great pain, administered a morphine shot. Finch recovered.

Sgt Ray Niven was on a prisoner escort in Kuala Lumpur. He got drunk and broke into a Malay political minister's house. Discharged from the Army, Nevin was convicted in a Malaysian court and served a prison sentence.

Sickness and tropical disease took its toll. In addition to a few cases of VD, skin conditions and ulcers, WO2 Frank Pellatt became very sick with dengue fever.

The brigade commander thanked the 105<sup>th</sup> for its 'rapid and flexible support ... always given'. He also described the battery as 'the best administered unit' in the brigade group. The Commander Australian Army Force FARELF added a further accolade, 'the best Australian unit in FARELF'. Maj Bogle was Mentioned in Despatches for this most professional and dutiful service during the tour. WO2 F A Pellatt and WO2 P H B Pritchard received CIC FARELF Certificates for their meritorious endeavours.

All ranks of the relieving 100 (A) Field Battery were hosted to a welcoming buffet luncheon on 18 October and the 105<sup>th</sup> completed embarkation on the SS *New Australia* and sailed for home at 1700hrs on 19 October 1957. It arrived in Sydney and came under command of 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment RAA at Holsworthy on 31 October. The battery was stripped of most of its officers and this led to severe morale problems.

This tour of duty began a two-year cycle of Malayan service for the RAA which provided operational experience against the CT for all field batteries. Until October 1959, two troops of four 25-Pdrs were the major equipments, but a light scales' role thereafter added six 4.2 in mortars. When the Australian Gunners then joined 26<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RA in Terendak Camp, Malacca following the end of the Emergency in July 1960, they reorganised to a six-gun battery with two equipments. In 1962 the battery converted to 105-mm L5 Pack Howitzers as part of 26 Field's re- equipment programme.

**Borneo.** By the end of 1963 the fledgling nation of Malaysia was sustaining border incursions by Indonesians in the states of Sabah and Sarawak. The Australian field battery (102<sup>nd</sup>), now part of the 45<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RA was approved to take part in antiterrorist operations. It served in an infantry company role on the Thai-Malay border, fired as part of a graduated response against a mainland incursion near Terendak, and finally became a battery of single gun positions with 4<sup>th</sup> Light Regiment RA in western Sarawak. The Confrontation ended officially in August 1966 but Australia continued to maintain a field battery at Terendak and then Singapore from 1969.

## Holsworthy 1957–1960

The late 1950s saw a change in defence emphasis from that based on a CMF manned predominantly by National Servicemen to a mobile Regular brigade group capable of deploying to South-East Asia, and finally in 1959, the abolition of National Service, an increase in CMF volunteers and an increase in the ARA brigade group.

Major R M C (Dick) Cubis assumed command of 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery on 16

December 1957 and, impressed by the battery's recent active service record, set about perpetuating the Malaya 'first'. Gnr K (Ken) Murphy recalls being given 'a small piece of blue felt with this equally small cut out from a [Malayan] Tiger Beer label to work off' . . . and the legendary 'Pissin Pussy' tiger in front of the palm tree was born. The BC had hundreds of transfers manufactured (at his own expense) and with immense pride emblazoned 105's vehicles, guns and buildings with this emblem. However, he had not cleared this logo with the CO of 1 Fd Regt, Lt Col E J H Howard who initially ordered its removal. Maj Cubis' silver tongue eventually persuaded the CO to progress an application for this emblem and the 105<sup>th</sup> became the first modern battery in the RAA to receive approval for a logo. Cubis was also responsible for the introduction of pennants flown from vehicle radio aerials on ceremonial mounted parades.

The official description of the battery emblem (refer cover for image) is a tiger under a palm tree surmounting a black boomerang, all on a sky-blue background. The tiger is claimed to be symbolic of the ferocity of the artillery harassing fire which delivered its lethal payload without warning and struck terror into the heart of many a CT. The boomerang represented a traditional Australian weapon. As the logo is also symbolic of Malaya's Tiger Beer label, some unkind souls have stated that it was also symbolic of the typical Australian yearning for vast quantities of beer. Perhaps the curved trunk of the palm tree (versus the straight trunk of the beer label) bears testimony to this latter derivation. The MUC was added after its award in 1991.

In keeping with the Defence concept of light scales mobility, each of the eight gun detachments now held a 4.2-in mortar in addition to their 25-Pdr. On 17 March 1958, the battery paraded through Sydney as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade Group. Together with its sister batteries in 1 Fd Regt, the 105<sup>th</sup> took its turn to provide support to the School of Artillery which brought students across from North Head at Manly. The first cooperation task was on 19 June.

The year 1958 was certainly one for keeping the Army in the public eye. Commencing 23 October as part of the Army Week activities, 105 Fd Bty participated in the Eastern Command Tattoo at the Sydney Showgrounds. On Remembrance Day, they Beat Retreat at Victoria Barracks and, for the remainder of that month and part of December, were a component of the first full Australian infantry Brigade Group exercise since World War 2.

For three months beginning 26 March 1959, the battery exercised with 1 Fd Regt up the east coast to Mackay and back again. The highlight of the period was Exercise Grand Slam held in the vicinity of Coulsen's Gap, 30 km south of Sarina. The ceremonial side of the trip included participating in the ANZAC Day parade in Mackay, the Queen's Birthday review at Victoria Park in Brisbane and driving through Brisbane city with the 1 Inf Bde Gp.

The 105<sup>th</sup> was involved in proofing the 25-Pdr 119 fuses in July and August 1959 and life then became quite routine until the regimental exercise at Tianjara from 31 March to 27 April 1960.



On 29 June 1960, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment RAA farewelled and marched-out 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery and their 25-Prs. The parade was reviewed by Lt Gen Sir Frank Berryman KCVO CB CBE DSO, Colonel Commandant RAA who had been a First AIF subaltern in 4 AFAB. The newly acquired US 105-mm M2A1/M2A2s were marched-on and the Tiger battery headed northwards by road to their new home—Wacol, Brisbane and the latest successor to Berryman's old unit—4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RAA.

### **Wacol 1960–1964**

The new Pentropic Division was the cornerstone of the 1960 reorganisation in which a divisional HQ RAA (Brig F R Evans OBE) commanded five field regiments and a locating battery. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division consisted of three Pentropic Battle Groups (BG) based on 3 RAR and 1 RQR in Brisbane and 2 RQR in Townsville. The operational concept based around 3 RAR and 105 Fd Bty provided for an airmobile BG, Force Alfa on seven days' notice to move to Thailand on a contingency plan.

On 4 May 1960, a new ARA 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RAA cadre took over the old 11<sup>th</sup> National Service Training Battalion barracks on the western ridge at Wacol, Brisbane and began raising RHQ, HQ Bty and 103 Fd Bty. 105 Fd Bty led by BC Maj B C Forward and BSM WO2 R R Matthews overnighted at Scone and Guyra, then became the first fully manned and operational field battery to march-in to this fledgling unit. It arrived at 1830 hrs on 2 July bringing its eight 25-Pdrs and 4.2-in mortars and was welcomed by CO Lt Col J H (Jack) Studdert.

Though the battery had 2½ ton six-wheeled Studebaker and GMC trucks for towing 25-Pdrs, in the airmobile force role, it used ¼ ton Land Rovers to pull the 4.2-in mortars. Key appointments in the 105<sup>th</sup> at this time included: BC—Maj B C (Brien) Forward, BK—Capt WG (Bill) Hoffman, C Tp Comd—Lt I R (Ian) Smith and D Tp Comd—Lt R S C (Ron - 'Jet') Morris.

In September, shot at Tin Can Bay in cooperation with RAN pilots from the HMAS *Melbourne*, drove through Brisbane as part of the Army Week celebrations and then participated in the military tattoo including an 1812 Overture at the Brisbane Exhibition grounds.

On 8 October Maj D H (Don) Moore took over command of 105 Fd Bty. Air mobility training now took priority and on 4 November 1960 the battery conducted air transportability trials with the RAAF at Amberley and then the Tigers trained in fire and movement at Tin Can Bay. On 15 December 1960, the Force Alfa operational instruction was replaced by Ambrose, a contingency for SEATO anti-insurgent operations in South-East-Asia. This force was to be based on the 2 RAR BG which included 105 Bty equipped with 4.2-in mortars. The initial deployment would be by the HMAS *Sydney* and airlift.

Further loading trials were conducted at Amberley with C130 Hercules aircraft in February. Then followed a very wet battery exercise at Tin Can Bay. CO Studdert introduced a policy of fostering ARA / CMF relationships. Each battery was affiliated with the local 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Field Regiments 'in direct support' for training.

During March 1961, 103 and 105 assisted their CMF counterparts on their annual camps at Greenbank and Tin Can Bay. The Tigers manned 25-Pdrs for this role.

When the CMF units returned to Brisbane, 4 Fd Regt commenced some very successful regimental shooting. The CO advised the two BCs that the battery who reported 'ready' first for the most regimental missions would lead the regiment back to Brisbane. This was a worthy challenge as he who arrived back first commandeered the wash points and could be stood down reasonably quickly. However, 105 had been a consistent winner to date. BC Don Moore believed this 'unfair to 103' and suggested tossing a coin. BC 103, Maj J R (John) Salmon declined and took the shooting challenge - and won! 'Twas a sad day for the Tigers and from then on 103 was 'the battery to be watched'.

Exercise Tropic Holiday took place around Townsville from 5 April to 20 May 1961. It began, however, at Tin Can Bay where the unit became expert at convoy drills and making and breaking camp. Throughout the meticulously scheduled move to Townsville, the CO could be found around any corner with a copy of the movement order and a stop watch and pity help any speedster or dallier. By now, Maj F A (Frank) McAskill was 2IC and his arrangements for accommodation and meals at the showground stopovers were a tribute to his administration.

4 Fd Regt had the honour of taking part in this first ever ARA / CMF fully integrated exercise in Queensland. They live-fired near Mingela, worked with the 2 RQR BG at Rollingstone and patrolled and tracked at Mount Spec. Vehicle movement was painfully slow at the latter and chain saws were the order of the day closely followed by winches. The unit paraded ceremonially through Townsville on ANZAC Day and 15 May before heading homewards via a very dusty inland route - Charters Towers, Clermont, Emerald, Biloela, Murgon and Kingaroy.

Plan Ambrose was tightened up in May when the 3 RAR BG was ordered to seven days' notice to move. At that time the battalion and its logistic support needed about 500 people and six to eight weeks to be ready to move. However, 105 Fd Bty was assessed as requiring only seven days training prior to limited overseas operations. Tropic Holiday had been a windfall for the Tigers' state of readiness.

In July, Capt G F B (Gordon) Rickards rejoined 105 Fd Bty as BK and the Tigers began picking up all external support tasks such as the Guard of Honour for the Opening of Parliament on 22 August because 103 Bty had been formally warned for service in Malaya commencing in October. Nevertheless, September found them again at Tin Can Bay firing 4.2-in mortars in preparation for a test of Force Ambrose readiness.

In October 1961, the Tigers took part in the first of the big three major Pentropic Division exercises, Icebreaker. They exercised using 4.2-in mortars with 1 Fd Regt (105-mm M2A2s) in support of the 3 RAR BG in the Putty Training Area between Windsor and Singleton. At the peak, 4000 troops were involved in this one-sided exercise which tested the battle group in conditions as close as possible to those envisaged for overseas operations. The 105<sup>th</sup> was assessed as needing to complete

individual training, particularly for officers and SNCOs in their detailed responsibilities within the battery. There was also a requirement to practise working with the administrative elements of the battalion. The 4.2-in mortar was found wanting in range during the advance phase of the exercise and it was announced that the Italian 105-mm L5 Pack Howitzer would be replacing it.

The battery deployed to Tianjarra on completion of Icebreaker and spent November attached to RMC Duntroon for RMC cadet corps training.

WO2 M. (Max) Almond became BSM of the Tigers in January 1962. He was initiated at Tin Can Bay with a brief regimental exercise in March, and operating with the 3 RAR BG and shooting for 16 Army Lt Aircraft Sqn in April.

In May 1962, 4<sup>th</sup> Fd Regt (now consisting of 101 and 105 Batteries) again combined with 1<sup>st</sup> Fd Regt at Tianjarra on the bitterly cold CRA 1 Div's Exercise Southerly Buster. Rain led to severely bogged vehicles but thorough route reconnaissance and winching experience allowed the 4<sup>th</sup> to bypass a deeply bogged 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment. To lighten vehicle loads at one stage, ammunition was carried forward by hand at night. A divisional fire plan, believed to be an ARA first since World War 2, was fired and impromptu/opportunity divisional targets were engaged.

The Tigers played their part in the Queen's Birthday Parade in Brisbane on 4 June when the entire 4<sup>th</sup> Fd Regt was turned out for a ceremonial showing by the Army.

