



# The Germ Journal



**Issue Number: 41**  
**30 June 2011**

\*\*\*\*\*

Welcome to the June 2011 Edition of the Germ Journal (the Ex-104 Battery Member's Newsletter).

**Vale: John Andrew Elston**  
**17 July 1946 – 22 May 2011**

I received this note from Graham Floyd.

John was on Charlie Gun. Geoff Haack was the Gun Sgt and Kev Brown the No7. Some other names who were part of the detachment Ken Swartz, Jock Boggie(RIP), Graham Floyd, John Brown.

John was at Scrimmy's funeral even though he was not well then. He still enjoyed having a beer with old mates and was in good spirits.

John was a good mate and a true gunner/Germ. Lest we Forget.

Rest in Peace, John Elston.

**Contact List Updates:**

If any Germ has an E-mail address that is not recorded on the Contact List please let me know (corcorf@bigpond.net.au). It will save time and money if all I have to do is mail out electronically.

New/Change of address, etc.:-

Peter Small's email address:  
pete.small@bigpond.com

I'm still looking for email addresses for Stuart McArthur, if any one can help me out it would be appreciated?

**12 Field Regiment RAA Association:**

**Report for Germ Journal June 2011**

Good day all 104 Battery Germs,

At last finished the preliminary planning for our Regimental reunion on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of April next year, it has been decided after lengthy and painful debate by the committee that the Association will be subsidising the entry costs to all members to the tune of \$6000.00, you would be saving around \$30.00 or 54% off the full ticketed price incurred by the Association for all the functions. I point out that the subsidy will only be available to members of the Association, however if you, your wife or partner is not a member at the present time the Association will accept you as a full member and your wife / partner as an Associate member for \$20.00 each payable within the next six months and you both would be entitled to the fully subsidised entry cost. A payment by you both in the eschewing years would be \$10.00 per annum each if you both want to continue to be a member or and an Associate member.

We have structured our entry costs into three groups which will allow our members and others to select the category under which they fall. We encourage all Germs to try to attend the reunion whether they are a member of the Association or not, however once again the subsidy will not apply if you don't become a member. I point out that the full unsubsidised entry costs are still very cheap at \$120.00 per person. The final registration forms as well as a membership application are included in this report for your perusal and

response (refer attached). The forms are easy to understand and outline the functions, the venue, the costs and also the areas where you will have to put your hand in the pocket I.E. Drinks, Accommodation, and travel. We also have allowed any prospective attendees to pay in three equal instalments so as to make the admission price more bearable over the time leading up to the reunion. We will be offering a choice of motels and a Caravan park within the close area of the functions and we will include them in our next three newsletters and Germ Journals.

I know that the Regimental reunion in 2012 does clash somewhat with the 104 Battery reunion planned for 2013; however there is nothing we could do about it as the Association had planned Adelaide as the venue some three years back.

For those of you who are members of the Association we will have news in our next newsletter as to what is happening at North Fort, the Memorial walk and the museum. All is not as bad as it seemed when it was announced that the museum would close last January. Our newsletter, as will be this edition of the Germ journal, is available for viewing on our website [12fieldregiment.com](http://12fieldregiment.com) in coming weeks.

Well that's my lot for this issue of the Germ Journal.

Best regards to all.

Rob (Cossie) Costello.

**Royal Australian Artillery Association:**

No Report this quarter.

**National Artillery Museum at North Fort, North Head:**

No Report this quarter.

**Reunions:**

Adelaide 2013;

Bob Dehle is looking to contact the Germs listed below. All are from the second tour except for David Scott-Branagan who was silly enough to do both. If anybody can help Bob's email address is: [bobdehle69@bigpond.com](mailto:bobdehle69@bigpond.com)

Larry McWilliam, John F (Gonk) Davidson, Kevin J Crouch, Maurice M Pearce, Frank A Phillips, Paul C Beacroft, Graham J Cahill, Ray G (Andy) Devine, DA Horne, Leonard A Johnson, Gregory W Laird, Roger N Oliver, Allan D Robotham, David J Talbot, Victor Turco, David T Weldon, David J Scott-Branagan, John M Bell.

Bob's report follows.

