



# The Custodian

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2008

## FORT LYTTON HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first issue of The Custodian, the official newsletter of the Fort Lytton Historical Association Inc. We are not sure how many issues we will produce during the year, but will try for four. The newsletter will be sent to other Artillery organisations and other interested persons and will also be posted on our website. Every issue will include news of events at Fort Lytton, coming attractions and historical articles.

Why did we call our newsletter The Custodian? On the badge of the Coastal Artillery you will see the motto "CUSTODES PORTARUM", which loosely translates to "WE GUARD THE GATES". The members of the Fort Lytton Historical Association are all volunteers and we regard ourselves as the custodians of the Fort, the history of the Fort and all of the items on display. So it seemed fitting to call our newsletter The Custodian.

If there is anybody out there who is willing to donate their time for a couple of Sundays every month they are more than welcome to come down to Fort Lytton and join our association.

### FORT LYTTON HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED DIRECTORY

President: Mr. Maurrie McGuire, OAM

Hon Secretary: Mr. Danny Hunter

Hon Treasurer: Mr. Peter Gore

Newsletter Editor: Mr. Harry Lynas

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### COMING EVENTS

Xmas Party – 13 Dec 2008

64 Pounder Firings – 1 Feb & 5 Apr 2009 (TBC)

2009 Living History Weekend – 6 & 7 June 2009

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**THE BEGINNING OF A TOURIST ATTRACTION**  
**AND**  
**THE CONSTRUCTION, AS NEAR AS POSSIBLE, OF FOUR OF THE ORIGINAL GUNS OF FORT**  
**LYTTON, FROM 1886 TO 1943**

When World War II ended in August 1945 the old Fort Lytton became redundant and was abandoned and was emptied of all equipment, except fortunately two RML 64lb 6" Barbette Mounted Guns, of 1878 vintage, and four original barrels, of 1886 vintage, of the 6" RBL Disappearing Guns. The 64 pounders were stored in Brisbane and the four barrels left lying in the Fort area, two of which were at some time removed, one to Ampol Refinery, where it is now mounted in concrete at the Main Entrance, and the other to 11 Field Regiment at Dudley Street, Annerley, which is also now redundant and part of history.

After the cessation of hostilities in 1945, the old Fort was left to the wind, rain, sun, and occasional grass fires, which eventually destroyed a lot of the wooden construction within the Fortress area. In 1956 Ampol purchased most of the site to build a refinery and tidied the place up. The original bridge into the Fort had been burned down, plus the buildings inside. Eventually part of the moat in front was filled in to get inside the Fort to clean it out of rank undergrowth and etc, a causeway was built and it became a sort of picnic area.

In 1988 the word went out that Ampol was to give the Fort area back to the Government as an Historic Tourist Attraction. Very quietly, on a particularly wet Saturday afternoon the same year, there was a gathering of near doddering, old ex-service WW II gunners and much younger National Parks and Wildlife personnel and a few current Army personnel. The idea being to form a Tourist Attraction, volunteer guiding groups handled by the veteran gunners, and eventually the possibility of future refurbishment of the gun emplacements.

The old Quarantine Station Laundry was given on a loan basis, with an old refrigerator and furnished with tables and chairs by National Parks and Wildlife to be used as a Canteen and part Museum. The Museum in the Fort area was restored by the Department of Works and stocked with memorabilia. Two of the guns inside being part of the original Fort armament, one 9lb RML horse drawn field gun and a four barrelled Nordenfeldt garrison and naval gun, a so called machine gun which was actuated manually and very effectively.

One of the two 6" barrels mounted at the entrance is the barrel that was at 11 Field Regiment for a number of years and the other barrel is off No. 2 Disappearing Gun. The Fort is now managed by National Parks and is ably assisted by survivors of the original group of gunners who up till the time of writing still carry on voluntarily as Guides to the public. It is worth mentioning that the original group who started in 1988 were a mixture of gunners, NCOs and officers, all returned servicemen from WW II who pitched in to get things going, notably led by Ray Cook, and went from nothing to the present state at the time of writing. At the beginning, the original optimistic group consisted of Ray Cook, Bert Lonie, George Ludinski, John and Ian McKenna, Fred Shelberg, Howard Williams, Bernie "Max" Beare, Harold Campbell, Dan Hunter, Alan Brooke, Eric Bingham, Col Fraser, Dick Phillips, Frank Davies and one sig, Jim Meehan. Over the years the older men fell by the wayside, and their places have been taken by others, Jim Cross, Don Morrison, Tom Trevannion, Frank Heywood, Harry Lynas, Maurrie McGuire, John Allen, Frank Pellat, Peter Gore, Dave Sinclair and Ray Jell (for a period of nine months), Grant Carpenter, Dave Spethman, Lee Deighton and Ian Wheeler.