The new Italian 105 mm L5 pack howitzers (L5s) arrived in July that year. A unit cadre detachment had been trained on the L5 at the School of Artillery. Because the instruction booklets with the L5s were written in Italian, this team unpacked all the guns - (which were found upside down in the crates, probably because no one could read the Italian instruction for 'This side Up') and assembled them. Each detachment commander now had the dubious honour of having three weapons (a 25-Pdr, a 4.2-in mortar and an L5) to squeeze into his tiny gun bay. The 25-Pdrs lost and were parked outside in canvas wraps.

The cadre then converted both batteries to the new weapons over the next three months. One new and frustrating aspect of the L5 was the very slow (15 kph) speeds at which it had to be towed. The battery deployed approximately three times per day, unboxing and re-boxing the ammunition at each position.

Eventually 105 Bty was allowed to fire the new guns. Sgt I C (Ian) Morley recalls that the guns were set up in a straight line, loaded and laid, then all detachments were withdrawn behind Sgt R P (Rex) Taylor's gun and it was fired using a very long lanyard. The others were then similarly fired.

Around this time, Canungra was declared a close training area. It was nearer to Wacol than Tin Can Bay and became a popular range on which to trial the effectiveness of high angle fire in mountainous terrain. On the first trip to Canungra, several of the light Jeep trailers broke in half before reaching their destination.

On 31 August, the Tigers had the honour of firing a 21-gun salute for the arrival of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit of Thailand. The RAA experienced a change of formal title to 'The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery' on 19 September 1962. Her Majesty the Queen, until this time the Colonel-in-Chief, became its Captain General.

Exercise Nutcracker in the Singleton-Putty Training Area was the biggest ever Australian military peacetime exercise to date. The battery was part of the artillery force of two field regiments (1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) which supported two ARA Pentropic Battle Groups (1 and 3 RAR) which exercised against an enemy of 600 CMF soldiers from 20 October to 10 November 1962. This was the first major exercise for the L5s and establishment deficiencies in manpower were highlighted.

The new year welcomed a new CO, Lt Col J G (Joe) Hooton. International P3 2½ and 5 ton trucks had replaced the Studebakers and GMCs but there were still three main weapons held by each gun detachment. To overcome the 15 kph limit on towing the L5s, the guns were ported in pairs on the back of the P3s.

The Tigers chalked up another 'first' when, in May 1963 they were part of 4 Fd Regt's L5 / Iroquois helicopter manoeuvre trials at Tin Can Bay. Initially the guns were lifted complete with shields, then without shields and finally the pilots accepted a gun with no shield and a two-trail section configuration—about 1800 pounds (820 kg). Another problem was keeping the gun stores inside a wire cargo net as it was not until some time later that canvas A22 cargo containers were introduced. The Chief of the General Staff, Lt Gen J G Wilton, a former inaugural battery commander in the 2/4th Field Regiment AIF visited the trials and was pleased with the progress being made.

These trials confirmed that the L5's mobility was comparable to that of the 4.2-in mortar for the Force Ambrose airmobile requirements. In June that year, 105 Fd Bty finally said farewell to its 25-Pdrs and 4.2-in mortars.

During July, Exercise CARBINE culminated in 105 Bty being deployed aboard HMAS *Sydney* as a trial of loading for seaborne movement under Plan Ambrose. Sgt Merv Dux's gun was coated in a special waterproofing compound then covered in a special plastic bag with a venting tube at the top. Unfortunately, the ship stopped a bit short of the beach and when the gun went into the water, the immersion pressure of burst the bag and drowned the gun.

At this time, ammunition for the L5s was somewhat restricted. To practise observation of fire by live firing, it was not uncommon for the Tigers to borrow 25-Pdrs from their adopted CMF 11 Fd Regt, form what became known as Emu Troop and fire in support of observer training at Tin Can Bay.

Just before the Army's major exercise for 1963, the Tigers were brushing up on their helo deployments at Tin Can Bay when, on 9 October, Sergeant Laurie Thompson's B Sub of C Troop was considered to be behaving dangerously under an Iroquois and the pilot jettisoned his load. L5s don't fly, especially without shields and the gun ploughed into the ground leaving a one metre deep crater. Second-in-command, Maj Frank McAskill was not amused. D Tp Comd Capt G T (George) Salmon has the firm belief that a second gun was also dropped during this exercise, though not quite as spectacularly as C/B sub.

By now South-East Asia was experiencing unrest. In August 1962 Australia had provided a Training Team to assist the South Vietnamese and the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation had commenced on 19 September 1963. Counter insurgency doctrine had been produced and was being trialled in the ARA. Exercise Sky High in the Colo-Putty Training Area during October and November 1963 was the Army's first test of the new doctrine. It was conducted by the 1<sup>st</sup> Task Force (1 TF) with the main emphasis on air deployments. The visiting Ulster Rifles from the UK participated actively despite the high summer temperatures. The infantry learned valuable techniques, but it was less relevant to the already quite airmobile Tigers. Just after 'Stand Down' one morning, John F Kennedy's assassination was announced. The prolonged silence of Gunners reflected their awe as they came to grips with the news.

The year of 1963 ended on a high note with the Master Gunner of St James Park, General Sir Robert Mansergh GCB KBE MC visiting Brisbane and reviewing the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Field Regiments on a parade at Wacol on 12 December.

WO2 F H (Frank) Mitchell had become BSM in November 1963 and on 1 April 1964, Maj H J C (Craig) Beck assumed command of 105 Fd Bty. The next day, the Right Honourable Dr J M Forbes MC, Minister for the Army was given a tour of 4 Fd Regt and the Tigers contributed to a demonstration of the workings of an L5 gun and detachment. D Tp, now commanded by Capt G T Salmon put on a demonstration for the 2 RAR BG at Enoggera on 3 April.

Lt Col J D (John) Stevenson assumed command of 4 Fd Regt in mid-June. There were severe manpower shortages in 4 Fd Regt at this time and collectively, only one eight-gun battery could be fully manned. Despite this, when the unit took part in an advance to Tin Can Bay in direct support of the 1 RAR BG, CRA Col M P (Paddy) O'Hare insisted that two batteries be provided. There was no helicopter support so the L5s were ported ('flown'). The batteries performed well and received a good report—on the other hand, the infantry's performance was slated.

As part of the celebrations for the opening of the Papua and New Guinea Parliament by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in August 1964, Maj P R (Phil) Burns flew a composite 4 Fd Regt troop of L5 guns to Port Moresby to fire two salutes. During World War 2, a 25-Pdr gun had been manhandled up the Kokoda Track to the top of the Owen Stanleys. Sgt L W (Stretch) Fanning's L5 from the 105<sup>th</sup> was stripped and, with the aid of some native porters, carried up the 25-Pdr's route, past the 25's gun platform on top of the range and then reassembled. Four Papua New Guineans then had the honour of firing a round of blank ammunition each.

On 10 August, Maj G T (Graham) Taylor took over command of the Tigers. In September and October 1964 a regimental composite 105 Fd Bty commanded by Maj Taylor became the first Australian battery to visit New Zealand on Exercise Tasman 3.

The National Service (Conscription) Act was approved on 10 November 1964 and Army strength raised from 22 750 to 37 500. A new air-portable Tropical Warfare division was to be formed suitable for operations in South-East Asia and

New Guinea terrains. It was based on three task force headquarters and nine infantry battalions. The new divisional artillery comprised HQ RAA, three field regiments and one divisional locating battery. Each field regiment was given an establishment of three six-gun batteries of 105 mm L5 Pack Howitzers. This came into effect on 1 January 1965. Graham Taylor left the Tigers in late 1964 and BK George Salmon administered command until Maj P.N.O. (Peter) Tedder assumed command on 17 February.

These first five years at Wacol had been very tumultuous as operational concepts, equipment and manning had all experienced severe change. Now there were several simmering hot spots in Australia's near neighbours including Borneo and Vietnam. Though they were only at about 70 percent strength, the Tigers began to sense a real possibility for active service again in South-East Asia.

## **Vietnam 1965–1970**

On 29 April 1965 Prime Minister Menzies announced an Australian infantry battalion with supporting troops would be sent to Vietnam. The 1 RAR Group was deployed by 10 June whilst their direct supporting 161<sup>st</sup> Field Battery RNZA with four 105 mm L5 Pack Howitzers followed and reported 'ready' on 17 July. This ANZAC force was under command of Headquarters Australian Army Force Vietnam (HQ AAFV) but under operational control of the 173<sup>rd</sup> (US) Airborne Brigade which had flown into Bien Hoa from Okinawa in May.

The 105 Bty exercised with 4 Fd Regt in the Upper Mongogerie area near Casino in June 1965. A slow move by road to Amberley led to C130 Hercules flights down to Coolangatta, then ported guns in very noisy civilian trucks to the exercise area. It was CO Stevenson's belief that any future conflict in South-East Asia would be fought similarly to the Borneo Confrontation. Guns were deployed on ridge lines, requiring much clearing (or notional clearing) of trees, and camouflage nets were used extensively to minimise observation from the ground, by hanging them vertically around the perimeter of the gun position.

The original Australian elements of the 1 RAR Gp consisted of the battalion, an APC troop and the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Logistic Supply company. When it was decided to provide more balance to this force by adding a field battery, a troop of engineers, a light helicopter reconnaissance troop, a signals' detachment and additional logistics personnel, 4 Fd Regt was secretly placed on 21 days-notice to move a battery on operations overseas as from 28 July 1965.

105 Bty was selected as it was still the current priority light-scaled unit. The regiment was stripped by CO John Stevenson to provide BC Peter Tedder with the most experienced personnel to bring the 105<sup>th</sup> up to the augmented establishment of an independent battery. Unfortunately, this disrupted existing teams. When a hurriedly conceived evaluation of preparedness Exercise Clubfoot was conducted in early August around the Amberley-Flinders Peak area, the Tigers would have performed

better in their former configuration. Nevertheless, after nine helicopter deployments in quick succession and attacks by former AATTV veteran adviser WO2 D. Hill and his 'Viet Cong' enemy, the revised 105 was beginning to look good in the field.

The battery then headed for Tin Can Bay for a week of helicopter moves and live firing. As the road column returned to Wacol Camp on 19 August 1965, Lt G G (Gordon) Pound recalled an excited Lt A G (Alan) Hutchinson greeting each vehicle as it came through the main gate with, 'You lot are going to Vietnam'. The actual time of departure was concealed.

On 14 September 1965 Maj Tedder led his battery (less an advance party under BK B J [Bruce] Stark) aboard the HMAS *Sydney* at 0730 hours. At 1100 hours the Tiger battery became the first RAA unit to leave Australian shores for active service in the Vietnam War. On 28 September the *Sydney* anchored two miles off Cap St Jacques and American landing craft ferried the battery ashore to Vung Tau. From there, Hercules aircraft flew them to Bien Hoa and on 30 September they commenced establishing a battery position in a disused rubber plantation on the perimeter of the huge American base at Bien Hoa.

The 105<sup>th</sup> was under command of the Commander Australian Army Force Vietnam (COMAAFV), under the operational control of the Commander US Military Assistance Command Vietnam (COMUSMACV) and in support of the 173<sup>rd</sup> US Airborne Brigade. The first ammunition was delivered to the six hungry 105 mm L5 Pack Howitzers on 1 October. At 1135 hours next day the COMAAFV, Brigadier O.D. Jackson DSO OBE was present on Sgt Don McDonald's A Sub when the first round was fired by the Australian artillery in the Vietnam war. The heavy rain next day did not dampen the Gunners' preparations for their first operational shoot on 4 October—an LZ preparation for 1/503 US Infantry.

Eighty members of the 105<sup>th</sup> marched through the streets of Saigon on 12 October in a 'Welcome to Vietnam' parade. Around their necks were floral leis presented by pretty young girls of the Vietnamese Army Women's Service.

On 16 October D Gun fired the 1000<sup>th</sup> round and on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 105 Bty experienced its first operational helicopter deployment to Ben Cat, 50 km north-west of Saigon. This was a four-day shakedown operation in direct support of 1 RAR in the Iron Triangle area.

