



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



LE GROGNARD!

May 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 – Ph: 6254 2861 (h) [clem@bowtie.com.au]
Newsletter Editor: Graham Wilson – Ph: 0415 594 057 (m) [duty_first@hotmail.com]

NOTE: This Month's Branch Meeting
Monday 23rd May, 7:30pm Aegean
Room, Hellenic Club, Woden

Branch News:

.....
The guest speaker for the May Branch meeting will be Federal President, and ACT Branch member, Rohan Goyne. His topic:

'The Colo Wars' - Britain's small war in the South Pacific

I repeat, please advise if you would like to give a presentation during 2011, or have a suggested guest speaker in mind.

The guest speaker for the June Branch meeting has yet to be advised. The meeting will be held on Monday, 27 June 2011, normal time and venue.

MHSA Biennial Conference 2012:

I remind you that the ACT Branch will be hosting the Society's next conference, over the weekend Saturday/Sunday 3-4 November 2012. As I said last month, that might seem a long way off, but planning is underway now - suggestions are welcome; offers to assist, more so. A working group has been established, headed by Graham Wilson, together with Ian Ball, Tim Lyon and Nigel Webster.

Ian Stagoll

INTREP

Military Quote of the Month

'The *Duce* will have Ethiopia. With or without the Ethiopians.'

Marshal Rodolfo Graziani

Professor Richard Holmes Dies. Professor Richard Holmes, CBE, acclaimed British military history and retired Territorial Army brigadier recently died at the age of 65. Known for sharing his knowledge of warfare on BBC documentaries, Professor Holmes also taught at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and Cranfield University. His specialities included England's conflicts with France in the Middle Ages and World War II. He also wrote numerous books.

His focus was the ordinary soldier, whom he wanted to 'put centre stage'. Professor Holmes was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, as well as Northern Illinois University and the University of Reading. He served in the Territorial Army in which he commanded the 2nd Battalion the Wessex Regiment and eventually rose to the rank of brigadier and became the first reservist to hold the position of Director of Reserve Forces and Cadets. After a spell of teaching at Sandhurst, he joined Cranfield University as a teacher in 1986 where he worked until 2009. Professor Holmes was patron of the Guild of Battlefield Guides. (INTREP Comment: I have been fortunate enough to hear the late Professor Holmes talk on several occasions and can attest to the brilliant nature of his talks; having also once been a member of the dining party at the same lunch table as Richard, I can also attest that he was an extremely personable and likeable gentleman – the military history world has lost a shining light).

New Australian Government Website – Korean War.

The Australian Government launched a new website in April entitled 'Australia's Involvement in the Korean War'. The website is reasonably well laid out, however, from the point of view of a serious student of the history of the Korean War, it is little short of useless, consisting of very short, generalised items, usually no more than a paragraph or two long, on the various subjects discussed. One also has to wonder what use links to the current weather conditions in Pyongyang and Seoul would be to a reader or researcher. On the other hand, the site does have some excellent maps and it does give a good, beginner level intro to the subject of the history of the Korean War and Australia's involvement. The site can be accessed at <http://korean-war.commemoration.gov.au/>.

Another New Website.

Keith Bell of the Queensland Branch has advised that the Queensland Government has opened a new website which contains a variety of information on Queensland World War Two Historic Places. The website is well set up, visually attractive and easy to

navigate. On the other hand, while all services, allies, the Home Front and Southwest Pacific Campaign are all covered, the information displayed is relatively sparse and of a general nature only, although ideal as a primer for anyone starting out on the subject. On yet another hand, however, probably the greatest strength of the site (which appears to be a work in progress) is an interactive map with links to various sites of military interest. Not every site is included (not by a very long shot), however, it is a very good start and hopefully will develop as time goes on. Worth taking a look at, at www.ww2places.qld.gov.au.

Toilet Guide – World War Two Style.

