

**The Military Historical Society of Australia  
ACT BRANCH**

***LE GROGNARD!***

**November 2009**

**Committee 2009/2010**

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**NOTE!**

**Next Meeting – Monday 23 November 2009**

**Hellenic Club, Matilda Street, Woden at 7:30pm – Orpheus Room**

*The Battle of Britain: the Canberra connection  
presented by Kristen Alexander*



*Celebrating the Battle of Britain*  
Above, a Hurricane which is now part of the Battle of Britain flight, based at Duxford in the UK. At right is what looks at first glance like a Spitfire but is in fact a 70% scale version made in Australia and sold to the UK, among others, “like hotcakes”.



*Any person, irrespective of occupation and age, who has an interest in the study and research of military: history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment, medals, and kindred matters, is most welcome to attend meetings. Anyone interested in joining the Society may contact the ACT Branch Secretary, PO Box 7139 Watson, ACT, 2602. Feel welcome to visit our website at: <[www.mhsa.org.au](http://www.mhsa.org.au)>.*

## Military Quote of the Month:

The military value of a partisan's work is not measured by the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but by the number [of the enemy] he keeps watching [for him].

John Singleton Mosby, 1833-1916, Confederate Cavalry Leader

## POETRY OF WAR

Herbert Read

### A Short Poem for Armistice Day

Gather or take fierce degree  
trim the lamp set out for sea  
here we are at the workmen's entrance  
clock in and shed your eminence.

Notwithstanding, work it diverse ways  
work it diverse days, multiplying four  
digestions  
here we make artificial flowers  
of paper tin and metal thread.

One eye one leg one arm one lung  
a syncopated sick heart-beat  
the record is not nearly worn  
that weaves a background to our work.

I have no power therefore have patience  
these flowers have no sweet scent

no lustre in the petal no increase  
from fertilizing flies and bees.

No seed they have no seed  
their tendrils are of wire and grip  
the buttonhole the lip  
and never fade

And will not fade though life  
and lustre go in genuine flowers  
and men like flowers are cut  
and wither on a stem

And will not fade a year or more  
I stuck one in a candlestick  
and there it clings about the socket  
I have no power therefore have patience.

## INTREP

**Keep An Eye on the Troops.** Considered one of the 'Great Captains', Frederick the Great of Prussia dominated the battlefields of central Europe in the 1740s - 1760s, turning Prussia, hitherto a minor state, into a major military power. In the lull between the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), Frederick penned his *Military Instructions*, for the edification and guidance of his subordinates. In the Instructions Frederick discusses, amongst other things, ways in which desertion can be prevented, telling the reader:

*Though my country be well peopled, it is doubtful if many men are to be met with of the height of my soldiers: and supposing ever that there was no want of them, could they be disciplined in an instant? It therefore becomes one of the most essential duties of generals who command armies or detachments, to prevent desertion. This is to be effected,*

*1st. By not encamping too near a wood or forest, unless sufficient reason require it.*

*2dly. By calling the roll frequently every day.*

*3dly. By often sending out patrols of hussars, to scour the country round about the camp.*

*4thly. By placing chasseurs in the corn by night, and doubling the cavalry posts at dusk to strengthen the chain.*

*5thly. By not allowing the soldiers to wander about, and taking care that each troop be led regularly to water and forage by an officer.*

*6thly. By punishing all marauding with severity, as it gives rise to every species of disorder and irregularity.*

*7thly. By not drawing in the guards, who are placed in the villages on marching days, until the troops are under arms.*

*8thly. By forbidding, under the strictest injunctions, that any soldier on a march quit his rank or his division.*

*9thly. By avoiding night-marches, unless obliged by necessity.*

*10thly. By pushing forward patrols of hussars to the right and left, whilst the infantry are passing through a wood.*

*11thly. By placing officers at each end of a defile, to oblige the soldiers to fall into their proper places.*

*12thly. By concealing from the soldier any retrograde movement which you may be obliged to make, or giving some specious flattering pretext for doing so.*

*13thly. By paying great attention to the regular issue of necessary subsistence, and taking care that the troops be furnished with bread, flesh, beer, brandy, &c.*

*14thly. By searching for the cause of the evil, when desertion shall have crept into a regiment or company: enquiring if the soldier has received his bounty and other customary indulgencies, and if there has been no misconduct on the part of the captain. No relaxation of discipline is however on any account to be permitted. It may be said, that the colonel will take care of this business, but his efforts alone cannot be sufficient; for in an army, every individual part of it should aim at perfection, to make it appear to be the work of only one man.*

**Russian Army Escort.** In October 1992, at the height of the civil war in the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan, the threat to the lives of employees and other US citizens at the American Embassy in the capital of Dushanbe reached a point where the US Ambassador decided to evacuate the embassy in the interests of the safety of those working at or sheltering in the embassy. On 25 October, the US government formally requested assistance from the Russian government in providing security for US citizens in its embassy in Dushanbe and in response an armed escort from the 201<sup>st</sup> Motor Rifle Division was provided. The Russian troops provided armed security for the US party as it evacuated the embassy and withdrew to the protected enclave at the city's international airport. This marks the only time in history that Americans have officially asked for and been given protection by the Russian military.