Key appointments were:

BC	Maj P N O. Tedder	GPO	Capt P J C Treleven
BK	Capt B J Stark	Seco	Lt J A R Jansen
OPO	Capt K W Bade		Lt G G Pound
	Capt A G Hutchinson	BSM	WO2 J Soxsmith
	Lt B H Stark	BG	WO2 S D James
LO	Lt J C Long	BQMS	WO2 J Crook

LAD	WO2 D McLeod (RAEME)	Cook	Sgt J Haim (AACC)
BCA	Sgt J Buhmann	A Sub	Sgt D McDonald
Op CP	Sgt D Nicholls	B Sub	Sgt M Dux
Sigs	Sgt W Cottee	C Sub	Sgt I Morley
Clerk	Sgt L Hedge	D Sub	Sgt L Fanning
Tpt	Sgt R Harper	E Sub	Sgt L Kearns
LAD	Sgt M Fletcher (RAEME)	F Sub	Sgt N Wills

It was resolved that 161 Bty would remain in direct support of 1 RAR till 31 December but would alternate with the 105<sup>th</sup> on airmobile deployments. Until the end of the year, the Tigers would also be in general support of American forces throughout South Vietnam. The 11 major operations in which 105 Bty supported US forces have been summarised.

**Operation Hump (5–9 November 1965).** Search and destroy operation into War Zone D, 50 km north east of Saigon. 105 supports 1 RAR airmobile insertion. 834 VC KIA compared with 79 US and two Australians. Kiwi FO Capt Bruce Murphy was awarded the Military Cross for skilfully directing the face-on fire of 105 Bty to save two of A/1 RAR's platoons. Confirmed airmobile drills with B model Iroquois developed by BK Bruce Stark.

**With the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (21 November–16 December 1965).** Airmobile reserve for 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Div. Flew to Phan Rang (275 km north east of Saigon) in C123s ('Baby Hercs'). Not called upon but 101<sup>st</sup> was fascinated with the 'Italian-made 105 mm howitzers bearing the regal-looking crest showing a tiger and a palm tree' as their newsletter reported. The introduction of the medium lift Chinook helicopters in December detracted from the uniqueness and glamour of the L5/Iroquois combination. Returned to Bien Hoa via a short deployment at Ben Cat.

**Operation Marauder (1–7 January 1966).** Search and destroy operation into the Mekong Delta area (Plain of Reeds) 50 km west of Saigon. 131 VC KIA and 43 WIA/PW, 15 US KIA and 82 US WIA, no Aussie casualties.

**Operation Crimp (8–14 January 1966).** Destroy the VC HQ 4<sup>th</sup> Military Region in the heavily defended complex tunnel system in Ho Bo Woods four km west of the Iron Triangle and 45 km north-east of Saigon. Airmobile insertion. First day 1 RAR suffered 3 KIA and 15 WIA and the 105<sup>th</sup> lost FO Capt Ken Bade when he took the main blast of a VC booby trap and died in the arms of B Coy 2IC, Capt Peter Arnison. [His body was returned to Brisbane where 4 Fd Regt provided the escort as part of the full military honours of his funeral.] 128 VC KIA, 92 VC PW, 509 suspects interrogated and 1031 refugees left area. 14 US and 8 Aust KIA with 77 US and 29 Aust WIA.

**Operation Roundhouse (4–9 February 1966).** 1 RAR search and destroy operation in a 30-sq km area in the western area of War Zone D, 21 km north of the Bien Hoa air base. 1 VC KIA, 3 VC WIA/PW, 500 tonnes of rice, two tonnes of salt and a number of trucks captured, 4 US WIA, 2 Aust WIA.



**The Gunner O'Neill Affair.** In February 1966 Gnr P G (Peter) O'Neill failed to appear on a field punishment parade ordered by the BC as the result of a charge of disobeying a lawful command. Because there was no 'place of confinement' in the battery area or in Saigon, Maj Tedder ordered the soldier to be handcuffed to a steel picket in his weapon pit by day and to a stretcher by night for seven days. Reported by the press, there were questions in Parliament, and Tedder himself was charged. The Chief of the General Staff, Lt Gen Sir John Wilton CB CBE DSO flew to Vietnam to investigate. The subsequent court martial dropped the charges against the BC and Gnr O'Neill was discharged from the Army after serving 90 days' detention.

**Operation Silver City (9–22 March 1966).** Destroy HQ 7 Military Region in War Zone D. 1 RAR to provide security for FSB and logistics base. Airmobile insertion. US 2/503rd captured HQ but counter attacked. By 1100 hrs the battle began to turn in favour of the Americans, but the US gunners had run very low on ammunition—over 3000 artillery and mortar rounds had fallen among the assault waves, some as close as 30 m from the perimeter. Tedder's Gunners fired continuously for four hours resulting in a number of critically timed missions breaking up several VC assaults. Within 100 metres of the 2/503rd's position 265 VC corpses were counted and 80 more were found further back and hundreds had been evacuated. The battalion was awarded the US Presidential Citation for gallantry and their CO wrote to BC 105: 'Thanks for saving our lives. I have never seen finer shooting.' [In BC Peter Tedder's opinion, the battery's shooting was at least as fine and as important as in the Battle of Long Tan, perhaps more so because of the shortage of ammunition in the other batteries.]

**Operation Denver (13–22 April 1966).** Airmobile reconnaissance in force. Based from Song Be airfield 125 km north-north-east of Saigon near the Cambodian border. The enemy were disrupted but there were few contacts. [This was 105 Bty's last direct support of 1 RAR which returned home on 1 June.]

**Operation Hardihood (16 May–8 June 1966).** Advance and the secure Nui Dat (65 km south east of Bien Hoa) in Phuoc Tuy Province for future home of 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force (1 ATF), the expanded and self-reliant commitment to the Vietnam War. 5 RAR arrived and joined the 173rd's operation with 105th Bty in direct support. On 23 May Maj D (Don) Kenning led his own 161 Bty together with the 105<sup>th</sup>, an ordnance detachment, an MP platoon, the 2/503rd Battalion logistics group and a 4.2-in mortar platoon from Bien Hoa to Nui Dat. At 1700 hrs 5 June, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment RAA commanded by Lt Col R M C (Dick) Cubis MVO opened its regimental command net. At 1800 hrs both 105 and 161 Batteries joined 103 under command of the Regiment.

**Long Tan (18 August 1966).** 6 RAR arrived in Nui Dat on 14 June. Its D Company was sweeping through a French rubber plantation east of the base on 18 August seeking an enemy force that had mortared 1 ATF's new home earlier that morning when they stumbled onto an estimated two VC battalions. The leading 12

Australians were killed or wounded immediately and as the enemy began to encircle the company, torrential rain commenced. FO Capt M (Morrie) Stanley RNZA in direct support called for the field guns of 103, 105 and 161 Batteries and the 155-mm self-propelled mediums of A/2/35 US Arty. In four-hours 3440 rounds fell on the attackers, some as close as 30 m from D Coy. APC-borne reinforcements finally arrived and the VC fled leaving behind 245 dead. Some 500 were believed wounded and three were captured. The ANZAC forces suffered 18 KIA and 24 WIA. Stanley was awarded an MBE whilst his radio operator, LCpl Willy Walker was Mentioned in Dispatches. BK Bruce Stark recalls 'it was "all hands to the pumps" serving the guns, unboxing ammunition and everyone was flat chat. Even had the cooks, RAEME and the det of 131 Div Loc Bty (their radar was out of action) involved.'

**Operation Vaucluse (early September 1966).** 6 RAR search and destroy in the Nui Dinh Hills ('Warburton Mountains') 5+ km west of Nui Dat. 105, 161, a reduced RHQ 1Fd Regt and a coy from 5 RAR to a gun position at French Fort 6 km south-south-west of Nui Dat.

Although Paludrine was being taken by all members of the battery, a more virulent and drug resisting strain was imported by North Vietnamese troops infiltrating South Vietnam down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. On 14 November 1965 section commander Lt Gordon Pound was evacuated to Saigon and subsequently repatriated after a serious attack of cerebral malaria. Gnr T (Tom) Simpson became ill with malaria on 6 December 1965 and died three days later. His body left the battery with fullmilitary honours and was buried in the 28<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Brigade Cemetery at Terendak, Malaysia.

Bob Hope and his shows had been playing to American servicemen wherever they served since World War 2 days. Vietnam was no exception and they, as well as Lucky Starr's and other Australian shows all helped the Tigers to forget the conflict for a little while. Perhaps the most memorable performer to the Gunners was Sydney Go-Go dancer Pat Wordsworth, the 'Big Pretzel'.

Prime Minister Harold Holt visited the 105<sup>th</sup> on ANZAC Day 1966. A member of the 2/4th Field Regiment AIF, he confided in the battery that, 'Though I was a very poor gunner for a while in the AIF, I think I know a good regiment when I see one and I congratulate you Major Tedder on a first-class battery.'

For the 1 RAR Gp's outstanding service to the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, the United States Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded on 4 July 1991 to all Australian units in the Group, including 105 Fd Bty. US Decoration: Sgt L W (Stretch) Fanning—Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service; and Republic of South Vietnam Decorations: Gnr T (Tom) Simpson (Post)—Armed Forces Honour Medal - Second Class.

Casualties: Capt K W Bade (KIA 8/1/66), Gnr R W Cliff (KIA 6/2/67), Gnr A R Hall (wounded 12/1/66), Gnr F Gulyas (wounded 12/1/66), Gnr A E Lloyd (WIA 8/1/66), LBdr L Francis (WIA 8/2/66), Bdr C Elwell (WIA 2/66 and 6/66), Lt G G Pound (evac cerebral malaria 14/11/65), and Gnr T Simpson (DWOAS 9/12/65).

An advance party led by Capt Alan Hutchinson departed Nui Dat at the end of August. The Tigers' main body left Vietnam by 'freedom bird' on 24 September and arrived in Australia on the 25<sup>th</sup>. They had fired approximately 30 000 rounds during the 12 months of operations and, once again had chalked up many firsts for the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery in Vietnam.

The battery returned to its lines at 4 Fd Regt, Wacol and when, in March 1967, RHQ and Headquarters Battery went to Vietnam, the same elements of 1 Fd Regt returned from their tour of duty and assumed command of the now Maj M M (Mike) Thomson's 105<sup>th</sup> at Wacol.

### **Enoggera**

In November, 1 Fd Regt moved across to Gallipoli Lines, Enoggera and soon afterwards the battery received its 105-mm M2A2s.

The year 1968 was busily spent preparing for the forecast second tour of duty in Vietnam from February 1969. There had been a complete changeover since the last tour of officers and with one exception, also the senior NCOs; National Servicemen were pouring in to bring the manning up to its war establishment; and there were a new gun and a new deployment concept of an earth wall bunded fire support bases.

Battery training exercises culminated in Headquarters 1<sup>st</sup> Division's assessed exercise for the 105<sup>th</sup> at Shoalwater Bay in September. The Tigers acquitted themselves well and after a regimental exercise at Tin Can Bay in October, they were guided through their sub-unit battle efficiency training at the Jungle Training Centre, Canungra by a cadre of recently returned veterans from 4 Fd Regt.

### **Second Tour of Vietnam**

The regimental farewell parade at Enoggera on 21 January 1969 was reviewed by the Colonel Commandant, Maj Gen D R Kerr CBE ED, a former GPO of 105 Bty in the 1930s.

On 3 February 1969 the Tigers (approximately 60 percent of whom were National Servicemen) boarded a chartered Qantas aircraft at Brisbane's Eagle Farm Airport and for the fourth time in the battery's history headed off to active service. This was the first time that an Australian battery had returned to Vietnam for a second tour of duty.

The aircraft stopped briefly at Darwin and Singapore before disembarking its passengers at Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon. From there aC123 'Baby Herc' flew them to the 1 ATF base at Nui Dat. They arrived at 1500 hours on 4 February and were met by the battery commander Maj L A (Lachie) Thomson who had arrived with the advance party a week before.

The battery came under command of RHQ 12 Fd Regt (Lt Col J D [Jack] Kelly) until that of the 1<sup>st</sup> Field arrived at Nui Dat in March 1969. The Tigers' sister batteries were 104 (till 101 arrived in April), 161 RNZA and B/2/35 US Arty (155-mm self-propelled guns). The key manning on arrival was:

BC	Maj L A (Lachie) Thomson	FO A	2Lt J E (Jim) Box
BK	Capt G M (Greg) West	FO B	2Lt N (Nigel) Groves

FO C	Capt A J (Tony) Poole
FO D	2Lt I D (Ian) Gill
GPO	Lt A R (Arthur) Burke
Seco	Lt J P (Paul) Stevens
Seco	2Lt G J (Greg) See
BSM	WO2 RWP (Robbie) Shields
BG	WO2 D A (Denny) Atherden

BQMS	SSgt I C (Ian) Morley
BCA	Sgt W (Bill) Pyle
Svy	Sgt D W (Don) Dickson
Sigs	Sgt N (Neville) Galbraith
Tpt	Sgt K W (Pop) Hughes
A Sub	Sgt B (Sailor) Edwards
B Sub	Sgt J P (John) Smith
C Sub	Sgt R B (Ray) Hartigan
D Sub	Sgt K J (Chris) Christensen
E Sub	Sgt D P (Dave) Gratwick
F Sub	Sgt D E (Hughie) Sparks

Before the main body of the battery arrived, the advance party had chalked up the first kills for the second tour. At 1000 hrs 4 February, an Army pilot returning to Nui Dat had sighted a VC supply truck. The only guns in range were those of 105<sup>th</sup> (102 Fd Bty having departed at 0600 hours). A motley crew of storemen, cooks, clerks and a few gun numbers manned three guns under the GPO Arthur Burke. The first round was fired by Sgt Dave Gratwick's gun. Despite the unorthodox detachments, fire for effect was right on target—the truck was destroyed and two VC were killed.