The planning for the 2013 reunion in Adelaide is well on the way with accommodation at the Adelaide Shores Holiday Resort at West Beach being finalised. A separate email will be sent in the next few days outlining the options available with prices.

This venue was used earlier this year for a large reunion for the RAAF and 6RAR are planning theirs there for April 2012, so the resort is well able to cater for large numbers.

The program being considered is along similar lines to that held last year in Darwin, with lots of opportunities for getting together as well as tours to some of the state's great features, including the Barossa Valley, Southern Vales wineries, Victor Harbor and many city attractions.

The reunion is planned to start on Tuesday 23rd April with registration and dinner, free day for tours etc on the Wednesday, then a full day of remembrance and fellowship for Anzac Day. The Battery Dinner is scheduled for the Saturday evening at an exciting new venue, then breakfast together for the Sunday 28th prior to departure.

Can I suggest that you mark these dates in ink in your diaries and start looking for cheap air fares to Adelaide. Plan to come before the 23rd and stay longer as there is plenty to see and do in South Australia.

Best wishes.

Bob Dehle

**Items of Interest:**

Contributions from around the country follow;

Rob and Rosemary Brooker's News: -

Hi all,

Life is fairly quiet in Canberra as we bunker down for the winter.

This year Rob marched with Royal Australian Survey Corps in Canberra on Anzac Day and caught up with some of his old work colleagues. He transferred from Artillery after he came home from Vietnam and discharged from Survey Corps in 1987. However, he said it wasn't the same as marching with his mates from 104 Fld Bty.

We recently visited the AWM to see The Rats Of Tobruk exhibition, which was very interesting. Rob's grandfather, who ended up as the RSM of the 2/48th Btn, was awarded a Military Medal at Tobruk. My father joined the 2/48th at the end of Tobruk, just in time for the Battle of El Alamein, where he was wounded in action. Rob and I met as a result of family friendships in SA. We had planned to have a holiday in Egypt to look up all these WW11 sites, but decided it is not that safe at the moment.

Rob has finally been fitted with hearing aids, so he can hear a lot more now, which is good most of the time!

We had a few days in Tuross last month while Rob played in a Lawn Bowls competition. We are going to Adelaide shortly for a few days to catch up with our Mums. The rest of the family are well.

Best wishes to all,

Rob and Rosemary

Ken and Judy Burt's News: -

Hello Frank, Paula and Fellow Germs,

We hope you are all fit and well.

This year our eldest son Grant turned 40 so the whole family had a big celebration for a week up at Ballina as he lives at Lennox Heads. There were 8 adults and our 4 grandchildren and we will have great memories of the holiday. We had perfect weather so the kids had a ball, girls did Byron Bay over (4 days in a row) and the boys went surfing and fishing so everyone was happy. It was a great location for us all.

April saw Judes dad turn 97 & and still as fit as ever. I turned 65 in June where have the years gone. We spent Anzac Day in Bowral this year.

Winter is upon us here in the Highlands. The trees have lost their leaves after the best autumn for years as the foliage was spectacular. The fire has been going non stop and we have had good rain so all the dams are full.

We are planning our next trip for August–September, either to the Corner Country of N.S.W. or up to Lake Eyre, depending on the roads.

I am slowly working through my Bucket List.

That's all for now.

Regards.

Ken and Judy.

Frank and Paula Corcoran's News: -

Well Nadia's and Julian's wedding was a great success and a real young persons wedding. We let them choose the guests and while Paula and I had a few people we wanted them to invite there was no old aunties and uncles that they would not see again. Paula and I went through that caper to the exclusion of a lot of our mates, as I'm sure a lot of you did too. We did not want to do that to our kids.

On the personal side you may not have heard but I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in February and had an operation to remove it on May 4. I'm home convalescing and the Surgeon is confident he got the lot but a test in August will tell. In the meantime I am doing my exercises to build up the pelvic floor muscles and should be as good as new in the not too distant future, by late July fingers crossed.

I had no symptoms it was picked up in my annual blood test so it was found early, which is a plus. It sent a lot of blokes at the local Club to the Doctor for blood tests so that was also a plus as they had not been bothering to have regular check ups. There is a lesson here fellow Germs.

