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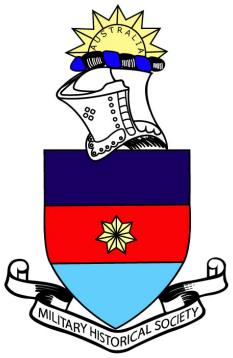

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THE AUSTRALASIAN NAVAL FORCES (ANF)

Greg Swinden

Firstly let me explain that the Australasian Naval Forces (ANF) and the Commonwealth Naval Forces (CNF), and vice versa, are not the same thing. Following Federation in 1901 the various state navies were combined into the Commonwealth Naval Forces, on 1 March 1901, with Captain (later Rear Admiral) William Rooke Creswell in command.[1] This amalgamation did not happen overnight and it was not until 1904-05 that any semblance of order was achieved.

Whilst Creswell was busy getting the naval affairs of Australia in order, having inherited a rag tag fleet of different vessels and a conglomeration of varied personnel from the state navies, the naval defence of Australia rested very much with the Royal Navy and its squadron of ships based on the Australia Station.[2] Royal Navy ships had been based in Sydney since the days of the First Fleet and warships were permanently based in Australian waters since the 1820's and remained so until 1913. Even the creation of the various state navies had not lessened this need; as the state naval vessels were considered only suitable for harbour and close coastal defence.

Creswell was supported by some forward looking politicians including Prime Ministers Deakin and Fisher who supported the concept of an independent Australian Navy and the Government commenced ordering purpose built vessels for the new navy. The first of the CNF's new vessels were the Torpedo Boat Destroyers *Parramatta* and *Yarra* which were built in England and arrived in Australian waters in late 1910. It was the CNF that was subsequently granted the title Royal Australian Navy on 10 July 1911. Following on from the arrival of the two destroyers was the creation of the Australian Fleet Unit consisting of a battle cruiser (*Australia*) and two cruisers (*Melbourne* and *Sydney*) along with four more destroyers and two submarines. A third cruiser (*Brisbane*) was also planned to be constructed in Australia. Additionally a number of Royal Navy warships such as the cruisers *Encounter, Pioneer, Psyche* and survey vessel *Fantome* were loaned or transferred to the new navy.

It was, however, not just the acquisition of new ships that occupied the thoughts of our early naval officers and administrators. The personnel to man the new ships were equally important. Some officers and men had been transferred from the old state navies and a number of ex Royal Navy personnel had also joined the CNF. A modest recruiting program for the CNF had begun and a Boys Training Ship and a Naval College were planned but the reality was that these were several years in the future. As part of the program to train Australians to be naval personnel, and possibly in the future alleviate the shortage of trained men, the ANF was created.

Following the 1902 Colonial Conference in London it was agreed that Australians, and New Zealanders, would be permitted to enter the Royal Navy for training[3]. This would eventually form a core of trained men who could be accessed by the new Australian navy. The ANF was

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1 All states except Western Australia had naval forces consisting of ships and NSW and Victoria possessed naval brigades (naval infantry)

2 The Royal Navy ships of the Australian Squadron remained based at Sydney until October 1913 when the first RAN Fleet unit formally arrived in Australian waters. The flagship of the Royal Navy Australian Squadron was the cruiser, HMS *Cambrian*, which saluted the arrival of the Australian Fleet unit on 4 October 1913 and then, nine days later, she and several other British warships departed and returned to England for reassignment or decommissioning. Some ships remained in Australian waters on loan to the RAN such as the cruiser Encounter.

3 This was linked somewhat to the Australasian Naval Defence Act of 1887 in which the Australian colonies had provided funding for the maintenance and manning of seven warships (five third class cruisers and two torpedo gunboats). Previously manning of the ships in Australia had been purely by Royal Navy ratings recruited in Great Britain although several Australian born individuals did travel to England to enlist directly in the RN.

formed and recruiting started in early May 1904 and 15 year old schoolboy John Garfield Clubb[4] of Balmain, NSW was the first recruit and issued ANF service number 1. Over the next ten years another 1795 boys and men were enlisted in the ANF from both Australia and New Zealand. These men were effectively Royal Navy ratings who signed on for an initial period of five years service and served in the Royal Navy ships of the Australian Squadron.[5]

In January/February 1913 the majority of ANF personnel still serving in the Royal Navy (i.e. they still had a portion of their five year engagement to complete) were formally transferred to the RAN and many were allocated as commissioning crews to the newly built ships and submarines of the RAN. These men were allocated service numbers in the RAN service number 7000 series and approximately 400 men were transferred to the RAN[6]. For example Able Seaman Harold 'Lofty' Batt (ANF 1344) from Palmerston North, New Zealand was allocated service number 7442 and became commissioning crew of HMAS *Australia.* He had joined the Royal Navy in July 1909 as a Boy 2nd Class at Lyttleton, New Zealand and was allocated to HMS *Pioneer.* He served in the RAN until 1919.[7]

Another example was Ordinary Seaman Erle Boyd (ANF 1646) from Bendigo, Victoria who enlisted in the ANF in March 1911 and his first ship was HMS *Psyche.* When he transferred to the RAN he was allocated service number 7353 and joined the new cruiser HMAS *Melbourne.* Boyd served in the RAN until 1933 and attained the rank of chief petty officer. When World War II broke out he returned to the RAN, in January 1940, and served at sea throughout the war and was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for his service in HMAS *Manoora.*

Several ANF ratings served in the submarine arm of the fledgling RAN and a number lost their lives when HMA Submarine AE1 was lost off New Britain in September 1914. These included Engine Room Artificer 3rd Class John Messenger (ANF 1389/RAN 7291) from Ballarat, Victoria and Stoker Petty Officer John Moloney (ANF 1133/RAN 7299) from Brisbane, Queensland. Able Seaman Reuben Mitchell (ANF 1448/RAN 7476) also of Ballarat, Victoria enlisted in the ANF in 1910 and later served in the RAN Submarine service and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) for his bravery while serving in the submarine HMS E14 in the Dardanelles in April/May 1915. Stoker Petty Officer Henry Kinder (ANF 1334/RAN 7244) of Kogarah, New South Wales was Mentioned in Despatches for his service in HMAS AE2 during its penetration of the Dardanelles on 25 April 1915. Kinder later spent several years as a prisoner of war of the Turks after the AE2 was sunk on 30 April 1915.

Of course not all ANF ratings were effective sailors. Some were a *Kings hard bargain* – a lazy and ineffective sailor and several deserted before their period of service was over. Able Seaman Herman Brazendale of New Norfolk, Tasmania enlisted in the ANF in 1911 (ANF 1612/RAN 7866) and served onboard HMAS *Sydney* when she destroyed the German cruiser *Emden* at Cocos Island on 9 November 1914; but he was a difficult sailor who was frequently in trouble and deserted from the RAN in July 1918.

After the creation of the RAN in 1911, and the Australian Fleet Unit in 1913, the need for the ANF ceased to exist; although RN personnel on loan to the RAN made up nearly 30% of the navy's manpower. As a result enlistment slowed and no Australians were recruited after October

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4 John Garfield Clubb. Born Balmain NSW 7 January 1889. Enlisted in ANF 2 May 1904. Served in HM Ships *Mildura*, *Challenger* and *Pyramus*. He was medically discharged as unfit 19 April 1909.

5 Noting the five years commenced from the time the man turned 18 so any service before this age ('Boys Time') did not count towards the period of service.

6 Note that ANF ratings who completed their initial service in the Royal Navy and were discharged prior to 1913, and who later enlisted in the RAN, would be issued service numbers commensurate with their year of enlistment.

7 In 1967 Harold Batt published a history of his service in the RN and RAN from 1909-1919 entitled *Pioneers of the Royal Australian Navy*. This is the only known book written by a member of the ANF.

1912 although New Zealanders continued to join up until March 1914.[8] Overall, however, the ANF ratings provided a good source of highly trained manpower at a crucial time in the RAN's history. In 1913 when the RAN required well trained personnel to man the newly acquired warships the ex-ANF ratings were able to provide that skill and knowledge with a distinctly Australian flavour.[9]

For those interested in researching the ANF further a good source of information is the ANF Service Records held at the Australian War Memorial (AWM 266). This consists of the individual Attestation Papers for each man who enlisted in the ANF and two large, and rather musty, leather bound ledgers that record the enlistment details and service records of the 1796 Australians and New Zealanders who served in the ANF.

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8 The last Australian to join the ANF was Leslie Norman Bartholomaues (Born at Broken Hill in 1895). He joined the ANF on 22 October 1912 and was allocated service number 1781. He was transferred to the RAN on 22 February 1913 and allocated service number 7868. He was discharged Services No Longer Required (SNLR) on 5 April 1918 following the HMAS Fantome mutiny. The last man to join the ANF was Thomas Henry George Hullah from the Chatham Islands, New Zealand who enlisted on 6 March 1914 and was allocated the last ANF Service Number of 1796.

9 That said at least 25% of all RAN personnel in 1913 were Royal Navy personnel on loan to the RAN and several more were ex Royal Navy members who had joined the RAN directly

IMPERIAL RESERVISTS FROM AUSTRALIA

-Andrew Pittaway

> His Majesty the King, having been graciously pleased to direct by proclamation that the Army Reserve be called out on permanent service, every man belonging to Reserve resident in New South Wales is required to report himself at once to the Paymaster of the Imperial Pensions Sydney. The necessary instructions as to his joining will be given. Any reservist failing to comply with the above instruction will be liable to be proceeded against. By order W.A. Holman, Premier and Treasurer[1]

A little researched area of Australian military history is that of the Imperial reservists. They are only mentioned in passing in the Australian Official History by C.E.W. Bean and that was only when the ship they were on, HMAT *Miltiades* sailed with the first contingent of the AIF. So who were they? They were men who had seen service in the British Army before being released short of their twelve years service to 'reserved' status. On their release they were then free to take up any occupation they wished but if Britain were to find itself at war they were to be recalled immediately to their regiment.

From the surviving records it seems they were only allowed to leave the permanent forces if they had guaranteed employment in Australia or another 'colony'. William Adlam of the Rifle Brigade was promised employment with his brother in Sydney so was released to reserved status. One condition William and others had to meet when arriving in Australia was reporting to the State Treasury Department.[2] Before the Great War many of these men were classed as time expired as they had served their time on the reserve list. Though the time expired reservist was not called up to their regiments when war was declared, this did not stop many from joining the AIF or making their own way back to England to enlist.[3]

At the outbreak of the First World War, the majority of those reservists who had arrived in Australia from the UK from 1910-1914 were called back to their regiments; as appeals like the one at the beginning of the article by the NSW Premier appeared in each Australian military district. The six military districts in Australia organized the call up for their own states and arranged for the reservists to go into camp and subsequently their embarkation. According to the records of the military authorities held at the NAA, 1509 Imperial reservists were called up in Australia.[4]

MD	State	Number called up
1st	Queensland	269
2nd	New South Wales	665
3rd	Victoria	252
4th	South Australia	100
5th	Western Australia	210
6th	Tasmania	13

Though 1509 men were called up, not all of that number would embark with the reservists.[5]

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1 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 August 1914, page 10.

2 British Army WW1 Service Records NA – W Adlam – William was killed on 19 April 1915 in Belgium

3 The War Office also sent notice that they would pay the passage to Great Britain of ex regular & territorial officers who are medically fit for service (*The Brisbane Courier* 19 October 1914 page 7)

4 NAA Melbourne Office MP367/1 – 592/3/831

5 One reservist who was classed as medically unfit that tried to join the AIF was a Herbert James Knight from the King's Liverpool Regiment. He was mobilised in Victoria and reported to the authorities 10 March 1915. There is quite a bit of discrepancy in his records from the fact that he claimed to be the holder of the Victoria Cross from the Boer War. This was found to be fraudulent and he did not embark

Of this total number, 160 were exempted as being medically unfit or had become 'time expired' by the date they had reported to authorities. One hundred and eleven of these men who were classed as 'time expired' after reporting; later enlisted into the AIF. There were also 16 who did not report to authorities and were classed as being deserters.