Barely a month later, the Tigers' first blood was spilt when, in the early hours of 9 March, the stealth of the approach of 5 RAR's cordon around Phuoc Hoa Long (a small village just outside the southern perimeter of the 1 ATF base) was shattered by a mine blast and heavy firing from the village's northern post, triggered when D Coy's 10 Platoon headquarters inadvertently entered a protective minefield. The platoon commander, platoon sergeant and a section commander were killed in the initial blast. 105's FO, 2LT Ian Gill, had sent his ack, BDR I. C. (Ivars) Valuks along with Signaller GNR P. J. E (Ric) Stingemore with this platoon. Valuks was wounded, and Stingemore isolated. While the battery fired illumination, Valuks and Stingemore, together with the casualties from platoon headquarters were extracted by Gill, the D Company medic and an engineer sapper who, in the final stages of the six hour or more extraction effort, detonated a mine, blowing his foot off. The engineer was awarded an MID.

The concept of using bulldozers to build protective earth bunds around gun positions was well-established doctrine by the time of the battery's arrival. The command post (CP) was underground and personnel slept in pits initially. The pits were soon superseded by iron culverting which was set up below ground in bulldozer scrapes, covered with several layers of sandbags and had blast walls erected at either end. During the wet season, these 'igloos' were sited above ground with sandbagged walls around them. By the end of July 1969, the CP had also become prefabricated. Two steel cargo containers (connexes) were welded together and work benches, stores bins, equipment and lighting were built-in. This CP could be moved on the back of a truck or flown under a Chinook helicopter. It was placed either below ground in a

bulldozer scrape or banded up and sandbagged above ground in the wet. With only the tannoy and aerial wires to connect after arrival, this CP very quickly swung into action. The connex CP also carried all the pierced aluminium plank (PAP) for the gun platforms.

In the 12 months of operations, 105 Fd Bty in its 'Ubique' tradition occupied 31 different fire support bases from Kerry near the Long Binh base in the north to Bruiser almost on the coast and south-east of Nui Dat. In addition, there were seven section step-up moves and 14 return deployments to Nui Dat—an overall total of 52 moves.

By 1969, there was a complete operational task force (brigade) group at Nui Dat. In general, the TF HQ and one battalion group remained at the base whilst the other two battalion groups conducted operations within gun range of Nui Dat, each other or an American artillery unit. The province of Phuoc Tuy included the port of Vung Tau, the South-East Asian Riviera of the French colonial days which was now the logistics base for 1 ATF.

5 RAR, commanded by Lt Col C N (Colin) Khan was the directly supported battalion. It engaged in 16 major operations during the tour. In addition, numerous company-sized sweep and ambush tasks were conducted during operational 'breaks' and constant day and night patrolling was maintained around the battalion's sector of the Nui Dat base. Many of the operations were the reconnaissance-in-force type with companies operating widely dispersed and platoons separated within the companies by up to two kilometres. To ensure a speedy fire support response in contacts with the enemy, the fire support elements at company level were split. The FO ack and the mortar fire controller (MFC) went with a detached platoon each whilst the FO remained with company headquarters and the third platoon. The FO controlled the fire support for the company talking by radio with the FO ack and the MFC. Both the latter soon reached a very high standard of competence. The ten most significant operations have been summarised.

**Operation Federal Overlander (10 March to 8 April 1969).** Defence of Long Binh after Tet (Chinese New Year) and advance to Nui Dat. 105 relieved 161 Bty at FSB Kerry 24 km north-east of Saigon. A step-up via FSB Sally to Nui Dat. While in support of 5RAR, on 19-20 March 1969 an operation to clear an enemy mortar position targeting Long Binh saw two Companies supported by US Army Engineers assault on the position known geographically as “the fried eggs”. A Company 5RAR with FO 2LT Jim Box was appointed to lead the assault with the FO conducting an early morning aerial reconnaissance. Unfortunately, whether from ground fire or mechanical failure, the US Iroquois helicopter crashed near the intended start-line for the attack. All including the FO survived but the FO unfortunately was eventually medevacked back to Australia. The assault went ahead but nonetheless the enemy had disappeared. Further in the Operation at the FSB, a couple of rockets exploding above the gun position put a new urgency into stand-to. One of our guns was rolled up to its bund under command of the BK, the barrel lowered to the horizontal and the highest charge

splintex (beehive) round loaded. Unfortunately, no one had noticed the trail spades were resting on the aluminium planking. The gun fired, skidded backwards and knocked over the BK. The cone of steel darts set off all the trip flares in its path and ripped out the barbed wire and claymore mine defences.

**Operation Surfside (12 April to 2 May 1969).** The most notable experiences of this operation on the coast south-east of Nui Dat were the dug-in 'floating' command post caused by a high-water table in the area, a caved-in CP caused by the ground shock waves of the 155-mm SPs firing nearby, a swim in the sea for FO parties, and a nip of Bundaberg rum to commemorate ANZAC Day.

**Operations Twickenham I and II (2 May to 1 June 1969).** Search and destroy in the Nui Thi Vai and Nui Toc Tien mountains ('Warburton Mountains') 5 and 15 km west of Nui Dat. FSB Susan was sited just off the highway to Saigon west of these two mountain complexes. 22 VC KIA, 8 VC WIA. Chinook leap-frog to FSB Nick (25 km north-east of Saigon) to defend during Ho Chi Minh's birthday celebrations. [Whilst staging through the US Blackhorse base, one section acquired a 50-calibre machine gun from the Yanks by trading clothing, ration pack can openers and a brass 105-mm cartridge case.]

**The Battle of Binh Ba (6 to 9 June 1969).** The shortest, most vicious and the most successful operation of 5 RAR's tour started on 6 June when a tank and an armoured recovery vehicle were fired upon as they passed by the rubber workers' village of Binh Ba, 6 km north of Nui Dat. D Coy (on standby) was reacted but it soon became evident that there were more VC than the estimated two platoons. (Captured documents later revealed that the enemy force was a North Vietnam regular battalion guided by the local guerrilla unit.) It took 48 hours, two APC-mounted companies, two tank troops, a light fire team (RAAF) and 2000 rounds from the 105<sup>th</sup> before the battle was finished. VC: 107 KIA, 6 WIA, 8 PW. Aust: 1 KIA, 10 WIA.

**Operation Esso (15 June to 15 July 1969).** Pacification programme around Dat Do (8 km south-east of Nui Dat). FSB Bruiser with high arc mesh observation tower south of Dat Do—sustained 12 x 82-mm mortars rounds, no casualties. Though a real and significant pacification programme was achieved during this time, old Aust mines redeployed by VC took their toll—Aust 7 KIA, 43 WIA including FO sig Gnr I D (Ian) Haywood, FO Lt Paul Stevens and two of his party: LBdr A R (Alan) Johnston and Gnr W E (Walter) Pearson.

**One Giant Step for Man - one muddy bog for the Tigers.** Reconnaissance in force. Temporary 3-gun FSB Elaine some 28 km due east of Nui Dat built in red mud area. Neil Armstrong made history with the lunar landing on 21 July, BC Lachie Thomson and his party had their transistors tuned and soon passed out the good news.

**Operation Camden (29 July to 30 August 1969).** Protection of a US land clearing team and reconnaissance in force in VC Hat Dich Secret Zone (19 km north-west of Nui Dat). Chinook deployment to FSB Polly, 40 separate actions, 10 000 rounds fired by 105. VC: 54 KIA, 39 WIA, 1400 bunkers and 1650 m tunnels and

trenches destroyed. On 8 August, FO Ack Bdr P J E (Ric) Stingemore was Mentioned in Despatches for calmness, determination and initiative whilst under fire. Two weeks later on 21 August, FO Ack Bdr G C (Gerry) Dekker was awarded the Military Medal partly for his attempts to recover a wounded infantry company commander whilst wounded himself, and directing artillery fire by exposing himself to enemy machine gun and rocket fire.

**Operation Kingston (15 September to 15 October 1969).** Reconnaissance in force. FSB Ben 18 km north-east of Nui Dat. Torrential rain, red soil, dispersed 3-gun positions deployed by APC (including Cpl Normie Rowe's). Intense nightly harassing and interdiction (H&I) fire plans. Highest number of the enemy rallied to the government (Hoi Chans) during 5 RAR's tour of duty.

**Operation Kings Cross (31 October to 12 December 1969).** Search and destroy in Long Thanh Province. FSB Cape 20 km north-west of Nui Dat. Numerous contacts, many bunker systems, a record 6300 rounds fired in 16 days.

Christmas 1969 was almost a disaster because Australian wharf labourers refused to load the MV *Jeparit* in Sydney with supplies for Vietnam. These included the Christmas beer. Soldiers made their point with 'Wallop a Wharfie on R&R' posters. The problem was solved by commissioning HMAS *Jeparit* and volunteers from Sydney's Regular Army units loaded the ship as the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Labour Unit. The Tigers did not really have a decent break between operations during December because the battery was split between Nui Dat and the Horseshoe gun positions and each was on duty 24/7.

**The Last Op—Bondi (30 December 1969 to 26 January 1970.)** Denying movement near Nui May Tao (38 km north-east of Nui Dat) around Tet. As the battalion spread out, the battery again split and moved several times. This entailed an almost constant routine of defensive works, which together with a relatively heavy firing programme made the Tigers really look forward to their last move back to Nui Dat on 26 January.

Little changed on the technical side until late October 1969, when the battery was issued with Gun Rules for low angle fire with the M2A2. High angle Rules soon followed. This reduced time taken for the CP manual calculations to compensate for each gun's MV. In mid-November, the guns were calibrated using the RAA's new Electronic Velocity Analyser (EVA).

Approximately four times during the year, each member of the battery had 48 hours Rest and Convalescence (R&C) leave at the Peter Badcoe VC Club at Vung Tau where 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Logistic Support Group (1 ALSG) was based. BC and FO parties went with their affiliated infantry battalion elements. The gun group went half at a time. Vung Tau still held the beauty of the Indo China riviera days and the Club was a safe, inexpensive haven. The city itself had its high priced, seamy side to separate soldiers from their money quickly.

Once during the tour, each man was allowed a five-day Rest and Recreation (R&R) leave by chartered airlines to his next of kin's address in Australia or to any of the eastern cities of Hong Kong, Taipei, Bangkok, Penang or Singapore. R&R was the highlight of everyone's tour—once you had been on one, you were about half way through your time in Vietnam.

There were no deaths in the battery on this tour, but the following were wounded: Bdr I Valuks (9 March); 2Lt J E Box (20 March), Gnr E J Bradley (11 May), Lt J P Stevens, Gnrs A R Johnston and W E Pearson (15 June); Gnr I D Haywood (4 July); Bdr G C Dekker and Gnr G C Davis (21 August); and Gnr L D Johnstone (29 August).

The following awards were made to members of 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery: Military Medal: Bdr G C Dekker; and Mentioned in Dispatches: Maj L A Thomson, 2Lt N Groves, Gnr P J E Stingemore.

Twelve months to the day on 4 February 1970, a 'freedom bird' flew the Tigers home to Australia, an RAA record 76 000 rounds having been fired during this second tour of Vietnam.

## **Conventional Warfare 1973–1985**

Back in 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment's Gallipoli Lines at Enoggera in Brisbane, the battery was just starting to take shape again in October 1970 when BC Maj K W (Ken) Mackenzie was required to move with RHQ and HQ Bty across town back to Wacol. The Vietnam conflict was dragging on and in June 1971 the Tigers were officially warned to prepare for their third tour of duty in 1973. The next 18 months of preparations were interrupted only by routine ceremonial salutes and two 1812 Overtures—one at Enoggera on 1 October 1971 and the other at New Farm Park at the commencement of the Warana Festival in September 1972.

Maj M R (Mick) Hawkins had honed the 105<sup>th</sup> to a fine edge and the Tigers were rearing to see active service once more when the wind was completely taken out of their sails in December 1972 with the Labor Party's coming to power—overnight, National Service and the Vietnam troop commitment were abolished. The Nashos marched out and new BC Maj J A R (John) Jansen was left with a decimated force.

