

The Military Historical Society of Australia  
ACT BRANCH

**LE GROGNARD!**

January 2011

Committee 2010/2011

**President:** Ian Stagoll - Ph: 6254 0199 (h) 0414 291 971 (m) [ian.stagoll@gmail.com]  
**Vice President:** Andrew Geraghty - Ph: 0411 444 145 (m) [creativewords1@yahoo.com]  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Robynne Mitchell - Ph: 6257 0687 (h) [actsec@mhsa.org.au]  
**Committee member:** Clem Davis - 6254 2861 (h) [clem@bowtie.com.au]

**NOTE: This Month's Branch Meeting**  
**24 January 2011, 7:30pm**  
**Orpheus Room, Hellenic Club, Woden**

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**Federal Council Survey:**

Inserted in your December 2010 copy of *Sabretache* there should have been a MHSa Federal Council **survey form**. I have attached a copy of the form, and covering letter, at the end of this newsletter in case you haven't responded and have misplaced the original form. If you have not already responded I would encourage you to complete and return the survey form as soon as possible. The Society, Branches and of course individual members will I believe ultimately benefit from the information gathered.

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**Society Mailing List:**

I've mentioned this before, but if you haven't already done so consider adding your details to the mailing list [see Member Services on the website: [www.mhsa.org.au](http://www.mhsa.org.au)]; it's a good resource for lodging enquiries and helping others with their research, as well as sharing information and hearing about matters of possible interest.

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**Did you Know:**

**The Pentagon** has twice as many toilets/washrooms as needed. When it was built, segregation was still in place in Virginia, so separate toilets/washrooms for blacks and whites were required by law.

**Graduates of the Virginia Military Institute** went on to become some of America's most significant commanders in WW2, including George C. Marshall, the top US Army general during the war. One who didn't stay the course earlier on was Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller. Puller resigned from VMI after his freshman year to enlist as a Private in the Marine Corps in 1918. He retired as a Lieutenant General - the most decorated Marine in US history.

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**Branch Meetings:**

Please let me know if you would like to give a presentation during 2011, or have a suggested guest speaker in mind. Any suggestions for varying the format of our meetings would also be most welcome. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday 28 February 2011, 7:30pm, Aegean Room, Hellenic Club, Woden.

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**University of the Third Age [U3A]:**

Now in its fourth year, the **ASPECTS OF MILITARY HISTORY** course that I convene for the U3A will begin again on 3 February 2011.

As I have mentioned previously in *LE GROGNARD!* this ongoing course features a talk or presentation on a different topic each week. Speakers include well-known historians and writers, and others who talk from personal experience or perspective. It covers a wide range of subjects relating to military history matters, with a special emphasis on Australian military history.

The course is held each Thursday 2.30-4.30pm at the Canberra Southern Cross Club Jamison. The usual format is for the speaker to talk for around an hour, followed by a 15-20 minute break for afternoon tea, and then the speaker takes questions and joins in general discussion. Attendance is generally around 35-40, including many former service personnel.

I remind Branch members that they are most welcome to attend sessions of this course. Please contact me if you want to know more.

Ian Stagoll.

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**For information** - on 15 December 2010 Federal Council issued the following Press Release:

## **"The Sabretache Writers Prize for Military History"**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

The MHSA has today announced a new biennial writers prize for military history. The MHSA, formed in 1957, is a nationally networked historical society focused on the study of Australian military history and publishes a quarterly journal, Sabretache.

"MHSA members will be able to test their skills researching and writing military history with this new initiative", new Federal President, Rohan Goyne said today.

The details of the prize are:

- The prize will be open to Society members;
- \$500 will be awarded biennially to the article judged the best by a panel
- The panel comprises noted military historian, Dr Peter Stanley, Mr Anthony Staunton, Editor of Sabretache/Author and a Branch representative
- The article will be 3,000 to 4,000 words on a topic of Australian military history based in part on primary sources
- The winning entry will be published in Sabretache and the writer will be invited to speak at the Society's biennial conference.

"I'm looking at new ways for the MHSA to pursue its core functions which are the research, writing and study of Australian military history", Federal President Mr Goyne said.

"This new writers prize will provide incentive to our professional and recreational military historians to practice their art", Mr Goyne concluded.

Entries close on **31 May 2011** and the winner will be announced at Federal Council's August Annual General Meeting.

