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*Sabretache*



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## EDITORIAL

Writing the review for Andrew Salmon's excellent book on the Korean War for this issue reminded me of a chance encounter a few years ago, when a colleague and I were attending a conference in Brisbane. We were walking to the venue when we caught up with someone we recognised from the previous day as a fellow delegate – a tiny lady, elderly but very spry. The ensuing conversation soon revealed her to be Olwyn Green, widow of Lt Col Charles Green, the highly-regarded first CO of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment in Korea. Green's mortal wounding by a shell fragment on the very day the unit was rested from the line in 1950 is movingly described in Andrew's book. According to some reports, Green's last words were 'Who is going to look after Olwyn?'

My point in telling this story is, I suppose, that the raw material of history is ever present and all around us, and simply needs recognising as such. In the above case it took the form of a person who represented a living bridge to the past; but it might just as readily be the family photo album, a building in town, some oddment picked up at an auction, or the memories of being involved in a significant event years ago. Increasingly, the focus of that grab-bag thing we call history has shifted from great lives and grand occasions – history 'from the top' – to ordinary people and everyday circumstances – history 'from below'. We see it in the growing popularity of online genealogical sites, self-published local histories, and TV shows depicting the re-enactment of daily life in a particular era.

To a very real extent, *Sabretache* occupies a similar niche. The journal offers the opportunity for Society members to share the fruits of their interests and research in all sorts of areas of military history, large and small. More often than not, the emphasis from contributors is on history at the ground level: how things work, what people did, where events occurred, and so on. The results are always informative and often quite challenging, as attested to by the remarkable breadth of subject matter and depth of knowledge displayed in this issue's articles, which range from postage stamps to POWs, from medals to musketry, and a great deal more.

It is my hope that topics such as these not only instruct and entertain, as I have no doubt they will, but will also inspire others to put their encounters with history into words and send them to the journal. Articles need not be lengthy; in fact, shorter pieces of 2000-3000 words are very welcome, and I am more than happy to offer advice to potential contributors about the direction or focus their ideas might take. Then of course there are other opportunities to contribute: the 'As You Were...' column provides an outlet for thoughts or comments arising out of previously published material; or if you've read a recent publication and have something to say about it which might be of use to the membership, put it into 300-1000 words and submit it to the Book Reviews. And let's not forget this year's Writers' Prize, the details of which appear in the Society Notices.

May I take this opportunity to thank those members who took the trouble to send me their positive responses to my first issue as editor. I must also apologise for its delayed despatch. The few glitches arising out of the shift in operations from the ACT to South Australia should now be resolved, and each issue hopefully will be delivered to you more promptly from here on. For the present, I trust you will enjoy this issue's diverse offerings as much as I have in putting them together.

**Paul Skrebels**

## MILITARY HISTORY ON THE POSTAGE STAMPS OF AUSTRALIA: DEVELOPING THE ANZAC TRADITION

Chris Yardley<sup>1</sup>

*Postage stamps are a very political, territorially grounded and yet overlooked part of visual culture.* (Raento and Brunn, 2005)

### Introduction

The postage stamp is a fiscal device. It pre-pays a mail delivery service and in its current form has been around for more than 170 years. For a century or so the image on the stamp made a fiscal statement – the portrait of the monarch, the state emblem or a map. Interestingly it was the Colony of New South Wales that broke the mould when it issued a set of stamps to commemorate the century anniversary of the First Fleet landing in Sydney in 1788. Two years later two colonies, Victoria and Queensland, issued stamps, at a large premium, as a contribution to collecting money for the Boer War Patriotic Fund. In addition to the name of the colony, the title of the fund, a value and the portrait of Queen Victoria, they also included images of a troopship and Armed Service personnel (Oppenheimer, 1997).



1900: One penny and two pence postal value / sold for 1/- and 2/- with the difference going to the Boer War Patriotic Fund. Today catalogued at \$125 and \$425.  
Renniks catalogue #s 53 and 54.

### The Anzac tradition

These early representations of the military set a precedent and this article looks at the development of the Anzac tradition through the issue of commemorative stamps. The stamps described are shown in chronological order of issue. A set of stamps actually called ‘The Anzac tradition’ was published in 1990. A stamp heritage book of the same name included a forward by Sir Edward (Weary) Dunlop in which he wrote, ‘the poignant bloody sacrifice at Gallipoli shared by men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps coined the hallowed word “Anzac” and has been heralded as the birth pangs of Australian nationhood’. While he was at the Australian War Memorial, historian Michael McKernan wrote, ‘a curious mood gripped those Australians sent abroad to fight .... they saw themselves as participants in a moment of high historical importance for their nation’ (Clark et al, 1990).

<sup>1</sup> Chris Yardley, originally from England, moved to Australia from New Zealand in 1989 and thus began his fascination with Australian stamps. He is currently a student at the National Australian Centre for the Public Awareness of Science at the Australian National University in Canberra. His research is in determining the messages contained in postage stamps.



1935: 20th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. With no Memorial of its own Australia used the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London as its image. Renniks catalogue #s 81 and 82.

Thirty years later the Post Office went to the iconic image of Simpson and his donkey to celebrate the Gallipoli landings. After landing on 25 April 1915, John Simpson (1892-1915), stretcher bearer, somehow acquired a donkey ('Duffy') and began carrying wounded soldiers from the frontline to the beach for evacuation. He continued this work for three-and-a-half weeks, often under fire, until he was killed (Greenwood, 2008).



1965: 50th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. Renniks catalogue #s 302-304.

General Sir John Monash GCMG KCB VD (1865-1931), a civil engineer, became commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Egypt shortly after the outbreak of the war and led it in the Gallipoli campaign. In July 1917 he took charge of the new Australian 3rd Division in north-west France and in May 1918 he was made commander of the Australian Corps, at the time the largest individual corps on the Western Front. In August 1918 the successful Allied attack at the Battle of Amiens was spearheaded by the Australian Corps under General Monash (Serle, 1982). The two careers of John Monash are represented on the stamp celebrating his birth.



1965: Centenary of the birth of General Sir John Monash. Renniks catalogue # 307.

The next image incorporating a portrait of the Armed Services is from the 1974 set of *Painting* definitives (everyday use) issue. Ann Gray, then Head of Australian Art, has described George Lambert (1873-1930), an official war artist from 1917, as a 'versatile artist with great audacity and considerable finesse, a more broad range artist than any other in Australia at the time'. The sitter was Thomas Herbert (Harry) Ivers, a sergeant with the 1st

Signal Squadron and employed as a map maker for the War Records Section in Palestine. They met during Lambert's visit to Damascus in 1919.



1974: *Sergeant of Light Horse* (in Palestine). Renniks catalogue # 505.

The next set to be issued entitled *Colonial Military Uniforms* showed soldiers in a context of engagement and aggression.



1985: *Colonial Military Uniforms* showing left to right, the Royal Victorian Volunteer Artillery, the Western Australia Pinjarra Cavalry, Cavalry, NSW Lancers, NSW Contingent in the Sudan and the Victorian Mounted Rifles. Renniks catalogue # 885

The next illustration shows Australia's *Armed Services* as 'larrikins' whilst emphasizing Defence as an entity rather than as separate services. This stamp was issued as one stamp in a set of 26 entitled *Living Together*.



1988: *Living together / Armed Services*. Renniks catalogue # 1074.

The significant 1990 set of five stamps *The Anzac Tradition* incorporates two images in each stamp representing the Anzac soldier at war and the resultant effect upon those he/she had left at home. The designers Otto and Chris used peoples experience as their focus – 'the fear and expectation, the separation and loss, the camaraderie and courage – themes common to all wars' (Clark et al, 1990, pp 8-11).



1990: *The Anzac tradition*. Left to right the images represent *At the front*, *They also serve*, *Lest we forget*, *Casualties* and *News from home*. Renniks catalogue #'s 1181-1185.

In chronological order the next postal celebration illustrates three anniversaries directly connected with wartime history. Apart from the overall design, the title, the issuing country and the placing of the value tablet, it would not be apparent that the three stamps comprise a set.



1991. *In memory of those who served : 50th anniversaries*. From left to right the images represent, *Wartime Women's Services*, *Siege of Tobruk* and the *Australian War Memorial*. Renniks catalogue #s 1230-1232.

The next set, this time of five stamps, *Australians under fire*, shows another lot of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, of five crucial battles of 1942. Illustrator Brian Clinton and designer Brian Sedgrave include the campaign ribbons of the medals recording the battles.



1992: *World War II / Australians under fire*. *Bombing of Darwin*, *Battle of Milne Bay*, *Battle of the Kokoda Trail*, *Battle of Coral Sea* and the *Battle of El Alamein*. Renniks catalogue #s 1289-1293.

In 1995 two sets of four stamps were issued with the description of *Australia Remembers* to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 2. In Series 1 we are introduced to Mrs Jessie Vasey CBE (1897-1960), the founder of the War Widow's Guild, Sgt Tom Derrick VC (1914-1945), Flt Sgt Rawden Middleton VC (1916-1942), and soldier-surgeon Sir Edward (Weary) Dunlop AC CMC (1907-1993). The symbols printed in the gutter strip of the examples shown are the Victoria Cross and the badge of the Ex-Prisoners of War

Association. In Series 2, honoured are fighter pilot WO Ken Waters (1924-1993), Sister Ellen Savage GM (1912- ), the sole nursing survivor of the sinking of hospital ship *Centaur*, CPO Percy Collins DSM (1905-1990), and bomb disposal expert Lt Cdr Leon Goldsworthy GC DSM GM (1909-1994). The symbols are the George Medal and the George Cross. Series 1 was also issued in the hygienically-friendly format of self-adhesive stamps.



1995: *Australia Remembers*, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. Renniks catalogue #s 1492a and 1522

After a further period of five years, in 2000, Australia Post issued a set of four stamps in the *Australian Legends* series, the *Last Anzacs*. The three 'Diggers' celebrated are Walter Parker (age 105), Roy Longmore (age 105) and Alex Campbell (age 102). The set includes an image of the World War 1914-1915 Star.



2000: *Australian Legends, the Last Anzacs*. Renniks catalogue # 1952.

Also in 2000 the centenary of Australia's first Victoria Cross was celebrated as well as two recipients from WW2 and from South Vietnam. The awardees are Major General Sir Neville Howse VC KCB KCMG KStJ (1863-1930), Boer War 1900, Sir Roden Cutler VC AK KCMG KCVO CBE (1916-2002), Syria 1941, Edward Kenna VC (1919-2009) New Guinea 1945, and WO Keith Payne VC (born 1933), South Vietnam 1969. The middle stamp in the se-tenant – a philatelic term meaning 'joined together' – block shown below is an image of the Victoria Cross.



2000: Centenary of Australia's first Victoria Cross. Renniks catalogue # 2002

In 2008 Australia Post issued a miniature sheet entitled *Lest we Forget* and three other miniature sheets showing the same stamps. One of these commemorated the finding of HMAS Sydney during 2008.



2008 *Lest We Forget*: left to right the individual stamps represent: Veterans marching, laying of wreaths, playing the 'last post', war veteran and child and young people at Gallipoli.  
Renniks catalogue #s 2959 and 2953-2957.

Illustrative of the pervading tradition of Anzac it is worth recording a non-military issue of 2009: *'Not just desserts'*... but look at the uniformed participants! Two of the stamps, showing lamingtons and Anzac biscuits, include images of men in uniform. Lamingtons are believed to have been named after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Lamington, who served as governor of Queensland 1896-1901.



2009: *Not just desserts*. WNS Catalogue #s AU034-037.09



The Kokoda Trail battle has been celebrated with the joint-issue by Australia and Papua New Guinea with a miniature sheet and a set of five stamps. The stamps show images from the 1942 battle, the care provided to Diggers by the local population and modern images: the Kokoda Isurava memorial, Kokoda veterans and Kokoda today.



2010: *Kokoda* (miniature sheet). WNS catalogue # AU050-055.10  
(The stamps have also been issued as gummed items and in a self-adhesive format)

In 2011, for *Remembrance Day*, the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the eleventh year of the millennium, two stamps have been issued.



2011: *Remembrance Day*. WNS catalogue # not yet allocated

By printing stamps in the hundreds of thousands Australia Post has helped to focus attention upon the sacrifices of war and towards the ANZAC tradition. Long may it continue. Here are my particular favourites repeated from above:



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All illustrations are original scans from the author's collection.

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## AS YOU WERE ...

### Feedback from Readers and Contributors

Contributor Barry Bamford sends the following response to Roy Manuel's comment in this column in the December 2011 issue, relating to Barry's 'The Lives of Riley' article published in the June 2011 edition:

- The statement shown on p.29 of 'The Lives of Riley' is correct! Tenth Light Horse (10LH) was called up for full time duty during the early part of WW2, the initial period starting in December 1941. As the article relates, for a short while the Regiment had sufficient members volunteered for overseas service as to warrant 'AIF' status, but membership declined and the Regiment was eventually disbanded in April 1944.

So what of Roy's contention about a 'new corps' he joined in October 1941? Roy's original service number was 5554, which suggests he was a member of the West Australian militia, possibly 10LH, but if he joined a 'new corps' in October 1941, I respectfully suggest his recollections are playing tricks on him. At that time it is more likely he transferred to the 2/10 Armoured Regiment that was formed in WA in July 1941 and transferred to Puckapunyal soon after for initial training. Roy's reference to 'Capt Burt' tends to confirm his transfer to this unit, as Lt Col J.F.P. Burt was commanding officer of 2/10 Armoured Regiment between April and September, 1944. It needs to be stressed that the 2/10 Armoured Regiment was a completely separate unit to 10LH and had no affiliation with that Regiment at all.

There are two other points that might be of interest, arising out of Roy's comments:

1. The 2/10 Armd Regt was eventually issued with Stuart and Grant tanks – and in Jan 1943 was relocated back to Western Australia where it was disbanded in Sept 1944.
  2. For a brief period between November 1941 and June 1942, one squadron of 10LH was equipped with Bren gun carriers, from most accounts in similar 'clapped out' condition that Roy describes. After that, 10LH reverted to three horse-mounted squadrons that remained in place until the Regiment was disbanded.
- Barry adds that in his original article, footnote no.3, p.19 incorrectly states that 'The other two regiments of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Brigade were the 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse from South

Australia and the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse from Victoria’. It should of course read ‘the 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment from Victoria and the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment from South Australia and Victoria’.

Kevin Smith – whose article on Tom Gode and the 2/26<sup>th</sup> Bn in Malaya and as POWs of the Japanese appears elsewhere in this issue – writes concerning Brenton Brooks’ ‘Those Forgotten: The Inquiry into Recognition for Far East Prisoners of War who were Killed While Escaping’ (vol.52, no.4):

- Good to see *Sabretache* publishing Brenton Brooks’ article on POWs killed during or after escapes or attempted escapes. Once this matter had been opened to investigation by a Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal, the investigation should have been painstakingly thorough. Such investigations must provide natural justice for all who should be considered.

The matter was drawn to my attention by a relative of a former prisoner of war in mid-2011. I subsequently wrote to the DH&A Appeals Tribunal mentioning the names and some details of a number of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division escapers listed in my book *Escapes and Incursions* (2006) and elsewhere. The *Sabretache* article would have been written (but not published) prior to my letter. Dr Brooks is to be applauded for drawing attention to the superficial nature and the inadequacies of the Tribunal’s enquiries to date on this matter. I endorse his comments.

[Brenton’s article was indeed written and submitted to *Sabretache* in early 2011 – Ed.]

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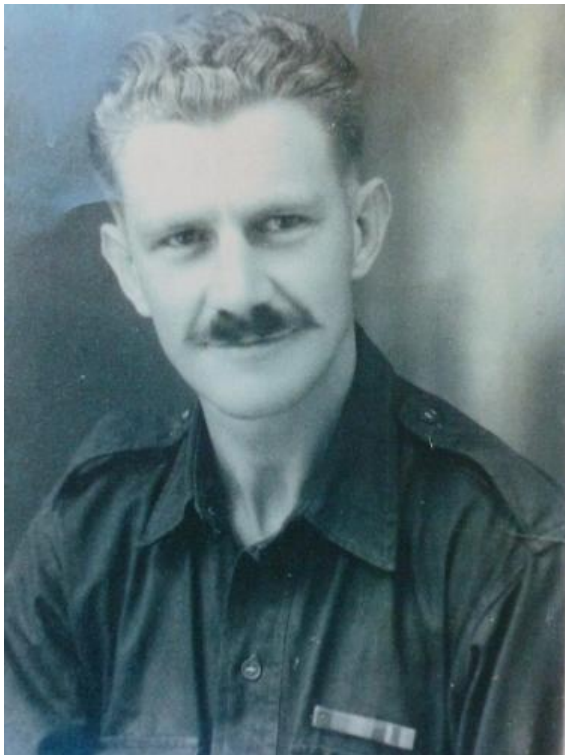
## THE OTHER DICK SMITH AND THE SIO CODE BOOKS

Graham McKenzie-Smith<sup>1</sup>

*‘On 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1944, the 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Division made the first significant capture of Japanese crypt material at Sio, on the north east coast of New Guinea, which had been the headquarters of the Japanese 20<sup>th</sup> Division. The material, which consisted of the entire “crypt library” of the Division, was found in a deep water-filled pit!’<sup>2</sup>*

*‘When exploited the documents enabled systematic access for the first time to the Japanese army’s four-digit, mainline operational codes. And whereas, in January 1944, only 1,846 Japanese messages, mainly in the less secure Water Transport Code, had been deciphered, in March the number rose to 36,000, many of which gave accurate details of Japanese dispositions and orders of battle. Among other things, the find led to MacArthur’s bold stroke to capture Hollandia and speed up the reduction of effective Japanese opposition in New Guinea. It proved to be one of the most significant signals intelligence coups of the war.’<sup>3</sup>*

Richard Henry (Dick) Smith was born 20 July 1922 at Leura, NSW, the second son of Richard Archie Smith and Isobel Marie Howarth. They moved to Blacktown but retained the house at Leura for vacations, so the Blue Mountains were a big part of Dick’s upbringing with the bushwalking delights of the Grose Valley close at hand. After leaving Parramatta High School, Dick won a Teachers College Scholarship and in 1941 at age 19 was teaching at Granville Junior Technical School.