On 25 January 1974 Cyclone Eva struck and Brisbane had its worst floods in more than 100 years. With over half the married quarters in Wacol Village under water, there was plenty of work to be done. Despite this, there were many volunteers from the battery to man the unit's two 40-man troops for flood relief work in the Wacol-Ipswich areas.

This was an era of change. With the withdrawal of the British from South-East Asia in 1969 and the US stance for their Allies to be more self-reliant, Defence policy was changing to one of independence and a conventional Army structure. HQ 1 Div moved to Brisbane, adopted a Regular Army manning and began to take up the reins of commanding 1, 3 and 6 TFs in Holsworthy, Townsville and Enoggera



respectively. HQ RAA was being re-raised within the Div HQ and began taking an active interest in the training and resources of 1 Div's gunner units—1, 4 and 12 Fd Regts, 8 Mdm Regt and 131 Div Loc Bty. With a Defence strategy of continental defence, more and heavier vehicles would be issued and establishment number increased.

During 1973, 105 had combined with 101 Bty to produce and trial a proposed new battery organisation of nine officers and 145 other ranks. The next year saw the Millar Report commissioned by the new Government. This resulted in the CMF becoming the Army Reserve (ARes) and being integrated into the functional command structure.

Maj I V (Ian) Reid commanded the 105<sup>th</sup> during this period and handed over to Maj A R (Arthur) Burke just before May 1976 when the Tigers received additional vehicles to trial a version of the 'TIB 28' (Training Information Bulletin № 28) conventional warfare establishment. This included an armoured command vehicle (ACV) in which was mounted the recently purchased Field Artillery Computing Equipment (FACE). On Exercise Kangaroo 2 later that year, the 105<sup>th</sup> came under command of 4 Fd Regt as its third gun battery and was allotted in direct support of 2nd/1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment. 'Skippy Two' was a divisional exercise conducted at Shoalwater Bay in October 1976 during which HQ RAA took direct command of the gunner assets of the formation.

In the mid-1970s, 105 Bty displayed a remarkable flexibility. Apart from annual shoots for the School of Army Aviation's pilots' course and BC/FO party exercises with their direct support battalion (6 RAR till December 1975 then 8/9 RAR), the Tigers provided Gunner input as '105<sup>th</sup> Medium Battery' for 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment's Exercise High View in the Charleville to Tambo area of south-west Queensland; converted to 4.2-in mortars as '105<sup>th</sup> Light Battery' for a 6 TF all arms observation of fire course; and formed a composite 'regimental battery' for an exchange with the 25<sup>th</sup> (US) Infantry Division's artillery in Hawaii where they mastered the 105-mm M102 Howitzer.

The year 1976 was also the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of 105's re-raising. On 6 October, the day on which the battery embarked for Malaya in 1955, BC Arthur Burke proudly led the Tigers on a ceremonial parade reviewed by 1 Fd Regt CO, Lt Col G J (Gordon) Fitzgerald. The commanding officer delivered a stirring address on the battery's 'firsts' before joining the soldiers and their families for a celebratory barbecue.

As a practical test of the re-raised HQ RAA 1 Div, on 24 and 25 May 1977 the Tigers were part of 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Regiments firing divisional targets at Shoalwater Bay. This proved to be very successful and CRA Brig J D (Jack) Kelly DSO was impressed with this Regular Army 'first' since the early 1960s.

But without a military involvement on which to focus Defence expenditure, the budget began to restrict activities more and more. Major exercises became less all embracing, there was more emphasis on using local training areas and command post exercises and 'mini mortar' exercises replaced previous live firing activities. Maj W

M Richardson took up the reins of command in 1978. During December 1979, the Tigers made their first commitment to international peacekeeping when five members of 105 Bty were detached to the Commonwealth Monitoring Force in Rhodesia.

On 21 February 1980, it was announced the 1 Div's task forces were to have three separate roles: 6TF (Brisbane) standard infantry, 1 TF (Holsworthy) mobile ops within Australia, and 3 TF (Townsville) that of an operational deployment force (ODF)—a readily-deployable, airportable force for low-level contingencies. Maj A W (Tony) Ayerbe's 105 Bty as part of 1 Fd Regt in 6 TF therefore continued with its 'standard' divisional artillery role.

The battery took part in a joint offensive support exercise at Beecroft Range, NSW in September 1981. The fire plans included artillery, naval gunfire and fighter ground attack support and were a precursor to the later 'Tasman Link' exercises held at Shoalwater Bay. Joint exercises were, in fact, becoming popular as the Defence Force wrestled with trying to prepare for credible contingencies in defence of mainland Australia. In June 1982, the HMAS *Tobruk* transported Maj D M (David) Forster's Tigers to Shoalwater Bay for the Commander Divisional Artillery (CDA—formerly the CRA)'s annual assessment and regimental exercise.

The Commonwealth Games in Brisbane filled the latter part of the Tigers' calendar for 1982. Some two-thirds of the battery provided support as drivers, placard bearers, officials and administrative staff.

Reductions in the size of the Army brought the seclusion of Wacol to a grinding halt when lesser numbers in the Enoggera area saw 1 Fd Regt move to Barce Lines in the north-west corner of these barracks in early 1983. The Tigers scored the former single level Ordnance Field Park headquarters which, though it had an asphalt parade ground behind it, was not in the same class as the purpose-built two story edifice that was the new home of 101 Bty. By this time the 8/12 Mdm Regt had a direct support role for the armoured and mechanised 1 TF and its traditional aid to the School of Artillery was now being shared across the divisional artillery. The earlier part of 1983 saw, for example, the entire 1 Fd Regt move to Ingleburn in support of the School's courses.

Perhaps it was a seven-year itch since the Tigers last overseas sojourn to Hawaii, but there was no doubt that the battery exchange with 29th Commando Regiment RA in Plymouth, UK was the highlight of 1983. With supplements from HQ, 101 Fd and 131 Div Loc Btys, 120 men under the command of 105 BC David Forster flew to the UK. A severe dust storm in the Middle East had them diverted for refuelling from Bahrain to Doha, Qatar. Here they were met by menacing submachine guns but this did not deflate the enthusiasm of the contingent. A highlight of this 'North Star/Southern Cross' exchange was the opportunity to train on the 105-mm British Light Gun which had recently distinguished itself with the Commando Gunners in the Falkland Islands.

1983 was also a year for several significant equipment changes. The FACE which had previously been mounted in an ACV went light scale—into a Land Rover, the displacement calculator became the back-up to the computer, a new L1A2 director finally replaced the time-honoured 7B, and the International F1 gun tractors made way for the Mercedes Unimogs.

If one could ever describe life in the Regular Army as 'normal', 1984 perhaps introduced new BC Maj W R C (Rick) Vickers with at least a standard training cycle—battery exercises leading up to an assessment by the CO in the first half of the year, direct support to 8/9 RAR's unit exercise at Shoalwater Bay arriving via HMAS *Tobruk* and returning by C130 Hercules aircraft, then a couple of regimental exercises which culminated with the CDA's assessment in October. This rolled into a divisional live firing exercise with the 8/12 Mdm Regt using its new 155-mm M198 Howitzers. The finale for the year was the 6 Bde (formerly 6 TF)'s Exercise Diamond Dollar in North Queensland during which the Tigers were in direct support of 8/9 RAR.

A 14.5-mm artillery observation training range was commissioned in the foothills of Enoggera Hill. This small weapon fired a point detonating smoke round from a tripod but both the command post and observers' drills were the same as for full calibre rounds. This economical training range was established by 105 Fd Bty under the supervision of 1 Fd Regt CO Lt Col D M (Don) Tait.

It had been many years since the Tigers had been required to defend their gun position from air attack. Exercise Bosun Contender at Shoalwater Bay in September–October 1985 offered the opportunity to view the results of an F111 strike on a battery position that had taken two weeks to dig. The results were quite devastating for BC Maj P W (Peter) Keane—hardly a sandbag was left untouched by the devastation of the modern air-delivered weaponry.

The first Australian-manufactured field guns since World War 2, the Hamel Guns were the focus of attention in 1985. The first two guns off the production line were put through their paces in comparison with two of their British cousins—Light Guns. Trials culminated with a demanding fire and movement exercise on High Range near Townsville. During this phase the Hamel Project Manager and former Tiger BC, Lt Col Arthur Burke spent several days with the design and production team observing and speaking to the gunners on the strengths and weaknesses of the new gun.

## **Continental Defence 1986–1994**

The mid-1980s witnessed the evolving low-level contingency defence strategy. A ministerial consultant, Paul Dibb submitted his report in 1986 and the next year the Government White Paper *the Defence of Australia* was presented to Parliament. This scheme proposed defence in depth and highly mobile forces which could be quickly deployed to any part of Australia and its territories. It condoned the

penny-packet dispersion of artillery and the need for a concentrated divisional artillery was not envisaged. Integration became the new Defence buzz word with individual, sub-unit, unit and formation part-time soldiers bringing existing Regular establishments to war strength.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade at Enoggera became an integrated formation with a third battalion joining it from the Army Reserve. Within 1 Fd Regt, manning was fleshed out by individuals and a third gun battery, the 104<sup>th</sup> was retrained as an integrated Reserve sub-unit. Tiger BC Maj S K (Steve) Joske received a few Reserve reinforcements, but predominantly remained a Regular battery. With an emphasis on bringing the Reservists up to a standard akin to their Regular counterparts, more mundane tasks became the lot of the permanent members in 105. Worse still, in the field vital asset protection and civil liaison became more and more the gunners' lot.

In between elements training at the Land Warfare Centre, Canungra and at the Battle School outside Tully; a Sydney Victoria Barracks Guard in May/June and a Vice Regal Guard of Honour on 12 August; and participating as a non-infantry team in the Military Skills Competition at Canungra, the battery managed an amphibious landing exercise with HMAS *Tobruk* in Moreton Bay and established a non-firing fire support base in a quarry outside Cooktown during the 6 Bde's first trial of integration in late 1987.

The next year, new BC Maj G J (Geoff) Bassett had the distinction of leading the Tigers to Puckapunyal with 1 Fd Regt. There, for the first time a gunner unit other than 8/12 Mdm Regt provided the annual firepower display to an audience of the combined Defence staff colleges of Australia. After a CDA's conventional operations assessment with 104 Bty in October, training turned to low level tactics in the lead up to Australia's largest peacetime exercise for many years—Kangaroo 89. In essence, 1 Div less the headquarters elements of 1 Bde conducted low-level operations across northern Australia from Weipa in Queensland to RAAF Base Curtin in the north-west of Western Australia. In early August, the Tigers deployed to the Kununurra area with five guns to defend their sector of FSB Stan for two weeks, then crossed to the Katherine area by fire and movement. 1989 finished on a strong gunner note with the CDA's assessment at Shoalwater Bay. The Tigers tails were held high after a very good report which included winning seven regimental mission adjustments against 101's single victory.

The Tigers entered the last decade of the 20th Century still stationed at Barce Lines, Enoggera and under command of 1 Fd Regt. Despite being undermanned (only 80–91 personnel) the 105<sup>th</sup> completed the unit warm-up exercise then moved to Singleton in support of School of Artillery courses in April 1990. Whilst BC Major D.L. (Dave) Evans was in Shoalwater Bay reconnoitring with 8/9 RAR's CO Gary McKay, a group of soldiers blotted the Tigers' proud name at Singleton by subjecting new arrivals to initiation ceremonies which became known as the 'Sausage Affair'.

The subsequent investigation resulted in disciplinary action against several soldiers. However, it took many months to rebuild the battery's esprit and shake off unsavoury nicknames.

At the conclusion of the 1 Fd Regt exercise and CDA's evaluation, 105<sup>th</sup> fired their last rounds from its veteran 105-mm M2A2 Howitzers on 24 August 1990. A month later, the unit had converted to the new Australian manufactured 105-mm Hamel Gun and was back at Singleton supporting a very discerning Warrant Officers' Gunnery Course from the School of Artillery. The Tigers then moved south to Puckapunyal joining 8/12 Mdm Regt for a mechanised brigade advance with live firing battle-group attacks. The Mercedes-Benz Unimogs continued to tow the Hamel Guns and 10-tonne Mack MC3 trucks carried the battery's additional ammunition. The Land Rover 110 Perentie remained the unit's light vehicle.

The affiliation with the 8<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> was repeated in April 1991 for the combined colleges' firepower demonstration at Puckapunyal. Sgt G (Grant) Boyce and Bravo gun were given the honour of being flown by the Army's new Blackhawk helicopter, landing in front of the huge audience, coming into action and engaging a target successfully with direct fire. En route home, the 105<sup>th</sup> spent ANZAC Day in Sydney, 'painting places like the Rocks and King's Cross a bright shade of crimson', and reinvigorating an old battery bonding spirit which had not been seen for 12 months. Expertise with Blackhawk deployments was further developed during 8/9 RAR's exercise at Shoalwater Bay in May.

