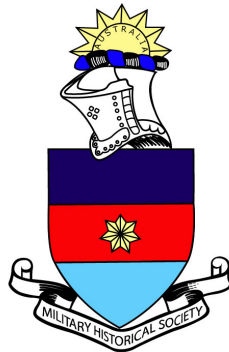


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



Copyright © 1957-2019 Military Historical Society of Australia on behalf of the Society and its authors who retain copyright of all their published material and articles. All Rights Reserved.

Sabretache policy is that the submission of material gives the Society permission to print your material, to allow the material to be included in digital databases such as the MHSa website, Australian Public Affairs-Full Text, INFORMIT and EBSCO. Reprints to non-profit historical and other societies will be approved provided suitable attribution is included and a copy of the reprint is sent to the author. Copyright remains with the author who may reprint his or her article or material from the article without seeking permission from the Society.

The Society encourages the download and distribution of *Sabretache* for personal use only and *Sabretache* can not be reproduced without the written consent of the Society.

www.mhsa.org.au

Military Historical Society of Australia
PO Box 5030, Garran, ACT 2605.
email: webmaster@mhsa.org.au

SABRETACHE

The Journal and Proceedings of
**The Military Historical
Society of Australia**

Vol LIX

June 2018

Number 2



Patron

Lt Gen P.H. Leahy,
AO (retd)

President

Rohan Goyne

Vice President

Nigel Webster

Secretary

Russell Linwood, ASM

Treasurer

Rod Bird

Membership Officer

John Meyers
mbhmus@bigpond.net.au

Councillors

Pat Hall
Anthony Staunton

Editor

Paul Skrebels
editor@mhsa.org.au
PO Box 247
MARDEN SA 5070

Society Website

www.mhsa.org.au

Webmaster

Paul Sutton
ps@pshistory.com

SABRETACHE

The Journal and Proceedings of the
Military Historical Society of Australia
(founded 1957)

June 2018

The aims of the Society are the encouragement and pursuit of study and research in military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment and kindred matters; the promotion of public interest and knowledge in these subjects, and the preservation of historical military objects with particular reference to the armed forces of Australia.

Constitution and Rules

The Constitution and Rules of the Society are printed in the January-March 1993 and April-June 1997 issues of *Sabretache* respectively. Section 12 of the Constitution was amended in the June 2010 issue of *Sabretache*.

Sabretache

The Federal Council is responsible for the publication of the Society Journal, *Sabretache*, which is mailed to each member of the Society quarterly.

Membership subscription

The annual membership subscription, due on 1 July each year, is \$40 plus branch subscription. Details of subscriptions and meetings are available from branch secretaries. Non-branch members should contact the Membership Officer.

Federal Council

PO Box 5030, GARRAN ACT 2605

Branch Secretaries

ACT: James Smith, 165 Belconnen Way, HAWKER ACT 2614
Queensland: David Geck, 106 Wharf St, MARYBOROUGH QLD 4650
South Australia: Elizabeth Hobbs, PO Box 1209, LITTLEHAMPTON SA 5250
Tasmania: John Presser, PO Box 309, GLENORCHY TAS 7010
Victoria: George Ward, PO Box 854, CROYDON VIC 3136
Western Australia: Peter Shaw, 3 Clubb Court, WINTHROP WA 6150

Fellows of the Military Historical Society of Australia

Mr Tony Harris	1992	SA
Mr Peter Shaw	1992	WA
Mr Peter Epps	2000	WA
Major Ian Barnes OAM ED RFD KStJ (Retd)	2002	VIC
Brigadier A.R. 'Tan' Roberts (Retd)	2002	ACT
Mr Pat Hall	2008	WA
Mrs Rhonda Grande	2008	WA
Major Paul Rosenzweig OAM JP (Retd)	2009	SA
Mr Don Wright	2011	QLD

EDITORIAL

I have decided that at the end of this year I will stand aside as editor of *Sabretache*. By then it will have been just over seven years since I took on the role, which is a decent run but perhaps also the proper time to make way for someone new and with fresh ideas. I have very much enjoyed my stint as editor; I've met or made contact with a lot of good and knowledgeable people, both within and outside the Society. I've also learnt much more about the field of military history than I would have if left to my own devices during those seven years. However, I've also had to put a number of personal research and writing projects on hold, and to postpone beginning others, and now I feel the urge to immerse myself fully in my own work.

Part of my decision has been prompted by the growing sense that time is passing by too rapidly these days, and that I need to make the most of what remains to me. As an example, I've just returned from an overseas trip wondering how many more such ventures I will have the stamina to make; I guess I'm starting to identify rather more closely with the old truism about not getting any younger. The point was driven home even more forcefully by the recent sudden passing of a friend and fellow military buff who to all intents and purposes seemed as fit as a fiddle until then. But enough of the morbid thoughts.

In making my intentions known at this stage, I hope to give anyone with an inkling that they might take on the editorial role a chance to think it over and write up an expression of interest in response to the formal call which appears under 'New *Sabretache* Editor' on p.50 of this issue. I should stress that previous editorial experience is not a prerequisite for the position; far better that candidates have a strong interest in military history in all its forms, a good working knowledge of written English, some effective interpersonal skills and a willingness to learn. Existing technical expertise in word-processing, layout and design is also not something to be too concerned about; they are the things that you pick up on the job (as I can well attest to!). Besides, I and others can always help out during any transition period.

Here then is an opportunity to involve yourself in a wonderfully varied and interesting field, and all under the auspices of a well-established institution. Have a look at the call for expressions of interest and give the matter some serious thought, and by all means feel free to contact me to discuss things beforehand and answer any questions you may have. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Paul Skrebels

JUNE 2018**VOLUME LIX — NUMBER 2****ISSN 0048 8933**

CONTENTS

4. The Jackdaw of Reims: Walter Vernon Herford
Trevor Turner
16. Railways in World War One: Their Place in the Australasian Military Railways Journey – Part 1
Jeff Hopkins-Weise and Rob Shiels
27. Commander Joseph Beresford
Benjamin James Morgan
30. The Brennan Torpedo: Australia's First Defence Industry
Rohan Goyne
32. The 'Men Behave Well and are a Credit to Australia': Australian Forestry Companies in the UK during WW2
Justin Chadwick
38. Breaking the 'Forrest Code': The Right Honourable Sir John Forrest PC GCMG
Major Paul A. Rosenzweig (retd)
50. New Sabretache Editor
Expressions of Interest
51. Reviews
Roger Maynard, *Hero or Deserter? Gordon Bennett and the Tragic Defeat of 8th Division*; Mark Johnston, *An Australian Band of Brothers: Don Company, Second 43rd Battalion, 9th Division*; Mike Colman, *Crew: The Story of the Men who Flew RAAF Lancaster J for Jig*; Christina Twomey, *The Battle Within: POWs in Postwar Australia*; Lachlan Grant, *Australian Soldiers in Asia-Pacific in World War II*; Rob Langdon, *The Seventh Circle*; David W. Cameron, *Australians on the Western Front 1918 Volume One: Resisting the Great German Offensive*; Christopher Othen, *Katanga 1960-63*; Ron Austin, *The Courtneys: A Victorian Military Family*
62. Military Forces of South Australia 1840-1903
Anthony F. Harris

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS: WALTER VERNON HERFORD

Trevor Turner

Introduction

The *South Australian Advertiser* of Monday 18 July 1864 stated:

The mournful intelligence was received in town early yesterday morning of the death, on the previous night, of Major W. V. Herford, of the 3rd Waikato Regiment. The deceased officer, it will be remembered, was wounded in the Orakau engagement whilst bravely leading his men on in spite of the deadly fire to which they were subjected. Hopes were entertained of his recovery at one time, but he had latterly sank under his wounds, and expired at a late hour on Tuesday evening at Otahuhu. Deceased was highly esteemed by those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and his death is deeply regretted by the officers and men of the Regiment. He was latterly attached to the Commissariat Transport Corps.¹

Almost 153 years later this newspaper cutting is nothing more than a curious footnote in the history of the New Zealand Wars. However, it not only belies the story of a prominent South Australian who died in an almost forgotten war, but who was foremost in the public life of the early days of colonial South Australian history in legal, social, religious and military affairs.

The Herford Family

Walter Vernon Herford, or Vernon, as he preferred, was born on 25 May 1828 at Altrincham, Manchester, where his mother, Sarah, had established a Unitarian school for girls. His father, John Herford, was a wine merchant and a man of staunch Liberal and Unitarian convictions. His grandfather, Lt Col William Lewis Herford, C.B., had commanded the 23rd Regiment, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, at the Napoleonic battles of Orthes and Toulouse.

In 1842, aged fifteen, Vernon accompanied his brother William, a Unitarian Minister and educator, to Germany, where William attended Bonn University.² During his time in Germany Vernon became fluent in the German language and developed a passion for the classics. He was also very close to his younger sister Laura, a promising artist and, in 1860, the first woman to become a member of the Royal Academy.³

Returning to England, Vernon studied law and developed an interest in all things military. On 1 November 1852 he was gazetted an ensign in the 3rd (King's Own) Regiment, Staffordshire Militia, and lieutenant in December 1852.⁴

South Australia

Having taken his law degree, Vernon Herford sailed for South Australia on 20 May 1853 from Gravesend aboard the *Agra*. However, it was not all clear sailing. Upon arrival at Port Adelaide on 24 August 1853 a petition was presented by the passengers, complaining of breaches of the 'Passenger Act 1852'. Vernon's complaint was that a quantity of 'pig's corn' had been placed between the pumps near the door of his cabin.⁵

¹ *The South Australian Advertiser*, 18 Jul 1864, p.2.

² Herford, p.20.

³ *Ibid*; another brother, Edward, was Coroner for Manchester City.

⁴ *London Gazette*: No.21383, 23 Nov 1852, p.315 & *London Gazette*: No.21429, 8 Apr 1853, p.102.

⁵ *South Australian Register*, 12 Oct 1853, p.3.

In Adelaide, on 25 February 1854, Vernon was admitted as a Barrister, Attorney, Proctor and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of the Province of South Australia.⁶ Establishing a reputation as a diligent legal officer, he formed a partnership with Mr H.W. Parker in King William Street, Adelaide until December 1855. With the large German population in the Barossa Valley, and his ability to speak that language, Vernon received a good deal of business from that community. He was also secretary of the Wine-growers Association and Anti-Distillation Law League and was a promoter and solicitor for the newly formed Tanunda Land, Building and Investment Society, as well as the Angaston Land and Building and Investment Society. Vernon was also an active member of the Order of Oddfellows and was examiner of the German language classes conducted at the Collegiate School of St Peter in Adelaide.⁷



Fig.1: Walter Vernon Herford, Adelaide, 1857. (Courtesy Auckland War Memorial Museum, PH-RES2023)

At Mersham, the home of the Wright family at Upper Dry Creek near Modbury, on 7 August 1858, Vernon married Annie McNee, third daughter of the late Dr John McNee.⁸ Vernon and Annie's first child, Annie Laura Vernon Herford, was born in May 1860, followed by Helen Alice Vernon Herford in May 1862. Their only son, Henry Vernon Herford, was born in Adelaide in September 1863. Sadly, he was to die in infancy at Otahuhu, New Zealand in 1864.⁹

As his business continued to expand Vernon had, by 1860, formed another brief partnership with the high profile Adelaide solicitor, James Boucaut – later Judge Sir James Boucaut and three times premier of South Australia. Vernon was now also diversifying his business interests and was advertising as a moneylender and speculating in land.

Orator of the Classics

His reputation as an orator and public speaker also gained prominence. At Angaston, on the evening of 17 February 1859, Vernon delivered a lecture on 'Student life in Germany', after which he recited one of the Ingoldsby Legends, which he delivered in a 'masterly style' and was widely complimented on.¹⁰ In fact Vernon had a passion for the 'The Jackdaw of Rheims' and 'The Hand of Glory', two of the best known of the *Ingoldsby Legends*.¹¹

Kent Town Rifle Volunteers

The lapsing of the Volunteer movement after the cessation of the Crimea War in 1856 saw the state of South Australia essentially undefended. The volunteer movement was reformed in 1859 and quickly numbered 14 companies and by 1860 the numbers had increased to 45 companies with a total of 70 officers and 2000 men. On 26 April 1860, the Adelaide

⁶ *Register*, 16 Mar 1854, p.2.