Cheers.

Frank

Paula's Prattles;

Hello to all Germs,

We are jealous of all those Queenslanders as we are having a freezing winter here in Melbourne.

Many thanks for all the good wishes for our daughter's wedding in April. It was a roaring success and she looked stunning.

Also, many thanks to the Germs for their phone calls and visits to Frank during his illness. He is doing well although is sick to death of himself and bored shitless, can't go too far yet.

Hope you are all well.

Paula

Gordon and Sue Johnson's News: -

Good day Boys and Girls,

Another ANZAC Day goes by and the March here in Brisbane is drawing bigger crowds every year, which is good.

There was about six of us Germs, myself, Leo Nicholson, Hugh Polson, Jeff Haack, Dick Duane and Laurie Bennett.

I Have the 104 Banner as Sue is doing some repairs to it. The corners are wearing out due to the poles rubbing on it. I will make sure it is with us in Adelaide.

Cheers to all.

Johno and Sue

Greg and Barb Petersen's News: -

Hi Frank,

Hello from the Petersens.

All is good up here in Brisbane.

We did venture down to Melbourne in May to visit the King Tut Exhibition, which is on display. Enjoyed that and managed to catch up with Alan and Kath Jackson, Frank Flegg and Neil Denham. Did a day trip to Ballarat. Very interesting but very cold.

I guess like everyone else, we have our families to keep us busy. Our first born grandchild is turning six in July and little Ruby, our granddaughter is now 18 months old and of course is a sheer delight.

Greg has always loved animals and works out at our local RSPCA two mornings per week.

We have a cruise planned to NZ towards the end of the year with a group of friends and are looking forward to that.

Frank, both Greg and I hope you are recovering well from your op. Would have been nice to catch up with you and Paula whilst in Melbourne, but hopefully next time I can have a bubbly or two with Paula.

Hope all are safe and well.

For now, take care.

Barbara and Greg

Lee and Rosemary Stockley's News: -

Hi Frank,

We were in Bali in March and off to Europe for 8 weeks in August. We are on an organised tour in Britain, Wales, Ireland and Scotland then taking another from Rome to Tuscany. Also back to Istanbul and this time have booked a private tour to Gallipoli to see the areas we did not see in 2009. Six days in Hong Kong on the way home.

ANZAC Day was probably one of the best I have ever had in Sydney, it really was a marvellous day.

Looking forward to Adelaide in 2013 for 104 Bty reunion.

Hope all are enjoying good health.

Regards.

Stockers and Rosemary

Barry and Sue West's News: -

I received the following updates from Barry who continues battling his illness.

Hi all,

Had a review with the Haematologist today (Tuesday 7 June) and here is a brief summary of where I am at.

After four cycles of chemo treatment (each cycle being 21 days), the M-Protein levels (the bad stuff) have steadily dropped from 36 g/dL – 27 – 12 – 4 g/dL. What that means is all going well, there is a good chance that good stem cells may be able to be harvested in preparation for stem-cell replacement therapy. Anyway,

what happens now is that I will have a bone marrow biopsy to determine a baseline for the bone marrow plasma cells and that will be followed up with two more cycles of chemo. Providing that the M-protein levels remain low, it looks like I will then go down the track for a stem-cell harvest in preparation for stem-cell replacement therapy. That's when all the fun begins, but of course we haven't quite reached that stage yet, but if you are interested, I guess you could Google "*stem cell replacement therapy*". What that means of course is that the latest review is a bit daunting (I guess we all have some fear of the unknown), but at least encouraging.

I guess that will do for now.

Cheers

Barry and Susan

**General:**

I received the following from Hugh Polson who thought the readers of the *Germ Journal* might be interested in it.

**Subject: Retiring the Last Huey**

This is the speech given at Fort Rucker when they retired the last Huey on 17 May 2011

As a Vietnam Veteran Army Aviator, I would like to thank everyone for coming to this special occasion, on this to be honest...very sad day, the end of an era. An era that has spanned over 50 years. The retirement of this grand old lady "OUR MOTHER" ... the Huey.