**Meritorious Unit Commendation (MUC).** After many years of fighting bureaucracy, the 1 RAR Gp of 1965–66 was finally allowed to accept the US MUC for its service with the 173<sup>rd</sup> (US) Airborne Brigade (Separate), the first formation to enter the Vietnam War in 1965. On 4 July 1991 under full ceremonial conditions in Townsville, the red MUC streamer was attached to the 1 RAR Battalion Colour by Lt Gen William S. Carpenter Jr, Commanding General of the US forces in Korea. Representative Tiger veterans from 1965–66 marched onto the parade ground with brother unit reps for the emblazoned colours to be trooped past. Two detachments of 105 Fd Bty proudly held ground with Hamel Guns on corners of the parade ground, alternating with two detachments from 161 Fd Bty RNZA. Veterans of that original tour of Vietnam received approval to wear the crimson, gold-bordered award whilst present day members of the 105<sup>th</sup> are embellished with the MUC whilst posted to the battery. This award to 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery is unique within the RAA.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade held its last camp as a Regular formation in October 1991 at Shoalwater Bay. The Tigers developed a fire support base from which they live fired to Danger Close OPs. BC Dave Evans passed the baton of command in December, describing his two years as 'a bitter-sweet time for the bty but I like to think that the occasional low was outweighed by some great achievements on exercise and on the sporting field'.

## Ready Reserve 1992–1997

June 1991 brought news of the impending Army Force Structure Review which included the introduction of the Ready Reserve scheme in 1992. This concept was based upon attracting tertiary students into the part-time Army by concentrating training into core periods during university semester breaks. It included a financial bonus for a two-year commitment. This was to mean the end of 105 Fd Bty as a full-time entity for a new era of service was planned for 1 Fd Regt.

Major G D (Geoff) Mulherin became the first BC of the now part-time 105<sup>th</sup>, its first change from full-time service since its howitzer battery predecessor was disbanded in 1940. The whole of 1 Fd Regt was reduced to a hierarchical training unit structure pending the arrival of the first Ready Reserve soldiers whose training commenced in July 1992.

Effectively, the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment could only field the equivalent of one battery. A new training cycle emerged wherein there was frantic activity during the July and January university breaks. Initially courses were the priority for collective training could not proceed till the Ready Reservists were qualified. Then these two core periods became the focus for sub-unit-leading-up-to-unit exercises which included CDA assessments. In the intervening months, the full-time component was required to maintain the plethora of equipment in a field regiment and respond to the many external tasks which seemed to come at the same pace as when the unit was manned entirely by full-timers. The 'Regs' began to become somewhat disgruntled with the demands of this new cycle as the lack of full-time private soldiers meant that NCOs were now performing more mundane duties than previously expected. However, by mid-1993, it was evident that there were insufficient soldiers being produced by the Ready Reserve system and manning levels fell.

In January 1994, Major S M P (Simon) Quaglia took up the reins of the Tigers. The anticipated productive start-of-year training period with now qualified Ready Reservists was slowed by a tropical cyclone in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area. The arrival of the majority of the new full-time members for a unit-conducted gun course in June was a pleasant relief from extraneous tasks and when the Ready Reservists arrived in July, the 105<sup>th</sup> was up to strength once more and ready for the regimental exercise. Unfortunately, an influenza epidemic quarantined the gun course on its final weekend so the regimental exercise began with trade testing the new arrivals. The battery exercise in August at Shoalwater Bay enjoyed chemical protective suits, chemical training and a 15-km route march made the end-of-exercise barbecue most welcome.

Two salutes were fired by the full-timers in Canberra in November—one for the Prime Minister of Ireland and the other for the Vice President of Indonesia. This was a snowy affair with a wind chill factor of -20 degrees! It made the Tigers so glad to return to Queensland's warmer climes that they leapt into the CDA's assessment and

received a pat on the back. The year 1994 concluded with a blitz of sporting achievements for the Tigers but, though this was a most creditable record, 104 Fd Bty (ARes) pipped the 105<sup>th</sup> for Champion Battery.

Maj S (Don) Roach became BC of the Tigers in December just in time for the January 1996 brigade exercise which was held at the High Range Training Area near Townsville. The Tigers occupied a fire support base and provided support for the combined arms units testing Ready Reserve standards with live firing battle runs.

This was a busy year for the 105<sup>th</sup>—Div Arty tasks for the joint exercise at Shoalwater Bay (SWB) in May, unit and School support in the same area in June, support to weapon locating troops again at SWB in June, School support tasks at Singleton in August, and a HMAS *Tobruk* deployment to Sydney followed by brigade level fire planning and CDA's evaluation at Singleton in December. The year's adventure training consisted of canyoning, caving and canoeing in the Bungonia State Reserve (near Goulburn, NSW) during August. A high point for the year was firing a salute for the President of the United States' arrival in Sydney.

A manning highlight was achieved in 1996—against an establishment of 121, the battery was manned to 126. The Tigers tails were high and they richly deserved to be 1<sup>st</sup> Field's Champion Battery for that year.

## **Restructuring for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 1997–2005**

Reorganisation is always present—drivers were badged RACT, administrative and quartermaster staff positions became RAAOC, and the last Ready Reserve intake occurred in December 1996. Thankfully, most of the RRes soldiers transferred either to the Regular Army or the Army Reserve. The January 1997 brigade exercise at Cultana and Woomera, SA acknowledged a change of operational concepts back to low-level operations—vulnerable point protection, section and individual gun positions, urban patrolling and VIP protection tasks. Major D J (Dominic) Teakle assumed command in February 1997.

Restructuring of the Army for low-level operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century disbanded HQ 1 Div Arty and RAA units came under the full command of their affiliated brigade headquarters—1 Fd Regt under command 7 TF, a combined 6 and 7 Bde HQs. It also disbanded the last Reserve artillery unit in Brisbane mid-year and 1 Fd Regt added two Reserve batteries (13 and 41) to the 104<sup>th</sup> already under command in exchange for one Regular battery (101) which left the unit to become Fire Support Company 6 RAR in a battalion group concept trial. The 105<sup>th</sup> remained under command as the strongest manned sub-unit of 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment.

The mid-year concentration period included courses at the School at Manly, NSW, a 7 TF Muster in Brisbane and live firing with visiting US troops as enemy at the Wide Bay Training Area. In July, the Tigers pushed a Hamel Gun some 212 km from Brisbane to the Gold Coast and back, raising \$23 806 for a support group to

teenagers with cancer. This was a great test of junior leadership skills and attracted considerable media attention.

On 3 October 1997, His Excellency Maj Gen Peter Arnison AO, Governor of Queensland and Mrs Mary Bade (mother of Ken) opened the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery Ken Bade Historical Room. Capt K W (Ken) Bade was the first Australian officer to be killed in Vietnam. A 105<sup>th</sup> forward observer with B Coy 1 RAR he was killed in action on 8 January 1966 and died in the arms of the company 2IC, Capt Peter Arnison. The 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery RAA Association now provides the Bade Room with a volunteer curator, Arthur Clendinen and assistants for restoration and display work.

Manning remained at a high level (114 against an establishment of 121) and the year concluded with an alpine trekking adventure on the Cradle Mountain track in Tasmania. The Tigers' tails were high indeed.

The General Reserve Supplementary Reserve concept came into effect in 1998 as Major S A (Stu) Bagnall took up the reins of command of the 105<sup>th</sup>. In retrospect, he states that for the next two years the Tigers supported more organisations and sub-units than it did its own exercises. During the two 1 Fd Regt exercises in 1998, 105<sup>th</sup> personnel provided the nucleus for 13 Fd Bty in one and fleshed out 104 Fd Bty in the other. The battery's only exercise was held during October at High Range (near Townsville) where live fire and movement with the supported 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment combined with military operations in urban terrain and close air support shoots.

Manning levels now began to decline significantly—the battery operated on an effective strength of 41 (of which 29 were Regulars) against an establishment of 122. On regimental exercises, total unit resources available could only man two four-gun batteries out of an establishment for four six-gun batteries. By June 1998 there were only 130 Regular positions within 1 Fd Regt.

The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery was not alone in suffering manpower shortfalls—this problem was Army-wide. A massive national enlistment programme was launched and it was so successful that the resources of the recruit training unit at Kapooka, NSW were unable to cope. 7<sup>th</sup> Task Force was selected to train some 300 enlistees over the Christmas 1998 period. Major Bagnall was appointed the OC of this training unit and 105 Fd Bty provided the nucleus of 254 staff for Recruit Company Enoggera (RCE). The battery virtually ceased to exist for the next six months and though hours were long and the task demanding, the junior NCOs' performance was magnificent. RCE was so successful that all staff received a 1<sup>st</sup> Divisional Commander's Commendation. 105's BSM WO2 G J (Greg) Nunn received a special commendation as CSM of RCE whilst BC Bagnall was awarded a Land Commander's Commendation for his endeavours as OC.



It was June 1999 before the Tigers manned their guns again—supporting 2<sup>nd</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment with live fire and movement at Shoalwater Bay. The locating elements of 131<sup>st</sup> Battery tried to pin down the 105<sup>th</sup>, but their average locrep, though accurate, seldom arrived till some five minutes after the battery had vacated the position from which it had fired.

Exercise Crocodile 99 was to have been the Australian Defence Force's major exercise for 1999 but East Timor erupted in September. The 105<sup>th</sup> was scattered to the four winds bolstering other elements for Croc 99, and only one gun, a CP and the forward observers were able to deploy to Singleton for close air support training.

Manning had reached an all-time low with the Tigers sporting an effective strength of only 40. Anything more than three guns in the field was a real struggle. Suddenly, fortune smiled and the 105<sup>th</sup> was warned-out to provide civil liaison parties and an infantry company structure as part of the 6 RAR Gp to relieve in East Timor from May 2000. Almost overnight, the ranks of the Tigers swelled to 119 on parade and a new BC, Major A W (Andy) Garrad and BSM, WO2 N G (Neil) Fisher took over on 1 November 1999. The esprit of the original 32 full-time members infected the new arrivals as the Tigers prepared for operational service once again. Without any doubt, the Tigers ended the 20<sup>th</sup> Century on a very high note.

## **East Timor**

In September 1999, Australia sent the controlling brigade group of an international peacemaking force to restore order in East Timor. Under then Maj Gen P J (Peter) Cosgrove AM MC, this force restored relative calm in six months and then established transitional control till a civilian government could be elected. Despite the two initial artillery batteries being employed as additional infantry companies on operations in East Timor, when 105's time drew near, the force was reduced and only the BC and FO parties and a few drivers (27 in total) departed with 6 RAR in May 2000. These Tigers were engaged in Civil Military Liaison (CML) tasks and, when supplemented by Mortar Platoon personnel from the battalion provided eight teams each of four or five personnel. In August, an additional 20 members of the battery provided a defence platoon for the Blackhawk helicopters in East Timor.

Part of the CML teams' work was to push the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) into action. Refugee camps were established and provided with adequate water, latrines and shelter for up to 2000 people. Initially, the CML teams worked within the 6 RAR area of responsibility. However, directions to assist the New Zealand infantry led to teams being deployed into a neighbouring area. An additional task undertaken was a programme to provide the unskilled members of the supported Bobonaro community with opportunities to learn new trade skills. Basic carpentry skills were expanded to four fully equipped training workshops in the district.

The remainder of the battery secured an exchange to Hawaii as part of a composite 7 Bde rifle company. This exercise was essentially infantry oriented and involved such activities as military operations in urban terrain (*sic* street / house fighting) and air mobility training. This was followed by low risk search duties in support of the Olympic Games in Sydney.

The ET veterans returned in November so the 105<sup>th</sup> was complete for three major exercises in the first half of 2001—restoring gunnery skills at Shoalwater Bay, then as part of the enemy force for a US / Canadian / Australian joint exercise, and live firing with both 8/12 Mdm Regt and 4 Fd Regt. Adventurous training provided relief in the middle of the year, and live firing battle runs with 6 RAR and danger close target shooting later in the year honed gunnery skills to a very high degree.

Maj G C (Griff) Thomas took over the reins of command in January 2002 and witnessed the dispersal of groups to Rifle Company Butterworth, reinforcing 131 Div Loc Bty elements in East Timor and providing assistance to the RAN intercepting and processing illegal vessels in the vicinity of Christmas Island. By mid-year the battery reunited for live firing at Shoalwater Bay, exercising with 4 Fd Regt near Townsville and taking part in the Defence firepower exercise in October. The year 2003 followed the established pattern of unit warm-up exercise, battery exercises, annual unit exercise and assessment and the major defence exercise Crocodile 03. The 1 Fd Regt birthday parade and its accepting the Freedom of the City of Ipswich satisfied the RSM's ceremonial thirst.