⁷ *Advertiser*, 26 Jan 1859, p.6.

⁸ *Register*, 9 Aug 1858, p.2.

⁹ NZ Death Index, 1864/1197

¹⁰ *Advertiser*, 22 Feb 1859, p.3.

¹¹ This collection of humorous and macabre stories in prose and verse was published between 1840 and 1847 by Rev Richard Barham, under the pen-name of Thomas Ingoldsby. The best of them were well regarded for their verbal wit, quality of verse and bilingual puns.

Regiment of Volunteer Rifles was formed consisting of many suburban and district companies.

Vernon Herford keenly entered the world of the volunteer. A public meeting was held on the evening of 8 February 1860 at the Maid and Magpie Inn, Stepney, with Vernon Herford in the chair, to consider establishing a volunteer rifle corps in that district. It was unanimously resolved to form a company, under the name of the Eastern Suburban Volunteer Rifle Corps.¹²

Two days later, on 11 February 1860, Capt James Hesketh Biggs, Staff Adjutant, (late 49th Regiment) attended the Maid and Magpie, and enrolled almost forty members for this new corps. After the enrolment, Vernon Herford chaired the first meeting of the new company.¹³ It was decided that the company would conduct regular drill on Monday mornings, and continue every alternate morning, between the hours of 6 and 8am. Local resident, Mr Dunlop Gloag, a former lieutenant of the 51st Regiment, was appointed drill instructor to the company. Vernon Herford was elected as their captain unopposed on 17 February 1860. Their company was now The Kent Town Rifle Volunteers, referred to simply as the 'Kent Rifles'. Shortly thereafter in early March the following appointments were formally gazetted in the Volunteer Military Force: Walter Vernon Herford to be captain and John Hamlin to be lieutenant; Vinrace Lawrence, Henry Friend Bastard and Joshua Finch to be sergeants and Peter Ray to be corporal.¹⁴

The initial enthusiasm for the Kent Rifles was very strong. As is always the case there was a hard core of members, including its captain, who kept the corps proficient. The volunteers were required to attend at least three times in each month to qualify themselves as effective members.¹⁵ For the first six months drill was conducted, usually at Prescott's paddock in Osmond Terrace and later the Kent Town Drill ground. The Maid and Magpie became the social centre for the corps and the defacto headquarters of the Kent Rifles. So popular was the enthusiasm for the Kent Rifles, and Capt Herford in particular, that a regimental dance, *The Kent Rifles Polka*, was composed by the wife of a company member, Pte Henry Price, and dedicated to Capt Herford.¹⁶

Generally the attendance at drill remained good, but there were some who failed to attend any parade and others rarely appeared at all. Besides a requirement for a certain amount of days at drill, members had to classify at the rifle range annually, to maintain their proficiency as 1st, 2nd or 3rd class marksmen, and the range days were well attended at the Glenelg Butts. On Saturday evening, 31 May 1860, the members of the Kent Town Rifle Volunteers entertained their popular captain at dinner at the Kent Town Hotel. After dinner Capt Herford gave a recitation of his old favourite, 'The Jackdaw of Rheims'.

Amalgamation of Volunteer Companies

After the initial burst of enthusiasm the volunteer movement soon struggled to keep its members. The interest of those less committed to martial activities quickly faded as did their attendance at company parades. On Friday evening, 17 August 1860, a meeting of the

¹² *Register*, 9 Feb 1860, p.3.

¹³ *Ibid*, 13 Feb 1860, p.3.

¹⁴ *South Australian Government Gazette*, 8 Mar 1868, p.233.

¹⁵ *Advertiser*, 5 May 1860, p.3.

¹⁶ *The Kent Rifles Polka* by Mrs Henry F. Price, Adelaide: Penman & Galbraith, 1860.

members of the Kent Rifles and the Kensington and Norwood Volunteer Rifle Corps was held the Kent Town Hotel, with a view to amalgamating these two companies. There were about 39 volunteers present and Capt Herford was voted to the chair. It was resolved, on the motion of Capt Walter Waldie, Kensington and Norwood Volunteer Rifles, and seconded by Pte Henry Price 'that the Kent Rifles and Kensington and Norwood Rifles be, and they are hereby, amalgamated'. Capt Waldie had decided to resign and the remaining officers of both companies were to retain their positions with Capt Herford to be Officer Commanding. Lieut Hamlin, Kent Rifles, with the consent of Lieut Webster of the Kensington and Norwood Volunteer Rifles, to be first lieutenant of the amalgamated company. It was also agreed that the name of the amalgamated company should be the Kent Rifles.¹⁷

Demise of the Kent Rifles

Unfortunately, by early 1861, enthusiasm for the volunteer movement had waned even further and despite the energetic efforts of Capt Herford, the Kent Rifles – even after their amalgamation – were no exception. Attendances at the monthly meetings and weekly drill had fallen alarmingly. By April 1861 it was evident that the Kent Rifles were no longer viable as an efficient volunteer corps with only 24 members, and its disbandment was ordered.¹⁸ The unit conducted one last range practice at the Mitcham target range on 6 April 1861 to contest for the following prizes: First: a silver cup, donated by Capt Herford; Second: the surplus funds of the Association; Third: a gold pencil-case.¹⁹

Those who attended the final range practice of the Kent Rifles were Capt Herford, Cpl Heanes, Ptes Solomon, Waldie, Caskey, Hambidge, Trapmann, Dewhirst, Jackson, Ballingall and Henry Price. Lieut Hamlin marked while Sgt Bastard scored. Sgt Lawrence acted as referee. The second squad, Kent Rifles, fired their last range practice the following Saturday, after which the prizes were awarded. By May 1861 the remaining Kent Rifles had amalgamated with the First Adelaide Rifles. The *South Australian Gazette* of 16 May 1861 notified the resignations of Capt Herford, Sgts Lawrence and Bastard and Cpl Samuel Heanes, all having joined the First Adelaide Rifles as privates.²⁰

Insolvency

However, the demise of the Kent Rifles heralded a period of continuing turmoil in Vernon Herford's life. For some time he had over extended himself in his private business dealings and veiled allegations were emerging of impropriety on his behalf. Vernon had also entered into the money lending business from May 1861. For the next eighteen months he struggled with a number of mounting money issues and his business and reputation suffered. By the end of 1862 his reputation and fortunes had collapsed.

On 1 February 1863 his humiliation was complete. It was notified that the fixtures and sundries at his office in King William Street would be sold by auction to satisfy the landlord's claim for rent.²¹ Perhaps, of the many mounting indiscretions against Vernon, the most damning, publicly at least, occurred on 6 February 1863, when claims were made on the

¹⁷ *Register*, 18 Aug 1860, p.3.

¹⁸ The Kent Rifles as at April 1861: Capt. W.V. Herford, Lieut. J. Hamlin, Sgts. H.F. Bastard, V. Lawrence, Cpl. S. Heanes, Privates G. Ballingall, J. Caskey, Edward Dewhirst, J.M. Gasquoine, R. Graham, W.R.W. Hambidge, J.B. Harrison, C. Howitt, C.S. Hulls, A. Jackson, J. Osborne, H. F. Price, J.E. Price, W. Randell, J.J. Solomon, W.G. Soward, F. Trapman, W. Waldie, W. Welbourne.

¹⁹ *Register*, 8 Apr 1861, p.3.

²⁰ *Adelaide Observer*, 18 May 1861, p.8.

²¹ *Advertiser*, 30 Jan 1863, p.4.

furniture and fittings of a house rented and occupied by Mrs Ann McNee, Vernon Herford's mother-in-law. Vernon had previously moved his family and their furniture into the house and had been living with Mrs McNee. It was also revealed that in January 1862, Mrs McNee had made a loan to Vernon of £650. As security Vernon assigned all his property at the house to Mrs McNee.

By March 1863 it was determined that Vernon had fled the colony and by late June he had been declared insolvent. His creditors attempted to seize Mrs McNee's furniture, believing they were Vernon's. Mrs McNee only narrowly kept her possessions.²² After fleeing Adelaide Vernon Herford quickly arrived in Sydney. Having read the offer of land for volunteers as military settlers in New Zealand in that colony's war with the Maori, and with his fondness for soldiering, this would have appeared a perfect opportunity to distance himself from his debts and create a new beginning. On 1 May 1863 Vernon departed from Sydney aboard the steamer *Prince Alfred* for Auckland.²³

New Zealand 1863

The New Zealand government were keen to free British regular troops from garrison duties for more offensive operations against the Maoris in the Waikato. To this end a large number of militia volunteers were being enrolled as military settlers, who, after three years' service were to be settled with land grants on confiscated Maori land. A great number of these men came from Australia and the Otago district of New Zealand. Eager to obtain a commission in the New Zealand Militia, Vernon presented his credentials as a former officer of the Staffordshire Militia and South Australian Volunteers to the Colonial Defence Department in Auckland. He was advised that if he could raise a company of volunteers for the new Waikato Militia now being established he might receive a commission in that militia.

Now an accredited government agent authorised to raise a company of volunteers for the Waikato military settler scheme, Vernon travelled to the Nelson area of New Zealand's South Island in early October 1863. By mid October he had enrolled 48 militia volunteers from the Nelson province, with an additional 15 from Marlborough, making a total of 63. Along with Vernon, these men mustered at the Militia Office in Nelson on the morning of 16 October and boarded the steamship *Phoebe*, having arrived from Port Lyttelton. The *Phoebe* also carried 125 militia volunteers from Dunedin and the Otago province, besides those newly recruited from Nelson and Marlborough.²⁴ The *Phoebe* arrived at Auckland on 18 October 1863.²⁵

Most of the volunteers from the *Phoebe* were allotted to the 3rd Waikato Regiment, including Vernon's 63 volunteers. As a result Vernon Herford received his commission as captain in the Auckland Militia on 20 October 1863 and was appointed to the 3rd Waikato Regiment.²⁶ On 8 December 1863 Vernon's wife Annie and their three children joined him in New Zealand, arriving aboard the steamer *Ann and Jane* from Adelaide. Vernon was able to rent a small house at Otahuhu for himself and his family. Otahuhu was then the site of a large and busy military encampment and conditions were very bleak and harsh indeed. In fact so severe were the sanitary conditions that often a candle was left to burn all night in order to keep the

²² *Register*, 6 Feb 1863, p.8.

²³ *Colonist*, 5 May 1863, p.2.

²⁴ *Colonist*, 16 Oct 1863, p.2.

²⁵ NZ Archives; Deputy Adjutant General, Inwards Correspondence, 1863/2498 of 15 Oct.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 1863/2480 of 20 Oct.

rats away!²⁷

However, if there were any doubts as to the reasons why Vernon had left Adelaide so hurriedly, they are dispelled by a brief mention in the *South Australian Register* in late December 1863, when a private letter received from a South Australian serving in New Zealand, stated: 'Ask if there was not a reward for Herford the lawyer. If so, I can catch him nicely. I would enjoy it much.'²⁸

Imperial Commissariat Transport Corps

Bored with garrison life at Otahuhu, Vernon applied for detachment to the Imperial Commissariat Transport Corps (ICTC), as did many others of the 3rd Waikato Regiment and Auckland Militia. Based at Penrose Farm in Auckland, the ICTC were to play a critical part in General Cameron's Waikato campaign. The timely supply of stores, rations and arms to maintain the impetus of the advance had long been a logistical nightmare in New Zealand. From Penrose down the Great South Road into the Waikato, long convoys of drays, often numbering seventy in number, were driven by the ICTC, mostly by men who belonged to the Waikato regiments. By February 1864, Vernon was at Mere Mere in the Waikato, commanding the newly raised No.8 Company of the Transport Corps, and in March at Te Awamutu.²⁹

Siege of Orakau

Orakau is situated in the Waikato District, near Kihikihi. The battle, or more accurately a defended siege, was fought from 31 March to 2 April 1864. The imperial and colonial troops would eventually number 1,700 and were under the command of Brig Gen George Carey. The Maoris numbered 300, including women and children, defending an incomplete and hastily built pa. On the morning of 30 March 1864 Lt Col Haultain, commanding Nos. 2 and 9 companies of the 2nd Waikato Regiment at Kihikihi, informed Gen Carey that Maoris were seen in force at the village of Orakau, about three miles south-east of Te Awamutu. The defenders were Ngati Maniapoto led by Rewi Maniapoto.