This little gem was discovered in the World War Two War Diary of HQ AIF (UK) and is extracted from *Australian Force Administrative Instruction No.50* of 8 November 1940:

2. BEHAVIOUR OF TROOPS.

Reports received indicate that there have been a large number of cases of promiscuous urination in COLCHESTER. In order that this may be overcome it is asked that units should assist by pointing out to all personnel that such a practice can only reflect detrimentally on the name of the A.I.F.

To assist troops the following list of public conveniences is published. Troops are also reminded that conveniences are available in all hotels:

Lavatory, Baths, Culver Street
North Station Road. By-pass junction.
East Street Recreation Ground.
St. Botolphs Street.
Butt Road (next to Fair Ground).
East Street Level Crossing.
Bus Park – St. Johns Street.
Castle Park – 3 locations.
North Station Road (near Castle Inn)
Hythe Bridge.

It is always a wonder that they found time for this stuff in the middle of a global conflict!

CIA Declassifies Documents from World War One.

On 19 April of this year the US Central Intelligence Agency announced that it had declassified six World War One-era documents that described the use of ‘invisible ink’ to convey secret messages.

‘These documents remained classified for nearly a century until recent advancements in technology made it possible to release them,’ CIA Director Leon E. Panetta said in a news release.

The CIA, however, neglected to mention in its news release that the documents had remained classified until this year, not because they were forgotten or overlooked, but because the CIA had vigorously opposed their release. In response to a 1998 FOIA lawsuit the CIA had argued that ‘some of the methods described in the documents in question are still used by the CIA, and that third parties inimical to the interests of the United States may not know which of the [invisible ink] formulas are still considered reliable by the CIA and approved for use by its agents.’

Logistics of a British Cavalry Regiment in the Peninsula.

The Duke of Wellington was a notably effective logistical manager, and despite great difficulties his troops were usually better equipped and supplied than those of his French opponents. If the daily logistical requirements of a single cavalry regiment are considered, the Iron Duke’s great achievement can be put very firmly into perspective. On paper a cavalry regiment had 407 personnel, organized into six troops, plus a staff,

with 478 horses and mules, including mounts for troopers, plus draught animals for the baggage, service, and munitions wagons. To feed the men of the regiment each day required 407 pounds of biscuit, 407 pounds of meat, and 407 rations of alcoholic beverages, or some 200 pounds of booze, if one included the cask, and omitting additional rations allocated to officers. Feeding the regiment's animals required a daily ration of 4,780 pounds of grain, plus 5,786 pounds of hay or straw, not to mention water, although this could, with a little luck, be obtained locally. As the normal issue of ration was three days' worth, the regiment had to carry a minimum of 12,642 pounds of food and drink for the men, plus 31,698 for the animals. Then there was the daily fire wood ration of 1,586 pounds, for a three day total of 4,758 pounds, plus additional for the officers. Thus, the total weight of three days' rations for a full regiment - men and beasts, food, drink, and fire wood - came to roughly 25 tons, if one includes additional allocations for officers. All this was usually transported by pack mules. Since commissariat mules commonly could only carry only 200 pounds, 246 mules were needed. And since the mules had to be fed, at least four more mules would be required to carry the grain and hay needed for the commissary animals each day. Well done Your Grace!

Bi-Partisan Effort? One day in November of 1944 the USS *Ulvert M. Moore* (DE-442), commanded by Lieutenant Commander Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., lay in Pearl Harbor, preparing for movement to the Western Pacific. There was much hustle aboard and many communications back and forth to shore establishments to ensure that the ship was ready for combat, as the newly commissioned ship was having some mechanical problems. On this particular day, among the messages was one for the *Moore's* skipper, reading 'Do you need a good Republican sail maker?' It was from the skipper of the *Moore's* sister ship,, the USS *William Seiverling* (DE-441), who was a noted yachtsman and, by chance, also a presidential kinsman, albeit a different president, or rather two of them, Charles Francis Adams IV. A 'rock ribbed Republican', Adams was having some fun with his Democratic comrade. Despite their political differences, Adams and Roosevelt got along very well, as befitted proper Harvard men.