As the reservists were called up in each state, they were generally taken under the wing of a local unit. In New South Wales they were initially ordered to report to the 26th Infantry camp at Randwick, 6 while in Western Australia they came under the 86th Infantry at Fremantle Park. The *West Australian* reported that:

> In response to the instructions to report for duty, there was a fine muster of reservists, who embraced a large variety of types, ranging from well dressed young fellows, who had apparently been doing well in the country of their adoption, to others who evidenced in their appearance the fact that prosperity had not yet dawned for them. Many carried their kit with them in anticipation of speedy embarkation from England, while several sported their blankets rolled up and slung over their shoulder in true bushman style. Eighty percent bore themselves, when standing at ease while the sergeant-major checked off their names on the reservists list, in an awkward style. When the command to come to attention, however, was shouted, there was a wonderful change. Each man seemed, in his movements, to hark back to the days when he stood in the ranks of his regiment at home, and commands were obeyed with smartness which drew from bystanders appreciative remarks.7

In Victoria as reported by the *Argus* on 12 August:

> Thirty Bell tents were erected on the parade ground of Victoria Barracks yesterday, and from now on the 200 reservists of the Imperial Army who have reported to Major F.J.D. Daryall will sleep there until they are sent off to rejoin their regiments. The men are a happy, wiry lot, and they move with the mechanical rhythm that marks the regular soldier. Other Victorian reservists soon moved to Broadmeadows camp, while the South Australians were camped at Morphetville. 8

Initially the authorities in Australia were not quite sure how to utilise the reservists as orders for their movement were slow to come from Great Britain. Just after their mobilisation, the Australian Minister for Defence, Senator Edward Millen made the following statement in regards to their use:

> As a considerable amount of uncertainty appears to exist regarding the Imperial reservists now in Australia, it might be as well to state that these at present are being attached to our own local forces, pending further direction from Imperial authorities. These men are of course, liable for service at the direction of the Imperial War Office, but obviously there is some little difficulty in the way of their immediate return to Great Britain. There services are at present, and with the sanction of the Imperial authorities, being utilised in connection with our own expeditionary force. It is probable, however, that the Imperial authorities might desire them to proceed to Great Britain, in which case, arrangements for their transport will be made by the Defence Department here.9

Because of their previous military experience a number of reservists were held back when their embarkation orders came through and with the permission of authorities in London, were to be used to help train the recruits of the fledging AIF. Their previous military experience would be a big influence on the training of the raw Australian recruits.

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with the AIF 'Character Insufficient, being a bad example to young soldiers'. He also tried to enlist under the name of Alfred Charles Bell Ingram VC. His NAA file MT1487/1 Herbert James Knight is worth a read.

6 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 1914, page 12

7 *The West Australian*, 12 August 1914, page 7

8 *The Argus*, 12 August 1914, page 10

9 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 August 1914, page 8

Walter Robinson of the 86th Infantry wrote that:[10]

> At the outbreak of war my battalion, West Australian Rifles (then the 86th, but now the 44th A.M.F.) was mobilized in Fremantle Park under the late Colonel C Battye, and I had the honour very soon after mobilisation of being appointed adjutant. The Imperial reservists in WA on being recalled to Colours, were assembled in the Park on ration strength of the 86th. Lieut. (now Major and MC) Manning was their O.C. and S.M. Nestor was appointed S.M. Instructor to them until their embarkation.
>
> It was a treat for all the young Citizen Force trainees to watch Nestor drilling his company, and the way they responded. The parade ground voice was well exercised in Fremantle Park, and saved "Jock" many miles of tramping, as no matter how far his squads got from him, his voice was after them, and broad as was his Scotch accent, his orders were never misunderstood.
>
> His conduct of orderly room when a Reservist stepped over the traces was an eye-opener to all the young officers, and it was the Camp Commandant's order that as many subalterns as possible should assemble for instruction at orderly-room when S.S.M. Nestor had 'crimed' a Reservist.
>
> Nightly after mess, "Jock" would attend the camp office situated in the Bowling Pavilion, for orders, and it was my delight after routine duty was finished to sit on the verandah with Jock and get him yarning of his past experiences, particularly episodes connected with the campaigns and battles represented by his many medals and bars ...
>
> The Park Hotel is situated just across the road from the bowling pavilion and although it was out of bounds to the compulsory trainees, the reservists had no restrictions placed upon them of that nature. Jock was well known at the "Park" where he frequently visited to see if many of his men were dodging fatigues!
>
> It was no uncommon occurrence for Jock, after a lengthy yarn at the Regimental Office, and a (duty) visit to "The Park" to be in the mood to exercise his voice in the street. If uninterrupted, he would drill an imaginary battalion for half an hour or more without a pause. Many a time a citizen of East or South Fremantle remarked to me, "You must have had some big manoeuvres on last night as we could plainly hear the orders shouted." But once inside the camp Jock was always the quietest...
>
> It was a great disappointment to Jock that he was not allowed to depart with the reservists when they embarked. He badly wanted to get the kilts on again, but his powers as a drill instructor were recognised as too valuable to the embryo AIF to let him go." [11]

Sixty four reservists who had been called up for service did not embark with the other reservists in 1914 as they were put on the staff list of the Australian Permanent Force as Instructors. The majority of this sixty four served in this role for the duration while some were released from this role and ended up transferring back to their original regiment or enlisting in the AIF.

Herbert Lee had been living at Woolhara in Sydney with his wife when he was recalled to the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was transferred to the Instructional Staff of the Australian Permanent Forces in the 2nd Military District from August 1914. His tenure on the instructional staff ended on the 31 August 1916 when he was allowed to return to his regiment. Embarking from Sydney on the *Port Sydney*, Herbert rejoined the 1st Battalion of the King's Own, initially as a corporal but then as a sergeant. Badly wounded in early October 1918, Herbert died on the 6 October 1918 and is buried at Doingt Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

William Falkner had initially been called back to the Royal West Kents but had been transferred to the Instructional Staff in Western Australia. He was in this role until July 1916 whereupon he enlisted into the AIF. Appointed lieutenant he commanded the 9th Reinforcements to the 44th Battalion which left Albany WA on 23 July 1917. William proceeded to France on 3 January 1918 where he served with the 44th Battalion and 3rd Machine Gun Battalion. He was wounded on

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10 Walter later joined the AIF as a private and served with the 12th Field Ambulance where he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

11 *The Listening Post*, RSL WA, 1932

26 August 1918 but remained on duty and was killed in action on the 31 August. He is buried at Hem Farm Military Cemetery.

Ernest Wright of Waverly NSW was temporarily engaged on the staff of the 2nd MD in NSW, however was soon released when he became time expired and instead of going on to serve with the Coldstream Guards, he enlisted into the AIF. Leaving Australia with reinforcements to the 19th Battalion he soon transferred to the 60th Battalion. He was involved in the 60th's assault at Fromelles on 19 July 1916 and was quickly wounded, unfortunately a short time later he was hit by a high explosive shell and was killed. He is commemorated on VC Corner Memorial.

Victor Bowen from Blyth in South Australia was called up to the Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry but was instead temporarily attached to the Permanent Forces in that state. He eventually embarked in March 1916 as a lieutenant of the 3rd Australian Division Signal Company. He survived the war and had been awarded the Military Cross for his actions at Messines in June 1917.

In a generous move by the Australian Government it had been decided to supplement the pay of the reservists to bring it up from the level of British pay to the level of greater pay for members of the Australian Imperial Force. As Senator Millen stated:

> Although these men are not members of the Australian Expeditionary Force and the Government is under no legal obligation regarding them, yet it has been decided to supplement their British pay to the extent necessary to bring it up to that adapted for the Australian force. In other words, Imperial reservists will be placed upon exactly the same footing as members of the Australian force. The Government takes the view that, although serving in the British Army, the men are residents in Australia, and proposes therefore, to extend to them a corresponding treatment both as to pay and pension.[12]

Of the 1509 Imperial reservists called up in August only 1285 actually departed these shores in 1914 with the majority embarking with the first contingent in October 1914. The reservists mobilized in Queensland joined up with those called up in NSW and embarked from Sydney on the *Miltiades* on the 17 October 1914. The reservists called up in South Australia and Tasmania joined their Victorian counterparts in Melbourne embarking upon the *Miltiades and Karroo* on the 20 October. The West Australian reservists travelled down to Albany where they boarded the *Miltiades* in King George Sound which sailed on 1 November 1914.

As not all reservists in Melbourne were able to embark with the first contingent, the remainder embarked with the second contingent, leaving on the *Berrima* from Melbourne on the 22 December 1914. Several officers accompanied the reservists to England where they were assigned to different units. Major Cyril Griffiths and Captain Frederick Manning were two who both gave good service to the Imperial forces, being decorated and returning to Australia at the end of the war.[13]

Cecil Thomas Gibbings, Royal West Kents, was another officer who had accompanied the Imperial reservists on their voyage to Europe. However he had returned to Australia in March 1915 on the transport ship *Kyarra* being one of the officers put in charge of the men of the AIF who were being returned to Australia for medical and disciplinary reasons. Upon arriving in Fremantle he joined the newly forming 28th Battalion AIF. He served at Gallipoli and was promoted to

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12 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 August 1914, p. 8 – Separation allowances were also paid to wives & dependents of the Reservists was authorized by the war office in London (*Brisbane Courier* 11 March 1915 pg 7). *The West Australian* of 12 August 1914 had a plea from an unnamed Reservist stating that he had to leave his farm to go back to his regiment and with the pay as it was his wife and three children would not be able to continue to pay off the loan and farm his plot. Subsequent issues of the paper had promises of support for his family from citizens so the reservist could keep his farm while he was away. Members of the W.A.C.A in particular offered promises of weekly payment to his family.

13 Lt-Col Cyril Tracey Griffiths CMG & Major Frederick Manning MC

Captain. He was killed at Pozieres on the 29 July 1916, when trying to force a way through the German barbed wire that held up the attack.

Departing with the first contingent to leave Australia, the reservist's story mirrors that of the AIF until they reached Egypt. While the AIF disembarked, the reservists continued on to England where they finally went their separate ways to their regiments.

In Australia, with the reservists' destination generally unknown after their separation from the AIF, it was suggested to families and friends of these men that they initially address their correspondence to "Care of the Australian Transport *Miltiades*, England".[14]

Private William Cleary of the Irish Guards wrote back to a friend in Sydney that:

> We had a splendid passage home, and parted with our Australian troopships at Port Said, the old *Miltiades* sailing for home by herself. She landed us in Plymouth on December 22. We were all drafted to our different regiments and got four days furlough. I was back in England from Ireland just in time to spend Christmas with my people.

The infantry reservists were immediately sent across to their regiments in France and reached their units by early January 1915. William Clearly continues:

> [I] was in the trenches on New Year's Day. I had my first taste of war on January 1 at Villiers Cotterets. We were in action for 36 hours in snow and hail and without food or water. But everyone was happy-no one was down hearted. We had Jack Johnson shells for breakfast, dinner and tea. It was terrible. We lost a lot of men with the German snipers but not half so many as the Germans. I got over my first battle without a scratch, but not so in my next for at La Bassee I was hit in the hip by a piece of shell, and while one of my comrades was helping me back to the field hospital I was hit by a snipers bullet.[15]

While Cleary survived his wounds, it didn't take long for deaths to occur. The first Australian Imperial reservists were killed on the 25 January 1915, exactly three months before the AIF would be in action. Those killed were Wallace Brooks from Cobar NSW, Percy Luck from Kempsie NSW and John Williamson from Paddington NSW of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards while Peter Crichton from Melbourne was a member of the 1st 'Black Watch' Royal Highlanders.

Through 1915 these reservists fought at places such as Loos, Festubert, Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Ypres and Gallipoli; names ingrained in British military history and the casualties to the reservists reflected this. While the papers in Australia were dominated by news of the AIF, the deaths of reservists were also mentioned. A friend of Corporal William Ferris of the Royal Irish put in a notice in the *Sydney Morning Herald* to let readers know of his death. Ferris, killed at Ypres, had been living in North Sydney and was working as a ship's fireman.[16]

Corporal George Sullivan served in the same regiment in Ferris and was also killed on 8 May. It was reported that:

> Corporal George Sullivan, an Imperial Reservist who rejoined his regiment has been reported missing since May 8th in France. Prior to leaving for the front he had resided in Australia for five years. He was born in Ireland, and has a wife and three young children who are at present residing in Hayberry Street North Sydney" Sullivan is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial. His wife and children were granted a pension from November 1915. [17]

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14 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 1914, page 11.

15 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 1915, page 13 – Cleary was discharged due to his wounds & returned to Australia. However this was not the end of his war as he enlisted in the AIF in May 1917. Assigned to the 19th Battalion he survived the war & returned to Australia in February 1919

16 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 August 1915, page 9. Ferris's parents were living at Cundy Street London

17 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 1915, page 8.

Two days in a row the *Sydney Morning Herald* brought up the case of Trooper Lionel Ward of the 15th Hussars. Trooper Ward had been wounded at Neuve Chapelle though the headline that grabbed attention was that he was one of 'Eleven brothers at the front'.

While the Australians were making a name for themselves at Anzac Cove, reservists with the 1st Battalion Essex Regiment were in the thick of the fight at Cape Helles. James Brewster, called up from Queensland was killed on the 28 April, followed a few days later by Thomas Printer. Andrew Miller from Redfern NSW was killed on 30 May 1915. William Paddon from Bulimba Queensland and Joseph Cockles of Sydney were both killed on 6 August. All apart from Cockles are commemorated on the Cape Helles Memorial. Joseph Cockles has a special memorial grave in Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery. This was the second son of the Frederick and Elizabeth Cockles of Manor Park Essex to be killed in the war. Joseph's brother Walter, also a reservist called up in Australia, had been killed on the 2 May 1915 in Belgium.