Entries should be addressed to:

Mr Anthony Staunton, The Editor  
Sabretache, the Journal of the Military Historical Society of Australia  
PO Box 5030  
GARRAN ACT 2605

Queries regarding style should be addressed to the editor on 02 6281 6975 [editor@mhsa.org.au](mailto:editor@mhsa.org.au)

Statement ends 15 December 2010

**Media Contact: Rohan Goyne, Federal President, Military Historical Society of Australia 0418 447 328(m) or [rgoyne@grapevine.com.au](mailto:rgoyne@grapevine.com.au)**

**Membership details: Kristen Alexander, Federal Secretary [fedsec@mhsa.org.au](mailto:fedsec@mhsa.org.au)**

## INTREP

**That Was Quick!** On 14 March 1945 the German submarine *U-714* was sunk off the Firth of Forth by HMSAS *Natal* (formerly HMS *Loch Cree*), a Loch class frigate of the South African Naval Force (SANF). Nothing overly special about this, except for the fact that *Natal* had only been accepted into SANF service on 9 March 1945 and had only set sail on its shake down cruise at 0900 hours on the morning of 14 March 1945, approximately four (4) hours before she sank *U-714*! HMSAS *Natal*'s feat so soon after commissioning was described at the time as 'unique in the annals of the Royal Navy'. The ship received the RN battle honour, 'North Sea 1945', and a number of individual decorations were awarded, including a Bar to the DSC for her captain, Lieutenant Commander D.A. Hall, DSC, SANF(V) (Hall had been awarded the DSC earlier in the war for gallantry in the Mediterranean). HMSAS *Natal* had an active role in the closing stages of the Battle of the Atlantic, as part of the RN's 8<sup>th</sup> Escort Group, after which she was sent to the Far East where in mid-1945 she took part in Operation Zipper - the Allied reoccupation of Malaya, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. After a long and distinguished career - the latter part of it as the SA Navy's hydrographic survey vessel - the 27-year-old *Natal* was finally towed south of Cape Point in 1972 and sunk as a gunnery target.

**Divvying Up the Loot.** Until relatively recent times loot was a major perquisite of warriors. Many armies and navies – which preferred to call loot 'prize' – regularized the collection of booty so that it could be distributed equitably among those in the ranks. Initially custom was the primary guideline for dividing up the loot but during the Renaissance, as armies became more formally organized, detailed regulations began to be introduced. A French military treatise of 1592 provides one of the earliest examples of written guidelines for the division of loot by a regiment.

The treatise first specified which personnel qualified for a share in the booty. After all, a man might be assigned to the regiment, but not be present at the siege and capture of a particular town or take part in a particular victory. After that, the treatise explained how much each eligible soldier was to be awarded. First, the commanding officer was to be given 10 per cent of the total booty. The remaining loot was then divided into 'shares' based on the specified allocation for each rank:

- Captains 6 shares
- Lieutenants 4 shares
- Ensigns and Gentleman Volunteers 3 shares
- Sergeants 2 shares
- Common Soldiers 1 share

In addition, the sergeant major of the command was to be given a half share for each company under his charge during the action. This was because at the time regiments did not have a fixed number of companies. Guidelines for larger formations provided a major percentage for the overall commander and other higher officers, including the sergeant major of the army, and demoted regimental commanders to a set number of shares. Depending upon the loot taken, awards could represent considerable sums. Even a common soldier occasionally came away with enough money to buy a farm or a shop, provided he didn't spend it straight away on wine, women and song (as if!).

## UNSUNG HEROES

**Claire Cline** was a US Air Force bomber pilot shot down in February 1944 over Germany. Bailing out just over the border he landed in occupied Holland; taken prisoner he was sent to POW camp Stalag Luft I. After months of boredom, Cline set out to make a violin - he'd had one as a child - using bed slats which he carefully carved with a penknife, and boiling down little bits of glue scraped from chairs. A non-smoker, he traded his tobacco rations with guards for the things he couldn't make: catgut for the strings, and a bow. It took three months, working every day, but from then on he was able to play and entertain his fellow prisoners. His favourite memory was from Christmas 1944. He played "Silent Night", and "As the notes drifted through the barracks a voice chimed in," he said, "then others. Amid the harmony I heard a different language: 'Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht, alles schlaft, Einsam wacht....' An elderly white-haired guard stood in the shadows, his eyes wet with tears," singing along with the prisoners. The following May the camp was liberated by the Allies - and Cline was able to bring his violin home. He became a cabinet maker. Claire Cline died in September 2010, aged 92. His son, Roger, who plays double bass in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, says the violin will go to a museum. [*This is True*, 26 September 2010]