Gen Carey planned his attack on the position. He directed Maj Blyth, 40th Regiment, and Capt Blewitt, 65th Regiment, to surround the pa with small forces, while he advanced more directly with the main body. Vernon Herford was known to Maj Blyth, as that officer had been in command of the detachment of the 40th Regiment and military commander in Adelaide during Vernon's tenure with the Kent Rifles.

Capt Herford, having arrived from Te Awamutu that first afternoon with his transport company, received permission from Gen Carey to join the storming party.³⁰ He took with him Ensign Henry Harrison, along with No.8 Company's staff sergeant, Andrew Dow, and many of the dray-drivers.³¹ However, his arrival was not without incident. Ensign William Mair, Colonial Defence Force and interpreter, wrote of Vernon's initial arrival at Orakau from Te Awamutu; his introduction to warfare and ineffectual wounding:

²⁷ *Otago Witness*, 13 Feb 1864, p.17.

²⁸ *Register*, 29 Dec 1863, p.2.

²⁹ NZ Archives: Deputy Adjutant General, Inwards Correspondence, No.330 of 3 Feb 1864 and No.455 of 15 Feb 1864.

³⁰ Gudgeon, p.84.

³¹ NZ Archives, AD32/2675, Andrew Dow, New Zealand Medal application; 14 July 1873.

As we cantered round through some peach trees we got a rattling volley from some rifle pits just outside the north end of the pa. Hurford [sic] reeled nearly out of his saddle. A curious thing had happened to him, his tunic was flying open; beneath it there was only a fine silk shirt, and a bullet had hit him in the chest, but it did not penetrate the shirt, which seemed wrapped round the bullet. Hurford had just come up in command of a transport company, and was a fine plucky fellow.³²

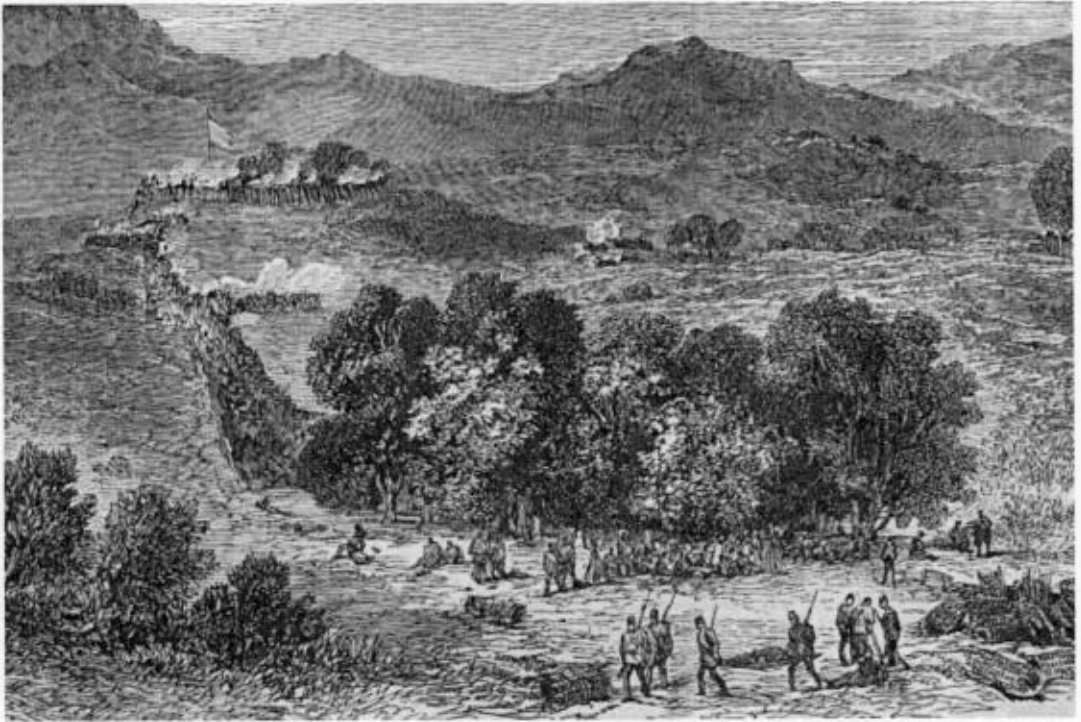


Fig.2: Orakau Pa and sap, 31 March-2 April 1864 (Illustrated London News)

At dawn on 31 March the troops were in position, but failed to take the pa by direct assault. Gen Carey then decided to approach it by means of a sap while, at the same time, his infantry were drawn close to prevent the defenders from breaking out. On 1 April Carey received reinforcements and work continued on the sap. Vernon and his men had volunteered, along with others, to work on the sap. The sap progressed with great vigour and by midday of 1 April almost 500 yards had been completed.³³ About midnight on the second day, a small party of Maori defenders suddenly appeared upon the sap parapet. Under Capt Herford, a heavy volley met them and they fell back into the pa. This small group under Vernon then recommenced digging the sap. Vernon had experienced another narrow escape that day, two spent bullets again striking him heavily without penetration.

Captain Von Tempsky

The charismatic Capt Gustavus von Tempsky and his No.2 Company of the Forest Rangers were also prominent in the actions at Orakau. Von Tempsky had been in close contact with Vernon who had spoken to Von Tempsky of his initial near wounding in the sap.

There was poor Major Hurford, [sic] of the 3rd Waikato Regiment, he came to me and said that he had just two very narrow escapes, one ball contusing his breast, another his hip. 'I am so

³² *The Waikato Argus*, 7 February 1910, p.4.

³³ *Taranaki Herald*, 9 Apr 1864, p.3.

glad' he said 'that my wife will not hear of this until all is over'. The following morning it was all over with him.³⁴

Early in the morning on 2 April General Carey had one of the six-pounder Armstrong guns placed in the sap, about twenty yards from the pa. Loaded with grape, it was repeatedly fired, with grenades being thrown while the gun was being charged. The sap was carried into a branch trench from the pa, and struck off in parallel towards the north side. It was about this time that Gen Carey instructed his interpreter, Ensign William Mair, to speak with the defenders, and consider surrendering; the response was the famous, 'friend, I shall fight against you forever, forever!'. Firing recommenced.

Captain Herford Wounded

Capt Herford now calmly rose from the sap with an axe and attempted to cut down a post from a portion of the old stockyard fence intervening between the sap and the head of the Maori rifle-pits or counter-scarp. Two years later, on 7 May 1866, one of Vernon's own men that day, Pte Daniel Callaghan, a Melbourne enlistee into the 3rd Waikato Regiment; and now of Vernon's No.8 Company of the Transport Corps, provided a personal account of that day when responding to another writers 'inaccurate' version of the events:

he did not see the bravest man that day on the field, Captain Herford, step out from the sap, axe in hand, and cut away that fence he speaks of? If, he did not see that, nor did he see him calmly return, his fine face lit up with courage and resolution, nor did he hear him say, 'Now boys, the coast is clear,' but I both heard and saw him, for I was never from his side throughout the whole engagement, and had poor Herford been well supported, the pa would have been taken at the run; but he was not.³⁵

Shortly thereafter, at 12:30 in the afternoon, the sap broke into the ends of the enemy's earthworks. A spirited but ill-considered attack was made from the sap on the pa. It appears a soldier working in the sap recklessly snatched the forage cap from a comrade and threw it out of the sap under the parapets and jokingly dared its owner to go and fetch it. The man jumped out of the sap. About twenty others, comprising Militia, Forest Rangers and regulars instinctively followed him. Carried by the momentum, with Vernon Herford and Ensign Harrison,³⁶ along with Staff-Sgt Dow, their impromptu charge burst through the light outer palisading surrounding the pa, and rushed into the great inner trench and endeavoured to scramble up the embankment. Here a deadly volley met them from the Maori defenders and ten men fell, either killed or wounded. It was an act of splendid but ill-fated bravery. While struggling to clamber up the steep sides of the trench, Capt Herford was shot by a Maori defender who, for a moment, had stood on the top of the parapet just above him.³⁷ The wound was horrific. The musket ball struck Vernon near the junction of the left nasal and frontal bones. It passed obliquely downwards and inwards into the brain, almost completely severing all the attachments of the left eyeball and forcing it from its socket.³⁸

Having discharged their weapons the Maori defenders quickly withdrew. With Capt Herford now fallen, seemingly dead, the attacking party retired, bringing with them the dead and wounded, including Capt Herford.³⁹ Daniel Callaghan, present in that spontaneous and tragic

³⁴ Cowan, *The Old Frontier*, pp.66-67.

³⁵ *The New Zealand Herald*, 10 May 1866, p.4.

³⁶ Late 2nd Waikato Regt, now 8 Coy, ICTC, Lieut., 2 Apr 1864 - NZ Army List 1865,

³⁷ Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars*, p.389,

³⁸ Mouat, p.13.

³⁹ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 12 Apr 1864, p.5.

assault, stated in 1866 that Pte (289) Thomas Jenkins, 2nd Battalion, 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment, was the only regular soldier in that assault and stayed with Vernon until he was also shot in the face – losing half his lower jaw:

It was an 18th man, Thomas Jenkins, had his jawbone shot away protecting my poor captain when he was down, nevertheless Jenkins would not leave him, and at length succeeded in dragging him into shelter. This man, I hope, will yet be noticed for his daring and devotion. Thomas Jenkins was the only regular that was with us in that charge.⁴⁰

An unnamed Tasmanian volunteer with No.10 Company of the 3rd Waikato Regiment, present that day, also describes the activities in the sap and the wounding of Capt Herford:

At this time we were getting very close to the Maories, and the firing was very hot on both sides. I fired off about 60 rounds. There were several shot in the sap, and about one o'clock one of the Militia officers, Captain Harford, [sic] made a rush at the enemy's pah, followed by some twenty men, militia and soldiers, but they had to retreat. This charge was not ordered by the General, and when the shout was raised no one knew what was up, except those at the head of the sap. The rush was made too soon – they only got into some rifle pits. The Captain got a bullet above the eye which knocked his eye out.⁴¹

The Casualties

Capt Herford was carried to the rear where the surgeon examined him. Upon seeing an apparently lifeless body with a bullet wound in the forehead, he concluded that it was a case beyond his skill. Very soon after, however, Vernon stirred, and opening his uninjured eye, recognised some of those around him.⁴² He was then evacuated with the other wounded to the camp hospital at Te Awamutu by his own transport company, in the care of Staff-Sgt Dow, who was with him in the sap when wounded.

Contrary to Pte Callaghan's statement about Jenkins being the only regular in their assault, seriously wounded in the impromptu assault were Ensign Alfred Chaytor, 65th Regiment and Pte Thomas Hannon, 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment, both of whom died of their wounds on 21 April. Also seriously wounded were Pte's Joseph Warbey and William Molloy, both of No.9 Company, 2nd Waikato Militia.

Casualties from Vernon's own No.8 Company of the Transport Corps, and late of the 3rd Waikato, included Corp Jonathan Armstrong, (late of the 58th and 65th Regiments) killed and Ptes Joseph Preston and Daniel Callaghan, severely wounded. Pte Preston was one of those whom Vernon had originally enlisted at Nelson. Pte John Lovett, also of the Transport Corps, was severely wounded in the head.

By 4 o'clock in the afternoon of 2 April the end of the sap was within two yards of the trench on the north side, two attacks on the position having been made and a heavy fire of grape and rifle being kept up, with a continued grenade assault. The Maori defenders realised that the pa could not be held, and a withdrawal was decided upon.⁴³ That afternoon the Maori defenders abandoned the pa. Having broken through the 40th Regiment's thinly guarded lines, for several hours the fleeing defenders were pursued by the Colonial Defence Force Cavalry. By nightfall the pursuit was ended and many survivors escaped, including their chief, Rewi

⁴⁰ *The New Zealand Herald*, 10 May 1866, p.4.