Operational rotations come around quickly in a small army and in September 2003 the Tigers' command and liaison parties (CLOG) provided a total of 31 members in two rotations to form the Civil Military Communication (CIMIC) Group for 6 RAR on the western border districts of East Timor under the UN Mission in Support of Timor-Leste (UNMISET). The CIMIC role was to support coordination and passage of information between UN organisations, the ET government agencies and the civil community as well as cross border liaison with the Indonesian Army as required. With the addition of a Fijian CIMIC team, the group was responsible for some 150 000 people. Whilst only a small contribution, the CLOG played an important role in the development and growth of the ET government institutions and services. The Group returned to Australia in July 2004.

BCs changed over during January 2004 and Maj P D (Peter) Monks became the CIMIC leader in ET. Back in Australia, BK Capt S (Steve) Silver led a 55-man Transit Security Element (TSE) to assist with border security operations off the northern shores of Australia. The TSE formed five sections for boarding and searching vessels and detaining the occupants if required. They were spread from RAAF Darwin to Christmas Island supporting three RAN frigates over a five-month period—without any incident worthy of note.

The 105<sup>th</sup> reconstituted and, following a tough battery exercise regenerating

its basic gunnery skills, was joined by the rest of 1 Fd Regt for the annual assessment exercise. The Tigers received excellent results for the Land Comd Arty assessors, bringing great credit to their versatility over a very disparate year.

The year 2005 began focussing on refining tactical and technical procedures with the 105-mm Hamel gun culminating in providing intimate fire support training for 6 RAR. The new policy of Hardening and Networking of the Army (HNA) meant this was also the year of conversion for the 105<sup>th</sup> and the 155-mm M198 Howitzers which began arriving in February. A conversion course culminated in live firing at Wide Bay in May during which members of the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery Association had the opportunity to see their modern successors with their new guns. Just to keep the battery busy, it moved into the headquarters and gun bay buildings of 104 Fd Bty which was to be disbanded on 2 July.

July 1<sup>st</sup> was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reraising of 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery for operations in Malaya. The year 2005 was also the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deployment of 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery to the Vietnam conflict. These events were historical for the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery—the 105<sup>th</sup> was the first RAA unit to serve in Malaya and Vietnam. It was therefore appropriate that at this time the battery should officially adopt its new mantle as a medium battery. During a large ceremonial parade at Enoggera on Saturday 2 July 2005, under the watchful eyes of Brig P B (Paul) Symon AM (former 1 Fd Regt CO) and local Col Comdt RAA Col A R (Arthur) Burke (former 105 GPO in Vietnam and later BC), an era ended when the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery with its 105-mm guns marched off and a new epoch began when the 105<sup>th</sup> Medium Battery marched on with its 155-mm M198 howitzers.

At a small function in the battery lines following the parade, Maj Gen J P (Paul) Stevens AO (former 105 FO and GPO in Vietnam) led the rededication of the Tom Simpson Memorial in the new battery lines. Col G M (Gerry) Salom (105 A Tp Comd in Malaya) then presented naming plaques for the new Perak and Kedah gun troops, former Sgt G C (Gerry) Dekker MM (105 FO Ack in Vietnam) proclaimed the BC and FO parties group as Dekker Troop, and Col Arthur Burke declared the command post group to be Somme Troop. Thus, on this very significant day in the history of the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery, the heritage of this unit was perpetuated.

In 2009, the M198 Howitzers were replaced by the M777 Howitzers and the Battery was redesignated as 105<sup>th</sup> Battery under the restructured 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment RAA with the three Gun Batteries being 105<sup>th</sup> Battery, 104<sup>th</sup> Battery, and 'A' Battery.

## **East Timor**

In April 2000, elements of 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery were deployed to East Timor as part of 6<sup>th</sup> RAR Battalion Group. The entire sub-unit was not deployed, but rather sub-unit elements were deployed and rotated with 6RAR and other Civil Military Liaison teams and peace-keeping units. The Tiger gunners distinguished themselves in these roles.

## **Afghanistan**

105<sup>th</sup> Battery's involvement in Afghanistan was the first time the Gun line had been in a combat role since Vietnam. From the period of 2008-2010, six rotations of Australian Gunners were conducted with the British Army. The Tiger Troop deployed to Afghanistan consisted of 14 Australian Gunners as part of the combined Australian and British Battery which had a total strength of 40 personnel. The British Gunners were from 7<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery. The Tiger Troop was primarily employed in FOBs in the Upper Gereshk Valley, Helmand Province, and was equipped with the British L118 105mm Abbot light gun. This deployment began with six months of training in Australia, followed by six months of training in the UK before arriving in Afghanistan. The Troop arrived in country on 25 Mar 2009 and departed 10 Oct 2009; Tp Comd – LT Khalid ElKhaligi; TSM – WO2 Shaun Graham.

On 09 Apr 2009 at 09:18am – firing the L118 light gun, Tiger Troop gunners fired their first rounds in battle since Vietnam 40 years earlier. A Danish Infantry Platoon under artillery support from the Bty were in contact, receiving small arms fire and rocket propelled grenades. The Danish FOs called in a Danger Close mission - 1 Round Fire for Effect. C Detachment of Tiger Troop was the first to fire, followed by the rest of the troop less than 2 second later. Shortly the Tiger Troop received a report back of Target Rounds, no further enemy action, however the guns remained in the mission for the next two hours covering the platoon's movement to exploit the enemy position in case they received a counter attack.

The Tiger Troop fired 1281 rounds in total over 59 fire missions. The round breakdown was 857 HE, 272 ILLUM, 158 SMK, 4 Marker RP. On average the combined Australian and British Battery shot 2 fire missions per week. This included a 60 round smoke screen to help a Danish Leopard 2 Tank troop to withdraw. The Troop conducted their own patrols to maintain local defensive measures and identify weaknesses. They sent out a hasty QRF patrol, commanded by Australians to support British and Afghan soldiers that were ambushed. They successfully defeated a standoff attack on the Forward Operating Base, including Counter Battery Fire against an enemy Mortar position called in by the British Locating Detachment. They also engaged an All Arms Call for Fire mission for an Infantry mentoring team that did not have a qualified Observer.

## **Iraq**

Subsequent to the establishment of 105<sup>th</sup> Medium Battery in 2005, the Battery supported Australia's commitment to Iraq by providing individual members on six-month detachments to the Security Detachment in Baghdad, and the Australian Army Training Team, up to the end of Australia's commitment in July 2009.

In 2018, 105 Battery members formed part of Task Group Taji VIII and deployed on Operation Okra. Members from 105 Battery worked with Army Iraqi instructors to assist in training over 6,000 soldiers for the ISF. Task Group Taji VIII enabled the opening of the Iraq Army School of Infantry Non-Commissioned Officers

II. This achievement meant that the Iraq School of Infantry could now conduct 75 per cent of its training without assistance from coalition forces. This rotation returned in 2019 after handing over the Task Group Taji IX.

## **Domestic Operations**

In 2020, 105th Battery was called upon to serve on Operation Covid Assist. Gunners were deployed over regional Queensland to maintain border security and processing whilst partnered with the Queensland Police Service. In 2021, 105th Battery were again required to deploy on Operation Covid Assist to assist with hotel quarantine and airport processing.

February 2022, saw South East Queensland devastated by floods resulting in thousands of people with uninhabitable homes. 105th Battery again answered the call to serve and deployed in late February to assist the Brisbane City Council, Gympie Council, Ipswich City Council and Somerset Council. The work consisted of general duties to help restore flood-affected communities. The work was neither glamorous nor military by nature, but rewarding to see the impact the work had on community rehabilitation and restoration.

## **Operational Training**

In 2023 the Battery transitioned from domestic-relief duties to operational readiness as part of 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade's online readiness. Training saw integration with 6RAR embedding Joint Fire Teams (JFTs/ FP Parties) into infantry companies; as well as technical shooting and advanced fire planning by the Battery at Shoalwater Bay. Multiple target engagement was featured in the training along with tactical movement and gunline survivability. Following this, the Battery deployed for exercises Diamond Strike and Tasman Sabre, participating in international large-scale exercises. The nature, intensity and duration of the 2023 training deployments were probably not experienced by the Battery since Vietnam, framing the technical skills and gunnery excellence of Tiger Battery for future operations. New training for operations in urban warfare also was introduced.

## **Conclusion**

The 105<sup>th</sup> Battery is currently a full-time sub-unit of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment RAA at Barce Lines, Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, Brisbane. It is now equipped with four M777A2 Howitzers. It has a long and distinguished lineage from the Great War, the militia between the wars, and in Malaya, Vietnam and East Timor. Its members have every reason to be proud of their heritage which is well displayed in the Ken Bade History Room in the unit lines. The Tiger Battery is surviving reorganisations and financial restrictions and remains ready to provide support wherever, whenever and for whatever is required—'Ubique' has never been a truer battle honour for the proud wearers of the United States Meritorious Unit Commendation and the owners of the 'regal-looking crest with a tiger and a palm tree'—the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery RAA.

## Meritorious Unit Commendation

By direction of the [United States of America] Secretary of the Army, the Meritorious Unit Commendation (MUC) is awarded to the 1<sup>ST</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and attached Units for exceptionally meritorious achievement in the performance of outstanding service:



The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment and its assigned and attached units, (including 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery) distinguished themselves in the conduct of military operations in the Republic of Vietnam from 5 May 1965 to 16 May 1966 while attached to the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade (Separate) of the United States Army. As the first ground combat unit in-country, the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade and its assigned and attached units conducted extensive combat manoeuvres [*sic*] in the Bien Hoa area and in the Viet Cong strongholds of War Zone D and the Iron Triangle during the period 5 May 1965 to 4 May 1967. In every confrontation with the stubborn insurgents, the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade displayed marked aggressiveness which enabled them to neutralize enemy strongholds and capture thousands of logistical items. In addition to remarkable skill and tenacity in combat, the sky soldiers of the brigade carried on an extensive civic action program characterized by sincere compassion for the suppressed local populace. During each of the brigade's combat operations, the sky soldiers immeasurably aided the allied counterinsurgency effort by winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. The remarkable proficiency and devotion to duty displayed by the members of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon themselves, the Armed Forces of the United States, and the Armed Forces of Australia and New Zealand.

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## Unit Citation – Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm



The 105<sup>th</sup> Battery RAA first Tour of South Vietnam was awarded the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation as part of the 1RAR combat group 1965-66. The Citation was awarded by the former Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) to specific military units that distinguished themselves in battle. The Governor-General formally approved the awarding of the Citation to identified Australian military units in recognition of their service during the Vietnam war. This Unit Citation can be worn by Gunners of the 105<sup>th</sup> Field battery SVN 1<sup>st</sup> Tour, and is displayed on the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery official Banners, flags and memorabilia. Unfortunately the Award is not approved to be worn on the uniform of the current serving 105<sup>th</sup> battery.

In 2023 Defence Awards extended the award to all units that served in the Vietnam war. Hence 105<sup>th</sup> Battery second tour gunners were awarded this Unit Citation.

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## **Tom Simpson Memorial**

Gnr T (Tom) Simpson was the first member of the 105<sup>th</sup> Field Battery to die on active service in Vietnam. He contracted cerebral malaria on 6 December 1965 and died three days later. His body left the battery with full military honours and was buried in the 28<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Brigade Cemetery at Terendak in Malaysia, the nearest safe burial ground to Vietnam.

To honour Tom, the battery's social club was titled the Tom Simpson Club. During the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the reraising of 105<sup>th</sup> Battery, Maj Gen J P (Paul) Stevens AO, a former FO and GPO with the battery in Vietnam (1969–70) led a dedication on 1 July 1995 of a stone cairn memorial in the unit's social gathering area. This memorial was repositioned when the 105<sup>th</sup> moved to new premises and Maj Gen Stevens led the rededication ceremony on 2 July 2005.

Barracks reconstruction and facilities rationalisation in 2018 unfortunately saw the loss of the Battery social club amalgamated into the Regimental Gunner Club. Tom Simson is memorialised in the honour wall in Cattery headquarters,

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## **Ken Bade Room**

The Ken Bade Room is situated in the barracks of 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment RAA at Barce Lines, Gallipoli Barracks Enoggera Queensland. Formerly the Ken Bade Room housed the 105<sup>th</sup> Battery historical collection up to 2019. Then on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the room was repurposed as the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment Library located in the Long Tan Centre. The room is formally dedicated and memorialised as the Ken Bade Room.