Wounded Imperial reservists trickled back to Australia on the hospital ships. Corporal John Westley of the Seaforth Highlanders arrived in Fremantle on 8 July 1915 and told the press his stories of how the Seaforths were cut up at La Basse as well as his wounding by gas at Hill 60.[18]

Sergeant Major Alex Oswald of the Cameron Highlanders returned to Bexley, Sydney, Australia in May 1916. He gave the interested readers of the *Sydney Morning Herald* an idea of what faced the reservists of his unit in France.

> The first battle of importance that we faced was that of Neuve Chapelle. Our regiment had not a great deal to do there, being mostly held in reserve, but nevertheless there was plenty of excitement. We were right in the very thick of the next scrap which took place at Rue du Bois on May 8th. We were in the forefront being in the brigade of the first division that had to do the attacking. Oh, that was a red day, I can tell you! More than half the fellows who jumped over the parapet to rush the German trenches 200 yards away never came back alive. They were mown down mercilessly by machine guns. My word it was hot! We lost all our officers – all but one, whom I dragged back wounded to our lines at night. No, we didn't take the German trenches; we got it pretty strong that time. Besides the hail of bullets, the artillery was on the job on both sides. I got hit in the leg with a piece of shrapnel and it dropped me and there I had to remain with none but dead and wounded lying around, for if a wounded man stirred, if he moved a finger even, he became a dead one immediately after.
>
> Yes, they riddled the wounded with bullets if they moved. The poor chap who turned just near me at once became a target for German rifles and was soon a corpse. I lay ever so still and rigid and yet half a dozen bullets fell all around me and two went through my kilt which was sticking up in a heap. I imagine they reckoned that they had settled me if there were any life remaining. Anyhow after that no more bullets came my way. About 9 o'clock at night it was dark enough to turn on my side and survey the situation and I started to crawl back to our trenches. On the way I came across the wounded officer I told you of. He had been lying in a little hollow and so like myself had escaped being killed. We tumbled back into the trenches mighty thankful as you can imagine after the closest call I have had or wish to have.[19]

Further casualties would occur through 1916 and while no infantry of the AIF were involved in the first day of the Somme, many reservists went over the top with their regiments. Joseph Poulton from Western Australia was with the 2nd Battalion Essex Regiment when they attacked near Serre. He did not get far before he was killed, however his body was recovered unlike Albert O'Dell of the Somerset Light Infantry who is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. Charles Adlam of

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18 *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 July 1915, page 6. Westley returned to Adelaide and was employed with the Australian Instructional Staff. He embarked from Adelaide in 1917 with reinforcements for the 10th Battalion; however he was kept in England as he was classed as unfit for front line duty. He returned to Australia in 1918

19 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 May 1916, page 6. Oswald joined his battalion again for the action at Loos before leaving the front in February 1916. He was discharged as time expired

Claremont WA, belonging to the Dorsetshire Regiment was badly wounded in the throat and died two days later at 45th CCS at Puchevillers.

Through the war there were 210 Imperial reservists killed or died of wounds and illness across England, Belgium, France, Italy, Salonika, Turkey, Mesopotamia and Egypt.

There are many interesting and varied stories of the reservists including those who were decorated for bravery; Issy Smith[20] of the Manchester Regiment was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at Ypres in April 1915; another to be decorated for his courage was Thomas Moore who had embarked from Melbourne in the Royal Field Artillery. As a sergeant in the 74th Brigade RFA he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and was also Mentioned in Despatches.[21] He was killed in action on 31 August 1918. John Saunders of the Royal Warwickshire's had been awarded the Military Medal for his gallantry and according to a friend in the regiment would have received a bar to the MM but was killed by a bomb from an enemy aircraft in late May 1918. [22]

Alfred Schonhardt from Subiaco WA of the 6th Dragoon Guards was killed in March 1918 when the men of the Dragoons, Hussars and Lancers fought the German Spring Offensive aimed at the British 3rd and 5th Armies. Harry Parry of the Royal Horse Artillery served throughout the battles at Somme, Ypres and Cambrai, only to die of wounds in France three days after the Armistice on 14 November 1918.

Alfred Gratton had embarked from Melbourne as part of the Devonshire Regiment and was killed in action on 6 October 1916. He was one of four brothers killed in the war; the others being; William Gratton, 2nd Battalion Devonshires 13 March 1915, No. 5018 Sydney Gratton of the 22nd Battalion AIF, 14 December1916 and Thomas Gratton MM of the 29th Battalion CEF, 21 August 1917. This must be a rare case of four brothers dying in three different national armies.

In September 1918, the question was asked to the Australian Minister of Defence Senator George Pearce whether the Imperial reservists who left Australia in 1914 would qualify for 'Anzac Leave' like the original men in the AIF. Senator Pearce replied that the reservists were entirely under British administration though representations on their behalf were being made to the Imperial Government for their return to Australia.[23] However before this special leave could be looked at for the reservists the Armistice was signed. Subsequently over five hundred of the Imperial reservists survivors would return to Australia to live after the war.

An incentive for families in Australia to return to Britain was that the Imperial Government also offered free passage back to Great Britain for the widows and orphans of those reservists killed in the war.[24] It is unknown how many families took up this offer.

As mentioned earlier another interesting aspect of the Imperial reservists was that 111 of the men initially called up served in the AIF. These men had generally been classed as time expired or medically unfit, however deciding that they still wanted to serve; joined the AIF. John Willoughby was called up to the Army Service Corps but was classed as medically unfit. However he embarked with the AIF with the 2nd Remount Unit then subsequently the Anzac Mounted Division HQ and the Provosts. In 1919 he took up non military employment in the UK in motor mechanics before returning to Sydney in February 1920.

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20 See article by Peter Burness in AWM Publication Wartime Issue 48

21 Other reservists to receive the DCM were 7941 Harry Corbett 1st West Riding Regiment died 1/4/1918; 8021 Charles H Smith 1st Bn East Surrey Regiment & 9430 William Stuart 1st Bn Black Watch KIA 9/5/1915

22 Letter supplied to writer by Saunders family

23 *The Brisbane Courier*, 24 September 1918, page 8

24 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 October 1919, page 7

Stanley Bugden was called up to the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) however after initially reporting for duty in Fremantle he was soon found to be absent from camp and was reported as a deserter. He had not run away from his country's call however but had seemingly made the decision to enlist into the AIF instead. Assigned to the 16th Battalion with the Regimental No.739, Stan's war would be short as he was killed with many of the 4th Brigade on 2 May 1915 at Bloody Angle, Gallipoli.

Likewise George Keyes of Nullawane, Victoria was another to be reported as deserting before embarkation when he absented himself from joining his Northampton Regiment. He enlisted into the AIF and was assigned to the 4th Light Horse Regiment with the Regimental No.123. He served at Gallipoli and later went to France with half of his Regiment to form the 2nd Anzac Corps Mounted Regiment. He returned to Australia in January 1919.

Michael Breen from Queensland was with the Royal Munster Fusiliers but also decided he would rather serve in the AIF so was also classed as a deserter. Originally in the 15th Battalion, he was soon transferred to the 25th Battalion with the regimental no.312. He served at Gallipoli where he was complimented in Divisional Orders for his service. In Egypt and France he ran afoul of military discipline going AWOL, discharging his weapon near billets, and also for punching his superior officer. He was awarded penal servitude for life though continued to serve with the 25th Battalion at Pozieres. He was badly wounded on the 25 August 1916 and died in London on the 14 September 1916.

Of the 111 reservists who were called up in August 1914 but served instead in the AIF, twenty were killed during the war.

The Imperial reservists who returned to Australia at war's end settled back into their peace time careers and activities. Post war the history of the AIF was written by Dr. C.E.W. Bean, but the history of the Australian Imperial reservist was seen as part of the British Army in the war and their experiences were largely forgotten from Australian history and only mentioned when it corresponded to that of the AIF.25

Even in 1919 when the reservists should have been fresh in the public memory, an Imperial reservist from Queensland felt compelled to write to the *Brisbane Courier*:

> Sir-I should like through the medium of your paper to correct a misapprehension that appears to have arisen amongst a section of the public over the appearance in this country of soldiers dressed in Imperial uniform, or, as commonly termed, 'Tommies'. Some funny and also some insulting questions have been put to the men as to their business here. Well! I will throw a little light on the subject. For the public information generally, and to avoid any further misunderstanding in case any more should arrive, I would like to say that these men are : (1) Imperial reservists called up to join English units on outbreak of war; (2) men who, after being turned down in Australia, patriotically went over on their own and joined up in England : (3) Australians in England 1914, and unable either to join the AIF there or return here, so had no option but join the Imperial forces. Perhaps this explanation (which by the way should have been made by the military authorities) will clear the air, and maybe others arriving will not be subject to contemptuous remarks, such as "imported strike breakers", Tommy emigrants etc.26

The return to Australia by Issy Smith VC in the 1920's temporarily brought the Imperial reservist into the media's eye again, but by and large in Australia the experiences of the Imperial reservists were generally lost from sight.

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25 Even the Australian War Memorial only has a portion of names of the Australian reservists killed in the war in their Commemorative Roll. Occasionally a story by or about a reservist would appear in a newspaper or journal of the Returned & Services League.

26 *The Brisbane Courier*, Queensland, 19 June 1919, page 6.

THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Nicholas Barber[1]

Battling the harsh Atlantic waves and Germany's naval offensive, few Allied merchant sailors understood that their success underpinned the entire Western Allied strategy in the Second World War. The Churchillian term 'The Battle of the Atlantic' overlooks the scale of the war's longest campaign. The six-year struggle stressed the geostrategic vulnerability of maritime Britain, Germany's continental approach to naval warfare and the industrial strength of the United States of America. Initially, historians argued that Britain barely survived the conflict and that the Germans were poised to sever Britain's arterial supply from the US.[2] However, recent scholarship explores the macro-industrial level of the campaign and concludes that the Allies were successful in the Battle of the Atlantic by a wide-margin.[3] If, as some argue, Allied victory was certain, the question arises- why did success take so long to achieve?

Allied victory in the Battle of the Atlantic was hindered by the strategic prioritisation of other operations, particularly the Strategic Bombing Campaign. Some scholars have over-emphasised the 'U-boat peril' and the threat to British survival. Admittedly, the Allies failed to evolve their tactics and technology during the inter-war period and the early years of the war in order to overwhelm the German assault on their maritime lines of communication; however, this did not change the inexorable result of the campaign. After a discussion exploring the certainty of Allied success, this paper will analyse the Allied limitations and German obstacles to achieving victory. Firstly, the most important factor that delayed Allied success was the prioritisation of other campaigns. Secondly, German operational and tactical strengths challenged local command of the sea and disrupted Allied supply. However, even if success in the Atlantic was prioritised sooner, it is difficult to determine whether the Allied invasion of Western Europe would have occurred earlier because the initiation of Operation Overlord was highly dependent on other factors.

Defining success in the Battle of the Atlantic is problematic because Allied objectives varied throughout the campaign. Strategically, one could argue that there were at least three phases to the conflict. Firstly, the critical aim of the Allied campaign was to maintain supply to Britain, ensuring it survived Nazi pressure to surrender. Germany, as it had in the First World War, exploited the consequences of Britain's Free-Trade policy.[4] As the centre of the global economy, Britain was the least self-sufficient industrial country and relied on maritime resupply for survival. However, once London restructured its economy and increased the efficiency of maritime supply, Britain was essentially safe from starvation even if convoys suffered losses during the course of trans-Atlantic crossing.[5] Subsequently, the objectives of the Allied

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1 Nicholas Barber is a senior cadet at the Australian Defence Force Academy and he was the 2010 recipient of the Military Historical Society of Australia prize for the best military history essay at the academy.

2 William M. James, *The British Navies in the Second World War,* Longmans Green and Co., London, 1946, pp. 220-238

3 Nathan Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II,* Scribner, New York, 1995, pp. 349-350

4 Correlli Barnett, 'The Influence of History upon Sea Power: The Royal Navy in the Second World War', in Nicholas A.M. Rodger (ed.), *Naval Power in the Twentieth Century,* Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1996, p. 128

5 Geoffrey Till, 'The Battle of the Atlantic as History', in Stephen Howarth and Derek Law (eds.), *The Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1945: The 50th Anniversary International Naval Conference,* Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1994, pp. 586-587

campaign transitioned from British survival to hunting the U-boats. Rather than re-routing convoys to avoid U-boats, Allied merchant vessels were accompanied by support groups, which used anti-submarine technology to detect, locate and destroy U-boats in an attempt to establish general command of the sea.[6] However, after the decision was made to prepare for the invasion of Western Europe, the principal aim of the Allied campaign in the Atlantic evolved once again.[7] Allied objectives reflected the need for sufficient supplies to be transported across the Atlantic to support invasion preparation in Britain. For the purpose of examining Allied success in this analysis, the third aim of the campaign will be investigated. Allied supply in preparation for Operation Overlord is a measureable objective; one can question whether adequate supplies could have been available sooner. On the other hand, determining the degree of Allied success in the first two phases of the campaign is challenging because the objectives are absolute. Essentially, Britain never starved; yet, the Allies never established general command of the sea during the war.[8]

Allied Success- An Overwhelming Probability?