In 1992 permission was granted to go ahead with the construction of the Disappearing Gun in No 1 Gun Pit, which was completed in five stages as money became available and was finally finished in time for Easter Camp 1996. The only original part being the barrel. Soon after work began on a 6 Pounder QF Hotchkiss in No. 3 Pit, which was completed by Xmas of the same year. There were no original parts used in the construction of this gun. Later again in 1997 more patterns were made by Ray Cook and Dick Phillips and once again with the tremendous assistance of Bryan Davidson, a consummate welder from National Parks, a replica of a QF 4.7" Naval Gun, vintage 1898, was slowly constructed and mounted in No. 4 Gun Pit in the Fort. There were no original parts used in the construction of this gun.

After a brief respite and a lot of thought, as a tremendous amount of time and money had been put into these three pieces of armament and though the wish was there, it was decided that though the minds were willing, the bodies were much weaker, age was taking its toll, and it was decided to finish on that note, that for men approaching eighty it was felt that they had done enough. **BUT**, charged with confidence and the fact that

the Fort would be complete only if the last gun was built it was decided by these three men that they would go ahead and do the job with the assistance of others. So consequently a twin barrelled QF 6 pounder gun was built for No 5 Gun Pit from nothing and you can now see it along with the other three inside the Fort. They are a monument to those old ex-servicemen who thought enough of the future generation to show what was there to be used at Fort Lytton from 1882, (when it was completed), to August 1945, when the war ended, and there was no further use for this sort of fortification in case Brisbane and Ipswich were attacked from the sea. Everything had become old hat, so to speak, and but for the foresight of Ampol, the Government, National Parks and Wildlife, and a small band of dedicated men there would have been naught to show for it.

After a lapse of a couple years it was decided to erect a Repository and Moving of Ordnance display in the Artillery Store, and by May 2001 it was finished and the refurbishment of the Artillery Store was completed. Also in 2001 one of the original 6" 80 Pounder RML Guns was returned to Fort Lytton by 1st Field Regiment and after 3 months hard work was restored and repainted and put on display in the Foyer of the Canteen.

In 1992 Ray Cook was honoured with the Order of Australia Medal for his untiring efforts and his dream of seeing the fort brought up to its present standard, much to the pleasure of his mates. In 2000 this same honour was accorded to Dick Phillips, and in 2007 George Ludinski was also awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his work at Fort Lytton. Special mention must be made of Dan Hunter for his unbroken continuous attendance from the instigation of the Fort Lytton Guides to the time of writing. Without the tremendous efforts also of George Ludinski and a much younger Harry Lynas the history and the publication of it probably would never have been accomplished.



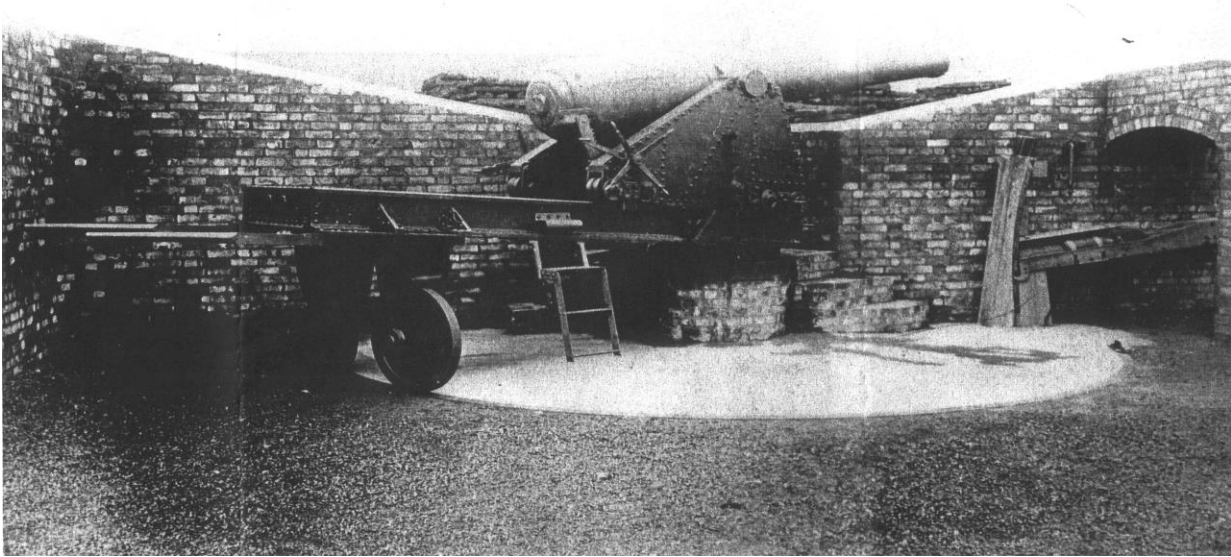
A group of the “oldtimers” in Gun Pit No 1 after placing the 6” Disappearing Gun barrel on its mounting.

