

2018 Re-union – Brisbane Queensland

As we go to press, we approach the 20th Anniversary of the formation of the Locating Artillery Association Inc. (now known as the Locating, Surveillance and Target Acquisition Association Inc.) on 14th Nov 2018.

As pointed out at the Re-union Dinner at the Kedron Wavell RSL Club, this is the 10th re-union of the Association.

Dedication Ceremony

Activities began at 1100 hours on 12th October 2018 at the 20th STA Regiment's lines in Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, with the dedication of AN/KPQ-1 radar, A12 as the Detachment 131 Div Loc Bty Vietnam Memorial. Guests assembled under grey skies as the Regiment marched on and the Catafalque Party mounted.



Regimental Padre Chaplain James Hall led proceedings with a call to prayer. Association Padre Rev Dr Graham Whelan OAM, PhD, DD then delivered the opening prayer which was followed by a bible reading by LT Rod Marrant and a reflection delivered by Chaplain Hall.

The dedication and blessing ceremony was conducted by Chaplain Hall, Padre Whelan, Chaplain Leo Orreal and Chaplain John Danse.

BDR Astrid Dylan then presented a prayer for the fallen followed by the Artillery Prayer recited by SGT Struan Robertson. The congregation then joined in the Lord's Prayer.

Wreaths were then laid by:

BRIG Susan Coyle CSC, DSM, COMD 6 Brigade
LTCOL Rodney Lang CSC, CO 20th STA Regt
Mr Bryan Bunney, Gaythorne RSL and
Mr Peter Cairns, Kedron Wavell RSL



BRIG Coyle lays a wreath, the Catafalque Party at Rest on Arms Reversed

Chaplain John Danse then delivered The Prayer of Remembrance followed by the Ode which was recited by WO2 Mel Wood; then followed the Last Post, a minute's silence, and Rouse. The congregation then sang the National Anthem.

We were then treated to an outstanding address by BRIG Coyle, wherein she covered all relevant aspects of the history of A12, its refurbishment and ultimate dedication as a memorial. During her presentation, BRIG Coyle invited the recipients of the Coral UCG to stand and be recognised. Spontaneous acclamation greeted her invitation.

Chaplain Hall then delivered the Blessing and the Catafalque Party dismounted, marking the conclusion of a moving and emotional ceremony.



Wal Franklin OAM, BRIG Susan Coyle CSC, DSM and Keith Ayliffe BEM, BA pictured in front of the newly dedicated Memorial.

Lunch at the Menz Club

The assembled then gathered at the Checkley Annex to the James Menz Club for the traditional barbeque and drinks, enjoyed by all.



On its conclusion, Regimental 2 i/c MAJ Geoff Meekan then addressed the gathering foreshadowing the formation of a third operational battery at the Regiment. The battery is as yet un-named but it is hoped that common sense will prevail and that we will ultimately see 133 Bty back on the Orbat.

A series of presentations were then made:

- A beautifully mounted replica 7.62mm SLR to be hung in the Menz Club depicting as well a full set of Vietnam Combat Medals
- A framed photograph of the Menz Club (Nui Dat), presented by Vietnam Veteran Peter Piro
- A donation of several hundred dollars to the Menz Club by LSTAA NSW President David Auld representing the balance of funds in the Coffs Re-union Bank a/c.

- A refurbished photographic 133 Bty history album initially compiled by SGT Jim Bushel, restored by LSTAA Secretary Bob Morrison RFD and presented by the last BC of 133 Bty, Allan Harrison RFD.

Open day tour

After lunch the visitors were broken up into two groups for a conducted tour of the Regiment's training facilities which included:

1. The Shadow UAV hangar, command post and pilot's station
2. The small arms Weapons Training Simulator (WTTS) and
3. A demonstration of smaller UAV's

1. Shadow

Initially we were shown through the hangar where various forms of aircraft maintenance was in progress, culminating in viewing a Shadow ready to fly, and it's launching frame.



We then visited the command post where missions originate.



Finally we were shown the pilot's station from where the aircraft in flight is controlled.



2. WTTS

This was a fascinating insight into modern small arms simulation training. It was a maxi-theatre style operation where battlefield scenes were depicted on a massive screen, A section level firepower demo proceeded for our education and enjoyment.

The noise level and weapon recoil was very realistic and a huge amount of performance data is recorded and fed back to firers "on the mound". This goes as far as zeroing individual weapons.

Several visitors took up the offer of a shoot, with varying results.

3. Smaller UAV's

We saw three different types of UAV's demonstrated.

These UAV's are in service in 20th STA Regiment for other smaller tasks. Given the knowledge and experience available within the Regiment, it has been assigned the task of assisting users from other corps (e.g. Infantry, Armour etc.).

The three aircraft we saw demonstrated were:

Black Hornet

This tiny helicopter is used in line of sight mode to carry out close reconnaissance. The clarity and resolution on the operator's screen (slung around his neck) is simply amazing given the size of the aircraft and therefore the size of the camera it carries.



Phantom

This aircraft has somewhat longer endurance than the Black Hornet but carries out a similar task. It is a commercially available drone. Every unit in Army is to receive one of these with a view to discovering more uses for these incredible pieces of technology.



Phantom operator



Phantom in flight

WASP

We saw this aircraft taken out of its packing case, assembled and the engine started. Because of local air safety regulations it is only flown on field firing ranges, so we did not see it fly. It has considerably longer range and endurance than the other two UAV's.

Note the all-terrain vehicles which carry the birds and their operators.



That concluded day one, and mercifully the rain which had threatened all day, did not eventuate.

4. Formal Dinner

The heavens had opened by the time about 60 guests assembled for dinner at the Kedron Wavell RSL Club where table centre pieces supplied by the Regiment depicted equipment of the past and present.



Model "Shadow" table centrepiece

Proceedings opened with an inventive adaptation of the Gunner Grace delivered by Padre, Rev Dr Graham Whelan OAM, PhD, DD, which drew a round of applause from assembled diners.

After a delightful two course buffet, toasts were proposed as follows:

- The Loyal Toast (MAJ Russ Hamsey)
- The Regiment (Keith Ayliffe BEM, BA)
- Absent Comrades (Ian Board)
- LSTAA (MAJ Geoff Meekan)

Between the third and fourth toasts MAJ Russ Hamsey gave us an inspiring insight into current and planned activities within 20th STA Regiment. During his presentation, UCG recipients were again recognised.

5. Farewell lunch and drinks

Heavy overnight rain continued, diminishing attendance at the farewell lunch at the Ship Inn, Southbank, which was nevertheless thoroughly enjoyed by those who braved the conditions.

Well Done SEQ Branch and sincere thanks to 20th STA Regt for their unstinting support.

It should also be noted that the SEQ Branch managed to obtain the services of Mr Grant Hamsey, a student from the University of the Sunshine Coast. Grant was employed by the Branch as an intern to assist in organising the re-union. He did a great job behind the scenes and was a pleasure to work with. We wish him all the best in his studies as he completes his Bachelor of Business (majoring in event management)



The prime movers, Terry and Keith