German victory in the Battle of the Atlantic was inconceivable.[9] Donitz's 'tonnage war' was inconsistent with Germany's grand strategic objectives and ultimately, the U-boat commanders were confronted with an overwhelming industrial force that could build merchant ships faster than they could effectively destroy them. Importantly, Germany's attempt to sever Britain's maritime lifelines relied on a strategy that did not reflect this aim.[10] The 'tonnage war' targeted merchant vessels rather than the cargo the vessel was carrying, a critical distinction in a campaign designed to prevent maritime resupply to Britain. U-boat commanders were equally rewarded for sinking merchant vessels leaving British ports as to cargo-laden vessels entering British ports.[11] However, sinking merchant vessels leaving British ports was too late to prevent the Allies from succeeding in their objectives; namely, maintaining maritime lines of communication to Britain.[12] The 10.6 percent of incoming cargo destroyed during 1942 was the most severe loss suffered by the Allied merchant fleet.[13] Although this cargo was undoubtedly missed, the German naval assault never really threatened Britain's survival and only hindered the build up of forces for the projected invasion of Western Europe.

A 'tonnage war' may have been more effective if it was difficult for the Allies to replace merchant vessels.[14] Historians have often suggested that the turning point of the campaign was when Germany declared war on the US. Before direct US contribution, scholars maintain that Germany was winning in the Atlantic because tonnage sunk outstripped British ship production.

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6 Marc Milner, *Battle of the Atlantic,* Tempus, Stroud, 2003, pp. 135-181

7 Alan F. Wilt, 'The Significance of the Casablanca Decisions, January 1943', *The Journal of Military History,* Vol. 55, No. 4, October 1991, pp. 518-519

8 General command of the sea is considered impossible to achieve by some prominent naval strategists. While Germany had access to the Atlantic, the Allies could not achieve general command of the sea. For explanation behind this theory see Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy,* Longmans, London, 1911

9 Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II,* pp. 348-349

10 *Ibid.,* p. 348

11 Gordon Williamson, *U-Boats vs. Destroyer Escorts,* Osprey Publishing, Oxford, 2007, pp. 74-76

12 Jürgen Rohwer, 'The Operational Use of Ultra', in Christopher Andrew and Jeremy Noakes (eds.), *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945,* University of Exeter, Exeter, 1987, pp. 275-276

13 John Ellis, *Brute Force,* Andre Deutsch, London, 1990, p. 160

14 Werner Rahn, 'German Naval Power in the First and Second World Wars', in Nicholas A.M. Rodger (ed.), *Naval Power in the Twentieth Century,* Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1996, p. 92

15 However, statistical information would indicate that the British merchant fleet remained relatively consistent throughout the initial years of the war. The replacements for the British merchant fleet were not built, but rather time-chartered, requisitioned or purchased.16 Nevertheless, after the US entered the war, merchant ship production exceeded Germany's ability to sink merchant vessels. Even during the 'Second Happy Time' in 1942, 17 Allied ship production was only slightly less than Germany's greatest amount of shipping sunk. Significantly, Allied ship production was more than four times the amount of tonnage sunk in the following year. From 1942 to 1945, the Allied merchant fleet had a net increase of approximately 22,000,000 tons, despite a loss of 12,590,000 tons of shipping.18 Ultimately, Donitz's U-boat fleet was overwhelmed by the productive capacity of the US rather than the battle pursued by the convoy escorts. Germany failed to have a sufficient number of U-boats during 1940 and 1941 to take advantage of Britain's isolation before the US directly entered the conflict.19 After 1941, the American shipyards made German victory in the Atlantic impossible, especially when German resources were prioritised for the war with the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, the early literature analysing the Battle of the Atlantic stresses that the Allies won the campaign by a small margin.20 These scholars over-emphasise the importance of the tactical and operational features of the Allied approach to the Atlantic, rather than the overwhelming probability of strategic success in the campaign. Stressing the significance of human decisions and achievements, rather than industrial capacity, is attractive and superficially credible, providing some purpose to the courageous efforts of Coastal Command, Bletchley Park, Allied navies and merchant vessels. Admittedly, the Allies failed to adequately develop anti-submarine tactics and technology during the inter-war period and the early years of the war. Over-confidence from victory in the First World War may explain this complacency, despite the late effects of anti-commerce submarine warfare in 1917 and 1918.21 Throughout the Second World War, tactical anti-submarine technology gradually advanced to include the Hedgehog, the Leigh Light and Huff-Duff; however, these improvements never completely overcame the U-boat.22 Some historians point to Ultra and the efforts of Bletchley Park as the critical feature of Allied victory in the Atlantic as Allied intelligence and Enigma decryption diverted convoys from the U-boat danger. 23 While intelligence is clearly an important consideration in all warfare, over-emphasis on this facet of the campaign can distract historians from the macro-industrial reality of Allied success.

One of the strongest arguments for the small margin school of thought is the effect of Allied convoys.24 Convoying drained the ocean of targets and allowed support groups to escort merchant ships across the Atlantic. While the British immediately adopted convoying after

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15 Holger H. Herwig, 'The Failure of German Sea Power, 1914-1945: Mahan, Tirpitz and Raeder Reconsidered', *The International History Review,* Vol. 10, No. 1, February 1988, pp. 97-102

16 Ellis, *Brute Force,* p. 160

17 The 'Second Happy Time' was a period associated with heavy shipping losses in early 1942. German U-boats easily located vulnerable targets along the US East Coast.

18 Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II,* pp. 348-349

19 Evan Mawdsley, *World War II: A New History,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009, p. 261

20 See, for example, Donald MacIntyre, *The Battle of the Atlantic,* Pan Books Ltd., London, 1969; Philip Pugh, 'Military Need and Civil Necessity', in Stephen Howarth and Derek Law (eds.), *The Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1945: The 50th Anniversary International Naval Conference,* Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1994, pp. 30-31

21 Mawdsley, *World War II: A New History,* pp. 258-259

22 Lisle A. Rose, *Power at Sea,* University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2007, pp. 287-320

23 Rohwer, 'The Operational Use of Ultra', pp. 275-291; John Winton, *Ultra at Sea,* Leo Cooper Ltd., London, 1988, pp. 94-108

24 Rose, *Power at Sea,* pp. 292-310

reflecting on its effect in the First World War, the US failed to initiate an effective convoy-system upon entering the war. German U-boats easily located vulnerable targets in early 1942 along the US East Coast and this assists in explaining the heavy shipping losses of the period, known as the 'Second Happy Time'.[25] Indeed, every merchant vessel sunk inbound for Britain delayed the build up of adequate resources for the projected invasion of Western Europe. Nevertheless, operational and tactical improvements on both sides influenced when Allied victory would be achieved, rather than the chances of victory itself. Even the convoy argument, which has strong evidence for credible effects at a strategic level, is questionable. Although convoying significantly decreased the number of ships sunk, one could argue that the industrial capacity of the Allies would have overwhelmed the U-boats and achieved victory, even if supplies were sent by less effective individual voyages.[26] Consequently, if Allied victory was highly likely, why did it take until 1944 for sufficient resources to accumulate for an invasion of Western Europe?

Obstacles to Success

From a macro-industrial analysis, the Allies could have won the Battle of the Atlantic earlier if the campaign was prioritised by Allied leaders.[27] In particular, the industrial capacity of the US may have overwhelmed the operational and tactical strengths of the German Navy sooner if resources were allocated for the Atlantic campaign. However, Allied commanders prioritised resources for other campaigns, which delayed victory in the Atlantic. Firstly, Allied confidence in the Strategic Bombing Campaign restricted the protection and reconnaissance that could be provided by air power in the Atlantic. Strategists recognised the vulnerability of naval assets to air power, even before the Battle of the Atlantic.[28] However, the inter-war period had produced popular theorists of strategic bombing, such as Douhet, and resources were allocated to Bomber Command in the hope that strategic bombing could end the war without the need for a costly land invasion.[29] Most importantly, the Very Long Range (VLR) US bomber, the B-24 Liberator, was prioritised for strategic bombing in the Combined Bomber Offensive over Germany. The limited number of Liberators allocated to Coastal Command was insufficient to close the Mid-Atlantic Air Gap. [30] After the US effectively employed convoy-operations in August 1942, the Mid-Atlantic Air Gap was the primary location for U-boat attacks.[31] Despite the Allies overall industrial advantage, the amount of tonnage sunk was critical in delaying the necessary build up of supply in Britain for an invasion of Western Europe. Secondly, Allied leaders prioritised US aircraft carriers for the Pacific Theatre rather than as sources of organic air power in the Atlantic. Aircraft carriers provided an effective local, organic air power capability for convoy protection against U-boats and land-based German aircraft, including the

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25 The 'Second Happy Time' is evident in Richard Natkiel, 'Map 4-January 1942-July 1942', in Stephen Howarth and Derek Law (eds.), *The Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1945: The 50th Anniversary International Naval Conference,* Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1994, p. 23

26 There are arguments that favour individual voyages over convoying. Convoying means that all convoy vessels must travel at the speed of the slowest ship and further, convoying decreases the efficiency of loading and unloading ships. See Jeremy Black, *Naval Power: A History of Warfare and the Sea from 1500*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2009, pp.157-158

27 Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II,* pp. 338-339

28 Rose, *Power at Sea,* pp. 27-28

29 Giulio Douhet translated by Dino Ferrari, *The Command of the Air,* Air Force History and Museums Program, Washington, 1998

30 Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II,* pp. 338-339

31 Richard Natkiel, 'Map 5-August 1942-May 1943', in Stephen Howarth and Derek Law (eds.), *The Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1945: The 50th Anniversary International Naval Conference,* Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1994, p. 24

Focke-Wulf 200 Condor.[32] In 1941, the first escort carrier, HMS *Audacity,* escorted four convoys and reported nine U-boats, destroying one with the assistance of surface vessels.[33] Additionally, 12 enemy aircraft were intercepted and five were destroyed. Despite the early success of this escort carrier group, prioritisation of aircraft carriers as escort vessels in the Atlantic only emerged in later years. Finally, a lack of surface vessels also contributed to the limited protection provided to Allied convoys. Specifically, escort vessels, such as destroyers, were allocated to the British Home Fleet in fear of German invasion and to maintain a naval presence in the North Sea.[34]

In addition, Germany provided a number of operational and tactical obstacles that hindered Allied success in the Atlantic. Most importantly, Germany inherently had the initiative in the conflict. After occupying France in 1940, Germany possessed a sound geographic base on the Atlantic coast of Western Europe to launch a naval offensive.[35] Control of ports on the French coast allowed Germany to avoid the distant blockade used in the First World War and challenge Allied command of the sea. For the Allies, achieving general command of the sea was impossible while Germany had access to the Atlantic. Additionally, the Germans had an effective sea-denial weapon; the U-boat.[36] Although initially limited in range and capability, the U-boat had proven its worth during the First World War and was soon adopted as the primary weapon for Germany in the Battle of the Atlantic. Improvements in U-boat technology continued to plague Allied anti-submarine warfare. Fortunately for the Allies, the new Type XXI and Type XXIII U-boats were produced too late in the war to make any considerable tactical difference.[37] Furthermore, U-boat tactics, such as the Wolfpack, were effective in contacting and inflicting maximum firepower onto merchant convoys. Finally, despite the success of Bletchley Park, German intelligence assisted German naval and air elements in locating and engaging convoys.[38] Particularly, the introduction of random super-enciphering and the fourth rotor for the Enigma resulted in the 'big blackout' of 11 months in Bletchley Park, which had operational and tactical consequences for Allied success in the Battle of Atlantic.

