As 2002 draws to a close the Committee decided to finish the year with a dinner in the “Casemate”, - details of which are included further on in this Newsletter.

This year has special significance for the Fort and the Society. It is:-

- **120 years** since the Fort was constructed (1882)
- **60 years** since the attack on Newcastle (1942)
- **30 years** since the Army vacated the Fort (1972)
- **20 years** since the Society was formed (1982)

The year has been a very memorable one for the Society, so we intend finishing up with a big bang. The searchlight and generator has been returned by the Navy. David Berriman and his team have had to do some modifications and adjustments to make them work. On your behalf I thank the Royal Australian Navy for their long and tedious efforts.

Phillip Berriman agreed to paint the “Studybaker” truck, and it has now been returned to No.1 Throsby, *(where it is garaged)* on Friday 18 October 2002, under the supervision of Vice President Hugh See. - *(It looks good).*

The negotiations between the Federal Government and the Newcastle City Council regarding the refurbishment of the Fort is still continuing as we go to press with this edition of ‘Muzzle Blast’. The best estimate is work will not commence until June/July 2003. This is a real disappointment as we were hoping the work would be completed by 2004, in time for the Bi-centenary celebrations of Newcastle settlement.

Grace Jones sent me a copy of “Australian Women's Army Service Association (NSW) magazine “Khaki”. This magazine is a very professional production and it contains an article on our celebrations in May/June. The material was provided by Maud O'Brien. The magazine is available at the Fort Office for your perusal. Many

*(Continued on page 2)*
thanks to our Grace and Maud.

The photographs of the Dinner and the Dedication are now available for selection and ordering at the Office of the Society (the cottage) on:-

Sat. 9th November 2002, between 12 noon and 2 pm, Sun. 24 November, 10 am to 2 pm, Sat. 7 December, from 6 pm. (day of the dinner)

Finally I wish to thank all who helped make the year such a wonderful success. Special thank you to those who gave up their time to work in the shop (please help!) - and to those who attended the Working bees. To the special efforts of Evelyn and her work coordinating the shop rosters. To Carl, the Editor of ‘Muzzle Blast’ and our volunteer Tour Guides - many thanks.

Also, I would especially mention Elma See for her excellent organisation of the weddings and tours.

I wish you all a very “Merry Christmas & a Healthy and Happy New Year”

P.S. Book early for the Anniversary Dinner. We hope to fire the guns, switch on the search-light and sound the siren on 7th December 2002.

Bill Hopkins

VALE—Richard (Dick) Selwyn MORT (Lt.Col. E.D. Ret’d)

RICHARD SELWYN MORT passed away on Sunday 8 September 2002 at a Booragul Nursing Home, aged 96.

Dick was a former President of the Fort Scratchley Society and served on the Committee in various positions for a number of years. He was a member of the inaugural Committee.

Dick was born in Lithgow, NSW on 26 March, 1906, the eldest of five children (three boys and two girls) born to Selwyn Robert and Charlotte Henrietta (nee Seeger) Mort.

Dick attended Leeton Public School from 1915 to 1918 and in 1919 commenced studies at Sydney Technical College. It was here that Dick’s Military career began when he “enlisted” in the Senior Cadets (Cadet service at that time was compulsory from age 14). He remained in the cadets until 1924 and reached the rank of Corporal.

In 1924, Dick started work at the BHP Newcastle Steelworks in the Main Laboratory as a works chemist whilst doing his Diploma in Chemistry at Newcastle Technical College, gaining his qualification in 1929. During the same period, from 1 July 1924 to 30 June 1927 Dick did his compulsory Militia Training, starting as a Gunner, then Corporal (1 Jan 1925), rising to Lance Sergeant (25 March 1925) and Sergeant on 27 July 1925.

From the 1 July 1927, Dick continued serving as a volunteer, being promoted to Warrant Officer Class 2 on 27 July 1927, and being commissioned to the rank of Lieutenant A.G.A. (Hy)* on 25 October 1929.

Having qualified as an industrial chemist, Dick was transferred to Open Hearth Department of the Steelworks as a Technical Assistant/Furnace man in 1930 and in 1932 was again transferred this time as a Leading Hand in the Coal Crushing Section of the Coke Ovens Department. In 1934 (23 September) he was promoted to the rank of Captain.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Dick was called up at the ‘precautionary stage of mobilization’ on 2 September 1939, initially for a two week camp, followed immediately by three months “camp” and then another three months “camp”. It was to be six years and five months before he was to return to the Steelworks.