**Fred Hargesheimer** was an electrical engineer, who started out working in the field of radio. When WW2 broke out he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps as a reconnaissance pilot. While flying his P-38 on a photographic mission over the island of New Britain he was shot down by a Japanese fighter. He parachuted into the Japanese-held island, and managed to survive in the jungle for a month without being captured. He was finally found by hunters from the island's Nakanai tribe, who brought him back to their village, called Ea Ea, nursed him back to health, and hid him from the Japanese - for five months - at extreme risk to their own lives. He was finally found by Australian intelligence operatives, and picked up by a U.S. submarine. After the war he married and worked for an electronics company, but the more he thought about his wartime experience, "the more I realized what a debt I had to try to repay," he said later. "These people were responsible for saving my life."

In 1960 he returned to Ea Ea to thank the Nakanai, and to see what they needed. Their answer: a school. By 1963 he had raised \$15,000, and returned to build the school. Over the next 40 years he kept returning, building a library, a medical clinic, another school, and other infrastructure in the village, which is now called Nantabu. Starting in 1970 he stayed for four years, teaching school himself, and helping to start a local industry to bring jobs to the community. The U.S. military awarded Hargesheimer a Purple Heart, the Silver Star, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Perhaps more meaningful: the Nakanai proclaimed him "Suara Auru" - their "Chief Warrior". In 2006, Nakanai tribesmen led Hargesheimer to something newly found in the jungle: the wreckage of his airplane. It was his last visit to the island. Hargesheimer died in December 2010, at 94. [*This is True*, 26 December 2010]

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*Anyone who has an interest in the study and research of general military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment, medals, and related matters, with particular reference to Australian military history, is most welcome to attend meetings of the ACT Branch of the Society.*

*For membership or other enquiries contact the ACT Branch Secretary, PO Box 7139, Watson ACT 2602, or visit the Society's website: [www.mhsa.org.au](http://www.mhsa.org.au).*



# The Military Historical Society of Australia

## Federal Council

Patron Air Marshal Barry Gratton AO, AFC, (Retd)  
Vice Patron Major General Peter Haddad AO (Retd)  
President Rohan Goyne 0418 447 328 [rgoyne@grapevine.com.au](mailto:rgoyne@grapevine.com.au)  
Vice-President and Sabretache Editor Anthony Staunton (A/H) 02 6281 6975 [editor@mhsa.org.au](mailto:editor@mhsa.org.au)  
Treasurer Tim Lyon [treasurer@mhsa.org.au](mailto:treasurer@mhsa.org.au)  
Secretary Kristen Alexander 02 6258 7348 [fedsec@mhsa.org.au](mailto:fedsec@mhsa.org.au)

**Address: PO Box 5030, Garran, ACT, 2605**

Dear Member

The Rules of the Society's Constitution require the Federal Secretary to, among other things, keep and maintain a register of members containing the name and address of each member and the date on which that member became a member. For no apparent reason, joining dates have 'fallen off' the register currently in place. In addition, there is no provision under the Rules for the register to include members' contact details, other than postal address, or their military interests/research pursuits.

With this in mind, at its meeting on 25 October 2010, Federal Council agreed that as a matter of priority the membership should be surveyed to address these matters. In addition to gathering details for the members' register as required by the Rules, and other information on members' needs and their suggestions to assist Federal Council's future planning and actions, members would be asked to provide their telephone and email contacts, as well as details of their military interests/research pursuits, and permission to use these in order to:

- include telephone contacts on the members' register for Federal Council's administrative use.
- compile an **opt-in** Society email contact list. Although the majority of members have email, speedy communication is difficult at present as Federal Council does not hold the email contact details of the membership as a whole. The contact list would be maintained by the Federal Secretary as an adjunct to the members' register. It would be used by of via the Secretary to distribute related military/research information, members' notices, Federal Council advice/information, announcements, or Society information to members. **It would not be** distributed to anyone else either in or outside of the Society.
- compile an **opt-in** register of military interests/research pursuits which would be distributed to members to facilitate contact, discussion, debate, learning and exchange of information and ideas between members of like interests and pursuits. This register would also provide guidance to Federal Council and the *Sabretache* editor in their endeavours to satisfy the needs and wishes of members as indicated by the survey results. It **would not be** distributed to anyone outside of the Society.