Prioritising the Battle of the Atlantic

The factors presented in the previous section of this paper illustrate the challenges confronting Allied success in the Battle of the Atlantic. Although the Allies would inevitably transport enough supplies to Britain to mount an invasion of Western Europe, each tactical victory achieved by the Germans delayed this achievement. Prioritising the Battle of the Atlantic over other campaigns may have resulted in an earlier Allied victory as an increase in vital resources could overwhelm German tactical and operational strengths. The Casablanca Conference in January 1943 demonstrated the significance of strategic prioritisation for the progress of the Atlantic campaign.[39] As a result of this discussion, a greater number of Liberators and escort carriers were allocated to the conflict in the Atlantic. Air power proved an effective means of minimising the U-boat threat, through reconnaissance and protection of the convoys. Specifically, the Liberators closed the Mid-Atlantic Air Gap, providing air cover to convoys

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32 David Hobbs, 'Ship-borne Air Anti-Submarine Warfare', in Stephen Howarth and Derek Law (eds.), *The Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1945: The 50th Anniversary International Naval Conference,* Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1994, pp. 388-390

33 *Ibid.,* pp. 391-392

34 James P. Levy, *The Royal Navy's Home Fleet in World War II,* Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire, 2003 pp. 153-162

35 Rahn, 'German Naval Power in the First and Second World Wars', p. 97

36 Herwig, 'The Failure of German Sea Power, 1914-1945: Mahan, Tirpitz and Raeder Reconsidered', p. 68

37 Milner, *Battle of the Atlantic,* pp. 231-236

38 Rohwer, 'The Operational Use of Ultra', pp. 280-283

39 Wilt, 'The Significance of the Casablanca Decisions, January 1943', pp. 517-529

throughout the transatlantic crossing.[40] Additionally, organic air support from escort carriers proved decisive in convoy protection.

Following the prioritisation of the Atlantic, tonnage sunk decreased significantly and preparations for the invasion of Western Europe followed.[41] Consequently, one could suggest that prioritising the Battle of the Atlantic earlier may have decreased the tonnage sunk and the time taken to build up adequate supplies in Britain for invasion. In particular, allocating Liberators to the much-criticised Strategic Bombing Campaign rather than the Battle of the Atlantic appears to be one decision that may have significantly affected the time taken to supply Britain for the invasion.[42] Nevertheless, historians have noted that, even after the Battle of the Atlantic was placed at the top of the list of priorities, national and inter-service rivalries and strategic pre-occupations prevented the right distribution of Allied resources for approximately six months.[43] Acknowledging the time taken to overcome this internal tension, the political decision to prioritise the Atlantic would have needed to have been made in early 1942 to significantly affect the outcome of the conflict. However, one could question whether this was ever possible. Considering that the US had just entered the war and strategic bombing was the favoured theory of the time, it is unlikely that air power resources would have ever been prioritised for the Atlantic in 1942. Furthermore, even if these resources were allocated to the Atlantic struggle, achieving an adequate build up of supply in Britain was not the only consideration required before launching an invasion of Western Europe. The timing of Operation Overlord was highly dependent on other factors, such as political will, confidence in strategic bombing and the campaign in North Africa. Even if the Battle of the Atlantic was won, it is likely that the Allies would have built up surplus supplies for the invasion rather than launching the operation earlier.[44]

Conclusion

Victory in the Battle of Atlantic was primarily hindered by Allied strategic prioritisation of other campaigns. Once the industrial capacity of the US economy contributed to the campaign, there was an overwhelming probability of Allied success in the Atlantic. Nevertheless, German military assets, including the U-boat and the Condor, delayed victory by destroying necessary invasion supplies destined for Britain. The Allied military response was limited by other strategic priorities, such as the Strategic Bombing Campaign and the Pacific Theatre, and this is an explanation as to why success was not achieved until 1944. Importantly, once escort carriers were diverted from the Pacific and B-24 Liberators were rerolled to Coastal Command, significant progress was made in eliminating the 'U-boat peril'. Nevertheless, there is scope for further discussion on the Battle of the Atlantic as many questions remain unanswered. For example, scholars still debate the strategic effects of the Liberators in Coastal Command. An investigation into the influence of additional VLR aircraft would provide a useful contribution to the scholarship of the Atlantic campaign. Ultimately, when reflecting on the importance of naval warfare in global conflict, it is difficult to overlook the longest campaign of the Second World War; the Battle of the Atlantic.

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40 Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II,* pp. 339-340

41 Mawdsley, *World War II: A New History,* p. 261

42 An Operational Research advisor, Professor P.M.S Blackett, calculated that a Liberator 'saved at least half a dozen merchant ships in its service lifetime of some thirty flying sorties. [The same plane would] drop less than 100 tons of bombs and kill not more than a couple of dozen enemy men, women and children, and destroy a number of houses.' See Ellis, *Brute Force,* pp. 162-163

43 Rohwer, 'The Operational Use of Ultra', p. 291

44 Tuvia Ben-Moshe, 'Winston Churchill and the Second Front: A Reappraisal', *Journal of Modern History,* Vol. 62, No. 3, 1990, pp. 503-538

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NAVAL OFFICER GAINS OAM AND TURNS 100

Greg Swinden

In June 2010, Richard 'Dick' Nossiter and was also awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2010 Queens Birthday Honours List for 'Services to sailing through the circumnavigation of the globe in the vessel *Sirius* 1935-37'. Later that month he celebrated his 100th birthday

Dick Nossiter was born in Sydney on 22 June 1910 and learned to sail in the Lane Cove area as a child. In 1935, aged 25, he joined his father Harold Nossister Sr and his younger brother Harold in their circumnavigation of the globe. They embarked in the family yacht *Sirius* (a 53 foot, 35 ton staysail schooner) and sailed to England via Bali, Malaysia, Colombo, the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean before reaching Great Britain in June 1936. The Nossiters then returned to Australia via Madeira, Trinidad, the Panama Canal, Galapagos Islands, French Polynesia, the Cook Islands and Tonga before finally reaching Sydney in May 1937; thus becoming the first Australians to circumnavigate the world by sailing vessel.

Dick Nossiter was appointed as a probationary sub lieutenant, in the RANVR, in February 1939 and was mobilised for war service in November of that year. After training as an anti submarine warfare officer at HMAS *Rushcutter*, and onboard HMAS *Moresby*, he was promoted to Lieutenant and then dispatched to Britain for service with the Royal Navy in April 1940. In July 1940 he was appointed as First Lieutenant in the corvette HMS *Mallow* and served in her until April 1941 when he was given command of the ASW Trawler HMS *Paynter* during which time the ship was involved in convoy escort duties to Russia.

In August 1942 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery whilst serving in HMS *Paynter* taking convoys to and from Murmansk through the dangers of ice and heavy seas and in the face of relentless attacks by enemy U-boats, aircraft and surface forces. Nossiter relinquished command of *Paynter* in October 1943 and was posted ashore to assist with the training of ASW Officers. In February 1944 he was joined the destroyer HMS *Brilliant* and then in May 1944 was given command of the newly commissioned Flower class corvette HMS *Potentilla*.

Then in April 1945 he was made an acting lieutenant commander and served as Assistant Staff Officer Disarmament of Vessels as hundreds of vessels were disarmed and returned to their original owners after the end of the European theatre of war. He returned to Australia in early 1946 and was demobilised in April of that year although he remained a member of the RANVR and was promoted to lieutenant commander in June 1948. He later transferred to the RANR when the RANVR was disbanded and was placed on the Retired List in March 1958.

After the war he retained his interest in sailing and navigated in six Sydney to Hobart yacht races and is currently the longest serving member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. Dick Nossiter was also a member of the Lane Cove Council for nine years during the years 1968 – 1977; which included three years as Mayor. Dick was married in 1941 and he and his wife Nancy celebrated 67 years of married life before her death in 2008. He now lives in Cardiff Heights near Newcastle. The yacht *Sirius* is also still going strong and is owned by retired British Airways pilot Simon Norris who resides in Thailand. The yacht *Sirius* is also still going strong and is owned by retired British Airways pilot Simon Norris who resides in Thailand.

FROM ADELAIDE TO HELLSHIP: The wartime experiences of Sergeant John William Earle Ellis 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion

Drew Ellis

Not everyone who deserves it gets to have their story told. Some get them told eventually, long after they become due. Every overdue story told represents the righting of a wrong. Earle's is one such story. He has long deserved to have his story told.

Adelaide and Enlistment

Willamina and Lewis Ellis had four adult sons when Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced to Australians that their nation was now at war. The four were fully grown and fit young men. They were Lou, the eldest, then Earle, Stan and Allen. Stan became my paternal grandfather, and Lou also became a grandfather. Their home in suburban Adelaide was middle-class and typically urban. From their home in St Peters, parklands and football fields were only a couple of hundred metres away. A short tram ride into Adelaide, and Earle would have been able to hop off on North Terrace at the Brookman Building, home of the School of Mines and Industries. A little further along North Terrace, he would have been able to see the National War Memorial at the corner of Kintore Avenue. This had stood since 1931 and Earle would have seen it many times. It is possible that he had witnessed its unveiling in the year of 1931. The Adelaide Technical High School, where he and his brothers had received their secondary education, was another short bus ride away.

He was thought to have been a keen football fan, and it is likely that he supported North Adelaide in the SANFL. This was not only because it was a family custom, but it was his local team. My father (Earle's nephew) understands, but cannot recall the source of this understanding, that Earle felt most at home on the Lacrosse fields. He believes there was talk generations ago that Earle may have played for his country. I have attempted to verify whether he did compete in Lacrosse at the highest level, but the official South Australian Lacrosse Association historian has not been able to confirm this either way. Whether or not this is true, there seems little doubt that he was a sporty individual, rather than a bookish one.

Earle had no trade or profession upon which to rely for financial security. When war was declared he had been attempting to find work as a labourer. It is difficult to know to how much work he had been finding during the depression, but we know from his enlistment papers that he was, at this time, unemployed.

Both Earle and his younger brother Allen enlisted in the Army. Allen's story can wait for another day, but it too must be told eventually. This – Earle's story – is interesting enough to stand on its own.

The Army records show that he enlisted on 10 July 1940 at Adelaide's recruitment office. This was only five weeks after the Dunkirk evacuation and two weeks after the fall of France to the Germans. The war had not been going well. Earle would have known all this. It is not difficult to imagine him eagerly reading the latest despatches – essential reading for young men who had been brought up on *Boys Own Annual* or other like publications. The Army records also show that he had brown hair, blue eyes and a few minor distinguishing scars. He listed his mother Mina as next of kin. He took the oath in which he undertook to 'truly serve our Sovereign Lord, the King …', and posed for his enlistment photograph. Looking at it now, the photo is a little

disappointing. It is small and of poor quality – it fails to capture any of the spirit or vitality of the man.

Eight Foot Tall and Bulletproof

Whilst Earle was experiencing the early months of his Army service, a new battalion was being formed in South Australia. Its commanding officer was appointed from the ranks of the part-time militia officers. Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Blackburn was a colourful and respected officer. During the First World War he had earned a Victoria Cross at Pozieres. Before this he had attained unofficial legend status when, as a forward scout on the first day of the Gallipoli campaign at Anzac he had gone further inland than any other digger. Now, twenty five years and a world war later, he was a respected Adelaide lawyer, was the South Australian Coroner, and an experienced militia officer as the Commanding Officer of the 18th Light Horse (Machine Gun) Regiment.

When the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion was born on 17 June 1940, Lieutenant Colonel Blackburn was appointed its first commanding officer. The battalion was designed not to fight as one unit, but rather for its detached sub-units, or companies, to be dispersed in support of other divisional units or formations. In normal operations the battalion would have its sub-units spread far and wide within the division's area of operations, each company supporting a different unit, generally a brigade.

It is to this unit that Earle, qualified armourer, newly promoted to sergeant, found himself posted. The battalion, like all others in the army, would have thought they were the best unit in the army. It is easy to imagine the pride and confidence that would have been felt by its members. They were well trained and well led. Besides, not every soldier could claim to have a Victoria Cross recipient for a commanding officer. Subsequent history shows that this proud unit became known as the Lost Battalion, but for now at least, it promised great potential as a unit that would acquit itself well when it finally faced its baptism of fire.

In early 1941, whilst the 6th Australian Division was already in combat in North Africa, it was clear to Blackburn that he and his battalion would themselves soon be fighting overseas. The members of the battalion all realized the imminence of their departure, and waiting for departure resulted in a build up of nervous tension. Blackburn decided that the heat of the South Australian February provided the perfect conditions to test the mettle of his men and the opportunity to condition them for their deployment overseas. He was determined that they would be fit for the fight, and he set about hardening them both physically and mentally in a series of forced marches. When the battalion was deployed from Warradale to Woodside, it did so on foot. This 45 kilometre trek was a mere precursor to an almost unimaginable and epic route march. Woodside to Victor Harbour, is about 100 kilometres as the crow flies. Unfortunately for Earle and the battalion, their route was not as the crow flew. They were made to take an indirect route, avoiding main roads and taking in as many towns and hamlets as possible. Having marched all the way there to Victor Harbour, they were made to march all the way back. Their march of 310 kilometres stood at the time as a world record. There had not been a longer recorded training march by a battalion-sized column anywhere in the world. There is a good chance that this record still stands.