Dick was called up for Universal Training in December 1941 (N275360) and went into camp at Bathurst with Sydney University Cadet Bn, which comprised 1,200 young teachers and Technical College students who were to do initial training during the school holidays, before returning to their reserved occupation of teaching in time for the new school year. He returned to teaching at Granville in February 1942 but was one of 100 such teachers who were recalled in April to become instructors.

After further training at Bathurst, Dick was promoted to corporal and joined 14 Infantry Training Bn also at Bathurst. Training involved a platoon of 30 raw recruits being trained for 30 days in the basics before they moved to higher training, and after seven platoons had benefited from his instruction, Dick applied for a transfer to the AIF (NX127991). He was posted in December 1942 as one of the first instructors at Advanced Reinforcement Training Centre (Jungle Warfare), which was being formed at Canungra to pass on the lessons from

<sup>1</sup> Graham is a long-standing member of the WA and ACT Branches of MHSa and has a special interest in the units of the Australian Army in World War 2. Richard Henry (Dick) Smith was Graham’s father.

<sup>2</sup> Ballard, Geoffrey, *On Ultra Active Service, The Story of Australia’s Signals Intelligence Operations During World War II* (Spectrum Publications, Richmond, 1991), p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> Coates, John, *An Atlas of Australia’s Wars* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2006), p. 254.

the Kokoda campaign. Dick instructed three platoons in the gruelling 30-day course, which later became standard for all troops before they left for New Guinea.

Dick's older brother Alex (NX18556) had enlisted in May 1940, serving in the Middle East, and by March 1943 was a platoon commander in 2/104 General Transport Company at Grovely. Looking to get closer to the action, Dick took advantage of the army regulation that allowed an older brother to 'claim' a younger brother to his unit. Alex requested a transfer for Dick and he joined 2/104 Gen Tpt Coy in April 1943. However, driving trucks was not to be Dick's role in the army; in May 1943 he responded to a call for men to join the Field Security Wing of the Intelligence Corps, and at less than 21 years of age, Dick joined 'F' Field Security Section at Indooroopilly.

F FS Sec was the training and depot unit for the field security sections which were deployed with each division and lines of communication area. While the division's intelligence section concentrated on gathering information on the enemy, the role of the field security section was to stop information reaching the enemy, a role that in other armies was called counter intelligence. This is done by lecturing to troops, inspecting security precautions, investigating rumours and keeping tabs on the civilian population. A field security section had one officer, a warrant officer, three sergeants and nine corporals and these men were often allocated to brigades or battalions for long periods working away from Sec HQ.<sup>4</sup>

While with F FS Sec, as well as 'learning by reading and doing', Dick attended a Motor Cycle School in August and a US Counter Intelligence School in October, learning interrogation skills from the newly arrived FBI types and schooling them in Australian ways. By November he was ready for an operational role, so was posted to join B FS Sec which was attached to 9 Inf Div, then at Finschhafen. Like many army journeys, it took a month to reach the division with delays at Townsville, Port Moresby and Dobodura before he volunteered to take some trucks forward, to be greeted at Finschhafen by Alex.

HQ 9 Inf Div was advancing along the Rai Coast north and west of Finschhafen and Dick caught up with B FS Sec at the division's rear HQ near Kiligia. By then 20 Inf Bde Gp was advancing with 2/15 Inf Bn leading. At the end of December 1943, Tac HQ 9 Inf Div and HQ 20 Inf Bde were around Blucher Point when Dick moved to Bde HQ. 2/15 Inf Bn advanced quickly to Cape King William by 3 January 1944, where 2/17 Inf Bn took over the lead with Dick attached to Bn HQ.

Despite several rearguard actions by the retreating Japanese, the battalion made measured progress and crossed the Goaling River to occupy Nambariwa on the 13<sup>th</sup>, where Bn HQ was established with B Coy occupying Sio Mission on the 15<sup>th</sup>. With no civilian population, there was little counter intelligence work to be done so the field security section mainly assisted the battalion intelligence section with searching enemy bodies and positions for documents. An abandoned HQ area was found above Gneisenau Point by a patrol on the 13<sup>th</sup> and this was searched, yielding general papers and maps which were sent back for evaluation.

The Sio-Nambariwa area had been the main Japanese supply base for Finschhafen and contained large dumps of all kinds which the enemy had made no systematic attempt to destroy. On the banks of the Goaling River were dumps of fuel, supplies and engineer stores as well as barges and repair facilities, all suffering extensive bomb damage. In the upper

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<sup>4</sup> Smith, R.H., 'The Work of Field Security', *Australian Intelligence Magazine*, no 118, Aug/Sep 1993.

reaches was a large transit and hospital area.<sup>5</sup> 2/17 Inf Bn and A Coy, Papuan Infantry Bn (PIB) patrolled extensively, and most patrols killed stragglers or reported bodies while specialist patrols evaluated the stores dumps and either destroyed or recovered useable equipment. A dump with 500 new rifles, ammunition and wireless equipment was located by a PIB patrol on the 17<sup>th</sup> and when this was examined by another patrol on the 18<sup>th</sup> a nearby HQ was located with a large wireless, many scattered papers and a paybook from a 2/24 Inf Bn soldier killed at Finschhafen.<sup>6</sup>

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Dick and another B FS Sec soldier (John Burke) organised a party of native carriers (and a guard party in case of stragglers) and set off for the reported HQ site. They found many scattered papers but in a partly collapsed water-filled slit trench were numerous books that looked interesting. It was standard practice when destroying important documents to tear off their covers before they were destroyed and for these to be sent to higher HQ under the signature of a senior officer to certify the destruction. These books all had their covers removed. The papers and books were collected and using boxes and baskets in the area (including a tin trunk) were prepared into carrier loads. However, a severe thunderstorm dispersed the carriers and the guard party returned to Bn HQ at Nambariwa with only a small sample. They returned next day to bring out a ton of wet documents.<sup>7</sup>

After returning to Nambariwa that evening Dick and Arthur commandeered a fishing lugger to transport the material to base, so they were happy to spend the night standing offshore without the need to use mosquito nets. Next day they arrived at Dredger Harbour where the papers were loaded onto a plane to be sent to HQ NG Force at Port Moresby. Some reports indicate that the grass hills around Port Moresby were white with papers drying in the sun, but the codebooks were sent to Central Bureau in Brisbane to be dried page by page in ovens, on clothes-lines and in front of electric fans. Dick thought nothing more of the episode until many years later.

After a few days of unofficial leave in the base area, Dick and Arthur returned to Div HQ which was now back at Kiligia, waiting to leave for Australia as 5 Inf Div had taken over the advance. While waiting, Dick was able to meet up with Alex and their younger brother Alf (NX190576) who was in the area with 2/13 Inf Bn.

Dick arrived at Brisbane on 7 March 1944 and after leave (when he got engaged to May McKenzie, WAAF (108794)) he settled with 9 Inf Div at Ravenshoe. He attended the Field Security Course at School of Military Intelligence at Southport in October before going on an unscheduled leave period. With five days notice, May organised their wedding and they were married in November, two days after Dick reached Sydney. In January 1945 he was sent to Hollandia (Dutch New Guinea) to assist with a US Counter Intelligence School for a month, and then spent another month returning to Ravenshoe.

9 Inf Div was then tasked to capture the area around Brunei Bay on Borneo and Dick left for the staging area at Morotai in April 1945. He was then attached again to 20 Inf Bde Gp and landed with 2/13 Inf Bn at Brooketon (Brunei) in May before moving to Lutong (Sarawak) in June. Here Dick had a range of field security duties with the battalion and with the locals,

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<sup>5</sup> Dexter, David, *The New Guinea Offensives*, (Aust War Memorial, Canberra, 1961), p.735.

<sup>6</sup> AWM 52 8/2/20/90, War Diary, 20 Inf Bde, Jan 44 Pt 2, p.104.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, R.H., 'I'll never forget the time that ...', *Memoirs of Richard Henry (Dick) Smith*, (G. McKenzie-Smith, Moss Vale, 1997).

including documenting members of the Indian Independence League.<sup>8</sup> In September, Dick joined 24 Inf Bde Gp at Beaufort (Sabah) and after documenting the surrendering Japanese, he established 2/43 Inf Bn Rehabilitation & Training Centre to prepare soldiers for a return to civilian life. He returned to Div HQ at Labuan Island in October to join NE Borneo Force at Jesselton, where he filtered out suspected war criminals from the Japanese prisoners awaiting repatriation and later conducted their initial interrogation. He learnt later that these interrogation reports had been referred to in the Rabaul War Crimes trials. In November Dick was flown down to Kuching where a Dyak revolt against the local Chinese community was developing over the rumour about the appointment of a Chinese Rajah. While a colleague settled down the Dyaks in the hills, Dick and his partner traced and neutralised the rumour. They were assisted by a local policeman with a new-born son whom Dick visited in 1984 to find the son was now the local police chief. As the last remaining member of B FS Sec, Dick handed over to a British field security section in January 1946 and left Borneo, to be discharged in Sydney in February.

After the war Dick studied Geology at University of Sydney before a long career teaching science at Katoomba and Cootamundra. He joined the CMF in Katoomba as a private in a transport platoon and rose to command the platoon as a captain before retiring, and he also ran the school cadets at Katoomba High School. He retained connections with the Australian Intelligence Association and 2/17 Inf Bn Assoc, and was active in the RSL at Katoomba, Cootamundra and Moss Vale where he retired in 1985.

In retirement he wrote a science textbook for schools and actively researched military history, including writing abbreviated histories of World War Two campaigns designed for school children, an idea now taken up for others. After a long and active retirement he passed away in 1999.

Dick was delighted when Geoffrey Ballard's book *On Ultra Active Service* was published in 1991, as it told for the first time of the importance of the Sio codebooks, and he corresponded with the author with further details. Similarly, he corresponded with General John Coates when *Bravery over Blunder* was published in 1999.<sup>9</sup> He was particularly proud when Gen Coates said, 'The discovery was reported to an anonymous intelligence officer who, to his ever-lasting glory, recognised it to be cryptographic material of the highest importance'.<sup>10</sup>

Well done, Dick.

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<sup>8</sup> Smith, R.H., 'Field Security in Operations – World War II', *Australian Intelligence Magazine*, no 103, Aug 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Coates, John, *Bravery over Blunder* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1999). Coates suggests that the codebooks were found in a water-filled tin trunk by an engineer with a mine detector searching for mines and booby traps. However, this version is not supported by any of the books that cover the engineer units in the area or the war diaries of the only RAE units in the area.

<sup>10</sup> Coates, *Bravery over Blunder*, p.246.

## ORDERS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES – PART 4: POST-WAR CAMPAIGN MEDALS

Paul A Rosenzweig<sup>1</sup>

Philippine decorations and medals may not figure prominently in many collections, but there are a few Australian connections that make them an interesting series to consider. In recent years, the Philippine Legion of Honor and the Outstanding Achievement Medal have both been awarded to members of the Australian Defence Force. Australia played a significant role in the liberation of the Philippines in 1944-45, and Australian naval and air force personnel received the Philippine Liberation Medal. Some 92 Australian Service personnel were recorded as missing or killed during operations in the Philippines during World War 2, and a further 785 Australians are known to have died when the *Montevideo Maru* was sunk northwest of the Philippine island of Luzon in 1942.<sup>2</sup> In more recent years, Filipinos and Australians served side-by-side in Korea, Vietnam and on various peace-keeping operations, and some 500 Filipinos earned the INTERFET Medal, the first award within the Australian Honours System to be issued to foreign nations.

This article reviews the campaign medals available to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for service in various wars and operational campaigns after World War 2.

### Anti-Dissidence Campaign Medal



The Anti-Dissidence Campaign Medal has been awarded to military members of the AFP for participation in any of the various ‘anti-dissidence’ campaign and operations within the Philippines since 30 June 1946. The medal is a disc in silver metal with a plain reverse. The obverse bears a large five-pointed star in the centre, with the title ‘ANTI-DISSIDENCE CAMPAIGN’ above the star and three small stars in the lower portion of the medal. These three stars are the equivalent of the Commonwealth Star in Australian heraldry, representing the three major island groups of the Philippines – Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. They appear on the Philippines National Flag, they are prominent atop the Rizal Shrine in Manila, and they are a key item on the Philippine Army badge. The ribbon of the Anti-Dissidence Campaign Medal is red (denoting bravery and courage in the face of an armed enemy) with three blue stripes, one in the centre and the other two at each edge (representing nobility and integrity in the performance of duty). A small bronze battle star can be worn to denote participation in each major battle

engagement or to denote an additional award.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer earlier papers in this series: *Sabretache*, LI (October-December 2010), pp. 29-44; *L* (July-September 2009), pp.21-31; *L* (January-March 2009), pp.5-17.



The first campaign for which the Anti-Dissidence Campaign Medal was awarded was a domestic rebellion by the ‘Huk’ guerrillas of the communist-led Hukbalahap. ‘Hukbalahap’ is an acronym for *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* [‘People’s Liberation Army against Japan’], a force which was formed in March 1942 as the militant arm of the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* [‘Communist Party of the Philippines’, PKP]. The Hukbalahap deployed predominantly in the province of Pampanga, Luzon, mainly in the rugged mountainous country around Mount Arayat. The Huks are noted as killing more than 5,000 Japanese during the war, but in addition possibly executed as many as 20,000 Filipinos (ranging from suspected spies and collaborators, to old personal enemies and political rivals). With the end of the war, the Hukbalahap became an underground movement and the Huks pursued their rebellion against the Philippine government. In November 1948, their name was changed to *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan* [‘People’s Liberation Army’], but retaining the title Hukbalahap.

The post-war Philippine Army was structured with ‘Battalion Combat Teams’, highly mobile, compact and self-supporting battalion-sized fighting units designed to operate independently of each other within their territories. They were organised specifically as anti-guerrilla units, and were ultimately successful in quelling the Huk rebellion. In 1950 however, only one – the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT (Motorized) – was fully trained and available to deploy overseas.

Three prestigious Medals of Valor were awarded to Philippine Army personnel during this campaign. Corporal Miguel Postolero (Special Infiltration Team, 15<sup>th</sup> BCT) risked his life during an attack on the hideout of Hukbalahap Chief Neri Ty in a barrio in Capiz province in the central Philippines. Postolero and a small team from the 1<sup>st</sup> Scout Ranger Regiment posed as Hukbalahap members and infiltrated a camp where the Huk senior leadership were meeting. At the last minute their movement was detected and the Huks opened fire, immediately killing several of the Scout Rangers. The operation resulted in the killing of 22 Huks including Chief Neri Ty; Postolero personally accounted for eight dissidents before being fatally shot.

Technical Sergeant Francisso Camacho and Corporal Weena Martillana (1<sup>st</sup> Scout Ranger Regiment) were cited for displaying conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in an encounter with the notorious Hukbalahap leader Eddie Villanpando and Commander Guevarra at Barrio Tabon, Calauan, Laguna on 20 December 1955. Villanpando had proved elusive in his activities in the provinces of Batangas and Cavite. In a three-month intelligence mission, the Scout Rangers penetrated the Huk organisation and gained their confidence, to the point that Camacho and Martillana were chosen to accompany Villanpando during travel between San Pablo City and Calauan town in Laguna. Camacho stopped the jeep due to ‘engine trouble’ and Martillana went to assist him. Using pre-arranged signals, Martillana successfully neutralised Villanpando, while Camacho neutralised Guevarra and one bodyguard, although Camacho was killed by retaliatory shots fired by the Huks.<sup>3</sup>

### **Korean War Medal, 1950-1955**

The Philippines Korean War Medal was awarded to AFP personnel for service during the Korean War between 1950 and 1955, which includes service after the armistice. The medal is a disc in bronze metal; the obverse depicts a Korean temple, surrounded by the phrase ‘KOREAN CAMPAIGN’ and three stars of the Philippines. The reverse of the medal features the crossed flags of the United Nations and the Republic of the Philippines, with the symbol

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<sup>3</sup> Philippine Army website, [http://www.army.mil.ph/miscellaneous/valor\\_awardees.html](http://www.army.mil.ph/miscellaneous/valor_awardees.html).

of the Republic of Korea above. The suspension ribbon is 34 mm in width, in yellow (representing Korea) with central stripes of blue, white and red (representing the national flag of the Philippines). The suspension clasp bears the name of the manufacturer – Jose Tupaz Jr of Quezon City, operating under the name of ‘El Oro’. Tupaz was a prominent Filipino medal designer, and a member of the Philippine Numismatic & Antiquarian Society. He was later responsible for designing new coins for the second term of President Ferdinand Marcos, and the official coin set bearing his designs was released in 1967. He was also responsible for producing the Vietnam Service Medal and the Jolo Campaign Medal 1972-1977 issued by the Philippine Government.