**HISTORY OF FORT LYTTON'S**  
**6 INCH, 4 TON, (CHAMBERED) RIFLED MUZZLE LOADING GUNS**

Two of these guns were purchased by the Queensland Government to act as the long range guns of Fort Lytton. They were emplaced in Gunpits 1 and 2 in 1883, fired for the first time in July 1884 and replaced by the disappearing guns in 1887, so as you can see they didn't last long at Fort Lytton. When they were replaced the barrels were sent back to England to be converted from muzzle loaders to breech loaders. Upon returning Queensland in 1890 the guns were sent to Townsville where it was envisaged that they would be emplaced in a coastal position for the defence of the port there. They were emplaced on Magazine Island and by 1892 they were operational using the original compressor plate recoil system. By 1895 they were deemed obsolete and it would have been too expensive to modify them further and in the early 1900's they were returned to Brisbane and were eventually used as targets on the range at Enoggera. They were then buried and in the 1960's one of the guns was dug up by a work party from 1 Field Regiment. In the late 1990's when restoration at Fort Lytton was in full swing the gun was returned to Fort Lytton and was lovingly restored by members of the Fort Lytton Historical Association and was put on display in the foyer of their canteen and museum. In the 2006 it was then moved by a National Parks and Wildlife party to its position near the moat at the entrance to the Fort.



6 Inch Rifled Muzzle Loader converted to Breech Loading in its position today at Fort Lytton.



6 Inch Rifled Muzzle Loader in original position at Fort Lytton (No. 2 Gun Pit).

### **Gun No. 3781**

Calibre: 6 inch (152 mm)	Manufacturer/Designer: British
Muzzle Velocity:	Sir W.G. Armstrong
Ammunition: Common Shell, Case, Palliser and Shrapnel.	Carriage: Garrison Barbette
Weight: 80 lbs. (36.4 kg)	Recoil System: Compressor Plates
Charge: 34 lbs (15.5 kg)	Traverse: 160 <sup>0</sup>
Detachment: 9	Elevation: 14 <sup>0</sup>
Rate of Fire: 1 round per 3 minutes	Depression: Loading with Mechanical Gear — 12.5 <sup>0</sup>
Range: 4, 500 yards (4,113 metres)	(The depression angle in these mountings was the loading angle with 5 <sup>0</sup> being the standard limit for firing.)

(In the next issue will be an article on the emplacements for these guns and the mechanical loading apparatus.)

## **FLHA RESEARCH GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR 2008**

### **PROJECT 5**

The FLHA Research Group has this year been concentrating on the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Steering Committee Project 5, titled "Garrison Guns and Associated Equipments". With the assistance of other RAAHSC members, the Fort Lytton Guides and the Fort Lytton Archives we have been able to create a document consisting of over 270 pages.

### **TINANA**

The Group is also nearing completion of the document titled "Camp Tinana" a WW2 Camp near Maryborough that the team visited in November 2006.

### **WOOLOOWIN BUNKER**

The Group followed up news that a homemade WW2 air raid shelter was under threat. The boarding house that occupied the land was demolished but the bunker was left in situ. Contact was made with the authorities as to the possibility of excavation and an archaeological study of the site.

### **WILKIE/WALSH CEREMONY**

Investigations were made as to starting an annual ceremony remembering the tragedy of the gunners Wilkie and Walsh. If successful it would be held as near as to the date of the incident (15th January) as possible. The idea is on the backburner as it is understood the Queensland Government also has interests in a ceremony. Their ceremony would be located in Queens Park nearby where the Wilkie/Walsh incident took place.

### **DEFENDING BRIDGES**

Further investigation was undertaken into the mounting of guns up river during WW2. It has been confirmed that guns were mounted to defend the rail bridges on the Calliope River at Gladstone, the Fitzroy River at Rockhampton and the Burnett River at Bundaberg.