It is feats like this that would have bonded Earle's battalion members into a tightly knit group, built their esprit de corps, and made them confident in the face of impending combat. With this training regimen behind them, and full of youthful confidence, how could they feel anything but eight feet tall and bullet-proof?

Palestine and Syria

On the 11 April 1941, he sailed out of Sydney with his battalion aboard the French vessel, Ile de France. There were four thousand troops on board, and the ship was ill-equipped to carry them. Its decommissioning had been long overdue, but the outbreak of war had seen it employed out of necessity as a troop transport. Immediately prior to this voyage, it had sustained damage from an on board fire. Earle and his fellow passengers were given the task of affecting running repairs – a task which may have proved beyond their capacity as evidenced by their subsequent stopover at Colombo.

Accommodation for the troops was cramped and poorly ventilated. The bedding was by way of hammocks, but the insufficient space allotted to each man meant that each head found itself between two sets of feet. Many troops took to seeking bed space in the fresh air on the upper decks. Accounts, like that of 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion officer Captain Roy Gordon, as detailed in the unit biography *From Snow to Jungle*, described this vessel as 'a terribly uncomfortable ship'. To indicate further the conditions on board, *From Snow to Jungle* goes on to explain that the sewage system failed early in the trip resulting in sewage flows on the floors.

Also, for the first week the rations consisted almost exclusively of boiled potatoes. The troops found this culinary shortcoming unacceptable and a near mutiny resulted in the replacement of the ship's cooks by the army cooks. Battalion members record that the more acceptable cuisine managed to restore order. More evidence that Napoleon was right with his assertion that the army marches on its stomach!

They sailed in the company of other vessels, including the *Queen Mary*, *Queen Elizabeth* and the *New Amsterdam* for the early part of the voyage, and the *Mauretania* and *Aquitania*, for a later part. They would also have had the protection of some naval escorts.

The day after Anzac Day, they arrived at Colombo where they stayed for ten days. This unexpectedly long stay was brought about by the need to do urgent repairs to some of the ship's systems. For Earle and his comrades, this would have provided the opportunity to set foot, as soldiers on leave, onto the soil of a foreign country. Whilst anchored in the harbour, a flotilla of small craft was employed to run a shuttle service for the troops between the ship and the shore. With shore leave granted, Earle would have had the opportunity to have his first experience of a foreign country. Having only seen Adelaide prior to this, I imagine it would have been an exciting prospect for him to explore his first foreign land.

On 6 May they departed Colombo after the necessary repairs had been completed.

The British troops at this time were in a perilous struggle in North Africa – they were on the Libyan-Egypt border and Tobruk was besieged on the coast of Libya. It seems highly probable that Earle and his mates would have anticipated being sent towards one of these theatres. It is equally probable then that they would have been subsequently disappointed to learn that they were instead heading for a place away from current hostilities. They had been diverted to Palestine en route, and the reason for this would not have been clearly evident.

One week later they arrived in Tewfik, near Suez. Following their disembarkation, they were transported by rail to their camp at Hill 95, 16 kilometres north of Gaza. On this ground nearly twenty years prior, General Chauvel's Australian Light Horse had fought their way into Australian folklore with their exploits against the Turks. It was here that Earle and his battalion began to be reunited with their Vickers machine guns and some of their combat equipment. This issue of equipment was to take some time, and though they did not know it then, they were soon to go into combat prior to the full issue being completed.

During their stay there, those who were granted leave had an exotic choice of places to explore. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv would have been on offer, and Earle, the Presbyterian lad from Adelaide, could have visited the sites he had previously learned about at Sunday school.

On 4 June, Earle and his battalion would have found out that they were to take part in the invasion of Syria, codenamed Operation Exporter. Earle would have heard in orders that he was to be a part of a large invasion force that would comprise 18,000 Australians, 9,000 British, 2,000 Indians and 5,000 Free French. They would be opposed by an estimated force of 53,000. The relative strengths of the respective forces give some indication that this would have reasonably been viewed as a high-risk plan.

The main strategic aim of the campaign was to deny the use of Syrian airfields to German and Italian aircraft – these had recently been used in support of the Iraq revolt. Control of Syria was of strategic importance since aircraft using Syrian airfields threatened North Africa and the Suez Canal. On the political front, General de Gaulle had requested it and Churchill, keen at this time to be seen to be supportive of this defiant ally, was keen to oblige. Once Churchill and the British War Cabinet had approved the campaign, the responsibly for conducting the campaign rested in the hands of the British Commander-in-chief Middle East, General Sir Archibald Wavell.

The 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion was attached to the 7th Australian Division under Major General A S (Tubby) Allen. In keeping with its intended mode of operating, the companies of the battalion were detached and sent separately to support different brigades of the division. The invasion plans called for the attacking forces to be split into Northern, Southern and Central forces. The Australians formed part of the Southern prong – they were to form up in Palestine, then advance north into the southern part of Syria, and close upon Damascus. Within this southern prong, Earle's battalion was to be spread far and wide. D Company found itself as part of the left wing in support of the 21st Australian Brigade. Earle, assumed to be part of HQ Company, would have been on the right with both A and C Companies. Their primary task was to provide support to the 5th Indian Brigade Group. E Company was effectively broken up, and its members attached to other companies in an attempt to make those up to full strength.

The companies left their positions in Palestine and advanced into Syria at their allotted times. It is not clear on what date Earle would have begun his advance to the front. However, the battalion biography, *From Snow to Jungle*, recorded that by 13 June all the companies had left the relative safety of Hill 95, and had advanced across the border into Syria. Sergeant J W E Ellis, Uncle Earle, advanced towards the front for the first time.

Earle, on the right wing, formed part of the force known as Gentforce. As such, he had as his commander a Free French General, Major General Le Gentilhomme. As a force, their principle tasks were to seize the towns of Quneitra and Deraa. Success in these tasks opened the way for the 1st Free French Division to advance towards Damascus. The left wing, amongst which D Company found itself, had other similar tasks. Together, these formed the left and right prongs of a fork that thrust its way northward into Southern Syria. Once these were engaged, a Northern front was opened by the 10th Indian Division advancing north-westward from Iraq. Finally, a third force, Habforce, was sent in to seize control of some vital assets, including the Haditha – Tripoli oil pipe-line.

On 24 June, Earle's battalion commander, Colonel Blackburn, accepted the surrender of Damascus on behalf of the Allies. This marked the end of these hostilities for Earl, and the battalion changed its posture from an attacking one, to one of defence and occupation. A counter invasion by German forces was not seen as likely since two days before Damascus was captured, the Germans had unleashed Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Soviet Russia. Nevertheless, the Australians dug in, sited their defences, and maintained a semi-tactical footing.

The companies of the battalion remained dispersed for a time whilst detached with various units. Earle would have been based at Bouida with headquarters company. An armistice came into force on 12 July and three days later most of the battalion once again came together. *From Snow to Jungle* records the Battalion's area of operations at this time. The 7th Division occupied the coastal region bounded by Lebanon to the east, and the Beirut-Damascus Road to the south. Within this area, Earl's battalion was located east-north-east of Beirut, with its centre at Bikfaya.

During this time in occupation, the battalion had established a skiing school which might have provided a novel sporting experience for Earle and his mates. I contemplate whether Earle the lacrosse champion could have adapted well to snow skiing, or did he opt instead to frequent the bazaars, to play Australian Rules Football, to drink Turkish coffee in Lebanese cafes, or try to learn the language of the locals?

Earle's first military campaign had taken him to Ceylon, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. He had fought under famous Generals, including Wavell, 'Tubby' Allen, and a Free French General, Le Gentilhomme. Travel and adventure had indeed presented itself to Earle, and I wonder what the ex-labourer from suburban Adelaide would have thought of his war to date.

The Japanese attack on Malaya on 8 December which due to the international dateline occurred shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December changed everything. The Curtin government realised that Australia now faced an imminent and real threat whilst all of Australia's battle hardened troops were overseas in the Middle East. Movement orders were drafted for the redeployment of the Australian troops to the Netherlands East Indies and Earle's time in the Holy Land was about to end.

Orcades and Blackforce

In January 1942, Earle embarked at Port Tewfik on SS *Orcades*. Units on this crowded ship included, as well as 33 officers and 603 men of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion, the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion, 2/2nd AA Regiment (less detachments), 2/6th Field Company, 105th General Transport Company, 2/2nd Casualty Clearing Station, plus various administrative units. Earle travelled on this ship with illustrious company. 'Weary' Dunlop, the most famous of all Australian POWs, was on board. The *Orcades*, although overcrowded, offered a far more comfortable voyage than the *Ile de France* had.

A short way into the voyage, Earle would not have been aware that he had just become an uncle. In Adelaide, his brother Stan had, on 26 January, had a son. Robert Ellis, son of Stan, had arrived into the world. This baby would later become the author's own father.

Consensus of opinion amongst the battalion members was that they were being returned to Australia. This must have been a pleasing prospect for energetic young Australians fresh from a victorious military campaign. There is little doubt however, that they would have known of the Japanese threat to Australia, and this is likely to have tempered any expectation of celebration that they may have had. Earle found himself once again anchored at Colombo, but this time it proved to be a quick visit. There was no shore leave granted this time, and they weighed anchor the following morning. The destination was still a subject of conjecture amongst the battalion members. They were heading south-east, and Australia was still the favoured bet.

Since the troops aboard the *Orcades* were not expected to see action for some time, Earle and his battalion colleagues had been embarked without most of their fighting equipment including their machine guns or their personal kit bags. These items had been loaded onto separate vessels –slower than the *Orcades* – and they began making their way separately from the troops who were so dependent on them. Without the guns and equipment, the soldiers of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion had had their effectiveness as a fighting force significantly compromised. This should never have happened, and it added significantly to the disadvantages that they were about to face. This would have been less serious if the battalion itself had been heading to Australia. However, as events panned out, their machine guns and equipment were diverted to Australia, after Earle and the *Orcades* had reached the Netherlands East Indies.

On board on 15 February, the battalion were able to listen to the BBC broadcast announcing that Singapore had fallen. The *Orcades* was to land troops in southern Sumatra but on the 17th was diverted to Batavia. The Corps Commander General Lavarack argued vehemently against his Corps troops being disembarked. The remainder of 7th Division would be diverted to Australia, but the immediate future of Earle and those on the *Orcades*, was uncertain.

With Singapore lost, Dutch troops in Java were now facing the limited options of either resisting, or capitulating to, the Japanese. General Lavarack saw the futility of any attempt to defend Java and he resisted the orders to disembark the *Orcades* troops. At this time, Earle and his shipmates would have been coming to terms with the very bleak prospect of going into action without their guns and equipment against a seemingly unstoppable enemy.

The decision to disembark the *Orcades* troops to support the Dutch in Java, is hard to justify in military terms. The likelihood of them delivering any sort of strategic advantage would have

seemed remote. The decision to disembark them there was likely taken in an effort to provide a show of support to an ally in need of a morale boost. General Lavarack resisted his order to offload the troops for as long as he could. In the end though, a direct communication from Australia forced his hand and he, aware of the futility of the proposed action, complied. Thus, whilst the majority of the 7th Division was sent to Australia, those on board the *Orcades* were allotted to a newly created multi-national force, under Dutch command, and named Blackforce. They were ordered ashore without most of their guns and equipment and were told to expect the arrival of the Japanese Army. They were expected to repel it when it arrived. The machine gunners were issued with rifles from the ships armoury, and they each received around fifteen rounds. Without their machine guns or a well thought out strategic intent, Earle and his mates, once eight foot tall and bullet proof, proceeded to go ashore.

Java and Captivity

It was raining when the battalion was landed at Tandjong Priok.

Blackforce was a composite brigade. As well as Earle and his machine gunners, there was the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion, a composite battalion made up from members of a guard battalion, some miscellaneous stragglers, and some administrative troops. They were supported by an American (Texas) Artillery Battery, a squadron from the Kings Own Hussars, and by the 2/6th Australian Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers. Command was in the hands of the newly promoted Brigadier Blackburn. Earle's battalion was given the specific task of defending Javanese airfields against expected attacks by Japanese paratroopers.

The battalion was initially sent to the main civilian airport of Batavia at Kemajoian. From there, B Company was detached and sent to the military airfield at Buitenzorg. At both sites they were in the company of Dutch troops who, having been there for some time and knowing of the inevitability of the Japanese attack, had seemed to do very little to prepare for it.

When the battalion troops were in location they immediately dug for themselves shallow shell-scrapes (or slit trenches). This was a well-honed discipline of Australian troops. They were trained to understand that when bullets and shrapnel began to enter their personal space the safest place to be was below ground level. They were quick to observe that the Dutch soldiers had not done this. Further, the Dutch officers were inclined, unlike the Australian officers, to leave their defensive positions at nightfall to return to their homes in Batavia. The Australians went 'stand to' at 5.00 every morning. This meant adopting a fully tactical posture, each man wide awake in his shell-scrape, guarding their defensive perimeter, watching silently for an enemy attack. During these times, they would have watched bemused as the Dutch officers returned through the perimeter to rejoin their units. This would not have created a favourable impression on the Australians.