Filipino veterans also received the United Nations Service Medal for Korea 1950-54, authorised on 12 December 1950 by the UN General Assembly for at least one day’s operational service in Korea between 27 June 1950 and 27 July 1954 (which also includes service after the armistice in July 1953). What makes this medal particularly interesting to collectors is that most national contingents received a medal with the fixed bar bearing the word ‘KOREA’ and the text on the reverse given in their national language. According to the official UN website, the wording shown on the fixed bar and on the reverse may be in English, French, Spanish, Danish, Greek, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Sanskrit or Turkish,<sup>4</sup> although other language versions are known.

The Philippines joined the international commitment to the Korean War despite having to contend with an economy severely crippled by the destruction of World War 2 and an active domestic communist rebellion. In particular, President Elpidio Quirino<sup>5</sup> feared that a communist victory in nearby Korea would prompt the global communist movement to actively support the Hukbalahap guerrillas. In 1950, the Philippine Army had nine of its ten Battalion Combat Teams and its only artillery battalion committed to fighting the Huk guerrillas. Nevertheless, on 23 August 1950 the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT was selected as the Philippines’ first Korea-bound combat unit. The Philippine Government ultimately deployed five Battalion Combat Teams in support of the campaign in Korea. These comprised the ‘Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea’ (PEFTOK).<sup>6</sup> Apart from contributing to the international cause of peace, the Philippine involvement in Korea proved to be the grounding

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/sites/medals/>; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations\\_Korea\\_Medal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Korea_Medal)

<sup>5</sup> President Elpidio Quirino, sixth President of the Philippines (17 Apr 48 to 30 Dec 53). The Philippine government defines the office of President as being held by politicians who were inaugurated as ‘President of the Philippines’ following the ratification of a constitution that explicitly declared the existence of the Philippines. This list of Presidents does not include foreign heads of state (King of Spain, 1565–1898; President of the United States, 1898–1946), nor the presidents under the Commonwealth of the Philippines or the Second Republic (a puppet government of the Japanese). Although the Malolos Republic (1899-01) never received foreign recognition, Filipinos consider Emilio Aguinaldo to be their first president.

<sup>6</sup> See [www.geocities.com/peftok](http://www.geocities.com/peftok); [www.peftok.blogspot.com](http://www.peftok.blogspot.com).

of several Filipino personalities who came to prominence in the ensuing years.

**10<sup>th</sup> BCT (Motorized) – ‘Steady On’**, September 1950 to September 1951: President Quirino hosted a farewell rally at Rizal Memorial Stadium on 2 September 1950 for the officers and men of the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT. This first PEFTOK contingent was the first Asian nation to enter Korea, and just the third United Nations Command combat unit after the Americans and the British. The 1,370-strong 10<sup>th</sup> BCT travelled aboard the US naval transport *Silvester Antolack*, comprising three infantry companies, a motorised reconnaissance company (M24 Chaffee tanks), an armoured company (although the promised M-4 Shermans were never received from the US), and an organic artillery battalion commanded by Captain Mariano Robles. The BCT was commanded by Colonel Mariano Azurin from Vigan, Ilocos Sur, a graduate of the US Army’s School of Armor in Kentucky. After arrival at the port city of Pusan on 19 September 1950 the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT entered a period of training, and was first deployed for operations near the village of Waegwan. It was attached to the US 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (‘Tropic Lightning’) which had fought in North and Central Luzon in the Philippines in 1945.

During the Korean winter, Azurin fought with his higher command for not providing his troops with winter clothing, and vigorously resisted their efforts to disperse the battalion as a series of independent companies. Azurin was relieved of his command, and Lieutenant Colonel Dionisio Ojeda was sent to command the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT. During the American-led United Nations Command counterattack in February 1951, Ojeda led the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT as part of the US 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division (‘Rock of the Marne’). They soon gained the nickname ‘Fighting Filipinos’ from their American counterparts. The ‘Fighting Tenth’ returned to Manila on 23 October 1951. It had lost 43 men killed-in-action, nine missing presumed killed, and 58 captured; a further 400 men had been sent home due to battle and non-battle causes.

At the outskirts of the town of Miudong, the battalion fought its first pitched battle, against a North Korean battalion, killing 50 while losing one man. In a bold raid on 5 November, a five-man commando team led by Lieutenant Venancio ‘Bonny’ Serrano captured 77 North Korean soldiers and sympathisers plus arms and ammunition. Santolan Road in Quezon City near the Philippine National Police headquarters camp was subsequently renamed ‘Colonel Bonny Serrano Avenue’ in his honour. In addition, Serrano was also commemorated by the Philippine Navy with the naming of a Tomas Batillo Class gunboat, PG-111 BRP *Bonny Serrano*.

In the Philippines, the equivalent of our Kapyong is the ‘Battle of Yultong’, part of the Great Spring Offensive against the UN Command, launched on 22 April. The 10<sup>th</sup> BCT was sent north to reinforce Line Utah, one of the northernmost bulges of Line Kansas north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, to defend a three-mile sector of the UN Command front line in western Korea above the Imjin River. On the battalion’s left was the US 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment,<sup>7</sup> and to the left of them was the British 29<sup>th</sup> Independent Infantry Brigade Group. In the assault which commenced just after midnight on 23 April, the men of Able, Tank, Recon and Baker Companies in the front line resisted furiously backed by their light tanks, howitzers and mortars. During its stubborn defense against a Chinese regiment, a platoon of Tank Company (O-1966 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Jose M Artiaga Jr) was overrun. Captain Conrado Yap led his Tank Company in an immediate counterattack (without tanks), and retrieved the bodies of the overrun platoon. Yap personally retrieved the body of Lieutenant Artiaga and three enlisted

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<sup>7</sup> The 65<sup>th</sup> US Infantry was an infantry regiment from Puerto Rico. The Filipinos were assigned to the 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment because of the mistaken belief that Filipinos widely spoke Spanish like the Puerto Ricans.

men, and also assaulted an enemy fire emplacement 800 yards away in spite of enemy fire and was killed in the process. A total of 42 Filipinos died in this action, with the enemy forces believed to have suffered 600 casualties.

Artiaga posthumously received the US Distinguished Service Cross and the Philippine Distinguished Conduct Star for ‘conspicuous gallantry and courage in the face of overwhelming enemy forces at Yultong’. Tank Company was awarded a unit citation from the US Eighth Army, and Yap was awarded the Medal of Valor posthumously, ‘for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty against superior enemy forces at Yultong, North Korea, on 22-23 April 1951’. Captain Conrado Yap has been commemorated by the Philippine Navy with the naming of a class of ship in his honour. The Yap Class comprises four vessels, including PG-841 BRP *Conrado Yap*.<sup>8</sup>

**20<sup>th</sup> BCT (‘Leaders’) – ‘We Lead’**, April 1951 to April 1952: the second PEFTOK contingent took over the line from the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT on 6 September 1951, under the command of Colonel Salvador Abcede, an experienced World War 2 guerrilla leader and veteran of campaigns against the Huks. The 20<sup>th</sup> BCT was attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> US Infantry Division (‘Rock of the Marne’). In 350 days of combat, the 1,400-strong 20<sup>th</sup> BCT lost 13 men killed-in-action, 100 wounded and one man missing in action.

The 20<sup>th</sup> BCT was noted for its successful attacks on Hills 277, 321, 300 and 313, and for penetrating the farthest north towards Pyongyang than any other UN Command unit. The 20<sup>th</sup> BCT fought several close-quarter engagements at Hill Eerie and surrounding features, near the town of Karhwagol, west of Chorwon. Hill Eerie had been won and lost many times, but it was attacked and captured for the last time on 21 May by a platoon commanded by Lieutenant Fidel V Ramos.<sup>9</sup> Ramos, a graduate of the US Military Academy, was later founder and first commander of the elite Special Forces of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, commanded the Philippine police force, commanded the armed forces, was Secretary of National Defense, and was then President of the Philippines. Ramos was first involved in counter-insurgency operations against the Hukbalahap in early 1951 as a platoon leader with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Combat Team. Although nominally commanding a reconnaissance platoon in Korea, Ramos assaulted a fortified Chinese Communist position and wiped them out.

**19<sup>th</sup> BCT (‘Bloodhounds’)**, April 1952 to March 1953: a veteran unit of the anti-Huk campaign, the 19<sup>th</sup> BCT landed in Korea late April 1952, commanded by Colonel Ramon Aguirre. It deployed to the Chorwon-Sibyon-yi corridor in the west central sector, attached operationally to the US I Corps, and then to the 45<sup>th</sup> US Infantry Division (‘Thunderbirds’) of the National Guard. The 19<sup>th</sup> was the first PEFTOK battalion awarded the South Korean Presidential Unit Citation; it also received a Battle Citation from the US X Corps.

**14<sup>th</sup> BCT (‘Avengers’) – ‘Crush ‘Em!’**, March 1953 to April 1954: arrived in Korea on 26 March 1953, commanded by Colonel Nicanor Jimenez. After two months at the front, during which it lost four men killed and 27 wounded, the battalion was relieved by units of the US

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<sup>8</sup> Yap Class fast attack craft: PG-841 BRP *Conrado Yap*, PG-847 BRP *Leopoldo Regis*, PG-851 BRP *Apollo Tiano* and PG-853 BRP *Sulpicio Fernandez*.

<sup>9</sup> General Fidel V Ramos: twentieth Chief of Staff AFP following the People Power Revolution (26 Feb 86 to 22 Jun 88); Secretary of National Defense under President Cory Aquino (22 Jan 88 to 18 Jul 91); inaugurated as the twelfth President of the Philippines (30 Jun 92 to 30 Jun 98). Refer:

<http://filipinopresidency.multiply.com/photos/album/20>; Ramos Peace and Development Foundation, Inc (<http://www.rpdev.org>).

45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division ('Thunderbirds'). The 14<sup>th</sup> BCT received the South Korean Presidential Unit Citation in December 1953, and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation upon its return home to Manila in 1954.

**2<sup>nd</sup> BCT ('Black Lions')**, April 1954 to May 1955: advanced elements were sent to Korea in December 1953, and the rest of the battalion departed in April 1954 commanded by Colonel Antonio de Veyra. The 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT served in the Yanggu Valley for thirteen uneventful months, although it did conduct several surprise commando-type raids behind enemy lines to destroy communications, supplies and installations. Colonel Reynaldo Mendoza brought this fifth and last PEFTOK contingent home to Manila on 13 May 1955.

These Battalion Combat Teams, with their domestic experience against the Huks, served as anti-guerrilla units under the United Nations Command, the military arm of the United Nations during the conflict. All PEFTOK battalions were attached to larger Allied units, mainly American, during their tours of duty. PEFTOK fought successfully against its main enemy – the 'Chinese People's Volunteer Army' – in hundreds of actions for hills, cities and towns along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel dividing North and South Korea. Not one PEFTOK battalion was overrun or made incapable of combat as a result of enemy action despite many hard fought battles.

**War Correspondents.** Twelve Filipino war correspondents and war photographers accompanied the Philippine military units. The lawyer Juan ('Johnny') F Villasanta, aged 31, was one of the first Filipino war correspondents in Korea, reporting for the afternoon daily paper, *The Manila Evening News*. Another Filipino who gained his earliest experiences in Korea was 18 year old Benigno S Aquino Jr, a journalist with the morning daily paper, *The Manila Times*. Both were embedded with the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT, and accompanied them in October-November 1950 during their push from Sachon Airfield north across the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Aquino reported, for example, that the US Eight Army was 'taking advantage of PI boys' experience in Huk fighting' on the strength of their reputation as good mountain fighters, and due to their experience at home where they had learned the hit-and-run tactics usually employed in Huk warfare.<sup>10</sup> Aquino was awarded the Philippine Legion of Honor in 1951, and Villasanta received the same award in 1954. Villasanta's son, Art Villasanta, was subsequently the Philippine historian of the Korean War.

Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino was the grandson of General Servillano Aquino, a Filipino patriot and revolutionary who had fought both the Spanish and Americans at the turn of the century. Ninoy Aquino has been described as 'a man in a hurry' – he served in Korea at the age of 18, was the country's youngest Mayor (age 22), Governor at age 29, and the country's youngest Senator (age 35). He was the main political rival of the Nacionalista Party of President Ferdinand Marcos<sup>11</sup> – under the Martial Law regime, Marcos had him arrested on 23 September 1972, and Aquino was assassinated at Manila International Airport on 21 August 1983. Manila's airport terminal was subsequently named 'Ninoy Aquino International Airport' (NAIA) in his honour, a statue was erected on historic Ayala Avenue in Manila, and Aquino was also commemorated on both the obverse and reverse of the 500 Peso note issued by the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*.

Ninoy Aquino's legacy lived on beyond his death: his widow Corazon ('Cory') Aquino

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<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.manilatimes.net/index.php/component/content/article/86-special-reports/24256-ninoy-aquino-was-the-times-correspondent-in-korea>

<sup>11</sup> Ferdinand Marcos, tenth President of the Philippines (30 Dec 65 to 25 Feb 86).

campaigns against corruption and opposed Ferdinand Marcos in a snap presidential election in February 1986. Marcos declared himself victorious on 15 February, despite Aquino clearly leading throughout the tally count; Aquino also declared victory and launched a civil disobedience campaign on 16 February. She became President of the Philippines following the passive resistance known as the ‘People Power Revolution’ of 22-25 February 1986.<sup>12</sup> In her victory statement she proclaimed, ‘The Marcos spell is broken’. Furthering the heritage, in 2009 Ninoy and Cory Aquino’s son Benigno Aquino III, was also elected to the Presidency.<sup>13</sup> In traditional Philippine style, he had long used the title ‘Noynoy’ to perpetuate the legacy of his father. As President, this nickname was popularly altered to ‘P-Noy’ – a contraction of ‘President Noynoy’ and a play-on-words of the term ‘Pinoy’ used to describe a native-born Filipino. With the Filipino love of name-games, Benigno P-Noy and his Vice-President Jejomar Binay became collectively referred to as ‘B-Noy and Binay’. On the ‘new generation’ banknotes introduced in the Philippines in 2010, the 500 Peso note features a portrait of Cory Aquino beside her husband, notably with their son’s signature as President beside them.

Some 7,500 Filipino soldiers deployed with PEFTOK between September 1950 and May 1955: a total of 90 Filipinos were killed-in-action, close to 300 were wounded, and 60 were taken prisoner. Their collective sacrifice is primarily commemorated by the Philippine Korean War Memorial; among those listed are Medal of Valor recipient, O-1914 Captain Conrado Yap from the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT. Also listed is Private Alipio S Secilliano of Libon, Albay (10<sup>th</sup> BCT) who was killed by snipers in a pre-dawn patrol while approaching the Naktong River –the first Filipino soldier to die whilst fighting overseas under the flag of an independent Philippine Republic. The Philippine Korean War Memorial stands within the grounds of the national war cemetery, *Libingan ng mga Bayani*, at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig, Manila. It is here that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is located, which has been the site of the annual Anzac Day commemorative service jointly hosted by the Australian and New Zealand Embassies.

On 25 June 2005, the ‘Marikorea’ Monument at Marikina Heights in Marikina City, Manila was unveiled to honour the service of the 7,000 Filipinos who served during the Korean War. The monument was erected through the joint efforts of Marikina City, the Korean community in the Philippines and the PEFTOK Veterans Association (the association of Korean War veterans). The word ‘Marikorea’ is drawn from the names ‘Marikina’ and ‘Korea’. Before their deployment to Korea, each of the five Battalion Combat Teams trained extensively for mountain combat in Marikina, whose rolling hills and rugged terrain resembled that found in Korea.

The Korean Government has honoured the Filipinos who fought in the Korean War in the Korean War Memorial in Seoul. Some 120 Filipino soldiers were interred in the cemetery at the UN Memorial Center in Busan, but were later repatriated to the Philippines at the request of their families. There is also a PEFTOK Monument at Gosong near the Demilitarized Zone, which honours not only the Filipino combatants but also the Filipino journalists and Red Cross workers, and a specific 10<sup>th</sup> BCT Shrine near the site of the Battle of the Yultong.

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<sup>12</sup> Following the EDSA Revolution, Ninoy Aquino’s widow Corazon Cojuangco Aquino was inaugurated as the eleventh President of the Philippines (25 Feb 86 to 30 Jun 92). The ‘EDSA 1 Citation Ribbon’ was awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who remained loyal to the Government of the Philippines during the ‘People Power Revolution’ of 22-25 February 1986, variously known as the ‘February Uprising’ or the ‘EDSA People Power Revolution’ (later ‘EDSA 1’).

<sup>13</sup> Benigno Aquino III was inaugurated as the fifteenth President of the Philippines on 30 Jun 10.

Further, to honour the selfless sacrifice of Filipino soldiers in fighting tyranny and aggression, the Korean government has constructed a 'Korea-Philippines Friendship Center' within Fort Bonifacio in Manila, near *Libingan ng mga Bayani*. Completed in 2010 to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War, this venture includes a 'Korean War Memorial Park' and other facilities.

### United Nations Service Medal

The United Nations Service Medal is a Philippine service medal awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for participation in peacekeeping operations on behalf of the United Nations Organisation. It may also be awarded to AFP personnel dispatched to any member nation as members of paramilitary or quasi-military units for service in support of the United Nations. Despite its appearance, name and ribbon, this uniquely Philippine award should not be confused with the United Nations Service Medal for Korea 1950-54 which was authorised by the UN General Assembly in 1950 specifically for service in Korea.