After call out, Dick was promoted to Temporary Major on 6 November 1939, and was appointed as OC of Scratchley Battery. A short time later, he was sent to the School of Artillery to do a course and on his return he was posted as the OC Wallace Battery located at Stockton which was a counter bombardment battery of two 9.2-inch guns. He held that posting until 1942, then appointed as OC Tomaree Fire Command. On 14
The year is a very significant year in the life of the Society; it is twenty years since the inaugural meeting presided over by the then Lord Mayor Alderman Joy Cummings in February 1982.

From that meeting I am the only person still active on the Committee, with a couple of breaks. Four of the number are no longer with us, they were Ern Boulton our first President, Dick Mort, also a Past president who died only a few short weeks ago, Arthur Saunders whose information supplied so many years ago on searchlights has been of great assistance over the last few weeks in restoring our searchlight, and Melissa Cameron who put so much time into developing the AWAS room.

A few weeks afterwards a then young chap David Ber- riman came up to the Fort and had a chat to Ern very soon thereafter he joined our Committee, he later went on to serve 12 years as our leader and President and for all but those first few weeks he has served on the Committee. At the same time John Dodd joined the Committee and went on to become a hard working Secretary, he also has passed away. David along with myself would not have envisaged back in those first few months the advances we have made could have been possible. I feel all of those who formed the first Committee would be very proud today with the advancement of the Society. The other members were Marg Boulton our first secretary a tireless worker nothing ever seemed a problem to her, Bruce Dawbin and John Sara.

That first committee set the foundations for the rest of us to follow.

In February 1982 at our first Committee Meeting we decided that, as April 1882 was the year of completion of the Fort it would be appropriate to celebrate the commencement of the Society with the One Hundredth Anniversary of Fort Scratchley this was to occur 6 weeks later. With no money and hardly knowing each other we started, even today I’m still not sure how it all came together, but it did and from there we had set the platform. The difficult we could do and the impossible just took a little bit longer.

The Society has progressed in up and downs fits and starts but after twenty years there are some definite signs of accomplishment.

In the early days most of the work was in trying to put up displays, clearing bitou bush and having people on hand to just open up.

Work started on the cleaning up of the 6” Mk VII guns and sorting out some of the parts which came back from council storage, finding that a large quantity were missing was a bad start.

The hardest part to overcome was no pedestals, pivots, layers platforms, or firing locks, all of which we now have.

- **Pedestals** From Georges Heights in Sydney
- **Pivots** With help from Albany Council in W.A.
- **Layers Platforms** Made and supplied by PJB [Phillip Berriiman] Tomago
- **Firing Locks** South Australian Police Academy Fort Largs S.A. supplied a copy of one and Griffiths Computerised Engineering made two for us [Andrew and Ron Griffiths], Adamstown.

**To this add the 1.5-inch Nordenfeld in the case-mate, the 6” disappearing gun barrel, from North Head Sydney, the four 80 Pounder barrels returned by Dept of Works NSW.**

Also an International Truck, a Studybaker Truck, a 25 Pounder Field Gun, and a Searchlight all donated by Newcastle Council from the Tuggeragh Collection. As well as a Manual 40 MM Bofors Gun bought at Auction from the above collection.

- **The International truck has been worked on and is registered as a veteran vehicle.**
- **The Studybaker has just returned from PJB at tomago where it has repainted and is nearing the registration stage.**
- **25 Pounder is in good order and condition**
- **40 MM Bofors is in good order and condition**
- **Searchlight has with assistance from the RAA at North Head with some internal Parts and the Navy at Garden Island who Pulled it down and restored it.**

With a Donation from Macquarie Generation a couple of years ago we purchased a generator which although working was also sent down to the Navy who virtually turned it back into a new one. Using the Generator we were able to fire up the Searchlight for the first time on the June long weekend.

These six items are kept in storage and it is hoped that some of them will be coming out and going on display on special occasions starting in the near future.

The Society has a very good library with several thousand items as well as all the many hundreds of items we do not display because of lack of space at this time. So what you see is not all we have and because things aren’t on show doesn’t mean they don’t exist as with the items from the Tuggeragh Collection these have been worked on for years by our members and with outside assistance, all of this behind the scenes. This added to the work in having the 80 Pounder in the Casemate brought back to working order and the lamp (Continued on page 4)
THE SECRETARY’S REPORT
(Continued from page 2)

recesses and lamps first stage all but completed as you have seen in previous issues isn’t the total sum of what happens at the Fort.