# *National Conference, Victoria, Easter 2010*

Andrew Kilsbey of the Victorian Branch is the conference convener and will be the point of contact for all matters to do with the National Conference. His contact details are: [conference@mhsa.org.au](mailto:conference@mhsa.org.au) or (03) 9563 0089 (AH).

A draft program is being finalised and is provided below. Andrew is pleased to announce that we have secured Professor David Lowe <<http://www.deakin.edu.au/alfred-deakin-research-institute/people/david.php>>, Director of the Alfred Deakin Research Institute <<http://www.deakin.edu.au/alfred-deakin-research-institute/>>, as Keynote Speaker. Coincidentally, the 2010 Conference will go ahead almost exactly 100 years since Alfred Deakin, three time Australian Prime Minister and a major architect behind the Australian national defence framework, ended his long and productive political career.

In addition, he was also able to announce that Major General Jim Molan <[http://www.icmi.com.au/Speaker/Leadership/Jim\\_Molan/Biography](http://www.icmi.com.au/Speaker/Leadership/Jim_Molan/Biography)> (Rtd), AO, DSC, has agreed to speak to our formal dinner on Saturday 3rd April. Major General Molan's recent book *Running the War in Iraq* <[http://www.harpercollins.com.au/books/9780732287818/Running\\_the\\_War\\_in\\_Iraq/index.aspx](http://www.harpercollins.com.au/books/9780732287818/Running_the_War_in_Iraq/index.aspx)> and his insights into modern military affairs will add a very contemporary feel to the historical context of the Conference.

This conference is packed with highly interesting, at times even controversial, papers from MHSa members from Queensland, Victoria, the ACT and NSW as well as from a number of guest speakers. The subjects are many and varied, and include battle, biographical, militaria, archaeology, social and strategy themes from the times of the Imperial forces in Australia through to the current day.

The Research in Progress segment will be included in the program once again. Any intending participants who have a research project underway or feel they may have an update or perspective of interest to the gathering, are encouraged to use this forum for a short and informal presentation. Members who can identify a subject for this session are encouraged to contact the Convener at their earliest opportunity.

The formal dinner will be a highlight; but it is expected that a field trip to Melbourne's historic Shrine and Victoria Barracks' WWII War Rooms will also be of interest to many. As well there will be opportunities for those militaria experts to display and trade their treasures.

Kristen Alexander

## *OUTLINE CONFERENCE PROGRAM*

Friday 2 April

6.00 – 9.00pm 'Meet and Greet' at the Box Hill RSL, Box Hill, Melbourne. Early registrations and refreshments.

Saturday 3 April

8.30 am Conference Registrations

9.15 am Formal Opening

Conference format and housekeeping (Conference Convener).

9.30 am Welcome address by VIC Branch President, Mr Robbie Dalton and introduction to the MHSa Patron, Air Marshal IB Gration, AO, AFC, who will officially open the Conference.

9.40 am Keynote Speaker: 'Australian Defence and the Legacy of Alfred Deakin'  
Professor David Lowe, Director, Alfred Deakin Research Institute, Deakin University

10.20 am Morning Tea

10.50-12:10 pm Two papers.

12.10 pm Members' display viewing

12.30 pm Conference lunch Box Hill RSL

1.30–2:50 pm Two papers

2.50 pm Afternoon Tea

3.10 pm Two papers

4.30 pm Program for Sunday 4th April – Conference Convener

4.45 pm Close of session (Conference Convener)

6.30 for Conference Dinner  
7.00 pm Box Hill RSL, Box Hill

Dinner Speaker  
Major General (Rtd) Andrew 'Jim' Molan, AO, DSC

*Sunday 4 April*

8 -10.00 am Closed Federal Council and Branch Representatives Meeting  
Chaired by Federal President Major Rob Morrison, RFD

9.15 am Venue Open for Displays

9.20am 'Research in Progress' – Eight x 5 minute presentations by members seeking information or reporting on the progress of various research pursuits. For more details see: <<http://www.mhsa.org.au/MHSA%20-%202008%20Conference%20Research%20in%20Prog.htm>>

10.00 am Tour group depart for military heritage precinct tour

10.30 am Guided tour through the WWII War Rooms at Victoria Barracks, St. Kilda Road, Melbourne; tour of The Shrine and associated memorials including the Victorian Boer War Memorial

12.30 pm Lunch at the Shrine precinct

1.15 pm Depart for Box Hill RSL

2.00–3:20 pm Two papers

3.20 pm Afternoon Tea

3.40–5:00 pm Two papers

5.00 pm Program for Monday 4th April & Close of Session (Conference Convener)

*Monday 5 April*

9.00 am Venue open

9:30 am Paper

10.10 am Morning Tea

10.30–12:30 pm Three papers

12.30 pm Formal Closure of the Conference – by Federal President Major Rob Morrison, RFD and closing words from the Patron Air Marshall B Gration, AO, AFC (retd).  
Preview of the next Conference.

12.40 pm Lunch (members' own)

Members only Trading and Sell books, militaria etc.

3.00 pm Farewell and closure of venue

*"I learned that good judgment comes from experience and that  
experience grows out of mistakes."*

*General Omar N. Bradley*