The medal is a disc in bronze alloy, with a plain reverse. The obverse is identical to the UN Service Medal for Korea 1950-54, bearing the emblem of the United Nations – a polar map of the globe viewed from the North Pole (representing the unity of nations) encircled by olive branches (representing peace). The medal even has the non-swivelling suspender and fixed bar bearing the word 'KOREA' in English, although it is awarded for participation in all UN missions. The suspension ribbon is 1.25 inches (32 mm) in width, with seventeen alternating stripes of light blue and white (representing the flag of the United Nations) – again, copied from the original ribbon of the UN Service Medal for Korea.

The Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK) has been seen as the beginning of a 'tradition of service' by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, a tradition of providing military or humanitarian aid to nations in need. The next such international contribution was the Philippine Air Force Contingent to the Congo (PAFCON), which deployed in support of the UN mission in the Congo (ONUC) in 1963. The *Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC) was established under United Nations Security Council Resolution 143 of 14 July 1960. In 1963, the mission's name was changed to *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo*. For its service in the Congo, the Philippine Air Force Contingent was named 'Limbas Squadron'. Filipino pilots flying Sabre jets, in tandem with Swedish and Iranian fighter units, ably secured the air space for the UN Mission.



Left: *Emblems of the Philippine Air Force's aerobatic team: 'Blue Diamond' pilot's colour patch; 6<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron enamelled badge; and the emblem of the 'Blue Diamonds'. The Philippine Air Force's 'roundel' is similar to that of the RAF but in reversed colours, comprising a red diamond, surrounding white and an inner blue diamond, hence the team's name.*

The Limbas/PAFCON pilots were all members of the 6<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, who were also seconded for duty with the Blue Diamonds, the Philippine Air Force's national aerobatic team. The Blue Diamonds was formed in 1953, first using P-51D Mustangs and then jet aircraft from 1959. They performed for the nation during Aviation Week every year – with the notable exception of 1963 when the team's pilots were called away for service in the Congo.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron has its heritage in the wartime 6<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Squadron commanded by Captain Jesus A Villamor of the Philippine Army Air Corps. For his wartime service in defence of the Philippines Villamor received the American Distinguished Service Cross from General Douglas MacArthur.<sup>14</sup> Further, as an intelligence officer in December 1942 Villamor established a communication network from the Philippines to General Douglas MacArthur in Australia, and coordinated the various guerrilla activities supporting the US liberation of the Philippines. On 21 January 1954, President Ramón Magsaysay<sup>15</sup> awarded Lieutenant Colonel Villamor the Medal of Valor, just the third to be awarded and the first to the Air Force. The Philippine Air Force base in Pasay City, Manila (originally known as Nichols Field) was named 'Colonel Jesus Villamor Air Base' (CJVAB) in his honour. Villamor's medals and insignia are displayed at the Philippine Air Force Museum.

The first commander of the Philippine Air Force's Blue Diamonds was honoured with the naming of Rancudo Air Base on Pagasa Island of the Kalayaan Island Group, the largest island occupied by the AFP in the Spratly Islands. Jose Rancudo rose to become Chief of the Philippine Air Force, and was killed by New Peoples' Army rebels in April 1987.

### **Vietnam Service Medal**

The Philippine Vietnam Service Medal was awarded for satisfactory service in the Republic of Vietnam for at least six months after July 1945. It could also be awarded to those who died in the line of duty prior to the expiration of six months' service, or to any member who was wounded or contracted illness and was unable to complete the six months' period of service. The medal is a disc in bronze metal; the obverse features a dragon in front of a stand of bamboo (symbolising the country of Vietnam) and the text 'REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM SERVICE' at the centre of the base. The suspension ribbon is 34 mm in width, in yellow (representing Vietnam) with stripes of red and blue (representing the Philippines). In common with the Anti-Dissidence Campaign Medal and Korean War Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal also features the Philippines heraldic symbol of three stars, this time arranged symmetrically on the suspension ribbon, as an equilateral triangle on the central blue stripe.

As early as 1953, a group of Philippine doctors and nurses had been sent to South Vietnam to provide medical assistance to the hamlets and villages throughout the republic (Operation 'Brotherhood'). This project was mainly financed and sponsored by private organisations within the Philippines. From 1964 the Philippine Government, a member of both the United Nations and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation, deployed several non-combatant contingents in support of the campaign in Vietnam. President Marcos was explicit on the subject of Vietnam aid and would not permit the sending of any combat forces, but instead offered civic action forces.

**Philippine Contingent, Vietnam.** In 1964 the Philippines contributed the Philippine

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<sup>14</sup> The Distinguished Service Cross was awarded for bravery on 10 December 1941, and an Oak Leaf Cluster was awarded for actions on 12 December 1941, making Villamor the only Filipino to receive the DSC twice.

<sup>15</sup> Ramon Magsaysay, seventh President of the Philippines (30 Dec 53 to 17 Mar 57).



Contingent, Vietnam (PHILCONV) in support of the US Military Assistance Command–Vietnam (MAC-V). The Philippine government increased aid to Vietnam out of a sense of obligation to contribute to the South Vietnamese fight against communism. On 21 July 1964, the Congress of the Philippines passed a law that authorised the President to send additional economic and technical assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. The law was implemented through the dispatch to Vietnam of a group of thirty-four physicians, surgeons, nurses, psychologists and rural development workers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Four such groups in turn served with dedication during the period 1964-1966.

**Psychological Warfare and Civil Affairs.** As part of the Free World Assistance Program ('More Flags'), sixteen Philippine Army officers arrived in Vietnam on 16 August 1964 to assist in the III Corps advisory effort in psychological warfare and civil affairs. They were to act in co-ordination with the US MAC-V. Initially the officers were assigned in pairs to the three civil affairs platoons and three psychological warfare companies in the provinces of Binh Duong, Gia Dinh and Long An. Of the remaining four, one functioned as the officer-in-charge, while one each worked with the Psychological Warfare Directorate, the III Corps Psychological Operation Center and the 1<sup>st</sup> Psychological Warfare Battalion. These officers ensured that the psychological warfare and civil affairs portion of the pacification plan was being carried out.

**Philippine Civic Action Group, Vietnam.** Legislation was passed on 4 June 1966 based on the civic action task force concept, and was signed by Marcos on 18 June. The bill permitted the dispatch of a 2,000-man civic action group consisting of an engineer construction battalion, medical and rural community development teams, a security battalion, a field artillery battery, a logistics support company and a headquarters element. The force was to undertake socio-economic projects mutually agreed upon by the Philippines and South Vietnam. Two contingents of the 'Philippine Civic Action Group, Vietnam' (PhilCAGV) successively deployed to South Vietnam between 1966 and 1970.

On 30 November 1967, the Philippine Ambassador to South Vietnam Luis Moreno-Salcedo presented the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation to PhilCAGV in appreciation of its civic action work in Tay Ninh Province. In the same ceremony, the South Vietnamese Defence Minister Nguyen Van Vy presented the Republic of Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation.

Returning from Korea, Fidel V Ramos had pursued further counter-insurgency operations against the Huks as an infantry company commander with the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion Combat Team. He drew on his experiences to raise and command the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) in 1962–65. Ramos then served in Vietnam as a non-combatant civil-military engineer, as Chief of Staff of the Philippine Military Contingent of PhilCAGV (1966-68). Ramos was able to apply his knowledge in civil engineering in the reconstruction and rebuilding of Vietnamese communities. After returning to the Philippines, Ramos successively commanded the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade (1970), was Chief of the Philippine Constabulary (1972-86), Vice Chief of Staff (1985-86) and then Chief of Staff (commander) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (1986-88).

Ramos ('FVR') later gained particular notoriety as AFP Vice Chief of Staff in February 1986 when he led a movement which withdrew support for President Marcos and mutinied in AFP General Headquarters, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo. On 26 March 1987, Ramos was awarded the First Bronze Anahaw Leaf to the Philippine Legion of Honor in the Degree of Commander (denoting a second award) for his eminently meritorious and valuable service when he 'staked his life in a defiant stand against the dictatorship that had thwarted the

People's Sovereign Will and thereby sparked the chains of events that led to the February revolution. He staunchly defended democratic principle against continuing efforts to subvert it. For his courageous and consistent defense of our cherished democratic ideals, he has earned a permanent place in the grateful memory of the Filipino race and of all freedom-loving people'.

**Philippine Contingent, Vietnam.** The residual force in South Vietnam which remained after 15 February 1970, was redesignated 'Philippine Contingent, Vietnam'. This comprised a headquarters element, four Military Assistance Program excess material teams and four medical and dental teams. All members of the contingent belonged to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and the unit had an authorised strength of 131. Of these, there were 66 qualified medical, dental and surgical doctors and technicians assigned to teams based in the cities of Tay Ninh, My Tho, Phu Cuong and Bao Trai.

**Military Assistance Program.** The Military Assistance Program element consisted of 36 logistic specialists with four excess material teams of nine members each. The teams were located in Long Binh, Da Nang, Qui Nhon and Cam Ranh Bay. The balance of the contingent was assigned to command and administrative duties at the national headquarters in Saigon. The US Military Assistance Command-Vietnam, in co-ordination with the Chief, Joint General Staff, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, provided security for the Philippine contingent.

#### Jolo Campaign Medal 1972-1977

The Jolo Campaign Medal was awarded to military personnel of the AFP for participation in pacification campaigns and operations against Islamic nationalists in Jolo on Sulu Island in the southern Philippines 920 km south of Manila, between 1972 and 1977. The medal is struck in bronzed metal; the obverse bears the title 'JOLO CAMPAIGN', above a galleon approaching a fort and crossed kris knives, representing Moroland in the southern Philippines where the campaigns were conducted. The

reverse features a figure of 'Justice', an armoured fighting vehicle, and the inscription: 'FOR SERVICE'. The suspension ribbon is 34 mm in width, in green (representing the predominantly Moslem islands south of Mindanao) with wide red stripes on both edges (representing bravery and courage in the face of an armed enemy) and a narrow white stripe in the centre (representing the hope for peace in the region). The suspension clasp bears the name of the notable medal and coin producer Jose Tupaz Jr of Quezon City ('El Oro').



Until the early 1970s, Sulu Island was a major trading centre, and the Tausog people of Sulu take great pride in their long tradition of martial courage which resisted both Spanish and American attempts at colonisation. The Moslem minority in the southern Philippines accounts for about 5% of the national population. There has long been a secessionist desire

amongst the Moro people, seeking their own independent Islamic state, prompting a series of military campaigns. The first Philippine Medal of Valor had been awarded to Second Lieutenant Paulino Santos of the Philippine Constabulary, ‘for exceptional conduct and conspicuous courage displayed at Bayang Cotta in Lanao Del Sur on 26 July 1917’. Santos led government troops in neutralising bands of Moro outlaws numbering about 500 – Santos and his men stormed a well-constructed and fortified cotta [‘camp’] and killed 30 outlaws. Santos sustained a near-fatal gunshot wound at the back of his head, but went on to attain the rank of Major General.

After the defeat of the communist Huk guerrillas, the Philippine Army’s Battalion Combat Teams were deactivated and were replaced by traditional infantry battalions. Meanwhile however, the New Peoples’ Army (NPA) was established in 1969 as the militant (armed) wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which dated back to 1959 (a separate entity to the PKP). The CPP was guided by a Marxism-Leninism-Maoism ideology, using a ‘Protracted People’s War’ to overthrow the government of the Philippines through the use of armed rebellion. The CPP launched its ‘First-Quarter Storm’ in early 1970, followed by a number of insurrections and public demonstrations. Most notably, on 21 August 1971 a Liberal Party rally at Plaza Miranda in the Quiapo district of Manila was attacked with hand-grenades. The Liberal Party (headed by Benigno Aquino Jr) was the strongest rival of the *Nacionalista* Party of President Marcos, but Aquino was late for the rally and was uninjured. At the same time, the Moro independence movement was begun in Mindanao by the former Governor of Cotabato, Datu Udtog Matalam. Seeking a *Bangsa Moro* (‘Moro State’) in the southern Philippines, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was founded in 1971 by Nur Misuari, an advocate of federalism as an alternative to the decolonisation of Mindanao. The MNLF was active throughout Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, drawing on its centuries-old heritage of local resistance to the central authority in Manila. From 1969, and particularly from 1972, the Philippine Army’s infantry battalions conducted campaigns against both the communist NPA throughout Luzon and the Visayas, and armed Muslim secessionists in Mindanao.

In response to the ‘Protracted People’s War’ and the Moslem secessionist movement, President Marcos imposed Martial Law on 23 September 1972.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the entire period of Martial Law, Fidel Ramos was Chief of the Philippine Constabulary (1972-86) and concurrently Director-General of the Integrated National Police (1975-86). A month after the declaration, on 21 October 1972, Misuari’s ‘Bangsamoro Army’ attacked Marawi City, the capital of the province of Lanao del Sur in the western portion of Northern Mindanao, commencing a separatist rebellion. Fidel Ramos was present during the Marawi incident, defending the camp which was besieged by 400 rebels, and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Star for his gallantry in action at Marawi.

The government counter-offensive on Sulu Island began on 27 March 1973, and the continuing fighting saw Jolo town largely destroyed. After the commencement of the war, Sulu became the country’s poorest province. After negotiations in Jeddah in 1975, the Tripoli Agreement was signed on 23 December 1976, paving the way for a ceasefire agreement in Zamboanga in 1977. After two uncertain decades, President Ramos made peace with the

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<sup>16</sup> Martial Law was imposed on 23 September 1972 by Proclamation number 1081 (signed on 21 September 1972, as provided for by Article VII of the 1935 Constitution). The ‘Martial Law Citation Ribbon’ was awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for loyalty and service during the period from 23 September 1972 until Martial Law was lifted on 17 January 1981. These Citation Ribbons are worn on the right breast above the pocket.

rebels in 1996, being instrumental in the signing of the final Peace Accord between the Philippine Government and the MNLF. This Accord saw Nur Misuari installed as Governor of the Autonomous Region of Moslem Mindanao (ARMM), with the MNLF legally administering the ARMM. The entire MNLF was integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippines National Police.

During his Presidency, Ramos also ordered the resumption of peace negotiations with the splinter group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)<sup>17</sup> and the CPP-NPA, who were both waging campaigns of oppressive revolutionary tax collection. In 2000 however, President Estrada<sup>18</sup> declared an all-out war on the Moros (both MNLF and the MILF) and accused Misuari of corruption; in turn, Misuari accused Estrada of not complying with the terms of the 1996 Peace Accord. Misuari insisted there be no elections for ARMM, which would be in violation of the 1996 Peace Accord, and continued to sit as ARMM Governor. After the Philippine Government refused to give Misuari a second term in 2001, he launched a new uprising in Jolo; this was swiftly crushed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Misuari fled to Malaysia after being charged with rebellion. Misuari was arrested in Malaysia in December 2001, and was imprisoned in Fort Santo Domingo in Santa Rosa, Laguna.

### **Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Operations Ribbon**

If the Philippine PEFTOK contribution can be seen as the beginning of a ‘tradition of service’ by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, it was also the beginning of a significant tradition of providing military and humanitarian aid to the nation in times of need or civil emergency. Immediately following the Congo deployment, the AFP supported a humanitarian mission to Bali. The Philippine Air Force took medical personnel and supplies on a ‘Medical Mercy Mission’ to the remote town of Tjulik in Bali, Indonesia following the eruption of Mount Gunung Agung. PAF paramedics joined doctors and nurses from the Department of Health in treating and vaccinating thousands of evacuees in a makeshift field hospital. Since that time, the AFP has taken on a significant role in responding to internal emergencies, from floods to landslides.

The Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Operations ribbon is awarded to members of the AFP awarded for participation in rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations connected with typhoons, floods, earthquakes, conflagrations and other disasters or calamities. The ribbon has three equal stripes of violet, red and green stripes – the violet signifies calamity or disaster, the red signifies the noble objective of the AFP in giving succour, and the green represents restoration to normal conditions.

### **FVR**

It is clear that the history of the Philippines’ post-war military record cannot be written without the biography of General Fidel V Ramos inextricably woven through it. The history

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<sup>17</sup> The Moslem-secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has its origins in a group of fundamentalist Moslems led by Islamic cleric Salamat Hashim who broke away from the secular MNLF in 1977. Since being formally established in 1984, the MILF has been concentrated in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, waging a rebellion seeking an independent Islamic state in the southern Philippines. The MILF rejected the MNLF’s 1996 Peace Accord with the Philippine Government, and refused to become involved with the ARMM. After Salamat Hashim’s death in July 2003, the MILF was led by Al Haj Murad Ebrahim.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Ejercito Estrada, thirteenth President of the Philippines (30 Jun 98 to 20 Jan 01): the Supreme Court declared Estrada as ‘resigned’ and the office of the presidency as ‘vacant’ after the 2001 EDSA Revolution (‘EDSA 2’). The EDSA 2 Citation Ribbon was awarded to members of the AFP for service during the period following the second EDSA popular uprising in January 2001 (known as ‘EDSA 2’), when Chief of Staff of the AFP General Angelo Reyes withdrew the AFP’s support for President Estrada.

began even earlier, with his father Narciso Ramos (1900-86) being a prominent Filipino Member of the House of Representatives (five terms) and Secretary of Foreign Affairs, most notably being the Philippine signatory to the 1967 ASEAN declaration. Fidel Ramos played a significant role in almost every aspect of Philippines post-WW2 history, and during his Presidency turned the wheel full circle by ensuring that his Filipino compatriots in his earliest years of service, his fellow Korean War veterans, were appropriately honoured.