⁴¹ *Launceston Examiner*, 10 May 1864 p.2.

⁴² Gudgeon, p.84.

⁴³ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 12 April 1864, p.5.

Maniopoto.

Of the 300 Maori defenders, both men and women, 150 were killed and most of the remainder were wounded. Twenty-six wounded and seven unwounded prisoners were taken in the pa. British casualties, out of a force of 1,474, were, according to the official return, 15 killed and 54 wounded. The attacking force comprised units of the Artillery, Engineers, 12th, 18th, 40th, 65th and 70th Regiments, together with the Colonial Defence Force Cavalry, three companies of the Waikato Militia, Commissariat Transport Corps and the Forest Rangers.



Fig.3: The Herford family, Adelaide 1865. Seated left, Annie Herford, Vernon's wife; in front, their daughter Annie Laura Vernon Herford. Seated right, Mrs Ann McNee. Standing at rear, Laura Herford, Vernon's artist sister. (Courtesy Auckland War Memorial Museum, PH-RES-2025)

After The Battle

Vernon remained in hospital at Te Awamutu and seemed to be slowly recovering. On 16 April his wife Annie arrived at Te Awamutu determined to nurse her husband. When convalescent enough Vernon returned to his small house at Otahuhu, where he continued to be nursed by Annie. On one occasion he was able to travel the brief distance into Auckland. However, his condition deteriorated and he suffered greatly, often becoming delirious. At a quarter past nine in the evening of 28 June 1863, Walter Vernon Herford died at his home in Otahuhu.⁴⁴ A post mortem revealed that the bullet had remained in his head, having travelled to the back of the skull,

where it had caused a fatal abscess to form.

For his gallantry at Orakau Vernon had been mentioned by Gen Cameron in his despatches of 3 April 1864 and elevated to the rank of Brevet-Major to date from 2 April 1864, the date of his wounding.⁴⁵ Bvt-Maj Walter Vernon Herford's military funeral took place in the churchyard of Holy Trinity at Otahuhu, Auckland on 1 July 1864. He was buried with full military honours in the same grave as his deceased infant son, Henry. His friend, Capt Prideaux Rickards, 3rd Waikato Regiment, acted as Chief Mourner. Vernon's body was borne on a gun carriage drawn by six horses, driven by his men of the Commissariat Transport Corps. The firing party also provided by the Transport Corps. The band of the 2nd Bn 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment played the traditional *Dead March in Saul* during the procession to the grave. The coffin bore a small plate simply inscribed: 'W.V. Herford, Died 29 June, 1864,

⁴⁴ Ibid, 12 July 1864, p.6.

⁴⁵ *Daily Southern Cross*, 11 April 1864, p.4.

Aged 36 years.⁴⁶ Sadly, Vernon had died virtually penniless. His family were now in what was described as ‘very straightened’ circumstances.⁴⁷



Fig.4: Vernon's headstone in the churchyard of Holy Trinity at Otahuhu, Auckland. (Author's photo)

The Herford Fund

Immediately after his funeral, at the instigation of Capt Rickards, a meeting was held at the Trafalgar Hotel where £90 was subscribed by his brother officers, and a fund was established on behalf of Vernon's family. Vernon had also died intestate and this only compounded Mrs Herford's dilemma.⁴⁸ In total the 'The Herford Fund' raised over £335 for the benefit of Vernon's now destitute family.⁴⁹ Annie Herford and her two small daughters, Helen and Laura, returned to Adelaide aboard the *Claud Hamilton* on 30 July 1864.⁵⁰

The New Zealand Government eventually awarded Mrs Herford a pension of £140 a year, plus £30 compensation, totalling £170. Annie Herford received a pension from 1864 to 31 March 1892, by which time it had reduced to £130 per annum.⁵¹ Vernon's artist sister, Laura Herford, upon hearing the news of her brother's wounding, immediately sailed for New Zealand, arriving aboard the *Victory* on 4 January 1865. After a short stay in New Zealand, Laura travelled to Adelaide to visit Annie and her children.⁵² In 1892 Annie Herford married widower Arthur Baker, again at the Unitarian Church in Wakefield Street. Annie died at Osmond Terrace, Norwood, on 30 April 1900, aged 59 years.⁵³ Vernon and Annie's daughters both married and remained in Adelaide.

New Zealand Medal

For his service in New Zealand Bvt-Maj Walter Vernon Herford was awarded the distinctive New Zealand Medal.⁵⁴ This medal was forwarded to his wife in Adelaide in December, 1872. It was described as:

⁴⁶ Ibid, 4 July 1864, p.3.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 12 July 1864, p.6.

⁴⁸ NZ Archives, BBAE 1587/69 Intestate files, Herford, Walter Vernon, 1864.

⁴⁹ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 11 October 1864, p.6.

⁵⁰ *Daily Southern Cross*, 1 August 1864, p.3.

⁵¹ Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, Pensions to Widows, & Compassionate Allowances 1865 to 1892; It was also decided that the money raised by The Herford Fund would be invested in mortgage and that the trust pay Mrs Herford the interest as long as she remained a widow, should she re-marry that the interest only be applied to her children. It was also decided that once the youngest child attained the age of eighteen years that the principle be divided equally amongst the survivors. One of the three trustees was Captain Rickards, another was Captain James Holt, 2nd Waikato Regiment; honorary secretary and treasurer of the fund, who with Captain Rickards, had been instrumental in establishing and administering the fund. The Herfords' good friend and samaritan, Prideaux Rickards, died in Melbourne on 12 September 1888, aged 55.

⁵² *Advertiser*, 31 August 1939, p.8; tragically, Laura Herford died from an accidental medical overdose in 1870, aged 39.

⁵³ *Register*, 1 May 1900, p.4.

⁵⁴ *New Zealand Gazette* No.31 of 31 May 1871.

The reverse shows a wreath of bay enclosing the dates '1861 to 1866,' and surrounded with the legend, 'New Zealand, Virtutis Honor.' Round the edge is engraved 'Brevt Majr. W. V. Herford, 3rd Waikato Mil.'⁵⁵

Mrs Herford signed a receipt for Vernon's medal at Stepney, Adelaide on 16 December 1872. Unfortunately she had placed the administration of her affairs in the hands of her brother-in-law, John Howard Clark, including the return of the Vernon's medal receipt to Wellington. However, as a result of a long illness and Clark's eventual death in 1878, the receipt for Vernon's medal was not returned. The New Zealand Secretary for Defence despatched a second letter and receipt to Mrs Herford in January 1878. Both receipts were returned to Wellington.⁵⁶

Conclusion

For seventy-five years a simple wooden cross stood over Vernon's grave and that of his infant son, unadorned and without inscription. In 1939 Mrs Laura Herford Sheat,⁵⁷ of Mount Albert in Auckland, was instrumental in having a suitably inscribed headstone erected in place of the wooden cross.⁵⁸ This headstone stands today, a simple memorial and enduring reminder to one man's story. It states: 'Walter Vernon Herford, Major, 3rd Waikato Militia, Wounded at Orakau. Died June 28, 1864 Aged 35 years'.

Of those prominent with Vernon Herford that fateful day of his own No.8 Company, Andrew Dow became a miner on New Zealand's isolated west coast of the South Island. He died at Greymouth in 1901, aged 75, and lies in a pauper's grave. Harry Berkely Rogers-Harrison, a Londoner, was promoted lieutenant to date from 2 April 1864 for his gallant efforts at Orakau. A senior public servant with the Queensland Lands Department, he died suddenly near Thargomindah in 1905, aged 63. Pte Joseph Preston deserted in 1865. He died at Auckland in 1913, aged 70. Pte Daniel Callaghan was severely wounded in the right arm during the assault and was medically discharged at Auckland on 24 October 1864. He died in 1898 aged 65. The unfortunate Thomas Jenkins, a 23-year-old labourer from Dublin, was also discharged in Auckland in 1865. He died as a result of his terrible wounds on 24 August 1867.

References:

- Cowan, James (1922) *The New Zealand Wars, A History of The Maori Campaigns and The Pioneering Period*, Vol.2
- Cowan, James (1922) *The Old Frontier – Te Awamutu, The story of the Waipa Valley*
- Gudgeon, Thomas (1887) *The Defenders of New Zealand*, H. Brett, Auckland
- Herford, C.H. (1916) *The Student's Froebel*, Part 1; Pitman & Sons, London
- Mouat, James, V.C., C.B (1866) *The New Zealand War of 1863-64-65. Special Report on Wounds and Injuries Received in Battle*. [Extracted from the Medical and Surgical History of the New Zealand War]

-o0o-

⁵⁵ *Register*, 5 December, 1872, p.8.

⁵⁶ NZ Archives, AD32/3065.

⁵⁷ Mr T.J. Thompson of Nelson had named his infant daughter after Miss Herford, in honour of her visit to his family in Nelson in 1865 following Vernon's death.

⁵⁸ *Advertiser*, 22 November 1939, p.2.

RAILWAYS IN WORLD WAR ONE: THEIR PLACE IN THE AUSTRALASIAN MILITARY RAILWAYS JOURNEY – PART 1

Jeff Hopkins-Weise and Rob Shiels¹

Throughout World War One, railways proved to be a crucial logistical part of the war effort on all sides throughout the United Kingdom, Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. Railways fed the voracious war machine, but no more so as was experienced on the Western Front. In Australia railways supported the war effort from recruitment trains through country and regional areas, troop trains transporting soldiers and nurses to their ports of departure for overseas service (and later, their return), as well as hospital trains, supplies, equipment and the movement of horses. Railways in many ways defined the military and civilian experience of this war.

With the current focus on the centenary of WW1, The Workshops Rail Museum at North Ipswich, Queensland, embarked on an exhibition research program in 2013 to examine the role of railways during the 'Great War', which led The Workshops Rail Museum to develop the exhibition *Railways 1914-1918*, launched at this Museum in 2015.²

The research for this exhibition examined the realities of rail operations at war, along with the Australian railway units that were formed to aid in the critical logistical support on the Western Front during 1916-18. These Australian railway units continued to provide valuable services in the immediate post-war period following the Armistice on 11 November 1918, and into 1919 as troops on all sides commenced their sometimes lengthy return trips to get back to their homes and loved ones, and for civilian populations to commence the long path to rebuilding and recovery. Railways played an enormous role on all sides, not only in the frontline experience of the Great War, but also in the equally important role on the home front in areas such as recruitment, transport, the return of people including casualties, and in other support for those fighting for their respective countries.

Railways and 19th Century Wars

Despite the fact that many people are unaware of the place of railways during 1914-18, even less known is the largely unexplored pre-1914 use of railways in wars during the nineteenth century through into Federation in 1901, and in the lead up to war in 1914. Australia's pre-1914 railways laid foundations for the even greater impact they had for this nation's role and contributions during WW1, and continued to do so on an even bigger scale during WW2 when war was at Australia's front door. Railways in fact became a feature in the operations of all conflicts which Australia has been involved from the 1860s through into the two World Wars.

¹ Rob Shiels is the Collection Manager at The Workshops Rail Museum (TWRM), located in North Ipswich, Queensland, which is part of the Queensland Museum Network. He was also the Project Manager of the World War One Western Front veteran narrow-gauge Hunslet 327 restoration project at TWRM during 2012-17. Jeff Hopkins-Weise is a historian and curator with a strong fascination for and background in Queensland, Australian, New Zealand and Pacific history. Areas where he has delved include the role and experience of the British Army in colonial Australia and New Zealand; the trans-Tasman dimensions of Australian involvement in the New Zealand wars during the 1840s and 1860s; and Australasian humanitarianism and memorialisation in association with conflict, the British Army and Royal Navy.

² A scaled-down version of this exhibition has been travelling to regional centres throughout Australia since 2015 and continues into 2018.