I would like to thank, MG Crutchfield for allowing me to speak at this event and try to convey in my own inadequate, meager way what this aircraft means to me and so many other Vietnam veterans.

First a few facts:

It was 48 yrs ago this month that the first Huey arrived in Vietnam with units that were to become part of the 145th and the 13th Combat Aviation Battalions; both units assigned here at Ft Rucker today. While in Vietnam, the Huey flew approximately 7,457,000 combat assault sorties; 3,952,000 attack or gunship sorties and 3,548,000 cargo supply sorties. That comes to over 15 million sorties flown over the paddies and jungles of Nam, not to include the millions of sorties flown all over the world and other combat zones since then. What an amazing journey, I am honored and humbled to have been a small part of that journey.

To those in the crowd that have had the honor to fly, crew, or ride this magnificent machine in combat, we are the chosen few, the lucky ones. They understand what this aircraft means and how hard it is for me to describe my feelings about her as a Vietnam combat pilot, for she is alive, has a life of her own and has been a life long friend.

How do I break down in a few minutes a 42 year love affair, she is as much a part of me and to so many others, as the blood that flows through our veins. Try to imagine all those touched over the years by the shadow of her blades.

Other aircraft can fly overhead and some will look up and some may not; or even recognize what they see but, when a Huey flies over everyone looks up and everyone knows who she is. Young or old all over the world she connects with all.

To those that rode her into combat, the sound of those blades causes our heart beat to rise and breaths to quicken in anticipation of seeing that beautiful machine fly overhead and the feeling of comfort she brings. No other aircraft in the history of aviation evokes the emotional response the Huey does. Combat veteran or not, she is recognized all around the world by young and old, she is the ICON of the Vietnam war, U.S. Army Aviation and the U.S. Army. Over 5 decades of service she carried Army Aviation on her back, from bird dogs and piston powered helicopters with a secondary support mission, to the force multiplier combat

arm that Army Aviation is today.

Even the young aviators of today, that are mainly Apache pilot's, Blackhawk pilot's, etc., that have had a chance to fly her will tell you there is no greater feeling, honor, or thrill then to be blessed with the opportunity to ride her thru the sky. They may love there Apaches and Blackhawks, but they will say there is no aircraft like flying the Huey "it is special". There are two kinds of helicopter pilots: those that have flown the Huey and those that wish they could have.

The intense feelings generated for this aircraft are not just from the flight crews but, also from those who rode in back into and out of the "devils caldron". As paraphrased here from "God's own lunatics", Joe Galloway's tribute to the Huey and her flight crews and other Infantry veterans comments:

Is there anyone here today who does not thrill to the sound of those Huey blades? That familiar whop-whop-whop is the soundtrack of our war, the lullaby of our younger days it is burned in to our brains and our hearts. To those who spent their time in Nam as a grunt, know that noise was always a great comfort. Even today when I hear it, I stop, catch my breath and search the sky for a glimpse of the mighty eagle.

To the pilots and crews of that wonderful machine we loved you, we loved that machine.

No matter how bad things were if we called you came down through the hail of green tracers and other visible signs of a real bad day off to a bad start. I can still hear the sound of those blades churning the fiery sky. To us you seemed beyond brave and fearless. Down you would come to us in the middle of battle in those flimsy thin skinned chariots into the storm of fire and hell, we feared for you, we were awed by you. We thought of you and that beautiful bird as "God's own lunatics" and wondered who are these men and this machine and where do they come from. Have to be "God's Angels".

So with that I say to her, that beautiful lady sitting out there, from me and all my lucky brothers that were given the honor to serve their country and the privilege of flying this great lady in the skies of Vietnam, thank you for the memories. Thank you for always being there. Thank you for always bringing us home regardless of how beat up and shot up you were.

Thank You!!!!.

You will never be forgotten, we loved you then, we love you now and will love you till our last breath.

And as the sun sets today, if you listen quietly and closely you will hear that faint wop wop wop of our mother speaking to all her children, past and present who rode her into history in a blaze of glory, she will be saying to them. I am here, I will always be here with you. I am at peace and so should you be and so should you be.

Next Edition will be September 2011.

Up the Ol'Red Rooster.

*Frank Corcoran*