Left: *General Fidel V Ramos aged 83 at the 2012 ceremony to commemorate the Allied landings at Lingayan Gulf in January 1945 (courtesy Dallas Drake, Angeles City RSL). Because it is not practical to wear medals or miniatures on the thin Barong Tagalog shirt, Philippine custom is to wear miniatures on the veteran's cap – Ramos wears his orders and decorations on the left side, and his campaign medals on the right.*

Abcede (PG-114). These gunboats had seen service in the Korean Navy as Chamsuri Class 'Patrol Killer Medium' (PKM) gunboats, and were redesignated Tomas Batillo Class for Philippine Navy service.<sup>19</sup> The first five were refurbished at Sangley Point Naval shipyard and were commissioned into service on 22 May 1996. It is interesting that, in such a strongly Catholic nation, the Philippine Navy followed superstitious tradition and avoided using the 'unlucky 13' in the hull numbers. Soon after, PG-116 was commissioned on 2 July 1998, named in honour of 157570 Staff-Sergeant Nicolas Mahusay of the Philippine Army (Infantry), who had received a posthumous award of the Gold Cross for gallantry in action in Korea with the 10<sup>th</sup> BCT.

Meanwhile, the Philippines had discovered a primitive Chinese military structure on Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands 130 nautical miles off the coast of the western island of Palawan. Diplomatic protests followed, and the Philippine Navy arrested 62 Chinese fishermen at Half Moon Shoal, 80 km from Palawan. President Ramos deployed Philippine Air Force F-5 fighters and helicopters, and further naval vessels. Ultimately, the Tomas Batillo Class gunboats were deployed with the Task Group deployed to defend the Malampaya natural gas platforms northwest of Palawan ('Palawan Guardians'). The ongoing territorial disputes regarding the various small islands and atolls in the South China Sea (known in the

<sup>19</sup> Tomas Batillo Class (ex-South Korean Chamsuri Class 311-ton naval patrol craft, built by the Korea Tacoma Shipyard): PG-111 BRP *Bonny Serrano*, PG-112 BRP *Bienvenido Salting*, PG-114 BRP *Salvador Abcede*, PG-115 BRP *Ramon Aguirre*, PG-116 BRP *Nicolas Mahusay*, PG-117 BRP *Dionisio Ojeda* and PG-118 BRP *Emilio Liwanag*. BRP is an acronym for *Barko (or Bapor) ng Republika ng Pilipinas* ['Ship of the Republic of the Philippines'].

Philippines as the ‘West Philippine Sea’) have continued sporadically, with the Philippines again recently ‘flexing its naval muscle’.<sup>20</sup>

The Philippine Navy celebrated its 112<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 5 May 2010 with the theme: ‘Naval Dominance for 7,107 Philippine Islands’. The celebration included the christening of the newly commissioned BRP *Emilio Liwanag* (PG-118), the latest addition to the Navy’s ‘floating inventory’ of the Tomas Batillo Class. This was an additional honour for the late Captain Emilio S Liwanag – earlier in 2010, the former Naval Station Pag-Asa at Pag-asa Island in the Kalayaan Island Group off Palawan was renamed ‘Naval Station Emilio Liwanag’. Liwanag was a Philippine Navy officer from 1938, a veteran of service with the US Army Forces in the Far East during WW2 (Battle of Bataan, internment in Camp O’Donnell, Battle of Manila). During the Korean War, Commander Liwanag served as the Senior Naval Advisor to the Philippine Diplomatic Representative in Korea, concurrently being the Philippine Liaison Officer to United Nations Command in Tokyo. For his distinguished service he was appointed an Officer of the US Legion of Merit on 7 October 1952: ‘Applying his keen judgment and professional experience, Commander Liwanag formulated plans for the logistical support and efficient integration of Philippine forces into the Korean conflict. His high sense of duty and spirit of cooperation were contributing factors to the successful integration of the Philippine combat teams as elements of the United Nations Command and reflect great credit on himself and the Philippine Navy’.<sup>21</sup> On his retirement in 1963 he received the Philippine Distinguished Service Star ‘for eminently meritorious and valuable service to the Navy’. Liwanag died in 1967 at the age of 56 and is buried in *Libingan ng mga Bayani* [‘Cemetery of Heroes’] in Fort Bonifacio.

In an additional tribute to the Filipino commitment to the Korean War, in late 2010 the Republic of Korea conferred the ‘Korean War Hero Medal’ on fourteen Filipino veterans of the war. President Benigno Aquino III and Art Villasanta received the medal on behalf of their respective fathers, noted as ‘Two Filipino journalists who wielded the power of their pens in the defense of democracy in South Korea during the Korean War’.<sup>22</sup> The medal was also awarded to the commando Lieutenant ‘Bonny’ Serrano and the heroes of the Battle of Yultong Captain Conrado Yap and Lieutenant Jose Artiaga (10<sup>th</sup> BCT), and the hero of Hill Eerie Fidel V Ramos (20<sup>th</sup> BCT). Also awarded were the five PEFTOK commanding officers, General Dionisio Ojeda (10<sup>th</sup> BCT), Colonel Salvador Abcede (20<sup>th</sup> BCT), General Ramon Aguirre (19<sup>th</sup> BCT), Colonel Nicanor Jimenez (14<sup>th</sup> BCT) and General Reynaldo Mendoza (2<sup>nd</sup> BCT). The other recipients were Colonel Paterno Vilorio (20<sup>th</sup> BCT) and Colonel Mauro Lachica (2<sup>nd</sup> BCT), President and Vice President respectively of the PEFTOK Veterans Association, and Major General Fortunato Abat (14<sup>th</sup> BCT).

Ramos is also credited with some noteworthy distinctions: he is the only Filipino to have held every commissioned rank in the AFP from Second Lieutenant to Commander-in-Chief, at the time of his inauguration Ramos was the oldest person to assume the office of President of the Philippines (age 64), and he was also the first non-Catholic President. In addition, he is the only Filipino to have received an honorary British Knighthood (GCMG, bestowed by Queen Elizabeth II in 1995 for services to politics and government). Today, ‘FVR’ is still a prominent Filipino and is rarely seen in public without his trademark cigar and glass of red wine.

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<sup>20</sup> *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 18 June 2011.

<sup>21</sup> *Manila Times*, 8 October 1952.

<sup>22</sup> *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 21 December 2010.

## TO SANDAKAN WITH 49 MEMBERS OF THE 2/26<sup>TH</sup> AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION

Kevin Smith<sup>1</sup>

This approach to telling the story of one battalion of Australia's 8<sup>th</sup> Division takes the story of one of its members as a central theme. Telling the story of one typical soldier is a reasonably valid way to tell the story of those who served with him. It is a story of men who fought in Malaya and on Singapore Island, later to be sent as prisoners of war to Sandakan. I met Tom Gode's son many years ago following the publication of my *Borneo: Australia's Proud but Tragic Heritage*.

Harold 'Tom' Gode (QX14769) of Wynnum in Queensland, born in 1905, enlisted at Kelvin Grove on 16 July 1940. After basic training he was posted to the 2/26<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion which had been formed at Grovelly in November 1940 with Lt Col Arthur Boyes as Commanding Officer. The 2/26<sup>th</sup> was the only Australian infantry battalion raised in Queensland in the 8<sup>th</sup> Division, its colour patch a purple over blue diamond on a grey oval background. On 16 December drafts of troops started to arrive at Grovelly from their training establishments. By the 27 December 1940 the Battalion's strength was 921 other ranks.

The unit then trained at Redbank as from 25 January 1941. The move from Grovelly to Redbank was in two troop trains, with baggage and equipment sent on by motor transport. Gode quickly adapted to the ways of the army. They slept in tents between blankets on straw-filled paliasses and he soon became accustomed to the urine tubs put out in the tent lines every night. Reveille at 0530 in summer and 0600 in winter, the sounding of Retreat at sunset and Lights Out at 2215 shaped his day. A full training program was interspersed with route marches, cross-country runs, competitive sports such as cricket and boxing, concert parties out from Brisbane, Church Parades and Sick Parades. He did his share of guard and picquet duty, kitchen duty, and regularly read the unit's daily Routine Orders. Early on during their training the battalion was given, and bore thereafter with pride, the name 'The Gallopers'. Tom found himself allocated to Headquarters Company, commanded by Maj G. Armstrong, which comprised a Pioneer Platoon, Carrier Platoon, Mortar Platoon, Signals Platoon, the Motor Transport drivers and Regimental Police.

The unit went for Brigade training to Bathurst, NSW in February 1941. Originally planned and announced to be travelling via Wallangarra, Werris Creek and Dubbo, the troop trains travelled an entirely different route. The threat of Japanese espionage in Australia was strongly felt at this time. Departing on 24 and 25 February, members of the unit had breakfast at Coffs Harbour, lunch at Gloucester and dinner at Newcastle. They arrived at Kelso station and were marched into camp by the band of the 2/30<sup>th</sup> Bn on 27 February. The 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade AIF comprised the 2/26<sup>th</sup>, 2/29<sup>th</sup> (Victoria) and 2/30<sup>th</sup> (NSW) infantry battalions and the 2/15<sup>th</sup> (NSW) Field Regiment of artillery, plus support troops.

The strength of Tom's Battalion, including First Reinforcements, in early March 1941 was 32

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Kevin Smith OAM has published three books and several articles about Australian prisoners of war in Borneo. He enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1951 and trained with Queenslanders at Ennoger. He has visited Borneo a number of times, on several occasions leading pilgrimage tours. It is his intention to lead another group tour for Anzac Day 2012, the year of the seventieth anniversary of B Force POWs being sent to Sandakan.

officers and 875 other ranks against a war establishment of 900 ORs. The tough training started to whittle down their numbers as the troops became leaner and hardier. Leave was granted in reasonably generous measure, and for longer home leave granted to the unit as a whole, special troop trains to Queensland were arranged. As winter settled on the Bathurst area rugby league, rugby union, Australian rules, soccer and basketball competitions were organized within the battalion. Morale and discipline were considered to be excellent by the unit's officers. On 27 May the entire 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade marched proudly through Bathurst, to the delight of the local populace. Pre-embarkation leave was granted as from 15 July. With members of the unit returned from leave, their troop trains departed at 1135 and 1250 on 29 July and headed south.

They arrived at Port Melbourne at 1030 on 30 July 1941 and embarkation was complete an hour later. The 2/26<sup>th</sup> sailed from Melbourne that afternoon aboard the *Marnix*, HMT *EE*, the Queenslanders glad to be heading away gradually from the winter cold of both Bathurst and Melbourne. Their convoy was escorted by the cruiser HMAS *Canberra*. Training continued aboard ship often on a competitive basis with a lively training syllabus. The ship was greatly overcrowded and almost immediately there was an outbreak of mumps, quite apart from the anticipated seasickness. At sea on 4 August HMT *FF*, the *Johann van Olden Barnevelt*, carrying reinforcements for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, came alongside and regimental bands entertained the troops. Rottneest Island was sighted on 6 August and the ship proceeded towards Fremantle flying a yellow flag. Quarantine authorities at first would not allow the ship to berth owing to a case of meningitis aboard, but on 7 August several hours' shore leave were granted. The troopship sailed again on the 8<sup>th</sup> and training immediately resumed, including boat station drills and training films. Officers and NCOs were required to discourage the prevalence of gambling among members of the battalion. Early on the morning of 13 August Krakatoa Island was sighted.

Tom Gode disembarked at Keppel Harbour, Singapore with his fellow diggers on 15 August 1941. Initially at Camp Wavell near Changi, the battalion continued its extensive training with some emphasis on map reading, use of the compass and security precautions. Local leave to Changi village was available during their first week. Long-sleeved shirts were required to be worn as protection against mosquitoes, while weekly medical inspections as safeguards in the tropical climate kept an oversight of such health problems as mumps, malaria, venereal disease and tinea. HQ Company, like the four rifle companies, spent many days digging slit trenches. As from 23 August, one day's Singapore leave was available at weekends, one company at a time. During the last week of August, fifty of the Queenslanders were admitted to hospital, a typical attrition rate for illness throughout the Eighth Division.

On 1 September the 2/26<sup>th</sup> visited the nearby Gordon Highlanders to observe their Retreat Ceremony at 1800 hours. Training continued throughout the month: patrol exercises in close country, range practice, training with automatic weapons (a lack of confidence had been observed in their handling of the new Bren guns), anti-gas training, route marches up to twelve miles, bayonet training and swimming practice. Rifle companies served in rotation at Kota Tinggi in south-eastern Malaya.

On 15 October the unit moved from Camp Wavell by train to Tampin and then by motor transport to Jasin in Malaya for garrison duty and further training, especially in jungle and rubber country. There was a continuing emphasis on swimming practice. Comforts were regularly distributed by Chaplain Ussher to company representatives, and for each man there were tobacco, cigarette papers, razorblades, handkerchiefs, toothbrush and chewing gum.



Weekly church parades and daily sick parades continued. Training and sports continued into November, and although cricket matches were often washed out by the heavy rains, routine orders recorded that for a match against 2/15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment at Jasin on 9 November Pte Gode was scorer for the 2/26<sup>th</sup>.

When warning orders 'Awake' and 'Armour' were received on 29 November, all leave was immediately cancelled. Warning order 'Seaview' on 1 December led to greatly intensified preparations for action, yet on 2 December leave was once more available to Jasin township only, but troops on leave were to be available for recall within one hour. 6/7 December saw the Battalion on the move once again, via Segamat and into bivouac at Kota Tinggi. At 0400 on the 8<sup>th</sup> enemy planes were detected overhead while anti-aircraft fire and bombing were heard from the direction of Singapore. The invasion of Malaya by the Japanese had begun, shortly before their attack on Pearl Harbour. The unit's War Diary recorded that the troops were eager to see action and morale was high. The thoroughly well-trained battalion moved into defensive bivouac positions on 9 December at Mawai crossroads to patrol the KotaTinggi – Jemaluang road. All remained quiet in this east coast area through 12 December, with many friendly planes overhead, but on that date tremendously heavy tropical rains completely swamped the unit's bivouacs. As a result all companies were sent back to the 34½ mile peg, but their defensive patrolling of the road to Jemaluang continued, with no sign of enemy troops as Christmas day came and went.

Christmas lunch for the Battalion was poultry, peas, cauliflower, ham, fruit salad, nuts, fruit and beer. The day was spent quietly. On 27 December the 2/26<sup>th</sup> had an actual strength of 770 ORs against a reduced war establishment of 776. It might be noted that war diaries tend in the main to be overly concerned with recording officer statistics, movements, duties and actions to the relative neglect of the doings of the other ranks.

The devoted family man Harold Gode, professional fisherman and SP bookmaker pre-war, a jolly man and life of the party, wrote regularly to his family. In a letter dated 27 December he said, 'It is a great strain on the nerves waiting in the jungle for an unseen enemy to show up. We expect contact with them in a few days and hope and pray that we will prove more than a match for them. At least everyone at home knows we are willing to give all and to do our very best.'

All remained quiet and patrolling continued into the New Year. On 11 January the battalion moved north-west into bivouac at Yong Peng, proceeding then farther north towards Segamat and encountering very dense traffic that was moving south. By 13 January the battalion was astride the road west of Batu Annam, while 2/30<sup>th</sup> was near Gemas. On 15 January the 2/26<sup>th</sup> moved to the Muar River Estate three miles north of Batu Annam while the 2/30<sup>th</sup> encountered and engaged the enemy in ambush at the bridge over the Gemencheh River near Gemas, the first Australian fighting unit in action in Malaya. The eager men of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> continued vigorously in their patrolling around the Muar River. On 18 January at 0830 the 2/26<sup>th</sup> relieved the 2/30<sup>th</sup> at the Fort Ross Estate, and the 2/30<sup>th</sup> fell back towards Kluang.

The troops of 2/26<sup>th</sup> were bombed and machine-gunned by enemy aircraft, the battalion came under mortar fire and enemy snipers were noticed. The next day the battalion was ordered to withdraw at first light to a position south of the bridge at Segamat. On the 20<sup>th</sup> there were reports that the Japanese had infiltrated behind the 2/26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and it was ordered to withdraw south of Labis, arriving there at 0400 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. This move was accomplished smoothly but with great reluctance by the soldiers of the 2/26<sup>th</sup>. Here they endured

intermittent bombing and strafing by Japanese planes, but there were no casualties. On 22 January seven trucks of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Motor Transport Company withdrew the unit by a ferrying system to the Ayer Hitam area. Here they came under intense bombing attacks, and British aircraft were no longer seen in the skies. There was very heavy bombing again on the 24<sup>th</sup>. No Japanese ground activity was experienced in the vicinity of the attalion but the men from Queensland still continued their alert and thorough patrolling activities.

Higher Command developed plans for the 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade to hold the road junction at the 41 mile peg and to keep open the road leading to the causeway leading to Singapore Island. On 25 January enemy artillery shelled the battalion positions and late in the evening the tired men of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> commenced a further withdrawal southwards. Air attacks and shelling intensified, while the numbers of the 2/26<sup>th</sup>'s killed and wounded were steadily increasing. On 27 January, after about an hour's heavy shelling, the enemy launched an afternoon offensive against the battalion which was met resolutely by the Queenslanders. There was a deadly exchange of fire with rifles, light machine guns and rifle grenades. However, despite dealing adequately with all the attacks, the 2/26<sup>th</sup> was again ordered to continue withdrawing. All troops of the battalion were by now utterly exhausted.