To date, very little has been published about Australian military railway units, or the diverse roles which railways played, though there have been some insightful short historical explorations. John Bullen's 1995 two-part article, 'Australian Railwaymen at War 1916-1919', was published in the *Australian Railway Historical Society Bulletin*, while R.R. McNicoll's 1979, *The Royal Australian Engineers 1902 to 1919* contains useful appendices dealing specifically with the Australian Railway Companies.³ Of course the start of commemorations associated with the centenary of WWI has seen a number of new books and documentaries emerge which are correcting this historical amnesia towards railways, but they by and large deal with other nations' railways and the contributions of home front and military railway men and women. Nonetheless, these have included a 2016 book on the 5th Australian Broad Gauge Operating Company, and material dealing with Australian Broad Gauge Operating Companies on the Western Front in books by Bill Aves.⁴

Sadly, no detailed history of Australian military railways or even a serious pictorial study has yet been undertaken. Nor is there any comprehensive combined social, economic and military study which tackles railways at war in an Australian context for the Great War. Therefore this article seeks to touch upon some of this ground, and draw further attention to the very rich and yet largely unexplored context of railways in war from an Australasian colonial context through into World War One.

Early Origins and Development of Rail in War

As the Industrial Revolution took hold and spread through Britain, Europe and North America during the nineteenth century, it spawned new technologies such as railways and the electric telegraph. These technologies dramatically transformed travel, communications and trade, as well as the ability to mobilise vast military forces in time of war.

The first instance of railways being used for military purposes occurred in Britain and Europe during the 1830s and 1840s. By the early 1850s railways were already showing their usefulness for military purposes, as evidenced in the *Illustrated London News* June 1853 account of one major training event held at Chobham in England: 'The arrangements on the railways leading to the ... encampment, were on a scale commensurate with the requirements of the occasion; and although the South-Western Company had to convey 4000 men and upwards of 100 horses, the utmost accommodation was afforded to the general public, without the slightest accident, confusion, or delay.'⁵

Within a few years, the Crimean War (1853-56) witnessed the construction of the Grand Crimean Central Railway in 1855 from the port of Balaclava to supply ammunition and provisions to Allied soldiers engaged in the siege of Sebastopol (Sevastopol). This war also involved the world's first hospital train. Prussian wars with Austria in 1866 and then France in 1870-71 also saw the planned and efficient use of railways for military use. Apart from

³ John Bullen, 'Australian Railwaymen at War 1916-1919' Parts 1 & 2, *Australian Railway Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol.46, No.696, (September 1995), pp.243-56, & Vol.46, No.696, (October 1995), pp.283-99. R.R. McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers: 1902 to 1919: Making and Breaking* (Canberra: The Corps Committee of The Royal Australian Engineers, 1979), 'Appendix B: The Railway Companies', pp.169-79.

⁴ Tom Goode, *The Cold-Footed Mob: A History of the 5th Australian Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company* (Carlisle, Western Australia: Hesperian Press, 2016). William Aves, *The Railway Operating Division on the Western Front: The Railway Engineers in France and Belgium 1915-1919* (Shaun Tyas Publishing: Donington, Lincolnshire, 2009). William Aves, *The Lines Behind the Front: The Railways in Support of the British Expeditionary Forces in the Great War: A Photographic record* (Lightmoor Press: Gloucestershire, UK, 2016).

⁵ *Illustrated London News*, 18 June 1853, p.487.

these European innovations and military achievements using railways, the American Civil War during 1861-65 was the first truly railway war where rail played an integral role.⁶ Railways provided a capacity to rapidly mobilise and supply a large military force and bring it to the battlefield. Its power was primarily strategic and logistic. But like industrialisation from which it emerged, railways would transform modern warfare by the twentieth century to unheard of levels of military production, carnage and death, as was heralded with the outbreak of the Great War in 1914.

'Railways revolutionised warmaking on land' during the latter nineteenth century, and continued to play a monumental role through into two world wars in the twentieth century.⁷ The experiences of rail in warfare through the 1850s into the 1870s in Europe and in North America led to army commands everywhere starting seriously to consider the impact of railways for future military use. This included the creation of military railway departments, committees and other planning bodies, and specific engineer and railway staff corps in the armies of many nations such as Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, the United States and Russia in the lead up to 1914.

Australia throughout this period took its lead from Britain in all matters related to defence. Nonetheless, Australia lagged behind in planning for mobilisation and the use of railways in war. Following Federation in 1901 and the years just prior to the outbreak of WWI, Australia finally started to give serious consideration to its diverse and incompatible state rail networks for the purpose of national defence and military mobilisation.

Railways in Colonial Australia and the Wars across the Tasman

In the build-up to the Great War in 1914, we should also reflect on colonial Australia's introduction and growing experience with aspects of rail in war through our earliest overseas military involvements in the 1860s through to the early 1900s. And it would be the New Zealand (or Maori) Wars of the 1860s, where for the first time, colonial Australia's infant railways would be involved in the movement of British garrison troops for despatch to New Zealand during times of crisis in 1860 and in 1863.⁸

What appears to be the first instance of colonial Australian railways being used for military purposes took place in April 1860. In Melbourne the dramatic intelligence of the outbreak of conflict in Taranaki was received on 5 April 1860. That evening various communications passed between the governor, navy, military and commissary-general in preparation for sending supplies, equipment and troops of the Victorian garrison, as well as from Hobart Town, to New Zealand.⁹ The troops from Melbourne were to be sent by the *City of Hobart*.¹⁰ This vessel embarked 215 officers and men of the 40th Regiment. To assist with the speed and efficiency in getting these troops on the way to the war zone across the Tasman, a special

⁶ Christian Wolmar, *Engines of War: How Wars were Won and Lost on the Railways* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), p.34.

⁷ John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (London: Hutchinson, 1993), p.306.

⁸ For more detailed exploration of Australian involvement in the New Zealand wars during the 1840s and 1860s, including aspects such as logistics and railways, refer to Jeff Hopkins-Weise, 'Australia's Logistical and Commissariat Support in the New Zealand Wars, 1863-66', *Sabretache: The Journal and Proceedings of the Military Historical Society of Australia*, Vol.47, No.4, (December 2006), pp.5-24; and *Blood Brothers: The Anzac Genesis* (Rosedale, North Shore, New Zealand: Penguin Books, 2009; also published by Wakefield Press, Kent Town, South Australia, 2009).

⁹ *Argus*, 7 April, p.5, and also refer to p.4 and 9 April 1860, p.4. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 April 1860, p.4.

¹⁰ *Argus*, 10 April, p.4, and 14 April 1860, p.5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 April, p.4, and 16 April 1860, p.7

train on the Hobson's Bay Railway shuttled them from Melbourne Station to the pier on 17 April, where upwards of 4000 enthusiastic spectators witnessed their departure.¹¹

Railways in Victoria and New South Wales were also important during the two recruiting missions by New Zealand Government officials and officers during the military settler recruiting campaigns which took place in the Australian colonies in 1863, and again during early 1864. These two Australian recruiting drives were able to obtain between 2500-3000 men enlisted for service in New Zealand military settler regiments which served in the Waikato and in Taranaki during 1863-67. Colonial railways here were used to move recruiters to regional centres, as well as to transport recruits to ports for departure to the North Island of New Zealand.¹²

A related colonial railways experience is the importance of serving or former British Army (or East India Company) officers or Royal Engineers, who during the 1850s and into the 1860s, were involved in the surveying and construction of rail networks. One special unit of Royal Engineer enlisted men who were involved in New South Wales railways surveying during the late 1850s were also despatched to do New Zealand war service in Taranaki in 1860.

One important former officer was Captain Gother Kerr Mann, ex-Bombay Horse Artillery, East India Company, who became the first Commissioner for New South Wales Railways. Mann also contributed a valuable addition to the limited artillery available in New Zealand in the earlier conflicts during 1845-46 by assisting with the Sydney manufacture of a small quantity of Coehorn Mortars – the beginnings of an Australian arms industry. Designed by Mann, these mortars were then cast at the foundry and engineering works of P.N. Russell & Company. While residing in Sydney on sick leave, Mann was allowed to retire from the Company's army in 1838.¹³ Here he became a civil engineer and was employed by the commanding Royal Engineer as a draughtsman in 1844. His other New South Wales civil service included appointment as first Chief Commissioner for Railways in 1855, as well as the founding captain of the colony's Volunteer Engineer Corps in 1870.¹⁴

It was not until 1835 that the first officer of the Royal Engineers and a detachment of the Royal Corps of Sappers and Miners were despatched to serve in Australia. At this time the Royal Engineers was a Staff Corps consisting of trained military or civil engineers, whereas the Royal Corps of Sappers and Miners comprised only non-commissioned officers and privates who were skilled or semi-skilled tradesmen. These two Corps subsequently amalgamated in 1856 to become the Royal Engineers. Between 1835 and 1870, officers and

¹¹ *Argus*, 18 April 1860, p.4. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April p.4. Also refer to *Argus*, 16 April, p.4, 17 April 1860, pp.4 and 5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 April 1860, pp.4 and 5. Another account of this departure stated it comprised 227 officers and men. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 April 1860, p.5. Cf also R.H.R. Smythies, *Historical Records of the 40th (2nd Somersetshire) Regiment, now 1st Battalion The Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment): From its Formation, in 1717, to 1893* (Devonport: A.H. Swiss, 1894), p.361.

¹² Hopkins-Weise, *Blood Brothers*, pp.163-206.

¹³ F W M. Spring, *The Bombay Artillery: Lists of Officers who have Served in The Regiment of Bombay Artillery* (London: William Clowes & Sons, Limited, 1902), p.89. H.J. Gibney & A G Smith, eds., *A Biographical Register 1788-1939: Notes from the Name Index of the Australian Dictionary of Biography: Vol.II* (Canberra: Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University, 1987), p.77.

¹⁴ *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No.322, 30 December 1870, p.2897. R.R. McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers: 1835 to 1902: The Colonial Engineers* (Canberra: The Corps Committee of the Royal Australian Engineers, 1977), pp.10, 16 & 67. P.J. Greville, *The 5½ inch Coehorn Mortar and its Use in New Zealand* (Keswick, South Australia: P.J. Greville, 1979), p.8.

soldiers of the Royal Engineers contributed significantly to colonial Australia through their involvement in public works such as the planning and building of numerous public buildings, docks and bridges, the construction of defence installations, as well as the mapping and surveying, of crown land.¹⁵

In February 1856, a party of Royal Sappers and Miners, under the command of Capt J.S. Hawkins, Royal Engineers, arrived in Sydney. This detachment had previously been engaged in survey duties in Tasmania. A few of the men took their discharges in Tasmania, but the remainder sailed for Sydney in February 1856, 'followed by the seven reinforcements' later that year, including Sapper Charles Richardson.¹⁶ In New South Wales, Captain Hawkins and his detachment (14 men), were placed under the direction of the Surveyor-General, the Royal Engineer officer Lt Col George Barney, and put to work on investigation of possible railway extensions. This detachment was stationed at Parramatta. As the history of the Royal Australian Engineers states:

Within twelve months a route had been surveyed from Cambelltown to Goulburn, another up the Hunter River from Maitland, and another in the Moreton Bay district; two surveyors had traversed from Port Stephens to Stroud and Armidale; and work had been done between Goulburn and Yass and on to the Murrumbidgee River. Hawkins in his report of February 1857 stressed that 'every portion of the work was performed by the sappers themselves without any extraneous assistance'. They had [even] prepared much of their own equipment ...¹⁷

In February 1857, Capt Hawkins was appointed a railway commissioner, but he then departed for England shortly after. This detachment of sappers was left in command of the senior NCO Sgt Henry Quodling, with the detachment's work controlled by the Chief Commissioner of Railways. Over the next three years this small unit 'ran trial surveys from Parramatta to Penrith, from Parramatta to Richmond, and over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst. They also made a particularly difficult survey of the alternative route to the west by way of the Grose River valley'.¹⁸

Renewed troubles with the Maoris in the Province of Taranaki in the North Island of New Zealand during early 1860 necessitated reinforcements from the Australian colonies, and included in the force sent from Sydney in April that year were six sappers from the survey detachment – one of whom was Sapper Richardson. The small detachment of Royal Engineers from the New South Wales Survey Department who served in the war in Taranaki from 6 April to 20 August 1860, comprised:

- 2422 Corporal Martin Lavelle, discharged 4 May 1862
- 953 Sapper Charles Richardson, discharged 28 February 1861¹⁹
- 1501 Sapper Michael Givon, discharged 28 February 1861

¹⁵ McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers: The Colonial Engineers*, pp.1-46; Peter H. MacFie, 'The Royal Engineers in Colonial Tasmania', paper presented at the 2nd National Conference on Engineering Heritage, Melbourne, 20-22 May 1985. R.H. Montague, *How To Trace Your Military Ancestors in Australian and New Zealand* (Sydney, NSW: Hale & Iremonger, 1989), p.63.

