



RUSI HERALD

The Newsletter of the Hobart Branch of the RUSI of Tas Inc.

JANUARY 2009

Snapshot of the State



LTCOL Peter Hodge RFD

The new State President of the RUSI of Tasmanian Inc is LTCOL Peter Hodge RFD. Peter was born and educated in Launceston where he joined the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery in 1966.

Peter was employed as a Principal by the Education Department and served in a number of schools before finally moving to The Hutchins School in 1991 where he was the Director of Studies until 2002

Peter joined the RUSI in Launceston in 1969 and was both Secretary and Librarian of Launceston Branch during his membership in there. He transferred to Hobart in 1987 and was President of Hobart Branch in 2000 - 2001.

Peter and his wife Jeanne have two sons, one a Captain in the Australian Army in 6 RAR, the other an Architect in Hobart.

In 2003 Peter was appointed Project Manager for Operations Doctrine at the Land Warfare Development Centre. He travels widely working last year in the USA and Europe on NATO Operations Doctrine.

PRESERVING VISCOUNT NELSON

The Viscount Nelson, arguably one of the greatest naval captains of all time, was killed at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805.

There was no lead for a coffin on board the Victory, so a very large cask was produced, Nelson's body placed in it, and then it was filled with Brandy. On the 24 October, the cask was opened to allow for a 'disengagement' of air from the body. The Brandy was then drawn off and replaced without disturbing the body.

On arrival at Gibraltar on 28 October fresh Brandy having been procured, the Victory left for England, . It took the Victory five weeks to make the journey to England during which the Brandy was renewed twice more.

On 11 December Nelson's body was taken from the cask and found to be in a perfect state of preservation. During an autopsy by Dr Beatty, Nelson's bowels were removed as they had decayed. The rest of his vital organs were in a very healthy state. Beatty actually found the ball that had killed Nelson. See over.

POINT TO PONDER

A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with use.

ANON.

EDITOR: SQNLDR Alan Robertson, Executive Officer

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Preserving Nelson Cont'd

It had passed through the spine and lodged in the muscles of the back, a little below the shoulder blade. On the way it had fractured the second and third ribs.

Lord Nelson's remains were then wrapped in cotton vestments and rolled from head to foot in bandages, much like the ancient mummies of Egypt.

The body was placed into a leaden coffin filled with Brandy holding in solution camphor and myrrh. The coffin was then enclosed in a wooden one made from the mainmast of the French ship L'Orient.

When the body was finally removed from the lead casket after two months the un-decayed state of Nelson's body dismayed the officers.

The body was then finally sealed in another leaden coffin, placed inside a wooden shell and conveyed to the Greenwich Hospital.

The immediate cause of death was determined as a 'bullet wound to the left pulmonary artery which bled into the chest cavity.'

Nelson asked to be buried at St Paul's Cathedral as he thought Westminster Abbey would revert to the swamp from which it came.

The squabble over Nelson's coat

The uniform coat Nelson wore at Trafalgar when he was shot has been re-united with the French musket ball which passed through it and killed him. The two items are now displayed at Greenwich National Maritime Museum. When Dr Beatty, the Victory's surgeon, removed the ball during the autopsy, the gold lace, pad and lining from Nelson's epaulette were still attached.

Nelson left all his belongings to Lady Hamilton but although his brother demanded the coat it was eventually given to Lady Hamilton. She later gave it to a friend to settle a debt. When it came on the market in the 1840s, Prince Albert paid 150 pounds for it and then presented it to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich.

RUSI LIBRARY

Do you realize what a magnificent Library we maintain at Anglesea Barracks. It is housed in the Officers Mess Billiards Room and Members are free to borrow books particularly on Lecture Nights.

The Librarian is LTCOL Chad Sutton who will be most happy to make arrangements for the issue of any book to you. He may be contacted on Tel: (03) 6229 8513.



VISCOUNT NELSON

JUST AMAZING

At the time of Pearl Harbour, the top US Navy Command was known as CINCUS (pronounced 'sink us'). The shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry Division was the Swastika and Hitler's private train was named 'Amerika'. All three soon changed for PR reasons. What a surprise.

Editor.