As the Queenslanders continued south, keeping the road open at Johore Bahru, they were harassed again and again by well-camouflaged enemy fighting patrols. There was fierce fighting all day on the 29<sup>th</sup>, after a quiet night. Each attack was repulsed with huge casualties to the attackers. Hundreds of the enemy were killed, their losses being out of all proportion to those of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> which lost six killed and 25 wounded on this occasion. A Japanese account of this engagement referred to the Australians as fighting like wounded boars, defying death and impudently counter-attacking with the bayonet. Despite its success, the Battalion was ordered farther south for about six miles, being shelled during its night withdrawal. On 30 January at 2200 hours the battalion again withdrew, meeting the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Reserve MT Coy to cross the causeway at last.

As all of the Allies withdrew southwards, the Japanese Imperial Guards Division had been held for seven days on the road to the Strait of Johore by Gode's 2/26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which sustained many casualties while the thousands of British, Indian and Australian troops moved across the causeway onto Singapore Island. The 2/26<sup>th</sup> moved into defensive positions at Kranji on the island, just north of Mandai village and with Kranji Creek on their left. By 6 February Gode was in hospital when he wrote his final letter to reach his family. In it, thinking of what he had seen in action, he said, 'I am always thinking of you all and pray for you all nightly. I hope and pray war does not reach Australia as it is gruesome rotten murder and sacrifice, but it is the price we pay for peace.'

While the three battalions of 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade held the western side of the island across Kranji Creek, A and B companies of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> held the Kranji Pier area, supported by C company, with D presumably in reserve until the enemy landed there on 9 February. Under the terrifying blasts of intensive enemy bombing and heavy artillery fire the Queenslanders' reserves of courage came to the fore. To face such unprecedented destruction of comrades and countryside called for soldierly qualities that we who were not there cannot begin to understand, but we can greatly respect their fortitude and tenacity. The 2/26<sup>th</sup> then drew back on the 10 February, eventually taking up a final position a few days later near Tyensall Palace, a fashionable suburb of Singapore. The men of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> found fighting in the suburban streets and gardens somewhat strange after five weeks in the jungle and the rubber plantations. Singapore eventually fell on 15 February 1942, and the Queensland battalion was

among those marched into captivity at Changi.

Five months later Tom Gode left Singapore on the *Ubi Maru*, one of 1,495 prisoners of war, designated as B Force and bound for Sandakan in Borneo. Among those aboard were forty-nine men of the 2/26<sup>th</sup>, including eleven officers, one of whom was the officer commanding Gode's HQ Coy, Major Armstrong. On the way to its eventual destination the *Ubi Maru* anchored in sweltering heat at Miri on the west coast of Borneo for two days. The holds where the prisoners were confined were like ovens. Northwards and then east into the Sulu Sea the ship was usually in shallow coastal waters. Those on deck early morning or late afternoon occasionally glimpsed far inland the ragged crest of Mt. Kinabalu.

At Sandakan the infantry soldiers were kept below decks overnight until the morning of the day after docking. On their left as they stepped ashore they could see substantial two-storeyed colonial bungalows with whitewashed walls and red roofs. As each man disembarked his legs and feet, fouled and stinking from the body wastes of those who had not been able to climb to toilets on the rolling deck, were sprayed with carbolic solution against the spread of dysentery. Winnie Funk, a small girl at the time, remembered that 'the Australian soldiers were lined up at the football field under a very hot sun'.

They were marched in unit groupings along a narrow bitumen road towards their new camp. At about twelve kilometres the long column turned right onto a dirt track for a couple more kilometres. Beyond a virtual moat of mosquito-infested swamp rose slightly higher ground intersected by deep gullies. Here was their prisoner of war camp. The comradeship from training days, from combat and from Changi continued. It grew as the prisoners, mindful of Anzac traditions, strove to maintain their pride and steadfastness in being Australian soldiers. They were soon forced to commence work on building an airfield, a prime project for the Japanese war effort.

The first escape from Sandakan excited much interest and comment among the Queenslanders. Although not members of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Herb Trackson and Matt Carr of No 2 Company Australian Army Service Corps were both Queenslanders, known to several of the 2/26<sup>th</sup>. Trackson and Carr got away at the end of July 1942 but were recaptured a month later. They were then sent into solitary confinement back on Singapore Island where they survived the war.<sup>2</sup>

Conditions at the camp were initially tolerable. During the first six months the food ration was an adequate 550 grams of rice daily with some greens plus dried fish three times a week. The Australians at first tended to be boisterous and cheerful on the job, not especially respectful towards their guards, but their slow and contemptuous responses to the guards' commands led to face slappings. Before long the punishments became more severe. There were bayonet proddings and beatings. The prisoners became more cautious, and obedience was seen as preferable to life-endangering bashings. After a day's hard work at the airfield their spirits revived. Still sweating, dirty, hungry and with heads high they sang as they marched back to camp. The Japanese had some difficulty in understanding this among men who carried the stigma of shameful surrender. The first 2/26<sup>th</sup> death at Sandakan was Pte Fergus Mackay in November 1942. He has a known grave at the Labuan War Cemetery.

There were men who took an interest in the wild creatures around the camp. Snakes were

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<sup>2</sup> Their story is told in detail in the author's *Escapes and Incursions*.

common, including the tan-coloured king cobra up to four metres in length and the one-metre black spitting cobra. There was the reddish-grey krait and the green diamond-head viper. Beyond these distinctly menacing poisonous serpents there were large pythons which soon became much less common. Monitor lizards, too, were among the occasional reptilian cuisine for some POWs.

During those months of 1942 and into 1943 the prisoners organised two-up games and concerts, boxing and wrestling matches. While some played chess and cards on moonlit nights, there were keen gamblers who patronised Gunna's Game, pontoon run by 'Gunboat' Simpson under his hut, with electric lighting run surreptitiously off the main camp wiring. In August 1943 eight of the Australian prisoners were caught gambling and were beaten with a piece of rough wood. It might be speculated that the punishment was not so much for the gambling itself as for being caught at Gunna's Game with its illegal electric lighting. Several punishment cages were constructed during the period of the Sandakan captivity.

An energetic padre enlisted help to build a small chapel. Lieutenant Owen (2/26<sup>th</sup>) was one of several soldiers who became competent interpreters of the Japanese language. There were numerous courses and classes on a wide range of subjects from navigation by the stars to poultry farming. On three occasions during 1942 a few of the AIF prisoners were taken fishing towards Berhala Island in a heavy ship's lifeboat, thereby supplementing their rations. There were similar expeditions in a light *prahu*, and the camp commandant, Hoshijima, once took a few men fishing on a large motor launch. In June 1943 several officers and men including Major Armstrong of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> were shipped out to Kuching.

Despite the beauty of such natural wonders as the scarlet and golden skies at sunset the men's senses by late 1943 were dulled by beatings, starvation and depression. Sick at heart, they feared for the safety of loved ones back home in Australia. They quietly remembered wedding anniversaries and family birthdays. By September 1943 with work at the airfield going more slowly and with minor acts of sabotage from time to time by the Diggers, the rice ration was reduced to 400 gm per day while meat or fish were rarely supplied from this time onwards. More and more of the men began to collapse from their exertions at the airfield.

On the morning of 15 October 1943 guards suddenly surrounded the officers' huts. Almost all officers, including the remaining ten of the 2/26<sup>th</sup>, were given a half-hour to pack and were then immediately taken to Sandakan harbour for forcible embarkation on the *Tientsin Maru* headed for Kuching, where most survived the war. The purpose of this movement was to deprive the prisoners of their officers' support and leadership. One surviving officer of the 2/26<sup>th</sup>, Captain Ivio Smith, served on in the Australian Army to retire as a Major in 1970. Lieutenant Peter Stewart of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> perished in Kuching. None of the eight officers of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division retained at Sandakan would survive.

Life moved at a slower tempo in 1944. There was not very much singing on the way back from the airfield. Yet they clung with hope to their dwindling lives, longing for freedom, dreaming of home. A large number cherished the memory of wife and small children who would wait for them forever. The morale and discipline of the Australians still confounded their captors. Despite a reputation in some quarters for undisciplined behaviour, that stereotype is not entirely true of the average Australian soldier of the Second World War. Virtues felt to be typically Australian came to the fore in Sandakan – adaptability, initiative, refusal to be beaten by circumstances, mateship. A spirit of stubborn, almost aggressive, independence survived in Sandakan along with the disciplined cohesion of sharing in their

hardships and ordeals. Brutality, punishments and sometimes torture were now constant in the prisoners' daily lives. The daily ration by September 1944 was now 250 gms. of rice. For men starved and unwell their harsh treatment at Sandakan was almost unbelievably routine. Until the starvation regime of late 1944 there had been relatively few Australian deaths, but now dysentery, malaria and beri-beri started to overcome the earlier healthy resistance of the prisoners.

Then in October 1944 there commenced Allied bombing raids in the Sandakan area, and particularly raids focused on every Japanese airfield within range of the Philippines. Constant hunger pangs and the opportunity provided by the blackout precautions against air attack led in late 1944 to a spate of sorties in search of food outside the wire by desperate prisoners. Gordon Barber (2/26<sup>th</sup>) was on one foray by three prisoners to raid a Japanese tapioca patch when they were caught outside the wire. In November Sgt E.D. Bancroft (2/26<sup>th</sup>) was one of eight men who broke into the Japanese quartermaster's store very near the guardhouse seeking food, and all were later detected. These and others spent time in the cages for their efforts, and several died from this severe punishment.

There had been eighteen Australian deaths altogether at Sandakan in 1942, sixteen in 1943. There would be 71 altogether in 1944, and in 1945 there would be many hundreds of Australian POW deaths. Tom Gode died on Christmas Eve 1944, the cause of his death recorded by his captors as malarial meningitis. Back in Australia Tom Gode was finally recorded as deceased in Casualty List Q524 on 7 July 1945, a month or so before the war ended. His name is commemorated on Panel No 1 at the Labuan War Cemetery. Post-war his wristwatch inscribed with his regimental number was found in the No 2 Compound (British) at Sandakan.

At the end of January 1945 and into February many POWs were sent from Sandakan to Ranau, an inland kampong close to Mount Kinabalu. Among those on this 265 km march were three men of the 2/26<sup>th</sup>: Cpl C. Mann and Pte C. Izzard, both of whom died along the way at Paginatan, and Pte C. Isbel who survived to reach Ranau where he perished. On 29 May another large group of prisoners were sent towards Ranau. Among them were L/Cpl A. McLellan, Pte J.A. White, Pte C. Rowe, Pte W. Christiansen and Pte C. Stirling, each of whom died along the track, and Pte J. Burgess who reached Ranau and survived there until the end of July. In Sandakan the rice ration had been cut out entirely by the Japanese early in January. Twenty-nine members of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> Battalion perished at Sandakan.

#### **Members of 2/26<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion sent to Borneo as B Force POWs**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Home town</b>	<b>Location died as POW</b>	<b>Date of death as POW</b>
Maj Gerald Armstrong	Brisbane	Survivor	
Pte Leo B. Allan	Paddington NSW	Sandakan	21/2/45
Pte Arthur Ayton	Burnie Tas	Sandakan	15/2/45
Sgt Errol 'Dinny' Bancroft	Maroochydore	Sandakan	10/6/45
Pte Gordon K. Barber	Nudgee	Sandakan	8/12/44
Pte Douglas Barker	Chatswood NSW	Sandakan	7/6/45
Pte James Burgess	Pelican Flats NSW	Ranau 2j	30/7/45
Pte Guy Charles	Brisbane	Sandakan	7/6/45
Pte William Christiansen	Mackay	Near Sapi	7/6/45
Pte Jack Clear	Launceston Tas	Sandakan	24/5/44

Pte Alfred Cook	Gympie	Sandakan	10/4/45
Pte William Cooke	Purga nr Ipswich	Sandakan	10/6/45
Pte David A. Cumming	Warwick	Sandakan	21/1/45
Lieut Arthur Day	Brisbane	Survivor	
Pte Francis Dooley	Hurstville NSW	Sandakan	31/1/45
Lieut Hector Fox	Warwick	Survivor	
Lieut James Fraser	Proserpine	Survivor	
Lieut Leslie Glover	Brisbane	Survivor	
Pte Harold 'Tom' Gode	Wynnum	Sandakan	24/12/44
Pte Edward Griffiths	Coochin	Sandakan	20/3/45
Pte Percival Hankin	Townsville	Sandakan	15/6/45
Pte George Hutchison	Bardon	Sandakan	26/4/45
WO2 Arthur C. Hutton	New Farm	Sandakan	30/3/45
Pte Clifford Iles	Palmwoods	Sandakan	21/5/45
Pte Cecil Isbel	Proserpine	Ranau 1	25/3/45
Pte Clarence Izzard	Crows Nest	Paginatan	19/3/45
Pte Francis Jones	Gympie	Sandakan	23/5/45
Pte Cecil G. Langton	Mareeba	Sandakan	25/5/45
Cpl C. N. Mann	Coorparoo	Paginatan	2/3/45
Pte Fergus J. Mackay	Wooloowin	Sandakan	8/11/42
Pte H. McCallum	E. Brisbane	Sandakan	17/4/45
L/Cpl Andrew McLellan	Charters Towers	9m from S'kan	2/6/45
Pte J. McSweeney	E. Brunswick Vic	Sandakan	29/12/44
Lieut James Miller	Charters Towers	Survivor	
Lieut Gordon H. Owen	Townsville	Survivor	
Pte Roy Piper	Brisbane	Sandakan	21/5/45
Pte J. Plunkett	Randwick NSW	Sandakan	3/4/45
Pte Syd Roberts	Red Hill	Sandakan	21/5/45
Pte C. H. Rowe	Proserpine	Track	5/6/45
Pte Victor Rummell	Thallon	Sandakan	18/3/45
Lieut Clyde Sheppard	Dutton Park	Survivor	
Sgt E. J. Shields (Pay Corps)	Murwillumbah NSW	Sandakan	7/6/45
Lieut G. N. Sleeman	Townsville	Survivor	
Capt Ivio H. Smith	Kelvin Grove	Survivor	
Pte W. T. Sorby	Milton	Sandakan	20/1/45
Lieut P. Stewart	Coorparoo	Kuching	8/7/45
Pte Christopher Stirling	Mackay	1m from Maliau	16/6/45
Pte Joseph A. White	Home Hill	43m from S'kan	5/6/45
Pte Lionel A. White	Home Hill	Sandakan	10/6/45

### Sources

War Diary and Routine Orders of the 2/26<sup>th</sup> Battalion

2/26<sup>th</sup> Bn Association website

John Gode, Brisbane

Winnie Funk, Sabah, Borneo

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## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

### A VOLUNTEER OFFICER'S CROSS-BELT PLATE

Anthony F. Harris<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this article is to try to use a variety of resources in an attempt to positively identify a previously unrecorded item of military insignia. The pieces under discussion were located together in Adelaide, South Australia and will be shown to be *almost* conclusively of South Australian significance.

The pieces located form a suite of artefacts comprising:



1. A silver-plated cross-belt plate on a fragment of white patent leather. It is 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches high x 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches wide (70 x 56mm), constructed in two pieces, comprising a die-struck voided badge with a silver-plated domed backing plate. Three screw mounting points. The leather fragment is 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches (56 mm) wide.
2. A black patent leather cross belt pouch or cartouche box with white-metal fittings, a white metal light infantry bugle device to the flap and a red painted metal box insert 6½ inches wide x 3½ inches (165 x 90mm) deep at the flap. Two rings to attach to the cross belt. Impressed on the front face of the box beneath the flap is WILKINSON · 27 · PALL MALL · LONDON in an oval format.

3. A 'snake' pattern belt fastener in white metal attached to a fragment of white patent leather. The clasp is 1½ inches (38mm) long on a white metal loop, the leather belt fragment being 1½ inches wide. Most likely a sword belt clasp.

The initials worked into the belt plate, SAV in florid script, initially suggest, given its location, 'South Australian Volunteers', a title that was conveniently adopted to describe both the members and organisation of the South Australian Volunteer Military Force (VMF)

<sup>1</sup> Anthony F. Harris is a retired State public servant and a collector and researcher with a particular interest in the military history of colonial South Australia and the presence of the British Army in the colony. He has been a member of the MHSA for over 40 years and was made a Life Member, subsequently a Fellow, of the Society in 1992. He is currently Secretary and previously President of the SA Branch.

between the periods 1855-56, 1859-70 and 1877-86; also to the volunteer elements of the SA forces from 1886 onwards. Indeed, the tunic button initially adopted under the Clothing Regulations of 1861 (and worn to a greater or lesser extent on and off for the next 30 years) incorporated all three design elements of the plate under discussion – a crown, a laurel wreath and the initials SAV.<sup>2</sup>

In 1866 the VMF was re-organised under Act No.18 of 1865-66. Concurrent to this re-organisation, in August 1866 a requisition was prepared at the VMF Staff Office for the supply of a quantity of officer's swords and associated equipments including sword belts and cross-belts and pouches for all three branches of local service; Infantry (Rifles), Cavalry and Artillery.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this article only those references to the cross-belts and cartouche boxes will be analysed.