If any members would like any more information or would like to see some of the items mentioned please contact me.

2002 Working Bee Date Sunday Nov 24th
David Morrow
Secretary

VALE: Dick Mort
(Continued from page 2)

August 1942, he was seconded to the AIF and promoted to Substantive Major on 1 September 1942. There followed Appointments as Fire Commander, Darwin Fixed Defences, Deputy to the Commander, Fixed Defences - Darwin until the end of 1943 and OC Drummond Battery (Fort Drummond South Coast NSW), followed by Commander Fixed Defences - Port Kembla in 1944.

This was followed by a stint as a Permanent Member of Courts Martial at Victoria Barracks in Sydney. As the war was drawing to a close, Dick was appointed as a Contact Officer in the 1 Australian PW (Prisoner of War) Contact and Inquiry Unit from 8 August 1945 to 8 February 1946.

On returning to civilian life and his job at the Coke Ovens, he became a Senior Day Foreman. Dick also returned to Newcastle Technical College and studied for the General Management Certificate which he gained in 1949. He transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 9 February 1946. His award of the Efficiency Decoration was gazetted on 15 June 1947.

The gaining of his Management Certificate resulted in a major career change for Dick. He left the Steelworks and in 1948 took up a position as a full time Teacher of Supervision and Management at Sydney Technical College, a position he held until 1956. Dick did one more stint in the Army, being appointed as OC of 13 Medium Coast Battery from 21 May 1952 to the 11 January 1955. He retired as an Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel on 12 January 1955.

After a period as Head Teacher, School of Management, Hobart Technical College (1957/58), Dick again changed career paths becoming a Life Insurance Consultant in 1959, a position he held until he retired in 1973.

In 1962, on completion of private study he received his Diploma from the Australian Insurance Institute. He had been a JP for over sixty years.

Retirement from the Army did not mean the end of involvement with things military for Dick. He joined the Newcastle Sub-Branch of the Royal Australian Artillery Association (NSW) and served on the Committee for a number of years (excluding a short period while working in Tasmania). He was Vice President from 1965 to 1978 and President from 1979 to 1981. He was invited to become the Patron of the Newcastle Branch in 1990. He served as Patron until his health began to restrict his activities.

Dick was also one of three original member who started work on the restoration of Fort Wallace in 1987 and was the Foundation President of the Fort Wallace Restoration Association in 1992/1993.

Dick’s association with Fort Scratchley was long and his work was dedicated. He was a member of the Fort Scratchley Local Committee (no longer in existence) for a brief period. He served as President of the Fort Scratchley Society in 1984.

Dick also became involved in community activities during the later years of his life. He served in various capacities with the Coal Point Progress Association, Westlake’s Retired Bowlers’ Group, and was a Board Member of the C.A. Brown Anglican Retirement Village, Booragul and an Assistant Auditor with Toronto Probus Club.

Dick is survived by his second wife of over 25 years, Mavis, four daughters, twelve grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren.

Dick will be a loss to many, and sadly missed by those who knew him.

“Lest we Forget”

Treasurer’s Report

The Financial Statements for the year to 30th June 2002 are shown on pages 6 & 7 of this Newsletter.

The reason for the loss of in the financial statements is mainly due to the cost to date of the repairs and restoration of the Casemate ($34,607) and the Lighting of the Fort ($15,925) being charged as expenses. Of this $30,539 was shown as Plant Under Construction from previous years to 30th June 2001. The balance of $19,993 is for repairs and restoration of the Casemate and Lighting of the Fort for the year to 30th June 2002.

The change in accounting procedure is mainly responsible for the reduction in the value of Total Non Current Assets (from $56,521 to $27,372) and Retained Profits (from $78,488 to $46,331).

Charlie Stevens
Treasurer
‘Lighting the Fort’ Project

Last week the Project Team issued certificates of completion for two major contracts which were part of the Project:

Simon Zablotsky, of Steel Art Design completed all site work for restoring the seven recesses that were selected for restoration. The external frame and grille for the recess to the Lamp Room in the tunnels is still in his workshop for final assembly, and this will be installed on Simon’s return from leave in November.

Simon has proven to be a master artisan and has taken particular pride in the historic accuracy and authenticity of his work. In fact, we have learnt a great deal about the fabric of the lighting system from his careful investigations and analyses.

