

7 Field Regiment Association

Yandoo

Royal Australian Artillery

2000

Vol 1 No 14



7 FD REGT RAA ASSOCIATION

2 SUAKIN STREET, PYMBLE 2073  
(P.O. BOX 206 FRENCHS FOREST 2086)

**FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER  
7<sup>TH</sup> FIELD REGIMENT**

2000 has seen a substantial change in personnel representing the Gunners on the northern side of the harbour. LTCOL Ray Brennan has handed the Regiment over and taken up his appointment as an Instructor at the Regional Training Centre at Holsworthy. I thank LTCOL Brennan for his efforts whilst at the helm and the great shape that the unit was left in when I assumed command in January. Of other appointments, MAJ Shaun Harding has relinquished the job of BC HQ Bty to CAPT Steve Bennett so that he can concentrate on the many responsibilities of OPSO. Both field batteries have also welcomed new BCs, MAJ Andrew O'Brien at 113 and CAPT Andrew Attard at 28. WO1 Phil Matthysen has assumed his role as RSM and provided great support and advice throughout the year. Since August he has been away from the unit, posted as RSM of the Operational Search Battalion involved in the ADF's commitment to support the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. WO2 Scott Driscoll and WO2 'Paddy' McGarry both arrived at the unit this year as the new SMIGs, and have since worked tirelessly for their respective sub-units, especially during the absence of the RSM.

2000 was always going to be an 'unusual' year from the point of view of a CO of an artillery regiment. Training and exercising in the traditional sense of providing indirect fire support to other units of 8 Bde has not occurred. Instead, the focus for 7 Fd Regt, and indeed the majority of the ADF, has been towards preparing for the commitment to provide security to the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games – OP GOLD. The first six months of 2000 has seen the majority of unit personnel trained in operational search techniques over a number of block training periods and confirmatory weekends. Between August and November the unit has had over 60 GRes personnel involved in different aspects of the Operational Search Battalion, including CAPT Worboys performing the job of XO 8 Coy, as well as varying lengths of commitment by soldiers to the search platoons and reserve companies. Whilst this commitment to OP GOLD has been the priority for 7 Fd Regt this year, the absence of artillery firing exercises has enabled other personnel to also focus on other activities.

The new Tpt SGT, SGT Adrian Turrie marched-in to the unit fresh from operations with INTERFET in East Timor, and the ADJT, CAPT Brandon Wood completed a six month deployment to East Timor as a United Nations Military Observer with UNTAET. The remainder of unit personnel have been extremely busy with the other aspect of my focus for 2000; Recruiting! Changes to the recruiting process have led to both insufficient and inconsistent recruiting numbers. The unit has therefore initiated a number of activities, including school visits by the Cadre staff to address Year 11 and 12 students, and letterbox drops within the 'recruiting' areas for respective sub-units/depots. The purpose of such activities has been to draw prospective recruits to information nights to be held at depots in October and November, and then to a 'Try-before-you-buy' weekend at Holsworthy Range in mid November.

This year has also seen the successful completion of a pilot Non-RAA Personnel Safety Officer Assistant's Course at Puckapunyal by five members of the unit. Four of the unit members were female, and hence the long term intention is to be able to employ any member of the unit in the role of Safety Officer Assistant for a particular field firing exercise. This would thereby 'free' the limited numbers of RAA OPCP personnel to be employed as FO Assistants or to work in the battery Command Posts. In September, WO2 McGarry and I attended a 2 Div Arty Conference sponsored by 23 Fd Regt in Canberra. As well as the issue of this course being discussed, many other matters relating to GRes soldier and officer service were debated and consensus reached on matters of importance to 2 Div RAA units that need to be addressed at the RAA Corps Conference in November.

As I write this, it is with the sense of anticipation that next year will see a welcome return to our traditional role. As a CO I want to get the unit back into the field and training hard in the basics of providing indirect fire support and advising and co-ordinating all fire assets for manoeuvre unit commanders. Whilst attempting to return to this role I remain mindful of the fact that there will be a significant number of unit members deploying to Malaysia in November as part of the 8 Bde commitment to Rifle Company Butterworth. This will be a tremendous opportunity for unit personnel to experience an overseas deployment and utilize foreign training facilities.

Next year will also see 7 Fd Regt lead the 8 Bde commitment to the two week Exercise Pacific Reserve in Hawaii. To compound this high level of activity, many key unit members will be moving on at the end of 2000. MAJ Harding is posted to ATSOC in Canberra, CAPT Wood is posted to Land Headquarters, WO2 Bill Rowe is also heading to Paddington as the RQMS of the newly-formed 1 MP Battalion. Others to move on include the CCLK, WO2 Tim Jones, CPL Dom Adams, and LCPL Josh Brandon. As I write this, there is no intention by SCMA to replace many of these ARA staff because of the army-wide shortage of such personnel and the higher priority requirements of 1 Div units. To all of these personnel moving on at the end of the year, as well as to those remaining at 7 Fd Regt, I thank you for your commitment and endeavours over the past year, and wish you good soldiering in the future.

The past 12 months have been extremely busy for 7 Fd Regt. It has seen an ever-increasing demand being placed upon all commanders to ensure that the unit meets its significant commitment to the largest peacetime deployment of ADF personnel in Australia's history; support to the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As well, the continuing issue of recruiting to the GRes has required a significant and sustained commitment from the unit. With the new year bringing both a welcome return to our traditional role and the competing requirement to provide personnel to the Brigade's commitments to Rifle Company Butterworth and Exercise Pacific Reserve, the next 12 months will undoubtedly prove to be even busier for 7 Fd Regt. We would not want it any other way!

Ubique.

**P. I. BROAD, RFD**  
LTCOL  
CO 7 Fd Regt