The Japanese attacked Java in force. They arrived on 28 February 1942. They came by landing barges to three separate landing points. Those from the Western Force fell upon Bantam Bay near Merak and Eratan Wetan. The Eastern Force landed on Kragan. The convoys carrying these forces were fresh from victories against allied forces – the Western Force having fought earlier that same day at the Battle of Sunda Strait, and the Eastern Force having just defeated the ABDA (Australian British Dutch American) fleet in the Battle of the Java Sea. The Nasu detachment of the Western Force had been tasked to cut the escape route from Batavia to Bandoeng.

The preferred Japanese tactic was for forward elements to engage with the defensive positions of their enemy, whilst a deep encirclement was executed to entrap and deny their opponents an escape route. It was the Western Force that Earle would have encountered. They comprised the 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Battalion of 2nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Company of 2nd

Engineer Regiment and two Motor Transport Companies. They would have fallen upon Earle on the 2 March.

Deployed along a riverbank at Leuwiliang, both the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion and the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion stood their ground for as long as they could. Supported by the Texan Artillery, they destroyed several Japanese tanks, frustrated the Japanese advance, and held them for two days. To avoid the expected encirclement, they were ordered to withdraw back to Soekabumi. From this point on, pursued by, and in close contact with, the Japanese, they would have maintained a fighting withdrawal in an attempt to put space between themselves and the enemy. The Japanese Eastern Force closed in on them behind, and a week later their encirclement was complete. On the morning of 8 March, Java was surrendered. Earle and his surviving battalion members relinquished their weapons and marched into captivity.

His Java campaign saw him fight alongside the Americans, British and Dutch. The role of Blackforce seems to have been ill conceived, and it seems evident that they would have stood very little chance of achieving any tangible sort of victory. Like the forces lost at Singapore, Earle and his Blackforce allies might have better served the war effort by being re-equipped in Australia for a later, more effective, fight against the Japanese. As it was, the rapidly advancing Japanese were forcing decisions to be made on the run. It is unreasonable to judge these decisions too harshly given the circumstances at the time. At any rate, this is now all academic. The unalterable fact is that Earle and battalion mates, once victors from the recent Syrian campaign, now became Prisoners of War. Their Battalion, the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion, became *The Lost Battalion*.

The start of his captivity marks the point at which Earle's trail went cold. There were no records found of his specific movements, prison camps, activities, or companions. Whilst many from his battalion found themselves on the Burma Thailand Railway, it is almost certain that Earle did not. It is my best guess that he spent all of his captivity in Java, although it is likely that he was moved around between different camps within Java.

Jack Thomas commented to me during a visit to his home in Modbury, that he attributed his own longevity partly to his period of captivity under the Japanese. He cited the fact that for a two year period his diet was completely free of salt, fat and sugar. I recall this comment when I ponder how someone like Earle could have survived the hardships of captivity whilst avoiding any serious health issues. We know that he was relatively healthy when his trail reappears two years later. Records show that he, along with hundreds of other prisoners, was assembled by the Japanese at the Adek Camp, Batavia.

The Hellships

There were many hellships, and they carried thousands of souls.

The Japanese had instigated a policy of moving prisoners of war to Japan for use as slave labour in support of their war effort. Collected from throughout the occupied territories of Asia and the Pacific, they were shipped, as human cargo, aboard freighters. These vessels made hazardous voyages, running the gauntlet of the US Navy, who, if they encountered them, would sink them as enemy ships.

Those prisoners chosen for the voyages had to be free from certain diseases. The Japanese were especially wary of dysentery, and they screened for it almost obsessively at various points along the supply chain. Dysentery was tested for by a procedure called the *Glassrod Test*, which involved the insertion of a glass rod into the anus of the prisoner. Passing this test meant being deemed fit for the next stage of the voyage. Those transported represented the healthiest and fittest of all the prisoners under the Japanese.

The allied invasion of Europe was only weeks away, and in the Pacific the allies were fighting in the approaches to Japan itself. The Japanese war machine may have been under threat, but at this time at least, it was still turning. On the 9 May 1944, roughly two years after being taken captive in Java, Earle would have found himself at Adek Camp, Batavia. It was here that men from many camps were assembled into a cohort for preparation for a voyage to Japan. They were brought from several camps - the officers from Cycle Camp on the 10th – and the men from Cycle Camp, Kampong Macassar, Adek and Buitenzorg. Total numbers were forty one officers and seven hundred and thirty seven men, of which one hundred and ninety seven were British, forty two were American, two hundred and fifty eight were Australian and two hundred and eighty one, Dutch. The senior officer in command was Major Jack Dudley Morris, AIF. They were organised into four companies of one hundred and fifty men plus one officer, one company of one hundred and twenty five men and one officer, and a HQ company of forty eight. There were thirty doctors and sixty medical orderlies, and HQ company included two men serving as priests. They were supplied, courtesy of the Red Cross, with a consignment of shoes, and, surprisingly perhaps, were issued adequate medical supplies.

During the morning of 19 May, all, except for one Dutchman who was left at Tanjong Priok due to dysentery, were embarked upon the 3,500 tonne freighter, *Kiska Maru*. This would have occurred at approximately the same place that Earle had alighted from the *Orcades* two years prior. Back then he was still a member of an unconquered battalion about to be thrown into a fight against a deadly enemy. Now, he was in the company of many other prisoners, had been captive for more than two years, and was facing yet another voyage. Beyond that lay the prospect of enforced slave labour in a Japanese factory or mine. It is only possible to contemplate how much they would have known about their immediate future. How would Earle and his Australian companions have reacted to the knowledge that they were bound for Japan? Surely, it would have been hard to accept, that after two years of longing to return home, they were now about to be shipped in the opposite direction.

The ship steamed on a north-westerly heading, running through the Banka Strait, arriving in Singapore's Keppel Harbour on the afternoon of the 22 May.

It would have been interesting for the POWs to see parked at the sight of a German U-boat alongside the dock. They may have noticed its two shell holes in its stern – a battle scar that had not at that point been repaired.

Having been disembarked, the POWs were trucked to Havelock Road Camp. The normal residents here were mostly Indian POWs, and these exhibited great humanity toward the visitors and supplied them with food from their own rations. Another *Glassrod Test* was conducted here and one Australian and four Dutchmen were, as a result, detached.

On 2 June, the POWs were marched to the dock and taken by landing barges to the 4,000 – 5,000 tonne freighter, *Miyo Maru*. They were accommodated between decks under number one and number two hatches and could, due to three hundred men sleeping on deck, all lie at full length. However, the holds were filled with a cargo of bauxite which was to serve as a bed for those who found themselves in the holds. Kopok lifebelts were supplied for all POWs but the Japanese sergeant of the guard refused to have them issued. Over the course of the next few days, Major Morris lobbied hard to have them issued.

On 3 June, the vessel departed Singapore and joined a convoy of eleven freighters with four small corvettes in escort. Of these other ships, three freighters, the *Hiyoki Maru*, the *Hozan Maru* and the *Kokusei Maru* also carried POWs. Survivors noted the apprehension felt at this stage over the threat of submarines. This was not relieved at all when, during the night of the 6/7 June, the lead corvette was struck by an American torpedo. The following night, Major Morris finally succeeded in having the lifebelts issued.

Torpedoes were not the only hazards threatening the welfare of Earle and the Japanese convoy. The weather also played a role in presenting them with unavoidable hazards. Steaming on a north-easterly course across the South China Sea, they passed the Spratley Islands to their right, Cambodia and Vietnam to their left, and with the Philippines ahead. The relatively easy cruising belied the fact that the convoy was running the gauntlet of US submarines. They had crossed the equator during their last leg, and they were now heading further into the Northern Hemisphere. The freedom to sleep on deck must have been a blessing in the humid conditions of the South-East Asian tropics. The calm conditions were broken by a tropical storm, and Earle would have experienced seas and winds so severe that they caused damage to the ship. It was decided that it would shelter in Takao, Formosa while making the necessary repairs. It was there that Earle and the other prisoners were transferred to their third Japanese ship.

Less than a fortnight after the D-Day landings, the Tamahoka Maru slipped out of Takao, Formosa. It carried a cargo of seven hundred and seventy two POWs, amongst them, two hundred and sixty seven Australians. Amongst those was Earle, along with several battalion members, including Lieutenant Lance Gibson who would later help draft the official report on the voyage and the events surrounding it. The vessel joined up with other ships and began the final leg, as part of the convoy, towards Japan.

At the same time, the American Submarine, USS *Tang*, was heading west after leaving its home base at Pearl Harbour on 8 June. This was its third patrol. Heading west towards its patrol sector in the Yellow and East China Sea regions, it was skippered by Lieutenant Commander Richard O'Kane and was armed with 24 torpedoes. Its crew of six officers and 60 enlisted men had rescued 22 downed airmen on its most recent patrol, and prior to that, on its first, it had scored 16 hits from its magazine of torpedos.

On 24 June, the convoy had made it as far as Nagasaki Bay and the lights of the city were clearly visible. There was a feeling amongst both the POWs and the Japanese that the hazardous voyage was about to be safely completed. Survivors tell of how around 40 prisoners were sleeping on the forward hatch cover – part of the normal sleeping arrangements.

The night was broken by an explosion as a ship close ahead of them was struck by a torpedo. By the time it would have taken Earle to appreciate what had happened, a second torpedo had slammed into his own ship just below the bridge. The resulting percussion blew the forward hatch cover off and those lying on it would have been killed instantly. As the *Tamahoka Maru* foundered terminally crippled, two other ships in the convoy were struck. The volley of torpedoes had come from a single American submarine. The USS *Tang* had fired four torpedoes, each hitting a different target. Each of the ships that were hit sank.

The *Tamahoko Maru* sank within five minutes, taking with it five hundred and sixty one of the seven hundred and seventy one prisoners on board. Of the thirty five members of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion on board, twenty seven, including Earle, were killed.

Post Script

Earle was thirty two years old, unmarried, and without children. Here his story comes to an end. His body was lost at sea and he has no known grave. His mother Willamina requested the release of Earle's will by the DFO on 8 November 1945, and she then signed her son's Death Certificate on 24 August 1946.

Earle is listed in the Nominal Roll of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion, but of the survivors I had the privilege of speaking to, only Jack Thomas could remember him (and even this was only to the extent that he recalled his name). I have concluded that this is most likely because he would have been posted to HQ Company, whilst those I had met were not.

His medals include the 1939-45 Star, the Pacific Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939-45 and the Australia Service Medal 1939-45. A long time ago these medals were set into a semi-ornate brass frame where they have remained to this day. Ownership of these medals was passed to me decades ago, but I have never taken the trouble to investigate his story. I have often wondered why the person who had once loved him enough to have taken the trouble to frame the medals had not bothered to pass on his story to the subsequent generations.

Earle's name is on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial and he is officially commemorated by a memorial plaque maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore. His name is located in column 134 of the Singapore Memorial. Perhaps one day this author and his father will visit this site and introduce themselves to their unknown uncle. Although we would have to confess to him that we had left it way too long, we will at least be able to assure him that most of his story at least, has finally been told.

Notes

A short time after their capture in Java, the battalion was split up into smaller groups and spread across various locations and camps. Many of the members served on the Burma-Thailand Railway. The battalion members who survived are old men now. It is my hope that those of them who chose to read this account of Earle's war see it not only as a tribute to him, but to themselves as well.

Twenty seven members of the battalion were killed on the night of the 24 June 1944 when the *Tamahoka Maru* was torpedoed by the US Submarine *Tang*. They were:

Lt R Hamilton	Pte E J Doran	Pte H P Lunn
Sgt W H W Arnold	Pte L E Esler	Pte J D McGregor
Sgt J W E Ellis	Pte J C Fridlington	Pte A J McKerlie
Cpl J E Clarke	Pte J A Gleadall	Pte H J Oliver
Pte G Ashman	Pte K G Gunton	Pte W A Phillips
Pte A F W Brucknell	Pte W R Hedger	Pte W J Sayer
Pte W K Byrth	Pte S Hoffman	Pte A Simpson
Pte S A Crawford	Pte A W Kerrin	Pte J West
Pte P O Cunningham	Pte J H Leckie	Pte P Williams

The USS *Tang* was itself sunk later that year. Its commander, Richard O'Kane, was himself taken as a POW by the Japanese. He managed to escape and was later awarded the Medal of Honor. He finished the war as the most successful submarine commander in the United States Navy, and rose to the rank of Admiral. The comments he made later about the sinking of the *Tamahoka Maru* indicate that he had been aware of the likelihood POWs being aboard certain freighters, and that the torpedo that had hit that ship had been the second one fired from a volley of four. It seems likely that The *Tamahoko Maru* emerged from behind the first ship right at the moment the second torpedo was about to narrowly miss its intended target.