¹⁶ McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers: 1835 to 1902: The Colonial Engineers*, p.33. This group of seven reinforcements also included two men – 2422 Corporal Martin Lavelle (also seen as 'Lavelle'), and 1501 Sapper Michael Givon (also seen as 'Givon') – who would serve in the Taranaki War from 6 April to 30 August 1860.

¹⁷ McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers: The Colonial Engineers*, Endnote 52, referred to on p.16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

¹⁹ The New Zealand War Medal (and research) for Sapper Charles Richardson is currently in the research collection of one of the authors of this paper, Jeff Hopkins-Weise, and was a featured object in the exhibition, *Railways 1914-1918*, by The Workshops Rail Museum, in 2015-16.

- 1367 Sapper Samuel Kelly, discharged 28 February 1861
- 1299 Sapper George Leslie, discharged 28 February 1861
- 1291 Sapper John Wood, discharged 28 February 1861

The year 1861 saw the end of the employment of the detachment of Royal Engineers as railway trial surveyors in New South Wales. As far as it is known, all the men took their discharges in New South Wales, and most of them appear to have continued on in the public service. Those who remained in the Railway Department included Edwin Fearnside, who surveyed the zigzag railway over the Blue Mountains, Henry Quodling became a supervisor on the Great Southern Road – although in due course both he and George Jamieson were district engineers in the Railways – while Thomas Kennedy, Alfred Francis, John Ashplant and Alfred Vine were all surveyors.²⁰ It is clear that Capt Hawkins' small detachment of Royal Engineers made a considerable material contribution to the building of the railway network in colonial New South Wales.²¹

In what is probably one of the first instances of railways involved in fundraising and humanitarian efforts associated with war, railway firms in Victoria were involved with the Taranaki Relief Fund. This Fund was established throughout the Australasian colonies, although primarily supported in Victoria and New South Wales, to alleviate the great suffering of the European settler population caught up in the virtual siege at New Plymouth in Taranaki Province of the North Island of New Zealand. Victorian public support and activities associated with Taranaki settler fundraising was especially evident during August-October 1860, and was still operating into June 1861. Relief for the Taranaki sufferers was not always simply a matter of supplying financial aid. In August 1860 a circular was forwarded from the Nelson merchant firm of Nash and Scaife to its Melbourne counterpart Lorimer, Mackie, and Company. Nash and Scaife had been alleviating conditions at New Plymouth as best it could by supplying goods and foodstuffs and other essentials. At one meeting of the Melbourne committee in early October, the report from the sub-committee empowered to purchase and forward supplies also noted that the supplies dispatched aboard the vessel *Wonga Wonga* were carried free of freight, lighterage, and labour charges courtesy of the generosity of the Australian Steam Navigation Company, the Hobson's Bay Railway Company, and Thos Norton and Co.²²

With many of Victoria's imperial troop garrison now across the Tasman fighting the Maori, a number of civil disturbances ending in riots took place during 1860-61, all of which added to growing concerns about the colony's defences, which in turn led to a new willingness to rely on locally raised volunteer forces. One such event occurred during July-August 1861 when the Kyneton Volunteers were called out to assist in quelling rioting railway workers on the Malmesbury-Woodend line. In June 1863, a threatened railway riot at Sandhurst led to the Eaglehawk and Sandhurst Volunteers mobilised to aid the civil authorities.²³ Even in Brisbane in September 1866, feared rioting as a result of disgruntled railway navvies descending on the town in what has become known as the 'Brisbane Riots' or 'Bread Riots',

²⁰ McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers: The Colonial Engineers*, pp.18-19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.19.

²² *Argus*, 6 October 1860, p.4. Cf also Jeff Hopkins-Weise, 'Colonial Humanitarianism: Australian Involvement in Relief Funds during the New Zealand Wars, 1840s & 1860s', *The Volunteers: The Journal of the New Zealand Military Historical Society*, Vol.34, No.2, (November 2008), pp.102-05.

²³ *Argus*, 31 July, p.5; 1 August 1861, p.5; 26 June 1863, p.5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 August 1861, p.4. Millar, pp.86-87. B. Nicholls, *The Colonial Volunteers* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin Australia, 1988), p.34. Hopkins-Weise, *Blood Brothers* (2009), pp.67-69.

saw the local Volunteers and the small detachment of the 12th Regiment of Foot called to arms fully prepared to act in the defence of the civil order. The 12th Regiment soldiers themselves departed Brisbane shortly after for war service in New Zealand during late 1866 into January 1867.²⁴ Early railways therefore feature as part of the complex mix of social, economic and political machinations occurring in colonial Australia, at the same time as these colonies were playing considerable roles in the wars taking place across the Tasman with our sister colony New Zealand.

Australia also provided New Zealand with railway technology and equipment, including experienced contractors and engineers to carry out railway projects in both the South and North Islands.²⁵ One by-product of the military successes associated with the Waikato campaign in the North Island was advertisements in Australia for a railway engineer for the Auckland and Drury Railway in February 1864.²⁶ The construction of this line was also stimulated by the expected demands of both military settlers and free settlement to make use of confiscated Maori lands in the region of the Waikato.²⁷ Later in 1864, the commissioners of the Auckland and Drury Railway sought tenders in Australia for the construction of the twenty-four miles of railway, which was to include a branch line to Onehunga where a large commissariat depot and military base for imperial and colonial forces was located.²⁸

Apart from the wars across the Tasman during the 1860s, colonial Australians would become involved in later empire conflicts where railways played growing roles for military operations. The first of these was the war in the Sudan 1885, which saw the despatch of a New South Wales Contingent. This colonial contingent saw little fighting, being largely involved in assisting with a rail line construction and its defence during 1885.

During the Boer War in South Africa from 1899-1902, railways played a vital role; they were also a major target by Boer forces, which necessitated considerable British resources devoted to the defence of rail lines, rolling stock and other facilities, as well as armoured train use. Australian-raised forces played a major role in this experience. Other Australians either travelled to South Africa on their own initiative or were already working there in areas such as mining, and in turn enlisted in some of the many locally raised units, many of which were vital in the defence of railway infrastructure and rolling stock. One such colonial Australian was John Hallahan, a miner with family in Victoria, who joined the local South African mounted unit known as the Scott's Railway Guards in March 1901, and then went on to later service with the Canadian Scouts during 1901-02.²⁹

The Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900-01 also created a significant role for railways in this

²⁴ Rod Pratt and Jeff Hopkins-Weise, *Brisbane's 1st Battalion 12th (East Suffolk) Regiment Detachments, 1860-66* (Brisbane, Queensland: Jeff Hopkins-Weise & Rod Pratt, 2005), pp.51-55.

²⁵ *Launceston Examiner*, 3 September 1863, p.3. G.H. Scholefield, ed., *A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography: Volume II: M-Addenda* (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), p.232. Hopkins-Weise, *Blood Brothers*, pp.144-145.

²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 February 1864, p.8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 10 March, p.5, & 19 March 1864, p.5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 31 August, p.6; 1 September, p.6; 3 September, p.2; 5 September, p.6; 7 September, p.6; & 14 September 1864, p.6. At this same time the provincial government of Canterbury was also advertising for tenders for the construction of railway works.

²⁹ Jeff Hopkins-Weise, personal communications, with John Henke (grandson of John Hallahan), Brisbane, Queensland, during August-December 2013; Anglo Boer War website Scott's Railway Guards, <http://www.angloboerwar.com/unit-information/south-african-units/470-scotts-railway-guards> accessed 11 September 2013. Jim Wallace, *Knowing No Fear: The Canadian Scouts in South Africa 1900-1902* (Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2008).

campaign, especially in the relief of Europeans and their forces besieged by the Boxers in Peking during 1900. This also involved colonial naval forces from South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales serving ashore as part of the available military forces used by the European powers. While garrisoning locations such as Tientsin and Peking, these Australian colonial naval personnel were also called upon to carry out duties such as fire fighters and as railway men.

In 1900, just before Federation, one of the last Australian colonial volunteer military units formed was a specific railway engineer unit in Victoria during the period 1900-04. This volunteer unit also appears to be the only pre-WWI military railway unit to be formed in colonial Australia, and was known as the Victorian Railways Volunteer Regiment, and later as the 'Victorian Railways Infantry'. In the immediate post Federation period, both the federal government and the military started to truly consider national defence and plans for possible mobilisation of military forces, especially following the recommendations of the tour of inspection by British General Kitchener in 1910. This led to the War Railway Council being formed in Australia in 1911, which dealt with issues of planned mobilisation, national defence and even the call for a unified railway gauge to be implemented.

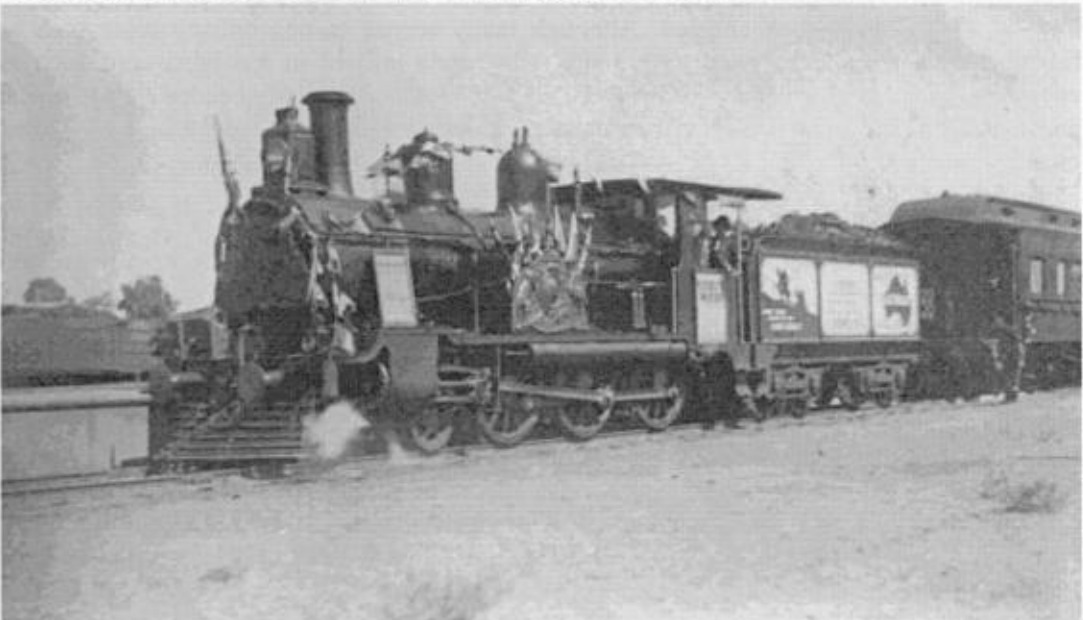


Fig.1: Recruitment train at Emerald, Queensland, 1916. (Queensland Rail/Queensland Museum Network Collection, PG416)

This process also involved the establishment of the Engineer and Railway Staff Corps during 1911.³⁰ This Corps comprised specialist officers who would liaise with state railways for defence or mobilisation purposes, often utilising existing state railways personnel, who in time of war, would swap their civilian attire and don their Engineer and Railways Staff Corps

³⁰ *Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia: No.4.-1911* (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird & Co.), pp.1085, 1088 & 1100; *Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia: No.5.-1912* (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird & Co.), pp.1094-1095. Edwin A. Pratt, *The Rise of Rail-Power: In War and Conquest 1833-1914* (London: P.S. King & Son, Ltd., 1915), Appendix: 'The Defence of Australia', pp.368-375. E.J.G. Prince, 'Towards National Railway Planning by the Commonwealth Government: Defence Considerations and the Constitutional Referenda of 1911 and 1913', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol.22, No.1, (1976), pp.62-64.

uniforms. The newly created officer training college at Duntroon, Canberra, also included a railways training aspect for senior cadets. Railways were quite clearly seen to be a vital part of the nation's defence and its capacity to assist in mobilisation for overseas service in the support of Britain and its empire in the lead up to WW1.