### **UPDATES**

"Fortress Brisbane" may be updated and "Camp Strathpine" is to be re-edited, perhaps in 2010 as even more information comes to hand. Metal detecting continues on the site, items dug up are now being catalogued and brought down to the guides for identification.

### **2009**

In 2009 the team is looking to recommence reconnaissance on selected sites throughout the year, the team hopes to produce a video tour of the Moreton Bay defences of Bribie Battery, Rous Battery and Cowan Battery.

Scribe:

Lee J. Deighton

## ACTIVITIES OF LYTTON DETACHMENT (FLHA)

By Dave Spethman (Battery Sergeant)

The detachment participated in several activities during 2008. These included their normal duties on Australia Day and Labour Day, the History Alive weekend on the Queen's Birthday weekend in June and the Bunya to Bay event at Lytton in October..

The other activities conducted included Lytton to Lota Local History at Wynnum Library in June, which included the unveiling of a plaque on their Clifton Gun, barrel no. 60756 cast in 1800 (Blomefield Pattern).

Brisbane Garrison Battery was assisted by the detachment for public firings in February and April. 'A' Battery, QPA was assisted for Queensland Day in June and "The Symphony On The Shore" as part of the Brisbane festival in August and the Artillery Day held at Lytton in November.

## VALE

### MAJOR GEORGE ANTHONY LUDINSKI, OAM, ED (RL)

George Ludinski was born in Brisbane in 27<sup>th</sup> April 1913, and first came to Fort Lytton in 1932, where he enlisted as a Gunner in the Militia in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Heavy Battery, Australian Garrison Artillery. He rose steadily through the ranks and by 1936 he was promoted to Sergeant. He was involved in the last firing of the disappearing guns in 1938 at Fort Lytton and then attended annual camp at Moreton Island where he showed his prowess as a Lewis machine gunner against aircraft.

During WW2 George was promoted to Lieutenant and became involved in the movement of guns for the Letter Batteries from Wallangarra to Brisbane. He was later posted to Darwin to serve on the coastal guns defending that city. For a short while he became the senior officer left in Darwin when the other much more senior officers beat a strategic journey south after the bombing raid on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1942. He followed this up with service in the jungles of Papua New Guinea and was posted to D Australian Heavy Battery to serve on the coastal guns at Buna.

George was posted out of D Aust Hvy Bty on 28 Apr 1944 and was returned to Australia to take up positions in Movement and Control, due to his civilian work prior to the War. He met his future wife, Dulcie, when he walked into the clothing store, where she was working as a member of the Australian Women's Army Services, in Townsville and they were married in Brisbane on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1945. George became involved in the administration of one of the depots in Brisbane involved in the demobilisation of men and equipment. George finally left the Army on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1946 with the rank of Major. (AWM Records state that he was a captain in D Australian Heavy Battery at the time of his discharge, however D Aust Hvy Bty was disbanded in September 1944 and George had been transferred out on 28 Apr 1944.)

After the War George returned to his civilian work as office manager for McDonald Hamilton, who handled shipping in Brisbane. In 1949 he was talked into rejoining the Militia (CMF), but this time into an Engineer unit and finally retired from the Army in 1966.

In 1988 when Ampol returned Fort Lytton to the Queensland Government George was among the first to answer the call to volunteer for duty as a Guide when Fort Lytton reopened to the public as a tourist attraction. He served in this capacity until late 2007, so in all George had links with Fort Lytton for 75 years. Mention must also be made of his research into the history

of Fort Lytton, and along with Dulcie, George spent many hours at the State Library poring over old newspapers and documents. With the help of Harry Lynas, George then produced 6 books detailing the history of Fort Lytton and the men who passed through the fort gates. For this work at Fort Lytton George was awarded the OAM, and was also made a Life Member of the Royal Australian Artillery Association, Queensland.

In his civilian life George and Dulcie had three children consisting of Doug, Judy and George, in all a total of 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

George Anthony Ludinski passed away on 1 Jun 2008 and was laid to rest in Pinaroo Lawn Cemetery at Albany Creek in Brisbane on 6 June 2008.





## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN—DECEMBER 2008

### VALE GEORGE

In June of this year, we sadly lost **George Ludinski OAM**, who was one of the group of ex-Servicemen who founded the Fort Lytton Guides in 1988. With George's passing, and that of **Jim Meehan** in 2007, there now remain from the original group: **Bert Lonie, Ray Cook, Dick Phillips, Danny Hunter and Frank Davies**, with only Danny now continuing as an active Guide and FLHA Secretary.