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A SURFEIT OF 'SUBBIES' THE CANLOAN SCHEME – WORLD WAR TWO

Graham Wilson

In the autumn of 1943, a scheme was devised under which Canadian Infantry officers could volunteer to serve with regiments of the British Army. This scheme came about due to a shortage of junior officers in the British Army, at a time when the Canadian Army had a surplus of these officers. The British Army, by 1943, was fighting or had fought campaigns over half the world and, with the invasion of North-West Europe imminent, was faced with a severe shortage of junior officers, especially in the infantry, an outcome of the usual grievous casualty levels experienced by an army with a history of its junior officers leading from the front.

The Canadian Army for its part had an almost embarrassing surplus of junior officers at this time. This situation had arisen from a combination of the disbanding of two home defence divisions, which had freed up a large number of officers, plus the fact that at that time the Canadian Army was fighting on a single front only, in Italy, meaning that the flow of officers from Canada was more than the requirement for officers at the front. Compounding this situation was the fact that officer training continued unabated and thus Canada had more officers than could be employed in active battalions. A result of this was that many officers were underemployed or even virtually unemployed in reinforcement units, depots, and training centres.

Aware of the shortages of junior officers faced by the British Army, and keen not to waste the asset represented by its pool of surplus junior officers, the Canadian Government offered to loan junior officers to the British Army on a voluntary basis, under the code name 'CANLOAN'. The British Government gratefully accepted the offer and it was agreed that CANLOAN officers were to be attached to British regiments and units for all purposes except pay and were to be allotted service numbers from a special block and that these numbers were to have the prefix CDN.

Initially some 2000 Canadian officers were to be part of the CANLOAN scheme; however, worsening Canadian casualty forecasts reduced the numbers. In the end, some six hundred and twenty three (623) Infantry officers and fifty (50) Ordnance officers (the latter whom the Royal Army Ordnance Corps were anxious to have), volunteered and served under the CANLOAN scheme; a total of six hundred and seventy-three (673) in all. While the majority were lieutenants, captains were included on the basis of one captain for every seven lieutenants. Some officers with higher ranks reverted and some from other arms of the service transferred to infantry, in order that they could attain a position in the scheme.

In the early spring of 1944 all officers who volunteered were interviewed by a special Selection Board, and on acceptance were sent to A-34 Special Officers' Training Centre, Sussex, New Brunswick, where they underwent a short refresher course, while the necessary preparations for overseas service were speedily completed. During this phase the CANLOAN officers were under the command of Brigadier Milton F. Gregg VC, MC, who, because of his continued keen interest in the welfare of all CANLOAN officers, is regarded as their Colonel-in-Chief and became Honorary President of the post-war CANLOAN Army Officers' Association.

From Sussex the CANLOAN officers proceeded overseas in drafts of from fifty to two hundred, the first draft arriving on 7 April 1944 and the remainder following in short order. They were immediately posted to British regiments and as far as possible the postings were to the British regiment, if any, to which the officers' Canadian regiment was affiliated.

The list of British Army regiments and corps to which CANLOAN officers were posted (including battalion, division, etc, where known) is shown below:

REGIMENTS OF THE BRITISH ARMY (IN ORDER OF SENIORITY) IN WHICH CANLOAN OFFICERS SERVED

The Grenadier Guards

1st Bn – Guards Arm Div

The Royal Scots

7/9th Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
8th Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div

The Queen's Royal Regiment

1/5th Bn – 7th Arm Div
1/6th Bn – 7th Arm Div
1/7th Bn – 7th Arm Div

The Royal Warwickshire Regiment

1/7th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div
2nd Bn – 3rd Inf Div
2/7th Bn – 61st Inf Div
9th Bn – 2nd Inf Div

The King's Regiment

5th Bn – 5th Beach Gp & No.2 T Force

The Royal Norfolk Regiment

1st Bn – 3rd Inf Div
7th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div

The Royal Lincolnshire Regiment

2nd Bn – 3rd Division
4th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Devonshire Regiment

2nd Bn -50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div
4th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div
11th Bn – 1st Inf Div
12th Bn – 6th Airborne Division

The Suffolk Regiment

1st Bn – 3rd Inf Div

The Somerset Light Infantry

4th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div
7th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div

The East Yorkshire Regiment

2nd Bn – 3rd Inf Div
5th Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div
7th Bn

The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment

6th Bn – L of C Brigade Group

The Leicestershire Regiment

1st Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Green Howards

2nd Bn
6th Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div
7th Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div

The Lancashire Fusiliers

2nd Bn – 1st Inf Div
2/5th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div

The Royal Scots Fusiliers

4/5th Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
6th Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div
10th Bn – 1st Inf Div
11th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Division

The Royal Welch Fusiliers

4th Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
6th Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
7th Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
9th Bn – 1st Inf Div
13th Bn – 1st Inf Div

The South Wales Borderers

2nd Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Monmouthshire Regiment

2nd Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
3rd Bn – 11th Arm Div

The King's Own Scottish Borderers

1st Bn – 3rd Inf Div
4th Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
5th Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
6th Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div
7th Bn – 1st Airborne Division

The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)

6th Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
7th Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
9th Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div

The Gloucestershire Regiment

2nd Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div

The Worcestershire Regiment

1st Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div
7th Bn – 2nd Indian Division

The East Lancashire Regiment

1st Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
5th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div

The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

5th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div
10th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Duke of Wellington's Regiment

1/6th Bn
6th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div
7th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Border Regiment

1st Bn – 1st Airborne Division

The Royal Hampshire Regiment

1st Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div
7th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div

The South Staffordshire Regiment

1/5th Bn – 7th Arm Div
1/6th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Division
2nd Bn – 1st Airborne Division
2/6th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div
2/7th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div
5th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div
7th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div

The Dorsetshire Regiment

1st Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div
4th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div
5th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div

The South Lancashire Regiment

1st Bn – 3rd Inf Div

The Welch Regiment

1st Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
1/5th Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
4th Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div

The Black Watch (The Royal Highland Regiment)

1st Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
4th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
5th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
7th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
10th Bn – 48th Inf Div

The Tyneside Scottish (Black Watch)

1st Bn – 49th (West Riding) Division

The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

1st Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
2nd Bn – 6th Airborne Division

The Buckinghamshire Bn (Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry)

1st Bn – 1st Inf Div

The Essex Regiment

2nd Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment)

1st Bn – 61st Inf Div

The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry

1/4th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The King's Shropshire Light Infantry

2nd Bn – 3rd Inf Div
4th Bn – 11th Arm Div

The Hereford Light Infantry (The King's Shropshire Light Infantry)

1st Bn – 11th Arm Div

The Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own)

2nd Bn – 3rd Inf Div
1/7th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
8th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Division

Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment, The Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own)

2nd Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh's)

4th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div
5th Bn – 43rd (Wessex) Inf Div

The Manchester Regiment

1st Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div

The North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's)

6th Bn – 59th (Staffordshire) Inf Div
7th Bn – 1st Inf Div

The York & Lancaster Regiment

1st Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div
11th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Durham Light Infantry

2nd Bn – 2nd Inf Div
6th Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div
8th Bn – 50th (Northumbrian) Inf Div
9th Bn – 7th Arm Div
10th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div
11th Bn – 49th (West Riding) Inf Div

The Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow Regiment)

1st Bn – 53rd (Welsh) Inf Div
5th Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
10th Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div

The Glasgow Highlanders (The Highland Light Infantry)

1st Bn – 52nd (Lowland) Inf Div
2nd Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div

The Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-Shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's)

2nd Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
5th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
7th Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div

The Gordon Highlanders

1st Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
2nd Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div
5/7th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
7th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div

The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders

5th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
9th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div

The Liverpool Scottish, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders

1st Bn – 55th (West Lancashire) Inf Div

The Royal Ulster Rifles

1st Bn – 6th Airborne Division
2nd Bn – 3rd Inf Div

The Royal Irish Fusiliers

1st Bn – 78th Inf Div
2nd Bn – 78th Inf Div

The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's)

2nd Bn – 15th (Scottish) Inf Div
7th Bn – 51st (Highland) Inf Div
11th Bn – 1st Inf Div

The Parachute Regiment

1st Bn – 1st Airborne Division
7th Bn – 1st Airborne Division
8th Bn – 6th Airborne Division
9th Bn – 1st Airborne Division
11th Bn – 1st Airborne Division
12th Bn – 6th Airborne Division
13th Bn – 6th Airborne Division

The Royal Engineers

204 Field Company

The Royal Army Service Corps

26th Armoured Brigade
38th (Irish) Brigade
2nd Arm Bde Workshop
HQ 86 (Army Troops) Area, 8th Army
665 Tank Troops Workshop
15 Vehicle Company
16 Vehicle Company
157 Vehicle Park
3 Base Ammunition Depot

The Royal Army Ordnance Corps

The Army Educational Corps

Allied Forces Headquarters

CANLOAN Officers took part in the bitter fighting in North-West Europe in 1944-45, many landing with the Airborne Forces on D-1, and with the seaborne assault on the Normandy beaches, and some surviving through the final battles in Germany. A few served with British Regiments in Italy, and, although the plan was for service in North-West Europe and the Mediterranean only, a number volunteered for other theatres with a few eventually serving in South-East Asia. Some, after being wounded, were returned to duty through the reinforcement stream and were posted to new units; thus many served with two or more regiments and formations. This, incidentally, explains the presence of a number of CANLOAN officers in the Royal Engineers, Royal Army Service Corps and Army Educational Corps, in addition to the regiments of infantry and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

CANLOAN officers received normal wartime (temporary) promotions within their British units, some becoming Company Commanders and in at least one case, Commanding Officer of his battalion. While with the British regiments they wore normal British unit and formation badges and shoulder patches, with the addition of 'CANADA' shoulder flashes.

For their service, the CANLOAN officers garnered a more than respectable tally of decorations, both British and foreign, as shown in the list below.

CANLOAN Decorations

41 Military Crosses (1 with bar)
1 MBE
1 Distinguished Service Cross (US)
1 Silver Star (US)
4 *Croix de guerre* (French)
1 Order of Bronze Lion (Dutch)
an unrecorded number of 'Mentions in Dispatches' and C-in-Cs Commendations

In addition, CANLOAN volunteers already wore:

2 Distinguished Conduct Medals
6 Military Medals
for previous service in the ranks of the Canadian Army.

On the debit side, the CANLOAN scheme was incredibly costly, with a total casualty rate of 75% and a fatal casualty rate of 20%, or 1 in 5 of every officer. The actual casualty statistics for the CANLOAN officers is shown below.

CANLOAN Casualties

Casualty Type	Casualty Number	Casualty Percentage
KIA or DOW	128	20%
WIA	310	50%
POW	27	5%
Total Casualties	465	75%

That the CANLOAN Scheme was a success is shown by the report published in the Official History of the Canadian Army, under the authority of the department of National Defence:

> The CANLOAN scheme may be accounted decidedly successful; the gallant young officers loaned to the British Army under its terms did their country credit and made a distinguished and significant contribution to the Military effort of the Commonwealth and the winning of the war.

During a pilgrimage to Great Britain and North-West Europe by CANLOAN veterans and their families in 1968, they were received and honoured by the Royal Family at St James Palace; by their former Regiments; by the Corporation of the City of London; and by Officials of other European Governments. The Lord Mayor of London, Sir Gilbert Inglefield, at an official luncheon at the Mansion House, paid them tribute with these words:

> In 1944 when the war was at its height, 673 young officers came over to help us, for our need was very great. One is perhaps reminded of the call recorded in the Acts of the Apostles when St Paul had a vision of a man who said 'Come over into Macedonia and help us.' And help came. 'Come over to England and help us' he might have said, and help came for our depleted ranks when our need was greatest ...

The CANLOAN officers were incredibly proud of their service and established their own association, the CANLOAN Army Officers Association after the war, the major physical achievement of the Association being the CANLOAN Memorial in a park on the banks of the Rideau River in Ottawa. The simple memorial records the names, 'CDN' numbers and British Regiments of the 128 fatal CANLOAN casualties. It was unveiled on 3 June 1961 by the Governor General of Canada, General The Right Honourable Georges P Vanier, PC DSO MC CD in the presence of the British High Commissioner, Canadian and British Government representatives and CANLOAN veterans, next-of-kin and friends from all parts of Canada. The memorial bears this inscription:

> Erected by the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom, the British Regiments, the CANLOAN Army Officers' Association, and CANLOAN next-of-kin. Designated CANLOAN, 673 Canadian Officers volunteered for loan to the British Army and took part in the invasion and liberation of Europe 1944-45. CANLOAN total casualties were 465, of which 128 were fatal. Their fallen are honoured in this quiet place in gratitude and remembrance of the cost of liberty

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