In a similar vein in New Zealand, Railway Engineer Battalions were formed across that nation from 1911, largely utilising existing New Zealand Railways staff. Some of these New Zealand Railway Engineers served in 1914 as part of the expeditionary forces which occupied German Pacific territories, primarily German Samoa. In January 1917, another New Zealand military railway unit, the (NZ) Light Railway Operating Company, was formed for service on the Western Front, with many of its personnel derived from the Railway Engineer Battalions.³¹

World War One

Across Australia during WW1, great efforts were made towards encouraging more and more men to enlist, especially as growing casualty figures emerged through 1915-16 onwards. Australian railway employees were one group targeted and by war's end it is estimated that 14,500 railways staff enlisted. Although many served in non-railway roles such as infantry, their skills background saw many railwaymen utilised in specialist units such as engineers, pioneers and signals. Railway staff in New Zealand similarly heeded calls to enlist, and of the 7,329 railway personnel who enlisted, at least 5000 served overseas, and 446 died on active service.³²

Prior to the outbreak of WW1, both Germany and France gained valuable operational experience or saw the value in light (or narrow gauge) railways for military purposes, and accordingly stockpiled track and rolling stock in their respective preparations for the outbreak of war. Britain, however, was late to recognise the benefits of light railway networks on the battlefield, and initially focused on motor transport. Following the disaster and muddy quagmire of the Battle of the Somme in 1916, Britain rapidly sought instead to utilise versatile narrow gauge railways. In July the British War Office approached Australia for assistance with increasing available railway staff for the Western Front. Australian authorities first replied that volunteers for railway service should be sought initially from among Army personnel already serving overseas, and volunteers for this unit, the 1st Anzac Light Railways, were raised in France during December 1916 and January 1917 and later reformed and renamed during 1917 and 1918.

Australian State and Commonwealth Railways in turn responded to this call for assistance and provided personnel for five additional railway companies raised through late 1916 and early 1917. These railway companies saw extensive service on the Western Front and the immediate post-war period in 1918-19. Australian Light and Broad Gauge Railway Operating Companies, along with associated engineers and pioneer units charged with constructing and maintaining the rail lines, bridges and other rail and supply infrastructure, provided invaluable service on the Western Front. Australian military railway units were part of a

³¹ Paul Napier, 'The New Zealand Railway Engineer Battalions', *Forts and Works*, No.14, (July 2002), pp.1-10. Paul Napier, 'The New Zealand Railway Engineer Battalions' (Parts 1 & 2), *The New Zealand Railway Observer*, No.265, (2004), pp.50-55 & No.266, (2004), pp.70-75. Paul Napier, '5th (NZ) Light Railway Operating Company: The Narrow Gauge Days' (Parts 1 & 2), *The New Zealand Railway Observer*, No.286, (2008), pp.163-168 & No.287, (2008), pp.198-203.

³² Napier, 'The New Zealand Railway Engineer Battalions', *Forts and Works*, p.8. Napier, 'The New Zealand Railway Engineer Battalions' (Part 2), pp.72-73.

much larger network including British (the Railway Operating Division or ROD), French and Belgian railway operations, and also worked closely alongside other allied military railway units from New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

Apart from home front aspects, including recruiting trains, troop departures and farewells and the like, the history of Australian military railway and associated units involves three main categories: Light Gauge Railway units (or Operating Companies); Broad Gauge Railway units; and the associated Australian Engineers and, especially, the Pioneer Battalions, who were heavily involved in railways construction, repairs and recovery. Also note that personnel in the various Australian railway units often served in both light and broad gauge roles, again depending on the war situation and other service need circumstances.



Fig.2: Australians had both Light and Broad Gauge Railway Operating Companies on the Western Front. (Queensland Museum Network Collection, H440-247)

Australia's first military railway unit was actually formed in New South Wales in September 1914 as the Railway Supply Detachment. This very small unit saw service in Egypt and then Gallipoli in 1915, where it was involved with the construction and operation of a light railway to assist with the off-loading and distribution of water and other supplies on the beaches. Personnel from this unit later served on the Western Front.³³ However, Australian military railway units primarily served on the Western Front during the period 1916-18.

³³ Trevor Edmonds & Jim Longworth, 'The Australian Light Railways of the Gallipoli campaign', *Light Railways*, Np.206, (April 2009), pp.3-8. Chris Clark, 'Milne, Edmund Osborn (1886-1963)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/milne-edmund-osborn-7596>. 'Railway Supply Detachment', www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/australian-railway-supply-detachment (accessed on 8 May 2015).

These railway units also stayed on, carrying out their vital transport and logistics roles into the immediate post-war and repatriation period of 1919, with many of its personnel not being repatriated themselves to Australia until late in 1919. Other combat areas where Anzac forces were involved with military railways include the Middle East (Egypt and Palestine) during 1915-18.

Although the first British light rail companies were formed in 1916, it was not until 1917-18 that light rail expanded and helped transform the often extreme difficulties of movement and supply on the Western Front. Many light rail companies were formed from Empire troops during this period, including South Africans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders. Indeed, all manner of nationalities were involved in rail operations, with military rail units from Britain, Canada, France, USA, Australia and New Zealand working closely together, along with many civilians as part of the French, Belgian and Middle Eastern railway networks, as well as the military and civilian Labour Corps (which included peoples from Africa, India, China, and South-East Asia),³⁴ making it a true ‘brotherhood of men’ or ‘brotherhood of many nations’ story.



Fig.3: Railway Operating Division (R.O.D.) train unit and Australian troops repairing the line at Villers-Bretonneux, some time after 25 April 1918, when Australian forces recaptured the town. (Queensland Museum Network Collection, H440-128)

To be continued in Part 2

-o0o-

³⁴ John Starling & Ivor Lee, *No Labour, No Battle: Military Labour during the First World War* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2009).

COMMANDER JOSEPH BERESFORD

Benjamin James Morgan

Commander Joseph Arthur Hamilton Beresford (1861-1952) was a British-born officer in the Royal Australian Navy. During the early stages of the First World War he commanded the Naval Brigade attached to the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) which successfully captured German New Guinea in September 1914. Yet despite playing a significant part in this episode, little has been written about him.

Joseph Beresford was born in Laugharne, Wales, on 11 August 1861, the son of Charles Beresford, a surgeon, and his wife Rebecca Beresford (formerly Gent, née Trump), a widow with a son from a previous marriage. Beresford's father died in 1863, and his mother later remarried and had another son. She died in 1872.¹ In 1877, at fifteen years old, Beresford joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman aboard HMS *Impregnable*.² In 1887 he married Katherine Gertrude Bate.³ The couple had a son, Arthur Edward Bathurst Beresford, born in Devonport, England, on 27 September 1891.⁴ Katherine died at the age of 42, in 1894.⁵ That year Beresford came to Australia as a chief gunner's mate aboard HMS *Karrakatta*, a torpedo gunboat serving on the Australia Station.⁶



Fig.1: Commander Joseph Beresford, c.1917. (State Library of Queensland, 1378391)

In 1896, Beresford left the Royal Navy on loan to the Queensland Marine Defence Force as a gunner, and in 1898 was appointed Lieutenant-Instructor.⁷ His service included time on the gunboat HMQS *Gayundah*.⁸ On 24 August 1898, he married Barbara Louisa Ward in the

¹ 'Joseph Arthur Hamilton Beresford'. *Ancestry.com*. Accessed 11 April 2018.

[https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-](https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/59402777/person/270063591996/facts?_phsrc=KNH52&_phstart=successSource)

[tree/person/tree/59402777/person/270063591996/facts?_phsrc=KNH52&_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/59402777/person/270063591996/facts?_phsrc=KNH52&_phstart=successSource).

Ancestry.com. (2010). *London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1932* [database on-line]. *Ancestry.com Operations*: Provo, Utah.

² ADM: 188/116/100622 Beresford, Joseph Arthur Hamilton. Accessed 11 April 2018.

<<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D6630984>>

³ 'Joseph Arthur Hamilton Beresford'. *Ancestry.com*. Accessed 11 April 2018.

<[https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-](https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/59402777/person/270063591996/facts?_phsrc=KNH52&_phstart=successSource)

[tree/person/tree/59402777/person/270063591996/facts?_phsrc=KNH52&_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/59402777/person/270063591996/facts?_phsrc=KNH52&_phstart=successSource)>

⁴ *Ancestry.com*. (2012). *UK, Commonwealth War Graves, 1914-1921 and 1939-1947* [database on-line].

Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah. 'Beresford, Arthur Edward Bathurst'. *RSL Virtual Memorial Wall*.

Accessed 19 April 2018. <<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/254788>>

⁵ FreeBMD. (2006). *England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915* [database on-line].

Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah.

⁶ *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 September 1914, p.6; Jones 1986, p.159.

⁷ *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 September 1914, p.6; *Ancestry.com*. (2011). *UK, Navy Lists, 1888-1970* [database on-line]. *Ancestry.com Operations*: Provo, Utah.

⁸ *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 April 1899, p.5; Jones 1986, p.161.

Wesleyan Church in Albert Street, Brisbane.⁹ They had a son, Victor Norman Beresford, born 12 September 1899.¹⁰ However, he died just a month later on 13 October 1899.¹¹ With the Commonwealth assuming control of the colonial navies following Federation in 1901, Beresford remained in Brisbane as a gunnery officer on the instructional staff until about 1910.¹² In 1911 as a Lieutenant, he was listed as being attached to the Director of Naval Reserves as part of the newly formed Royal Australian Navy, while acting for a period as District Naval Officer in Brisbane.¹³ On 1 January 1914, he was promoted to Commander, Permanent Naval Forces (Administrative and Instructional Staff) as Staff Officer to the Director of Naval Reserves.¹⁴

During the early stages of the First World War Beresford commanded the six companies of the Naval Brigade attached to the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) which captured German New Guinea.¹⁵ Landing at Kabakaul at dawn on 11 September 1914, a small force of naval reservists under Beresford overcame the initial German resistance and destroyed the wireless station at Bitapaka for the loss of six killed and four wounded. The following day they moved inland to garrison Herbertshohe. Meanwhile, other elements of the AN&MEF occupied Rabaul without opposition, and the colony subsequently capitulated.¹⁶ Beresford was later mentioned in despatches.¹⁷ Yet his health had been undermined by the climate in New Guinea almost from the beginning,¹⁸ and in 1915 he was invalided and placed on the retired list.¹⁹

Beresford's only surviving son, Arthur, died during the war. A sergeant in the 26th Battalion, AIF, he was unlawfully killed by a member of his platoon with a grenade at Frechencourt, France, on 29 June 1918. He was buried in Vignacourt British Cemetery.²⁰ Originally enlisting in Warwick, Queensland with the 9th Battalion, AIF, he departed from Brisbane, and was wounded on the first day of the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, before later serving on the Western Front.²¹ Married in 1916 to an English woman, he left behind a young

⁹ *The Queenslander*, 27 August 1898, p.428; Ancestry.com. (2010). *Australia, Marriage Index, 1788-1950* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah.

¹⁰ Ancestry.com. (2010). *Australia, Birth Index, 1788-1922* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah.

¹¹ Ancestry.com. (2010). *Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah.

¹² Ancestry.com. (2011). *UK, Navy Lists, 1888-1970* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah.

¹³ Commonwealth Naval Orders 1911, No.42, p.4; No.52, p.5.

¹⁴ *Commonwealth Gazette*, No.6, 31 January 1914, p. 127; NAA: B2455, Beresford AE. Accessed 17 April 2018. <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3074681>; *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 September 1914, p.6.

¹⁵ *The Mercury*, 31 December 1952, p.7; Jose 1941, p.74.

¹⁶ MacKenzie 1941, pp.53-58 and 74; Dennis et al 2008, p.235.