An example of his fine skills is the reconstruction of the recess frame manufacturer’s nameplates: We were lucky enough the find one of these original nameplates identifying ‘F. R. Robinson & Co 486 George St. Sydney, Established 1838, Manufacturers and Importers’ as the manufacturer of the recess frames. This small, stamped, brass plate was soldered to the frame in the front centre position of the floor.

Simon developed a series of resin and plaster castings to capture in a mould the finely embossed letters and symbols of the tiny plate. He then used his metallurgical skills, which were refined from research of the ‘lost wax’ casting method, to reproduce a ‘nest’ of brass castings of the plate (see attached photo). The castings were removed from the ‘nest’ and excess thickness machined away to produce a likeness of the stamped plate of the original.

The original has been re-soldered to the floor of its recess and one of the copies has been soldered to the floor of a similar, reconstructed recess frame that had lost its nameplate. Simon has done such a wonderful job that visitors would find it very hard to identify which nameplate was the original.

The Wall Lamps for installation in the recesses are also completed. The Project Team on 17-10-02 acquired the final four lamps that were constructed as Part 2 of our contract with Hunter-V-Tec. The quality of the lamps more than meets the expectations developed from the prototype built by Hunter-V-Tec and which has been described in earlier ‘Muzzle Blasts’.

The candleholder on all models has now been augmented by a decorative clasp to hold the candle firmly, in a manner similar to the UK model. Our master lamp-maker at HVT, John O’Neill, has also provided rolled stainless steel reflectors to be placed at the back of all the lamps to increase the effective light output. These are not based upon any heritage design, and will not pretend to do so, but the Project Team believes that the British Military would have, sensibly, installed reflectors in these particular Wall Lamps. Other lamps of the era had circular reflectors built in, such as the units provided for our consideration by Major General John Whitelaw, and the original ‘Bermuda Pattern Lamps’ I saw in the UK, which were painted white internally.

I am also pleased to report that a contract for the manufacture of a ‘Tremlett’s Fighting Pattern Lamp’ has recently been let to Steel Art Design. (Simon is expressing his desire to also try his hand at lamp making.)

The letting of this contract was made possible by the Managing Committee of the Fort voting an allocation of funds to make up, with the small amount of grant funds to come, enough funding to purchase (one only) Tremlett’s lamp.

I also wish to acknowledge the fine work put in by our Project Leader Jim Cox in preparing a final report on the Project for submission to the Cultural Heritage Projects Program of the Department of Environment and Heritage. The final grant payment to us will be made on the their acceptance of the report. On the completion of the Tremlett’s Lamp by Simon and the receipt by the Commonwealth of our final report and financial statements, we will have completed all the major aims of this Project.

I sincerely thank all those who participated to make this major project a success.  

# Rod Caldwell
Members are advised that the Society proposes to conduct a dinner in the ‘Casemate’ on Saturday, 7th December 2002, commencing at 6.30 pm with savories & pre-dinner drinks on the verandah of the Commandant’s Cottage, inside the Fort overlooking the Foreshore.

Attendance is restricted to members and their partners, and invited Guests. (at this stage due to accommodation problems)

Cost of the function has been set at $30.00 per person, and will include pre-dinner drinks and dinner wines. B.Y.O. Beer & Spirits.

(Pre-Dinner Savories)

• Decorated Platters of Assorted Cheese & Cold Cuts

(Main Meal)

• Roast Joints of Beef/Roast Leg of Pork/Roast Turkey, served with a selection of Salads

(Desserts)

• Special Home Made Christmas Pudding with Custard/- or Pavlova Filled with Fresh Cream & Tropical Fruit

Note: (Drinking Glasses will be provided).

Guests are requested to be assembled not later than 6.45 pm to allow for the Speeches of welcome and some presentations to be made by the President at 6.50 pm. - there will be no speeches made in the ‘Casemate” during or after the dinner. Dinner will be served at approximately 7.30 pm. There will be no formal head table, Guests are requested to circulate and mix.

During the evening it is proposed to fire one of the 6-inch guns and to operate the Air Raid Siren and Searchlight.

A Notice for the Dinner and Return Slip is included with this Newsletter. SO — Please get your returns in early.

TOUR GUIDES REQUIRED

The Society requires members of the Fort Society to be trained as Tour Guides for the Fort. This is a voluntary function. Should any member be interested in being trained to perform the duties as a tour guide please advise the Secretary, David Morrow for details.