If you do not respond to this survey, your details on the current members' register will remain unchanged and you will not be included on either the email contact list or interests/research pursuits register. *I urge you to respond. The information gathered from the survey will improve the Society and will benefit you and all members.*

Yours sincerely

Kristen Alexander  
Federal Secretary

- Please complete and return to Federal Secretary, MHSA,  
PO Box 5030 GARRAN ACT 2605 by **22 January 2011**.
- If you need more space for comments, just grab another sheet of paper!
- If you would prefer to complete and return by email, please email the Federal Secretary: [fedsec@mhsa.org.au](mailto:fedsec@mhsa.org.au)

1	Name	
2	Age (optional. To get an idea of the age spread of members)	
3	Address	
4	Permission to record your telephone number(s) on the members' register	YES/NO. Strike out whichever does not apply. If YES, telephone number(s).
5	Permission to record your email address(es) on the members' register	YES/NO If YES, email address(es).
6	Military interests/research pursuits	
7	Permission to include your interests and contact details on the members' interests/research pursuits register	YES/NO. If you wish your inclusion to be limited, strike out what details you do <u>not</u> want included: address/phone/email.
8	Signature/Date	
9	Where/how did you hear about the Society prior to joining?	
10	When did you join?	
11	Reason(s) for joining?	
12	Is the Society meeting your needs and wishes as a member?	YES/NO. If NO, in what way?
13	If NO to Q12, do you have any suggestions for improvement?	

14	Do you have any suggestions as to how the Society might recruit new members?	
15	How do you think the Society should be advertised/promoted to attract/recruit new members?	
16	Have you attended any biennial conferences?	YES/NO. If YES, give details
17	NO to Q16, why not? (eg cost? distance? lack of interest in program? other?)	
18	If NO to Q16, what changes could be made that might lead you to consider attending conferences in the future?	
19	Does <i>Sabretache</i> meet your needs as an organ of communication and/or as a vehicle to publish members' research?	Organ of communication YES/NO Vehicle to publish YES/NO
20	If NO to either of Q19, why not? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?	
21	What do you like to read in <i>Sabretache</i> ? (Including regular features such as book reviews, new books and Water Cart.) What would you like to see more/less of?	
22	To reduce production costs, Federal Council is considering changing <i>Sabretache's</i> size to A5 (15cm x 21cm) but with the <i>same</i> number of pages and <i>same</i> font size as at present. Would you support this?	YES/NO
23	If NO to Q22, why not?	
24	Have you joined the Society's contact list managed by Peter Evans? listmanager@mhsa.org.au	YES/NO. If NO, why not. If YES, how valuable is it to you?

25	Would you be interested in a website based forum?	YES/NO Have a look at <a href="http://www.ww2aircraft.net/forum/">http://www.ww2aircraft.net/forum/</a> and <a href="http://disc.yourwebapps.com/Indices/105008.html">http://disc.yourwebapps.com/Indices/105008.html</a> (the Battle of Britain Society forum) for examples.
26	Have you visited the Society's website in the last two years? <a href="http://mhsa.org.au">http://mhsa.org.au</a>	YES/NO If YES, number of occasions or frequency of visits
27	Do you have any suggestions to improve the website?	
28	Are you a member of another military interest group that might consider forming a relationship with the Society or exchanging website links?	YES/NO. If YES, details
29	Federal Council is looking for help with a number of projects. Do you have any skills/expertise you could offer on a VOLUNTARY basis (eg website design/development, content management, public relations, strategic planning/development)?	YES/NO. If YES, what projects would you be interested in helping with or managing?
30	Would you be willing to act as a mentor to another member, share your research/manuscript development/editing skills, offer to be a sounding board to other members undertaking research?	YES/NO. If YES how can you help/what expertise can you share?
31	If YES to Q30, would you like this to be included on the military interests register or for referral to be made on an as needs basis?	Military interests register YES/NO  As needs referral YES/NO
32	Federal Council wants to develop a members' benefits program. Do you own a business (or are connected to a business) that could offer members a benefit, such as a service or product discount?	Details (or contact the Federal Secretary to discuss <a href="mailto:fedsec@mhsa.org.au">fedsec@mhsa.org.au</a> )
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS:</b>		