Despite advancing years, George was an active Guide until his failing health began to curtail this activity. However with his steely determination and dedication to his beloved Fort, he still faithfully manned the Museum until late in 2007. George loved talking to Fort visitors about his links with the Fort from 1932 onwards, and about his own wartime experiences, e.g. being in the East Point Command Post during the first bombing raid on Darwin on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1942; the occasion whilst a member of D Heavy Battery, when his Sergeant "sold" their two Japanese prisoners to the Americans for cartons of cigarettes; and other similar tales.

George's legacy will live on though, with his own publications: "A History of Fort Lytton," three books on the Easter encampments, and two books on the nine Queensland contingents to the Boer War. In addition, we have photos of George dating from 1932, showing his many military roles, along with donated items of his military dress and publications.

In total, a **75 year** link with Fort Lytton, contained in one man's history.

### THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2008 has been a very busy and most successful year for FLHA. We hosted our first "Artillery Day" event on 9<sup>th</sup> November; supported the culmination of the "Bunya to the Bay" schoolchildren's activity at the Fort; participated in the Qld Living History Federation's "History Alive" event on Queen's Birthday weekend in June.

Off-site activities included Wynnum-Manly Society's event during which the 24 PDR cannon, restored by our newest FLHA member Ian Wheeler, and located outside the Library, was handed over.

Dave Spethman and Lee Deighton, as members also of Victoria Barracks Historical Society "A" Battery, took part in the firing of the 6 PDR Cannons at the Society's ceremonial events, e.g. Queensland Day, History Alive, and Brisbane River Festival Concert (1812 Overture). Dave and Lee also assist when Fort's 64 PDR RML guns are fired.

### THE CUSTODIAN

This new publication is an initiative of Harry Lynas and is intended to be a major link with FLHA members and also members of the Regiment. Having provided his expertise, enthusiasm and dedication in this production, Harry is to be congratulated for both the variety and content of articles. We'll all look forward to future editions.

### MONEY MATTERS

FLHA continues in a sound financial situation, having finished the 2007/2008 financial year with a healthy surplus. Well done, Peter.

### CANTEEN SALES

Income from the Canteen's sales of books, T-shirts and souvenirs has increased from previous years' and can only get better, given the growing number of visitors to the Fort and National Park.

Since going upmarket with George's "A History of Fort Lytton" and Dave's 3 books: "Fortress Brisbane," "The Garrison Guns of Australia," and "To Occupy a Fool's Paradise," supported by publisher Ron Mortensen, sales have been increasing, and Bookmarks for all 4 books are also proving popular. The redesigned Fort T-shirt had a slow start but sales are improving; the replica Gun/Pencil Sharpeners remain popular, and sales of other souvenirs are steady.

### FLHA MEMBERSHIP

We have just one new member, **Ian Wheeler**, and what an invaluable acquisition he has proved to be! Ian's first task was the refurbishment of the 24 PDR gun near the Museum, and he has important links to the 2 x 64 PDR guns in pits 5 & 6, as well as the Nordenfeldt machine gun from HMS Gayundah in the Museum. As a member of the Arms Collectors Guild, Ian was heavily involved in the rebuild and refurbishment of all of these guns, including those 24 PDRs known as the "Clifton Guns." Lee Deighton has made DVDs of the above works, from photographs supplied by Ian.

With his love of military history, and utilising his museum experience as a member of Victoria Barracks Historical Society, Wynnum-Manly Historical Society, and Redlands Museum, Ian then undertook the enhancement of displays in both the Canteen Museum and Artillery Store. With the assistance of Ian's wife Sandra, all items on display have now been identified to ensure visitors will easily recognize what they are inspecting e.g. firing mechanism of the 17 PDR anti-tank gun, cart wheel sights of a 40mm anti-aircraft gun.

Ian has also revarnished all of our display cases, painted the donation box in Artillery colours, refurbished the model of the Disappearing Gun, and is sourcing a display cage for the timber scale model of the 4.7in naval gun, at no cost to FLHA. He is also cataloguing the military training manuals, ready for display.

Ian is an ex-Army cook, and cheerfully "volunteered" to BBQ the lunch and prepare the salads for our 120 "Artillery Day" guests, and had the foresight to have "loaves & fishes" on standby for that event.

### TOURS OF FORT LYTTON

At a conservative estimate, between 3,000 and 4,000 people have visited the Fort this year. We have hosted many diverse groups from community and church-based organisations, for weekday tours; these have been large & small, city & rural, Sunshine & Gold Coast based.