Capt K W (Ken) Bade, an FO with 105 Fd Bty was the first Australian officer to be killed in the Vietnam War, KIA 8<sup>th</sup> January 1966. On 3 October 1997, Ken's mother, Mrs Mary Bade BEM opened this Room jointly with His Excellency Maj Gen Peter Arnison AO CVO, Governor of Queensland, the former infantry officer in whose arms Bade died.

A Last Post Ceremony of Remembrance of Capt Ken Bade's service and sacrifice was held at the Australian War Memorial on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

Ken Bade's Artillery sword and scabbard, medals, swagger stick, and screed of his service are displayed in the room.

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## 105<sup>th</sup> Battery RAA Association

The association was established as an Incorporated Association in February 1993. From July 2024, the association continues as an unincorporated association.

The association is open to all ranks and for all people who have served with, or are serving with the Tiger Battery. It was founded from its veterans following the 1987 Welcome Home [from Vietnam] Parade in Sydney and then the Vietnam Memorial dedication in Canberra in 1992.

The association has listed more than 800 former Gunners of 105<sup>th</sup> Battery and in 2023 had a financial membership of almost 300. Up to 2023, reunions were held annually when possible, and regional assemblies of 105<sup>th</sup> Battery members, veterans and families occur each ANZAC Day.

The prime media of communication is through its biannual magazine ***Tiger Rag***, its website, [www.105bty.asn.au](http://www.105bty.asn.au), and by email to [42.105as@gmail.com](mailto:42.105as@gmail.com).

Details on the Association, including its activities and membership, and information about the Tiger Rag magazine are posted on the website: <https://www.105bty.asn.au>. From 2024 the Tiger Rag will be published in electronic format, circulated by email and published also on the website.

Members and former members of 105th Battery can participate in activities of the Association by contacting via the above email address.



## Battery Commanders

1917 Morris H N (Bert) (RIP)  
 9/21-1924 Rees C V (Charles) (RIP)  
 1924-9/39 Williams F N V (Frank) (RIP)  
 10/39-12/40 Cahill M J C (Cyril) (RIP)  
 6/55-12/57 Bogle B L (Bruce)  
 12/57-1/60 Cubis R M C (Dick) (RIP)  
 1/60-10/60 Forward B C (Brien) (RIP)  
 10/60-3/64 Moore D H (Don)  
 4/64-8/64 Beck H J C (Craig) (RIP)  
 8/64-2/65 Taylor G T (Graham)  
 2/65-9/66 Tedder P N O (Peter)  
 9/66-12/67 Thompson M M (Mike)  
 1/68-2/70 Thomson L A (Lachie)  
 5/70-10/70 MacKenzie K W (Ken)  
 10/70-2/71 Glance B A (Brian)+  
 3/71-12/72 Hawkins M R (Mick)  
 12/72-7/74 Jansen J A R (John)  
 7/74-2/76 Reid I V (Ian) (RIP)  
 2/76-12/77 Burke A R (Arthur)  
 2/78-1/80 Richardson W M (Bill)  
 1/80-12/81 Ayerbe A W (Tony)  
 12/81-12/83 Forster D M (David)  
 12/83-12/84 Vickers W R C (Rick)  
 12/84-12/85 Keane P W (Peter)  
 12/85-12/87 Joske S K (Steve)  
 12/87-12/89 Bassett G J (Geoff)  
 12/89-12/91 Evans D L (Dave)  
 12/91-12/93 Mulherin G D (Geoff)  
 12/93-12/95 Quaglia S M P (Simon)  
 12/95-2/97 Roach S (Don)  
 2/97-12/97 Teakle D J (Dominic)  
 1/98-11/99 Bagnall S A (Stu)  
 11/99-12/01 Garrad A W (Andy)  
 1/02-12/03 Thomas G C (Griff)  
 2/04-12/05 Monks P D (Peter)  
 01/06-01/08 Mallet S (Steve)  
 01/08- Duncan P B (Paul)  
 01/11-01/12 Ryan D A  
 01/12-01/13 Hompas SA  
 01/13-12/13 Carew D A (Dave)

## Battery Sergeant Majors

4/55-10/57 Hook T (Tom)  
 11/57-10/58 McMillan R (Ray)  
 10/58-8/59 Royal J (John)  
 8/59-6/61 O'Brien N (Nipper)  
 6/61-12/61 Matthews R R (Dick)(RIP)  
 1/62-11/63 Almond M (Max)  
 11/63-6/65 Mitchell F H (Frank) (RIP)  
 6/65-9/66 Soxsmith J J (Joe) (RIP)  
 10/66- James S D (Stan) (RIP)  
 -2/68 Briggs S (Stan) (RIP)  
 2/68-6/69 Shields RWP(Robbie)(RIP)  
 6/69-2/70 Atherden D A (Denny)  
 3/70-12/70 Shields RWP(Robbie)(RIP)  
 1/71-5/72 Buhmann J H (Ken)  
 5/72-2/74 Haskard R J (Ron)  
 2/74-11/74 Pollock J C (John)  
 11/74-8/76 Bostock W (Bill) (RIP)  
 8/76-4/77 Webster G J (Geoff)  
 4/77-5/77 Dyer L N (Len) (RIP)  
 6/77-12/78 Simmons F J F (Fred)  
 1/79-12/79 Gann R (Ray)  
 1/80-12/80 Smith D H (Dave)  
 1/81-10/82 McCann R (Ross)  
 10/82-12/83 Sheperd R (Reg)  
 1/84-7/85 Pullen R J (Russ)  
 7/85-12/86 Collins T (Terry)  
 12/86-1/89 Scott R A (Ron)  
 1/89-12/90 Johnstone G J (Gordon)  
 1/91-12/92 Dunlop R D (Bob)  
 1/93-12/94 Lakey G (Graham)  
 1/95-10/95 Kennedy P (Peter)  
 10/95-1/99 Nunn G (Greg)  
 1/99-11/99 Cooper S N (Shane)  
 11/99-12/01 Fisher N G (Neil)  
 1/02-6/03 Williams K (Kev)  
 6/03-12/04 Beiring B (Buck)  
 1/05-01/07 Whish T (Trevor)  
 01/07-01/08 Graham S  
 01/11-11/13 Hawckett D J  
 01/14-01/15 Boswell P R (Paul)

01/14-12/15 Watson T (Trevor)  
01/16-12/16 Armstrong S (Stuart)  
01/17-12/17 Elkhaliqi K (Khalid)  
01/18-12/19 Murcott A E  
01/20-12/20 Dickeson N (Nick)  
01/21- 12/22 Mahr N (Nick)  
12/22- 12/23 Reilly S (Shaun)  
01/24- Arbuthnot L (Luke)

01/16-12/16 Miller M G (Matt)  
01/17-12/17 Morante M R (Matt)  
01/18-12/18 Watson B J  
01/19-12/19 Rogan M  
01/20-12/21 Bushell B (Brian)  
01/22- 6/23 Carkagis A (Anthony)  
06/23- 1/25 Partridge C (Carl)

## Abbreviations

24/7	24 hrs per day, 7 days per week	CPX	command post exercise CRA
A/7 etc	A Company 7 Battalion		Commander Royal Artillery CSC
AAFV	Australian Army Force Vietnam		Conspicuous Service Cross DCM
AB Bde	airborne brigade		Distinguished Conduct Medal det
acft	aircraft		detachment
AC	Companion of the Order of Australia	DF(SOS)	defensive fire (save our souls)
ACV	armoured command vehicle	div	division
Adv	advanced	DS	direct support
AFA	Australian Field Artillery	DSO	Distinguished Service Order
AFAB	Australian Field Artillery Brigade	DUKW	motorised amphibian vehicles
AIF	Australian Imperial Force	ED	Efficiency Decoration
AM	Member of the Order of Australia	EHC	evacuee handling centre
AO	area of operations	ET	East Timor
	Officer of the Order of Australia	ex	exercise
APC	armoured personnel carrier	FAB	Field Artillery Brigade
ARA	Australian Regular Army	FACE	Field Artillery Computing Equipment
ARes	Army Reserve	fd	field
arty	artillery	FF	Field Force Command
Arty Tac	Artillery Tactical Headquarters	FFV	Field Force Command Vietnam
ATF	Australian Task Force ASM	FO	Forward Observer
artificer sergeant major AWCC	Air	FOO	forward observation officer
Warning Control Centre BAC		FSB	fire support base
Brigade Ammunition Column BC		Gnr	Gunner (artillery private soldier)
battery commander		GOC	General Officer Commanding
bde	brigade	Gp	group
bdr	bombardier (artillery corporal)	GPO	Gun Position Officer
BG	Battle Group	H&I	harassment & interdiction
BK	Battery Captain	HNA	Hardening & Networking of the Army
BMRA	Brigade Major Royal Artillery	Hon	honorary
Bn	battalion	How	howitzer(s)
BSM	Battery Sergeant Major	HQ	headquarters
btv	battery	Inf	infantry
CB	counter-battery	Int	intelligence
CDA	Commander Divisional Artillery	JD	Jungle Division
CIC	Commander in Chief	KIA	killed in action
CIMIC	Civil Military Communications	LCT	Landing Craft Tank
CLOG	Command and Liaison Parties	LFX	live firing exercise
CMF	Citizens Military Forces	LH	Light Horse
CML	Civil Military Liaison	LO	liaison officer
CMG	Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George	loc	location/locating
CO	commanding officer	lt	light
CofS	Chief of Staff	LZ	landing zone
Col Comdt	Colonel Commandant	MACV	Military Assistance Comd Vietnam
cmd	command(er)	MC	Military Cross
coop	cooperation	MDS	Medical Dressing Station
		MI	Mutual Instruction
CPO	Command Post Officer	MIA	missing in action
		MID	Mentioned in Despatches

MM	Military Medal	sigs	signallers
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal	SOP	Standing Operating Procedure
Mtn	mountain	SP	self-propelled
MUC	US Meritorious Unit Commendation	SPE	services protected evacuation
MV	muzzle velocity	sqn	squadron
N Comd	Northern Command NS	SWB	Shoalwater Bay (Training Area)
National Service(men) NVA		tac	tactical
North Vietnamese Army		TET	Chinese New Year
OAM	Medal of the Order of Australia	TEWT	tactical exercise without troops
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire	TF	Task Force
ODF	Operational Deployment Force	TFAIO	Task Force Arty Int Officer
OP	observation post	TFHQ	Task Force Headquarters
OPO	observation post officer	TL	Troop Leader
ops	operations	TSE	Transit Security Element
pdr	pounder	TW	Tropical Warfare
PR	public relations	UMT	Universal Military Training
PW	prisoner of war	UN	United Nations
QF	quick firing	UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
R&C	rest and convalescence	UNMISSET	UN Mission in Support of Timor-Leste
R&R	rest and recreation	USN	United States Navy
RA Inf	Royal Australian Infantry	VC	Viet Cong
RAA	Royal Australian Artillery	VD	Volunteer Decoration
RAE	Royal Australian Engineers	Vic	Victoria(n)
RAR	The Royal Australian Regiment	Vol	Volunteer
RDF	Rapid Deployment Force	VVF	Victoria Volunteer Force
regt	regiment	WE	War Establishment
RHQ	Regimental Headquarters	WIA	wounded in action
RMC	Royal Military College	WO	Warrant Officer
RNZA	Royal New Zealand Artillery	WW1	World War 1
rpg	rounds per gun	WW2	World War
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade		
RQR	The Royal Queensland Regiment		
RRes	Ready Reserve		
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major		

## The Author

*Arthur Burke was born in Brisbane, Australia during the Second World War, matriculated from the Townsville Grammar School and became a bank officer, travelling salesman, real estate agent and part-time CMF soldier before joining the Australian Regular Army to serve as the Gun Position Officer and later a Forward Observer with the Artillery's 105th Field Battery during the Vietnam War.*

*Twenty-seven years later he retired, having commanded both a battery (105<sup>th</sup>) and a regiment (4<sup>th</sup> Field) of the Royal Australian Artillery, managed a major Defence project which manufactured a 105mm light howitzer artillery gun (Hamel), and been the senior operations officer to the general commanding the Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Division.*

*In retirement Arthur was a war widows' pensions advocate with Legacy and the honorary State secretary of the ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland. He was recognised with an OAM for this latter work in the 2003 Centenary Medal honours list.*

*Arthur was the honorary historian for two artillery units (105<sup>th</sup> Battery and 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment) and was appointed the Royal Australian Artillery's Colonel Commandant for Queensland in 2002.*

*He retired to the 'big Gun Park' on his passing in January 2019.*

*The 2022-24 revisions were authored and edited by LTCOL (Ret'd) Jim Box with assistance and contributions from LTCOL Khalid Elkhaliqi and LT Jackson Drummond.*



1916 – 4.5inch Howitzer - AWM



2021 – M777 Howitzer