The Polish 10th Motorized Cavalry Brigade. Organized in February 1937, the 10th Motorized Cavalry Brigade was the only fully motorized unit in the Polish Army when the Germans invaded on 1 September 1939. By then the brigade, commanded by Colonel Stanislaw Maczek (1892-1994), comprised two battalion-sized motorized regiments, a light tank company and two tankette reconnaissance companies, plus, an artillery battalion, anti-tank and anti-aircraft batteries, an engineer battalion, and some administrative elements, all motorized. During the German invasion, the brigade served primarily as a mobile reserve and screening unit, helping to defend Polish Silesia as part of the Krakow Army, and then covering the Polish retreat until the Soviet invasion of 17 September made further resistance impossible. Although defeated, and having lost perhaps half its personnel, the brigade remained intact, and retreated into Hungary, where it was disarmed and interned. Through Hungarian connivance, many of the troops, especially the officers, were able to find their way to France. There a Polish-army-in-exile was being formed from men who had eluded captivity or internment, and from Poles who had been living abroad. Maczek began to reform his brigade around a cadre of its original personnel, hoping to create a Polish armoured division. This project was hardly begun when the Germans invaded France, Belgium, and the Netherlands on 10 May 1940. The new Polish '10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade', hastily organized from a tank battalion, two motorized cavalry squadrons, an anti-tank battery, and an anti-aircraft battery, went into action with minimal training in early June near Reims. By 18 June, that is, *after* Dunkirk, having helped cover the retreat of the disordered French forces, Maczek ordered his troops to destroy their equipment and attempt to make their way to Britain. After often impressive adventures, Maczek and many of his men managed to make their escape, some men reaching French ports still in friendly hands and others getting to Britain by way of Spain and Portugal. Joined by other survivors and more overseas Poles, the brigade was reconstituted in Scotland in late 1940 and early 1941, eventually comprising two armored regiments and two mechanized infantry regiments. Early in 1942 the brigade became part of Maczek's new

Polish 1st Armoured Division. After two years of training, the division was committed to the Normandy front on 1 August 1944. Serving with the Canadian First Army, the division took part in Operation 'Totalize', helping to form the northern pincer that ultimately trapped the German Seventh Army in the Falaise Pocket, with the 10th Brigade being prominent in beating off repeated German attempts to break out. The division then went on to take part in the Liberation of Belgium and the southern Netherlands, and in early 1945 helped clear the eastern provinces of the Netherlands, before proceeding into Germany, where it seized the major naval base at Wilhelmshaven shortly before the surrender of Germany. After two years of occupation duty in northern Germany, the division was disbanded, as most of its personnel refused to return to by-then Communist-dominated Poland. The Polish 10th Armoured Brigade was apparently the only Polish Army unit in the war to never be defeated and the only one to go through the entire conflict with essentially the same officer cadre. Following the end of the Cold War, a new 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade was constituted in the Polish Army, and remains on active duty.

The Other Victims of the 'Bridge on the River Kwai'. In both Australia and the United Kingdom, the sacrifices of our POW during the building of Burma-Thailand Railway are well remembered. Generally forgotten, however, is the fact that while about 61,000 Allied POW worked on the railway, a staggering 270,000 Asian prisoners of war and impressed civilians were also employed as slave labour on the project. Compared to the 12,568 Allied POW who died working on the 'Burma Railway', a staggering 87,500 of the Asians died from malnutrition, disease, beatings, accidents, and executions. Lest we forget.

The U.S. Navy vs. 'The Circular Running Torpedoes'. A 'circular running torpedo' is one that, upon being fired, turns back toward the vessel that fired it. This is not only unnerving, but has sometimes proven fatal. During the Second World War, 24 American submarines found themselves threatened by a circular running torpedo, two of which were lost.

- USS *Tullibee* (SS-284), off Palau on 26 March 1944: a malfunctioning Mark XVIII torpedo struck the boat, causing the death of all but one of her 60-man crew, Gunner's Mate Second Class Clifford W. Kuykendall, who had been on deck at the time. Kuykendall was promptly captured and spent the rest of the war as a guest of the Japanese Emperor.
- USS *Tang* (SS-308), in the Formosa Strait on 24 October 1944: a torpedo, either a Mark XIV, XVIII, or XXIII, circled back and struck the boat, causing the loss of all her 78-man crew except skipper Richard H. O'Kane and eight other crewmen, who were on deck at the time, and who were also taken prisoner by the Japanese.