Visitor numbers on Sundays and Public Holidays also continue to grow, with frequent comments e.g.: "I did not know the Fort existed until I saw it on *The Great South East* TV program" (i.e. "Bunya to the Bay" report).

One has only to peruse the visitors' book to see that visitors enjoy their experiences. Comments are not only from Queenslanders; there are also many from interstate and overseas, including most recently a couple from Belgium.

### **HISTORY ALIVE 2008**

Held as usual on the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June, this event was again very successful. Despite unfavourable weather conditions, Lee Deighton, Dave Spethman and Gerry Day paraded in period costume and assisted various groups on display.

FLHA canteen and souvenir sales were up on previous years, possibly helped by the proximity of the food court this year.

Thanks must go to the Jason Armfield from *Contact Front*, who presented FLHA with \$240.00, proceeds from a raffle held that weekend (and which they have held at each History Alive event). This money was utilised for the enhancement of displays, undertaken by Ian Wheeler and others.

### **ARTILLERY DAY 2008**

Being our inaugural event of this ilk, there were a few minor glitches on the day, however overall was deemed an outstanding success. It was great to welcome those from further afield e.g. Maryborough, Goomeri, Toowoomba, who are less frequent visitors.

The M198 155 Gun supplied and manned by 13 Fd Bty, 1 Fd Regt RAA, proved to be a huge attraction, along with the Fort gun firings and display by the Queensland Scottish.

Many thanks to all who assisted in any way prior to and on the day, from the Anglican ladies who supplied the wonderful morning tea, to the Guides' partners & children who manned the canteen and assisted with preparation and serving of lunch. Also not to forget Roland Dowling and his Qld Parks & Wildlife staff, who cheerfully gave all and more than was expected, in making the day such a success.

Next year's event is already in the planning, and hopefully we'll have the smell of "real" cordite then!

### **FITTING OF BREECH OF DISAPPEARING GUN**

Courtesy of Frank Heywood, we have on film the fitting of the new Breech to the Gun, by Ray Cook, Dick Phillips, Ross Crowe and other members of the 131 Div Loc Battery. Lee Deighton has enhanced the film and produced an excellent DVD of this historic event.

### **LEE'S MOVIES**

Lee Deighton has produced many DVDs of Fort activities as well as those mentioned above, and all are of a very high standard. They are professionally presented and for sale @ \$5.00 each.

### **GRANTS**

We are investigating several avenues of additional revenue, and in particular have applied under the Commonwealth Govt's 2008 *Volunteer Grants Program*. Should this bid be successful, we would be able to purchase lockable glass fronted bookcases, uniform display cabinets, and some upgraded office furniture.

### **COLONEL COMMANDANT- NORTHERN REGION**

Our heartfelt thanks have been offered to the outgoing Colonel Commandant, **Colonel Arthur Burke**, for his wise counsel, advice, assistance and support of the FLHA during his tenure in the above appointment.

We wish him and his wife Di, a long, happy and healthy retirement, and look forward to welcoming them as honoured guests at future Fort Lytton events.

We welcome incoming Colonel Commandant, **Brigadier Mike Paramor, AM**, and hope to work closely with him in coming years.

### **ASSISTANCE BY LOCAL STAFF**

The above staff under the control of Chief Ranger Roland Dowling have been of tremendous assistance to the Association throughout the year. All minor maintenance matters are attended to. Rolley always makes himself available for guidance and advice as well as keeping us informed of any possible future use of the Fort by others.

### **INTERPRETIVE SIGNS**

The installation of these signs makes it much easier for visitors not taking a guided tour to understand what the various exhibits are.

### **MAINTENANCE OF GUNS AND ARTILLERY PIECES**

The Disappearing Gun was refurbished and painted some time ago. This year the Twin 6 Pounder received similar treatment. This included replacing rusting parts of the shield, etc. All that remains to be done is to replace the covers for the barrels.

Until monies become available to do the other guns Dave Spethman has drafted out maintenance schedules for all of the guns and the artillery pieces in the Gun Park. The local staff have started implementing these procedures.

In conclusion I would like to thank all of my fellow guides for a sterling effort throughout the year along with Rolley and his staff. May I take this opportunity to wish all the guides, local staff and their families and all readers of THE CUSTODIAN a Holy and safe Christmas plus a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year in 2009.

UBIQUE  
Maurrie McGuire

**Season's Greetings and a prosperous 2009 to all.**