An Indent was sent by the Treasurer's Office to the Agent General in London (the SA Treasurer was the Minister responsible for the Office of the Agent General) who placed the order in the hands of Messrs Wilkinson & Son of Pall Mall, London 'who are esteemed to hold the first rank in the manufacture of this specialty'.<sup>4</sup> There was some negotiation on the prices and degree of ornamentation required, and three different specifications and estimates were submitted by Wilkinsons. Eventually the cheaper quotation was accepted (with a further slight reduction) which included, when invoiced:<sup>5</sup>

For Officers of Rifle Companies:

54 White patent cross belts with black patent cartouche boxes, with plated mountings, bugle and *front plate*<sup>6</sup> @ 24/6d. each

For Officers of Cavalry:

20 White patent cross belts with black patent cartouche boxes with Cypher and buckle, tip and slide plated @ 27/6d. each.

For Officers of Artillery:

10 White patent cross belts, with black patent cartouche boxes, and plated mountings, cannon & furniture @ 27/- each.

From the wording of the above descriptions the author interprets that only the cross-belts for infantry officers were fitted with front plates. The cavalry officers appear to have had a cypher (probably a crowned VR) on the flap of the cartouche box with additional ornate fittings to the belt, while the artillery version had a cannon on the cartouche box but no plate or other fittings on the belt. The interpretation that the artillery cross-belts had no embellishment on the front is perhaps confirmed by a photograph showing a group of South Australian artillery officers around a 12pdr Whitworth gun, dated circa 1877.<sup>7</sup> All the officers are wearing plain white cross-belts and carrying swords, although one in the group appears to have a cross-belt which *possibly* has some form of embellishment (unclear in the photograph). It should be pointed out here perhaps that, following the disbandment of the VMF in 1869-70, when the force was re-raised in 1877 the same Clothing Regulations in force at the time of disbandment were re-introduced until major changes were made circa

<sup>2</sup> SA *Government Gazette*, 31 January 1861, p.87.

<sup>3</sup> State Records (SR). GRG 24/6/1866 No.1365½.

<sup>4</sup> SR. GRG 45/1/1866 No.799.

<sup>5</sup> SR. GRG 45/1/1867 No.123.

<sup>6</sup> Author's italics

<sup>7</sup> Mortlock Library of South Australiana, B7211



1881-82. Consequently it is felt that this photograph must depict the uniform and cross-belt worn prior to 1870.

It is of considerable interest to note that in none of the published Clothing (Dress) Regulations relating to the VMF *for any period* is there any mention or description of cross-belts for the officers of any branch of service in South Australia. Compounding the enigma is the photographic evidence which shows that where officers of Rifle Companies are shown wearing cross-belts, their belts are invariably black rather than white; while similar photographs of cavalry or artillery officers, as shown above, show them wearing white cross-belts. The fact that 54 white cross-belts for Rifles officers *with front plates* were bought by the colony in 1867 suggests that it would be highly unlikely that the belts would not subsequently be worn. Unfortunately the author is not aware of any photograph from the late 1860s to the mid-1880s showing a Rifles officer wearing a white cross-belt, either with or without the plate under discussion.

The cartouche box conforms exactly with those listed on Wilkinson's invoice which, together with the supplier's name impressed into the leather and its initial location, is probably sufficient evidence to tie it to this South Australian purchase of 1866. The cross-belt plate, although not described nor previously recorded was also, given the points raised herein, in all probability supplied under this same indent. Whether it was a general issue to all officers of the SAV or only to senior ranks is not known, although it is considered that whatever use it may have seen it was probably discontinued after the re-raising of the volunteer corps in 1877 (the volunteers were disbanded in 1869-70 until 1877). However, until further evidence can be found it seems highly likely that this is, indeed, a cross-belt plate of the Rifle Companies officers of the South Australian Volunteers, circa 1867 to perhaps 1870 and, as such, fits very comfortably into my small collection of colonial militia.

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## SOCIETY NOTICES

### ***Sabretache* Writer's Prize 2012**

Federal Council is pleased to announce that the *Sabretache* Writer's Prize for 2012 is now open. The details and conditions of entry of the prize are:

- the prize will be open to Society members;
- \$500 will be awarded to the entry judged the best by a panel;
- entries must consist of an essay of 3,000 to 4,000 words on a topic of Australian military history, based in part on primary sources.

Entries close on 31 May 2012. The winning entry will be published in *Sabretache*. Entries should be sent, preferably in digital format, to the Federal Secretary or Federal President of the Society (please note, not to the Editor).

### **Position of Federal Secretary**

The position of Federal Secretary is currently vacant on Federal Council. Federal Council would like to hear from any member of the Society who may be interested in being considered for the position. In the first instance, please contact the Federal President at [rgoyne@grapevine.com.au](mailto:rgoyne@grapevine.com.au).

### **MHSA Conference for 2012**

The biennial conference of the Military Historical Society of Australia will be held in Canberra in November 2012 at the Hellenic Club in Moore Street, Canberra City. The conference will be hosted by the ACT Branch of the Society. The ACT Branch is inviting potential speakers to contact them for consideration for the draft conference program. The contact at the ACT Branch is Ian Stagoll at [ian.stagoll@gmail.com](mailto:ian.stagoll@gmail.com).

### **Archive to Give Away**

Malcolm Saunders has an archive of materials re World War 1 (Gallipoli and Beersheba) veteran Maj Gen George James Rankin (1887-1957) he would like to donate to any organisation that could preserve it. The archive is in excellent condition, is housed in suspension files, and currently fills one standard filing-cabinet drawer. Contact Malcolm on 0418643027 or [saunderm@australiaonline.net.au](mailto:saunderm@australiaonline.net.au).

### **Presentation of Fellow of the Society to Don Wright**

Twenty-three MHSA members turned up at the January meeting of the Society in Maryborough to witness Don Wright being invested as a Fellow of the Society. The honours were performed by Pat Hall FMHSA, who is a long-standing member of the Society and Past President of the Western Australia Branch.

Prior to the presentation, John Meyers spoke on Don's long term commitment to the Society, including many years as the Queensland President. His knowledge in certain aspects of military collecting and research is unsurpassed and he has always been keen to support other members in their quest for information. In the history of the Society, Don was the first Life Member and is now the first Fellow of the Queensland Branch. The members of the Society congratulate Don on his award and wish him well for the future.



*Don Wright receiving his Fellowship from Pat Hall FMHSA,  
at Maryborough on 14 January 2012*

## THE ACCURACY OF A MUSKET: SOME NAPOLEONIC ERA RESULTS RE-EXAMINED

W. F. Refshauge<sup>1</sup>

Muskets come in so many shapes and sizes that they share only quite basic characteristics. So, for the purposes of this paper, a musket is an obsolete longarm whose essential feature is its smooth bore. The term entered English in the late sixteenth century; by the end of the American Civil War muskets were all but obsolete. Their heyday was the Napoleonic period and it is on the muskets of that time that this paper concentrates.

Muskets in general were notorious for their lack of accuracy but given their function, it was supposed not to matter too much. They were military weapons intended to be used in a mass, which helped to average out any such problems. But that avoids the question of just how inaccurate was a single musket in use. This note is intended to shed some light on that issue, at least for Napoleonic quality muskets.

The question is not merely theoretical. European Australia was founded and vast tracts settled during the era of the musket. Yet in hunting kangaroos for food, or chasing absconding convicts, dogs rather than muskets were often used. The famous drawing of the Myall creek killers with their victims shows several swords and cudgels but only one musket.<sup>2</sup> The limitations of the muskets were known and alternatives were used.

The reason for their inaccuracy was inherent in the muskets and their ammunition. They were loaded by tipping the charge and the projectile into the barrel at the muzzle. To enable rapid loading the supplied ammunition was of slightly smaller diameter than the musket's nominal calibre – for the English musket familiarly known as Brown Bess, this was around one twentieth of an inch (1.27mm) smaller. The gap, called the windage, made possible quick reloading of the firearm, but at the potential cost of reduced velocity of the projectile as the gases from the fired charge would pass around the projectile. The standard solution was to place a wad or a 'patch' of material between the charge and the projectile. That helped to seal in the charge but had no systematic effect on the direction taken by the projectile.

When the musket was first fired, the ball bounced down the barrel and went in the direction in which it was last deflected. Slag from the burnt black powder was deposited inside the barrel so that subsequent shots were affected by the pattern of deposits, modified by the action of the ramrod. But such deficiencies were not of great importance in formal battles, where massed firepower at close range (frequently around fifty to one hundred metres) ensured hitting power, and averaged out problems of accuracy (at least in the horizontal plane). The soldiers were trained to load and fire quite rapidly, normally two to three times a minute but in an emergency, cutting corners, up to five times a minute, propelling a large amount of lead in a short time.

It would be expected that shot from a musket would deviate from the theoretical trajectory in any direction with equal probability. In practice more than just gravity needs to be reckoned with in determining that trajectory. Chief among the additional factors are the density of the

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<sup>1</sup> W.F. (Bill) Refshauge is a retired farmer, now living outside Canberra, with an interest in Australian history. He is particularly interested in the way that technical information may clarify historical issues. His examination of the landing at Gallipoli appeared in a previous issue of *Sabretache*.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, David Denholm (1979) *The Colonial Australians*, Ringwood, Vic: Allen Lane, p.37.

air (air pressure and humidity), the force of any cross-wind and the Magnus force. The first two are self-explanatory; the Magnus force is that force which causes the curve in the flight path of a spinning golf ball or tennis ball, or a cricket ball bowled by Shane Warne. But there is another factor which is often overlooked. It merits a mention because failing to understand it has led some people astray. Fire up or down a slope is affected by gravity differently from horizontal fire. Firing downhill, projectiles overshoot relative to horizontal aiming. Firing uphill is more complex and while undershooting occurs with gentler slopes, on steep slopes overshooting may occur.<sup>3</sup> Its role in the trajectory of the ball is of some importance.

Failure to notice this led Gregory Blake to make a slip in his otherwise well researched book, *To Pierce the Tyrant's Heart*, claiming that with smooth bore firearms 'the balls tended to rise when they left the muzzle'.<sup>4</sup> This way of putting it is his interpretation of fire being systematically too high. The two examples he gives both concern firing down a slope. Rephrased more neutrally, his claim is that the projectile tended to be too high compared with where it was expected to be. The expectation is generated by aiming the gun. A gun that in this sense fires high consistently simply has ill-adjusted sights. However, among the commonest muskets around 1800, such as the French 1777 series of which some millions were manufactured, and the English Brown Bess, almost none had any sights. The soldier using one had to learn how to aim it. It makes no sense to say that such muskets fired high.

The effectiveness of muskets in competent hands was a matter of considerable interest and study during Napoleonic times. From our point of view, the reports are often frustrating because not enough information is given to work out what was happening. Thus Scharnhorst's musketry trials in Prussia in 1810 used 'large targets, approximating the size of a formed infantry peloton and small targets, probably the size of a single man'.<sup>5</sup> Table 1 shows some of the 'small target' results.

**Table 1:** Scharnhorst's 1810 trials against a 'small target', percentage hits by range

Firearm	Range (yards)		
	120	160	240
Prussian rifle, standard cartridges	51	26	0
Prussian 1809 musket	--	21	4

Without knowing whether the small target really was the size of a man, we should be cautious in drawing conclusions from this data. Further, the accuracy of the rifle seems no better than the musket's, contrary to expectation. After all, rifles are supposed to be superior to muskets in both range and accuracy. But the results at least for the musket do seem to be of the right order of magnitude for the target to have been the size of a man.

General B.P. Hughes recorded some more interesting studies from around 1800: Picard recorded 60% hits at 75 metres on a target  $1.75 \times 3.00$  metres – about five times the area of a human frontal outline; Greener recorded 75% hits at 100 yards on a target  $6 \times 20$  feet – about eleven times the outline; Müller gave figures of 53% hits for well trained men and 40% for

<sup>3</sup> McCoy, Robert L (1999) *Modern Exterior Ballistics*, Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, pp.47-51.

<sup>4</sup> Blake, Gregory (2009) *To Pierce the Tyrant's Heart*, Canberra: Australian Military History Publications, pp.215-216.

<sup>5</sup> Nafziger, George F (2009) *Imperial Bayonets*, West Chester, OH: Self-published, p.13.

ordinary soldiers at a target representing a line of cavalry.<sup>6</sup> However, these figures too need to be treated with care. In particular, is the size of the target appropriate to what is being measured? For instance, if Greener's target were doubled in length there would be few extra hits but the result would be less interesting, largely because the density of hits (hits per square foot of target) would be much reduced. To what extent reducing the size of his target would have the opposite effect remains unknown. Hence the need for caution.

Even so, Picard's data is quite useful. We can actually derive from it some information about the accuracy of a single musket. Hughes reports that Picard gives 'the following results of fire delivered under battle conditions by trained soldiers against a target measuring 1.75 metres by 3.00 metres:

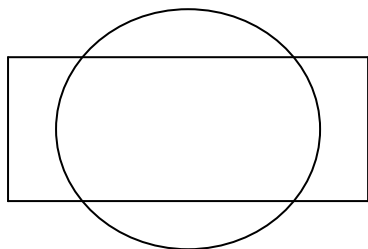
<i>Range</i>	<i>Percentage of shots hitting</i>
75 metres (82 yards)	60%
150 metres (162 yards)	40%
225 metres (246 yards)	25%
300 metres (328 yards)	20%

The suggestion of 'battle conditions' must be treated with reserve. It is probably better to talk of well trained soldiers firing hurriedly. Also, the soldiers will be standing, so there is more than one element of human frailty in the figures. That is, the accuracy of a musket under laboratory conditions is likely to be rather better than Picard's results, but that is irrelevant to muskets in use in the field. Note too that Picard's percentages, given only to the nearest five points, look like they have been rounded. Data from most other sources instanced above are given to the nearest single percentage point. This coarsening of the data by Picard is important, as will be seen shortly.

It significantly simplifies the arithmetic to convert the structure of Picard's target from a rectangle to a circle. Figure 1 shows the rectangular target with its circular equivalent imposed on it.

**Figure 1:** Comparison of Picard's target size and shape and the equivalent area occupied by a circle

*View from the front*



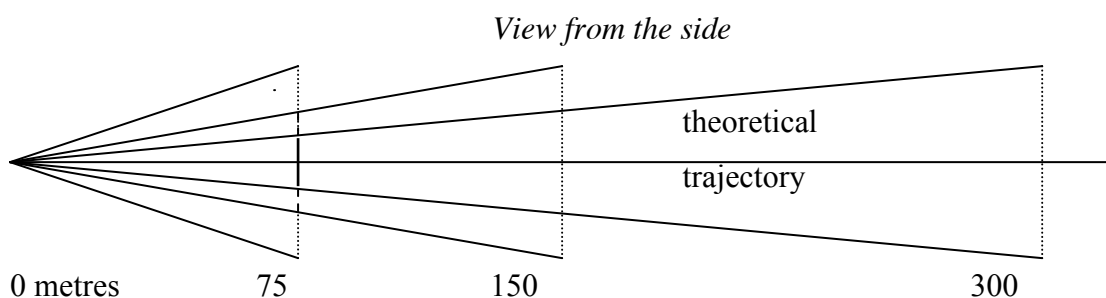
The rectangle and the circle are the same size and share the same mid-point. The areas of the circle outside the rectangle equal the areas of the rectangle outside the circle, but the rectangle has some area further from the mid-point than does the circle. As the likelihood of a hit recedes with increasing distance from the mid-point, the probability of a hit in each of the pairs of non-overlapping areas differs, so there is a small difference in the results obtained by

<sup>6</sup> Hughes, B P (1974) *Firepower*, London: Arms & Armour Press, pp.27-28.

using a circle rather than the rectangle used by Picard. Note too that that difference is swamped by the rounding that Picard imposed on his data. So the circle is demonstrably an approximation to the rectangular target but one without significant consequences because the difference is small and is absorbed within the rounding imposed by Picard. The target shape he used was  $1.75 \times 3.00$  metres, so it had an area of 5.25 square metres. A circle of radius 1.293 metres has the same area.

Think of Picard’s four targets as lined up together along the theoretical trajectory of the balls as in figure 2, so a hit on the farthest target is going to hit within a smaller area on closer targets.

**Figure 2:** Graduating Picard’s ranges to different sizes of target at 75 metres (target at 225 metres omitted for the sake of clarity)



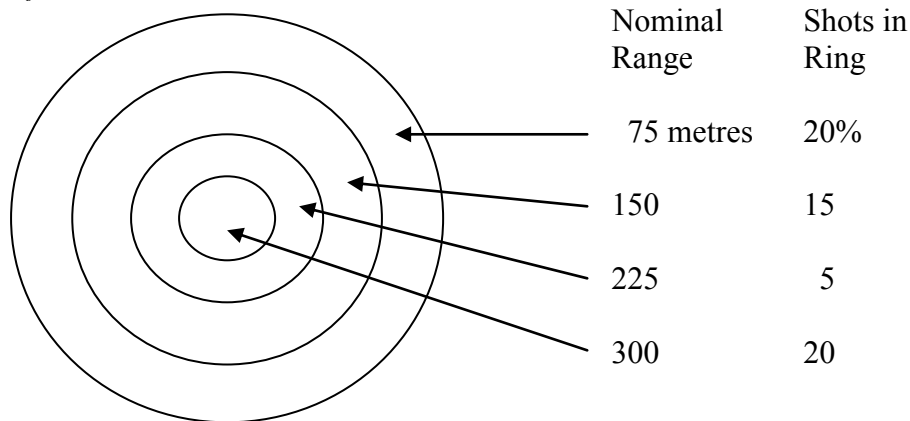
For example, a hit on the target at 300 metres will pass, in figure 2, through the middle part of the target at 75 metres marked with a heavy line. Similarly, a hit on the target at 150 metres passes, in figure 2, through those parts of the target at 75 metres marked either with the heavy line or the dashed line. The linear spread of the balls from the line of the theoretical trajectory, measured by the radius of the circle, is directly proportional to distance from the point of fire. This can be seen in figure 2. Hence the radius of the area hit on the target at 75 metres by balls that went on to hit more distant targets is obtained by proportionality. Thus, a hit on the 150 metres target is, at 75 metres, within a circle of radius  $1.293 \times (75/150)$ , or 0.646 metres. Similar results obtain for other distances. The results for all Picard’s nominal ranges are given in the following table.