There were several reasons why a torpedo might run in a circle and threaten the boat that fired it. The Mark XIV torpedo itself was a very flawed weapon, and that may have been a factor. But human error seems to have been the more likely cause. Carelessness while maintaining the delicate mechanism was not uncommon, and there are many documented instances where errors were made during the arming of a torpedo. On 25 September 1942, for example, USS *Sargo* (SS-188) fired five Mark XIV torpedoes, four of which failed to go off, and one circled back, to explode off her stern. An investigation determined that the gyroscope for the last torpedo had not been installed; it was still in its storage box aboard the boat when the torpedo was fired.

Dig In Deep. During the French invasion scares of the mid-19th century, a number of plans for the fortification and defence of London were proposed. One of the most creative plans was advanced by Colonel Robert Alexander Shafto Adair, Second Baronet Waveney, a militiaman and aide-de-camp to Queen Victoria. During the height of the invasion scare of 1858-1861, Shafto Adair wrote extensively

on the problem of the defense of Britain, with his work appearing in the influential *Journal of the Royal United Service Institute*. His first essay appeared in 1858, and advanced a very innovative proposal to turn London into an entrenched camp by using the rail lines that circled the city as the basis for a vast system of earthworks. Relatively little work had to be done, since most of the rail lines were on berms, or in cuts, which could be extended to provide parapets and battery pits as needed, while leaving the tracks and roadbeds intact so that trains could move heavy guns, troops, and supplies around the perimeter to supplement the fixed defenses. This proposal would have resulted in a fortified camp with a circumference of some 70 miles, leaving virtually the entire city immune from artillery bombardment. As part of this plan, Shafto Adair also proposed increasing the London militia from less than 20,000 to over 100,000 men to garrison the works. Not only would this provide for the defense of London, but any invader attempting to bypass and screen the city rather than besiege it would be vulnerable to an attack by the garrison. Although innovative and receiving extensive public support and spurring much discussion, this plan and others, both by Shafto Adair and other pundits, faded from view as the strategic naval balance shifted firmly in favour of Britain and a French invasion became a virtual impossibility.

A Strange Welcome Home. Arriving by rail in Atlanta, Georgia, while en route home in 1899 after being mustered out of service following the end of the Spanish American War, in which the regiment did not get to serve operationally and never left the US, the men of the all-black 3rd North Carolina Volunteers were attacked and beaten by large numbers of local police officers and ‘special deputies’, to remind them of their ‘place’, a fate shared by many other African-Americans returning from the war with Spain. This was not the first time the 3rd North Carolina had suffered this sort of treatment. While in camp near Knoxville, Tennessee, soldiers in a white regiment from Georgia often threw rocks at the South Carolina men during drill and occasionally took shots at them. On the other hand, local white civilians were won over by the volunteers’ exemplary behavior when they visited Knoxville, and the President’s Commission to Investigate the Conduct of the War with Spain specially commended the Third North Carolina. Later, however, when serving at Camp Haskell near Macon, Georgia, where racism and discrimination were rife, four members of the 3rd North Carolina were killed by white civilians, all of whom were acquitted when they pled ‘justifiable homicide’.

.....

How the Sayings Came About:

Ever wondered about the old saying ‘Lock, stock and barrel’? Most people think it is an old fashioned saying that means selling or disposing of a commercial property, say a shop or a tavern, complete with building, contents and everything else. Not so – the saying is military in origin and actually dates back to the 17th century when the preferred tactic of English musketeers was to fire off a volley, reverse their matchlocks, charge the enemy line and lay about the enemy with the butt end of the weapon, giving them ‘Lock, stock and barrel’. Now you know.

.....

Anyone who has an interest in the study and research of military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment, medals, and related matters, particularly where such are relevant to Australia, 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.