**Table 2:** Picard’s data graduated to a circular target at seventy-five metres

<i>Nominal Range (m)</i>	<i>Target size hit at 75m:</i>		<i>Percentage of shots hitting</i>
	<i>Radius (m)</i>	<i>Area (m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	
75	1.2927	5.25	60
150	0.6463	1.3125	40
225	0.4309	0.5833	25
300	0.3232	0.3281	20

Table 2 enables us to work out the likelihood of an object being hit in various areas on the 75-metre target – that is, the density of hits in those areas. The structure of that target is shown in figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Picard's data – distribution of hits by nominal range on the target at 75 metres  
View from the front



The shots closest to the theoretical trajectory strike the middle circle of the target; 20% of shots hit this area. These are the shots that go on to hit the target at 300 metres. Those that hit the target at 225 metres (25%) pass through this central part of the target at 75 metres, or the ring (annulus) surrounding it. The percentage of shots that hit within that ring itself is the difference between those passing through the central circle and those passing through it and the surrounding ring: 25% less 20%, or just 5%. Similarly, hits within the next ring are 40% less 25%, making 15%, and so on. By dividing these figures by the area of the ring within which the hits occur, we obtain a measure of the density of hits according to distance from the theoretical trajectory. Results are given in table 3.

**Table 3:** Picard's data – proportional density of hits by distance from the theoretical trajectory

Nominal Range (m)	Percentage of shots in ring	Area of Density ring (m <sup>2</sup> )	(% shots/m <sup>2</sup> )
75	20	$5.25 - 1.3125 = 3.9375$	5
150	15	$1.3125 - 0.5833 = 0.7292$	21
225	5	$0.5833 - 0.3281 = 0.2552$	20
300	20	0.3281	61

The table shows that hits are much denser closest to the theoretical trajectory – that is, most hits are close to the middle of the target. The very low density of hits for the outermost ring is to be expected, but the two intermediate rings show a similarity of densities that seems unlikely: there should be some relatively smooth curve from closest to furthest. It is in results like this that Picard's rounding of his results becomes a problem.

Picard's basic results can be presumed to be accurate, if not very precise, so it should be possible for us to use them effectively provided we don't press them too hard. We should not stray too far from table 2. That table shows target size at 75 metres for each of Picard's ranges, and the associated percentage of hits. The nature of the table is such that, given any two of those three parameters: target size, range and percentage of hits, the third can be determined. In view of the caveat about Picard's rounding of the percentages, in practical terms the percentage figure should be one of the givens. Thus, having selected one of the given percentage hits lines in the table, the range (or target size) required for any nominated size of target (or range) may be determined.

The table enables us to check the consistency of Picard's data with Scharnhorst's. At 160 yards (approximately 150 metres), Scharnhorst gives 21% hits by his musket on the presumed 'man-sized' target. For this exercise, suppose an adult human outline has a frontal area of say about 1.05 square metres; that is, 1.75 metres high by 0.6 metres broad. Let us also assume that this area is near enough to the shape of Picard's targets for the arithmetic to apply with reasonable accuracy (the shape should be 1.342 metres  $\times$  0.783 metres; we will take it to be the circle of the same area, radius 0.578 metres). From Picard's data in table 2, the target radius showing 20% hits at 75 metres is 0.3232 metres. At what distance will the target be when the target radius is 0.578 metres – the human-area circle?

By proportionality, that distance  $x$  is given as

$$\begin{aligned} x/75 &= 0.578/0.3232 \\ x &= 75 \times (0.578 \div 0.3232) \text{ m} \\ &= 134 \text{ metres, or } 147 \text{ yards} \end{aligned}$$

So, while Scharnhorst gives 21% hits at 160 yards, Picard's data imply 20% hits at 147 yards. Given the variation in muskets and conditions, the loose fit between the two studies and the approximations in the data, as well as queries about the size of the target, there seems to be reasonable agreement between the two.

With this perhaps modest degree of support for Picard, we may be emboldened to ask more interesting questions such as, at what distance  $D$  would hitting a human-sized target come to say 25%? Looking back to table 2, the target radius at 75 metres on the line showing 25% hits is 0.4309. Again, the radius for a circle equivalent to human size is 0.578 metres. The result sought is again obtained by proportionality, when the distance of 75 metres is multiplied by  $(0.578 \div 0.4309)$ . That is,

$$D = 75 \times (0.578 \div 0.4309) \text{ m} = 100.6 \text{ metres}$$

That means that the chances of a competent shooter hitting an adult human aimed at under field conditions, front on at 100 metres, with a single shot from a French Napoleonic musket, is 25%.

So we do now have, in the form of table 2, a rudimentary calculation device derived from historical data, by which we can determine the accuracy of muskets, or strictly speaking of a French Napoleonic musket, in use in the field. Applying the method is straightforward. First, if appropriate, convert the shape of the target to a circle. Then use the data from table 2 in the proportionality formula.

To summarise, Picard's data are broadly consistent with other data (Scharnhorst's), but their internal consistency is limited (the density of hits problem) so should not be used to derive anything other than immediate consequences from table 2. There are other qualifications that may apply. Perhaps most important is that the flight of the musket balls is not as simple as figure 2 suggests – the balls tend to curve further away from the theoretical trajectory with increasing distance. Also, it must be borne in mind that muskets and cartridges from different sources had different characteristics. Some of these may be too different from Picard's for his data to apply. Accordingly it is appropriate to end by emphasising again that Picard's results gives us useable but imperfect information: they can be used, but must be used with care.



## TWO AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FIRSTS: A PERSONAL VIEW

Capt A.J. Walker (retd)<sup>1</sup>

### The First Defeat of the Japanese

Australia is very proud of the part it played during the Second World War, particularly that the first defeat against the German Army was at the hands of the Australians defending Tobruk. However, the Australians were not there alone; there were others involved but it was the Australian infantry defending the perimeter who defied all attempts by the Germans to break through. Then it was the Australians again who inflicted the first defeat against the so far all-victorious Japanese. We are constantly reminded of this as we read of the Pacific war and the subject always gets around to Milne Bay and the ‘first defeat of the Japanese’.

But I disagree, having served in the Army and understanding the importance it places on the AIM and the significance of the timing of the aim. I take the view that the first defeat of the Japanese Army in the Pacific War was actually when the Japanese Army was stopped early on the Kokoda Track.

When the Japanese landed unexpectedly at Buna on 22 July 1942, it was first thought that they were only there to establish a military presence on the north coast of Papua, as they had previously established one in the Lae area of New Guinea. It was assumed that they wanted Kokoda because of the airfield which was part of the area of Buna, Gona and Sanananda. It is now known that they landed with full intentions of ‘quickly’ crossing the Owen Stanleys and capturing Port Moresby.

More by luck than good management there was a company of the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the area. The Japanese were in action on the 23 July. The fighting was very fierce and the Japanese did eventually occupy Kokoda on 29 July. According to Peter Fitzsimons,

on the morning of 28 July, General Haruyoshi Hyakutake, the commander of the 17<sup>th</sup> Army in Rabaul, received the coded cable from the Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo he’d been waiting for, and he in turn passed the orders on to Colonel Yokoyama in New Guinea. They had been given clearance to proceed to Port Moresby, which they estimated could be achieved in just eight days march from Kokoda, including fighting.<sup>2</sup>

I cannot be sure of the exact wording of the Japanese orders but it is reasonable to assume that the Japanese AIM was to capture Port Moresby before the Allies could land reinforcements. A battalion of 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade landed at Port Moresby on 13 August, which was twenty-one days after the Japanese landing and still they were only in the vicinity of Deniki.

On the morning of 26 August, when Brig Potts of 21<sup>st</sup> Bde signalled Maj Gen Allen (CO 7<sup>th</sup> Div) that 2/14<sup>th</sup> Bn would commence relief of 39<sup>th</sup> Bn, the Japanese were into their thirty-fifth day, twenty-nine days since they had been told Pt Moresby ‘could be achieved in just eight days’. The 39<sup>th</sup> Bn had done very well; they had denied the enemy the opportunity to gain any advantage from their surprise landing, and had prevented them from moving ‘quickly’ over the Kokoda Track. They were not alone, of course, with involvement from the

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<sup>1</sup> Capt Walker was a child during the Second World War and was not directly or indirectly involved, but he was left with a strong interest in military history. He has visited the Western Front, Normandy and of course Gallipoli

<sup>2</sup> P. Fitzsimons, *Kokoda*, Hodder Headlines, Sydney, 2004, p.212.

Papuan Infantry Battalion and others. But during that early fighting the Australians had prevented the Japanese from achieving their aim, and in Army parlance that means the Japanese had been defeated. The part played by 39<sup>th</sup> Bn has been well recognised and their efforts greatly admired, but – the real point of their achievement has been missed.

### **The First Australian Victoria Cross**

On 13 November 1900 the *London Gazette* published the following notice:

The Queen has been graciously pleased to signify her intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross on the undermentioned Private whose claim has been submitted for Her Majesty's approval for his conspicuous bravery in South Africa, as stated against his name: Private J.H. Bisdee (Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen, 1 September 1900 ...)

The Australian newspapers were quick to pick up on the announcement; the Hobart *Mercury*, with the heading, 'The first Australian VC', went on to say, 'The first, and so far the only, Australian to be awarded the coveted Victoria Cross is Trooper J H Bisdee, of Tasmania'. In Sydney *The Daily Telegraph* announced: 'The first Victoria Cross won by an Australian has been awarded to Private J.H. Bisdee of the Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen, who also gains the life grant of £1 per week promised by the Citizens' Life Assurance Company of Sydney to the first of our soldiers to be thus decorated'. There were many other similar mentions from which one might choose.

Trooper Bisdee reigned as the first and only Australian VC for ten days, at which time the Queen approved the award to Lieut G.G.E. Wylly. Bisdee and Wylly were both Tasmanians, both attended the same school, both were members of the same regiment, both were caught up in the same ambush, both performed similar acts of valour and both were nominated for the Victoria Cross. Because of the way official papers pass through the military system, Trooper Bisdee had been approved first.

It happened that an Australian officer, a doctor, serving with the New South Wales Medical Corps, carried out a similar act of valour earlier than Trooper Bisdee. On 24 July 1900 Lieut Neville Howse rescued a wounded soldier and for his bravery he too was nominated for the Victoria Cross. His nomination moved very slowly through the military system and eleven months passed before he became the third Australian serviceman to be awarded the medal, by which time he was a captain. Almost every publication I can find on the subject of the Boer War or the VC states something to effect that 'The first Australian awarded the Victoria Cross was Capt Neville Howse'. I feel that this is incorrect; the *London Gazette* is a very powerful instrument of law, and who can argue with the *London Gazette*! But what do the 'standard' authorities on the subject say?

*Australia's Boer War* by Craig Wilcox was published as an 'official history'<sup>3</sup> in 2002 to mark 100 years after the end of the war. On p.116, while referring to the fighting at Vredefort, it states: 'one of the orders set the scene for the first soldier wearing an Australian uniform to earn a Victoria Cross'. On p.152 it tells of the ambush at Warmbad and on p.153: 'News came that Bisdee would be awarded a Victoria Cross, ... few knew of Howse's nomination, which would not in any case be gazetted for another seven months, and Bisdee's award was assumed to be the first instance of an Australian earning the empire's highest honour'. Yes, naturally it was assumed briefly that Bisdee had earned and been awarded the first VC, but

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<sup>3</sup> [In that it was commissioned by the Australian War Memorial; see the reference list at the end of the article for full bibliographic details of this and the other works discussed – Ed.]

the matter of who earned the first VC is not being disputed; who was the first Australian awarded the VC and who appears as such in publications is the matter under discussion.

*The Australians at the Boer War* by Robert L. Wallace, 1976; as no similar book had ever been written, this was at the time looked upon as an official history. On p.276 it states: 'For his gallantry Captain Howse received the Victoria Cross, thus becoming the first Australian to win the coveted honour', although on p.293 it does say, 'For valour that day ... two Tasmanians, Lieutenant Wylly and Trooper Bisdee, were awarded the Victoria Cross.' However, no mention is made of Bisdee having been the first gazetted or the excitement the announcement caused throughout Australia.

*They Dared Mightily* by Lionel Wigmore and Bruce Harding, 1963. An excellent publication, on p.7 it states that 'The first Australian to whom a VC was awarded was Captain (later Sir Neville) Howse', but in this introductory chapter Bisdee is not mentioned. Each VC recipient is then covered in great detail, all in *Gazette* date order *except* for Howse, who appears first. In his entry it again says, 'This was the first award made to an Australian'. Bisdee appears next, his *Gazette* date indicating that he should have appeared first; Wylly is next and again his *Gazette* date shows that he should have appeared earlier than Howse. No mention is made of the early awards to Bisdee and Wylly.

*The Australian Encyclopaedia*, 1958. The Victoria Cross is included and the entry (vol.9, p.126) states: 'The first Australian to gain the award was Neville (later Sir Neville) Howse.' All VC recipients are listed, by war and in alphabetical order. Bisdee does not get a special mention, he just appears in the list.

*The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, various authors, 1995. As expected the story of the Victoria Cross is included and says (p.612): 'The first VC awarded to an Australian was won by Captain Neville House'. Sir Neville receives a special mention in the book, which is merited, but Bisdee is not mentioned at all.

Time Life Books produced a set of sixteen volumes dealing with Australia's wars; the Boer War volume is by Kit Denton. A whole page (p.135) is dedicated to the Victoria Cross with one photo, of Capt Neville Howse. In talking about the VC being 'awarded for the first time to an Australia soldier', it points out that the 'first Australian recipient of the Victoria Cross was not formally an Australian at all', because 'Neville Howse was born in Somerset, England'. It at least admits that Howse was born in England. Bisdee receives no special mention, appearing only in a list of the other five Australian VC winners from the Boer War, which is in alphabetical order.

*For Valour: Australians and the Victoria Cross*, by Richard Reid, 2000. It makes the usual statement about 'Australia's first VC, Captain Neville Howse' (p.8), and goes on to say, 'Trooper John Bisdee and Lieutenant Guy George Egerton Wylly form a unique duo in the story of the Victoria Cross in Australia. They were the first to gain the award while serving in the same unit at the same time and in the same place' (p.9). It does not add that Bisdee was the first Australian to be gazetted or that each had received his VC before Howse. It later says, 'As Captain Neville Howse was the first Victoria Cross recipient in Australian uniform ...', and under a column headed 'Award', it gives the dates of the deeds, thus awarding Howse first place on the list (p.10). However, there is a very big difference in meaning between 'date of award' and 'date of the deed'.

*A coin and a stamp.* In 2000 a coin was minted to honour one hundred years since Howse had won the VC. It is a \$1 coin which unfortunately was uncirculated. It is a beautiful coin with a reproduction of the VC, the legend 'Capt N Howse' with the date 24 July 1900. When Howse performed his act of valour he was a lieutenant, and with the date shown the name should appear as Lieut N Howse. The coin comes in a folder which slides into a nice cover. The folder explains: 'Australia's first Victoria Cross was awarded during the Boer War to Captain Neville Howse'. The cover carries the words, 'Australia's First Victoria Cross'. A stamp with a picture of Howse was also printed to honour the occasion.<sup>4</sup> No coin or stamp has ever been issued to honour John Hutton Bisdée, the first Australian-born recipient of the Victoria Cross.

Enough said; I have made my point, so where do we go from here? It would be nice to see a coin minted and placed in circulation, and a stamp issued which should remain available for a long period and not, as often happens, be issued one month and withdrawn the next. There should also be an overseas version. But first we have to convince someone in authority that a historical error has occurred and it should be put right.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

***Into the Midst of Things: The Autobiography of Sir Richard Kingsland*, Air Power Development Centre Publications, Canberra; card covers, 214pp, b&w photos, ISBN 9781920800499, RRP \$15.00**



The Royal Australian Air Force's Office of Air Force History (OAFH) has a remarkable oral history program and has now produced a number of autobiographies under its auspices. The text of *Into the Midst of Things* derived from a series of interviews with Sir Richard and Lady Kingsland and was supplemented by Sir Richard's records as well as a couple of extensive interviews conducted by the National Library of Australia. The raw material was then shaped into a captivating narrative by the RAAF Historian, Dr Chris Clark, and sensitively edited by Wing Commander Keith Brent, both ensuring that Sir Richard's distinctive voice is not lost.

Sir Richard had long resisted a biography and one of the reasons he was happy to become part of the OAFH's oral

<sup>4</sup> [See also Chris Yardley's article on postage stamps published in this issue – Ed.]