¹⁷ 'Joseph Arthur Hamilton Beresford'. *Honours and Awards*. Australian War Memorial. Accessed 11 April 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/people/rolls/R1521368/>; *London Gazette*, No. 29434, 11 January 1916, p.449

¹⁸ MacKenzie 1941, p.28

¹⁹ NAA: A6769, Beresford JAH. Accessed 11 April 2018.

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=5404489>; 'Joseph Arthur Hamilton Beresford'. *Discovering Anzacs*. Accessed 14 April 2018.

<<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/person/758845>>

²⁰ *The Mercury*, 31 December 1952, p.7; 'Beresford, Arthur Edward Bathurst'. *RSL Virtual Memorial Wall*.

Accessed 19 April 2018. <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/254788>; *The Mercury*, 21 November 1919, p.4; *The Daily News*, 16 January 1920, p.7; *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 17 January 1920, p.2.

²¹ NAA: A6769, Beresford JAH. Accessed 11 April 2018.

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=5404489>; *Kyneton Guardian*, 30 July 1918, p.2.

son, Arthur Victor Bathurst Beresford, born in 1917.²² The younger Arthur later joined the British Army, serving as a junior officer in The York and Lancaster Regiment during the Second World War.²³

In retirement Joseph Beresford settled in Sydney sometime before 1930, living there until the death of his wife in 1951. Following her passing he moved to West Hobart to live with his sister-in-law, Sarah Hawson, and her family. He died at the Repatriation Hospital in Hobart on 28 December 1952 at the age of 91, survived by his grandson Arthur living in Surrey, England and a great granddaughter, aged five. Beresford was cremated in a private ceremony at the Hobart Public Cemetery.²⁴

References

- 'Commander Beresford'. (14 September 1914). *The Daily Telegraph*. Sydney, New South Wales, p.6. Accessed 11 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article239621114>>
- 'Dug-Out Crime'. (16 January 1920). *The Daily News*. 3rd Edition. Perth, Western Australia, p.7. Accessed 14 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article84044508>>
- 'Former R.A.N. Man Dies at Hobart'. (31 December 1952). *The Mercury*. Hobart, Tasmania, p.7. Accessed 11 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article27129252>>
- 'Lieutenant Beresford-Miss Ward'. (27 August 1898). *The Queenslander*. Brisbane, Queensland, p.428. Accessed 11 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article21452075>>
- 'Marine Defence Force'. (1 April 1899). *The Brisbane Courier*. Brisbane, Queensland, p.5. Accessed 11 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3691148>>
- 'Mostly About People'. (30 July 1918). *Kyneton Guardian*. Kyneton, Victoria, p.2. Accessed 14 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article129613066>>
- 'News of the Day'. (17 January 1920). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*. Newcastle, New South Wales, p.2. Accessed 14 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article139425270>>
- 'Tragedy in France'. (21 November 1919). *The Mercury*. Hobart, Tasmania, p.4. Accessed 14 April 2018. <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12390627>>
- Dennis, Peter et al. (2008). *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*. 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press: South Melbourne, Victoria.
- Jones, Colin (1986). *Australian Colonial Navies*. Australian War Memorial: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

²² Ancestry.com. (2010). *London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1932* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah; 'Ellen Mary Lavington'. *Ancestry.com*. Accessed 14 April 2018. <https://www.ancestry.com.au/search/?name=Ellen+Mary_Lavington&marriage=1916&name_x=1_1>

²³ *London Gazette*, Supplement No.34758, 22 December 1939, p.8539; Supplement No.37909, 20 March 1947, p.1318

²⁴ *The Mercury*, 31 December 1952, p.7; FamilySearch.org. (2018). 'Joseph Arthur Hamilton Beresford, 30 December 1952, Cremation'. *Australia, Tasmania, Miscellaneous Records, 1829-2001* [database on-line]. Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office: Hobart, Tasmania. Accessed 19 April 2018. <<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QKYT-CQGZ>>; FamilySearch.org. (2018). 'Joseph Arthur Hamilton Beresford, 29 December 1952, Will'. *Tasmania Wills & Letters of Administration 1824-1989* [database on-line]. Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office: Hobart, Tasmania. Accessed 19 April 2018. <<https://search.findmypast.com.au/record?id=ANZ-TAZ-WILL/073222>>; Ancestry.com. (2010) *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980* [database on-line]. Ancestry.com Operations: Provo, Utah.

- Jose, Arthur (1941). *The Royal Australian Navy, 1914-1918*. 9th Edition. Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Volume IX. Australian War Memorial: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- MacKenzie, Seaforth (1941). *The Australians at Rabaul: The Capture and Administration of the German Possessions in the South Pacific*. 10th Edition. Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Volume X. Australian War Memorial: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- National Archives of Australia. *A6769: Service Cards for Navy Officers, 1911-1970*. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- National Archives of Australia. *B2455: First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920*. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- National Archives of the UK. *Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services*. Class: ADM 188; Piece: 116. Kew, Surrey, England.

-o0o-

THE BRENNAN TORPEDO: AUSTRALIA'S FIRST DEFENCE INDUSTRY

Rohan Goyne



Fig.1: The Brennan Torpedo Station on site on Hong Kong Harbour in 2017. (Photograph by the author, MVH Collection 2017)

Louis Brennan was a Victorian inventor of the Brennan Torpedo. He was born in Ireland but came to Melbourne with his parents as an eight-year-old. He invented the wire-guided torpedo when he was 22, and patented it in England in 1877. The Victorian Government entered into a contract with Brennan to proof the weapon in trials on Port Philip Bay in 1879 by providing the sum of seven hundred pounds.¹ It was drawn to the attention of Admiralty in 1880 and Brennan was asked to go to England where he received a retainer of five thousand

¹ NAA B3756, 1890/1564.

pounds per year while the torpedo was being assessed. After five years the weapon was accepted by the War Office in 1885 for roll-out throughout the Empire. Brennan was awarded the sum of one hundred and ten thousand pounds for his weapon to guarantee its secrets from falling into competing governments hands.

The Brennan Torpedo was the first wire-guided weapon and found a use as part of defensive systems for important harbours to deny entry to enemy ships. An intact Brennan Torpedo Station exists on Hong Kong Harbour as part of the Hong Kong Coastal Defence Museum, operated by the Hong Kong Government and which the author visited in 2017. As shown in Fig.1, the torpedo was installed at Hong Kong by the Admiralty as part of the roll-out of the weapon, under the supervision of Brennan himself. The torpedo was propelled by counter-rotating screws driven by unwinding two steel cables from internal drums. The two internal drums are illustrated in Fig.2, in a full-scale model of the torpedo.

In 1890, the Victorian Government sought the establishment of a Brennan Torpedo Station at Observatory Point and the supply of twelve torpedos for the defence of the colony. The Minister of Defence for the then Colony of Victoria, Graham Berry, in correspondence with the Victoria Office on 7 March 1890 was advised, 'the cost of service as named would be probably from twelve thousand to fifteen thousand pounds and that several years must elapse before supply can be made of all the Brennan Torpedos required for Imperial defence'.²

Brennan went on to develop other inventions such as a working prototype of a helicopter while working for the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, but it crashed on a trial in October 1925.

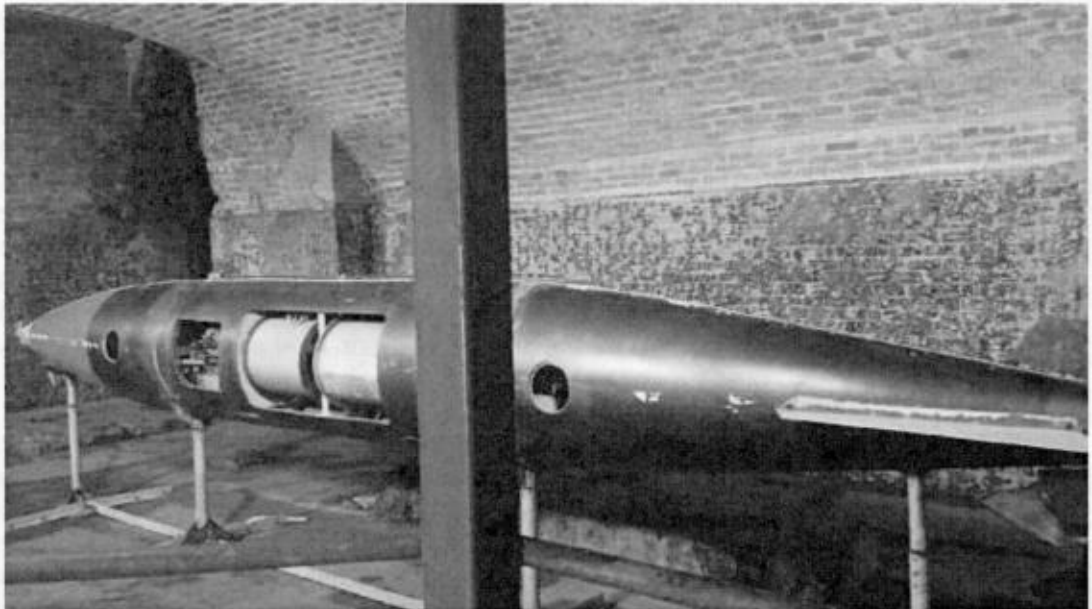


Fig.2: A full-scale model of the Brennan Torpedo inside the arsenal in the Brennan Torpedo Station on Hong Kong Harbour in 2017. (Photograph by the author, MHV Collection 2017)

-o0o-

² NAA B3756, 1890/1564.

THE 'MEN BEHAVE WELL AND ARE A CREDIT TO AUSTRALIA': AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY COMPANIES IN THE UK DURING WW2

Justin Chadwick

Military history has tended to focus on the feats of arms on the battlefield and the skills (or lack thereof) of generals. However, the stories of those not serving on the battlefield are no less important, with the Forestry Group being one such unit. These men, far from home and their families, performed valuable work for the war effort, breaking records as they went. The majority of the men ingratiated themselves with the communities they were associated, resulting in marriages and children, and relationships that lasted long after they departed.

On 19 November 1939 the Australian Government received a cable from the War Office in London requesting specialist troops. These troops were to be forestry and railway construction units from the Royal Australian Engineers. Approval by the Australian War Cabinet was made on 22 December and the Dominions Office was informed the following day. The units would comprise two Forestry Companies, one Railway Survey Company and three Railway Construction Companies and early in the new year the Dominions Office intimated that the units would be needed in the south of France. The total strength was to be 1243.¹ Recruiting for axemen, blacksmiths, carpenters, cooks, electricians, fitters and non-trades, such as drivers began in March 1940.²

The 1st Forestry Company, Australian Imperial Force (AIF), was made up of timber experts of all sizes. Cyril 'Tiny' Cullen, was boasted to be the biggest man in the AIF, standing (in the measurements of the time) at 6 feet 4 inches and weighing 20 stone.³ He had been an axeman his entire life and beaten the world champion, Whatta of New Zealand, in an exhibition match in 1929. He brought his own axes in leather cases and tended them 'as lovingly as a fiddler would treat his pet Stradivarius'.⁴ Cullen shared his cabin on the journey to Europe with the smallest man in the unit, Sapper Fred Hayles, a full foot shorter than Cullen. A 45-year-old inspector of the New South Wales Labour and Industry Department, Hayles had served in the First World War, seeing action as a sapper on Gallipoli and the Western Front.⁵ Their disparate sizes meant they needed tailor-made uniforms.⁶ The company, under the command of Capt Cyril Cole, a forestry officer from Canberra, arrived in the UK in July, being diverted from France as it had fallen to German forces. The second forestry company, under Capt Benallack, was formed in April 1940 and departed Australia the following month.

A further request for a third forestry company was sent by the War Office in September 1940. While this was agreed to, a headquarters group to take overall command of Australian forestry troops in the UK was also raised. The headquarters embarked from Sydney on 4 June 1941 along with Australian naval and air force personnel and Free French Naval Force members. Sailing across the Pacific Ocean and through the Panama Canal, they arrived at Glasgow before moving to their base at Jesmond, a residential suburb of Newcastle-upon-

¹ AIF Forestry Units in United Kingdom, Note for Minister, 17 July 1943, NAA A816/52/301/126.

² 'Australian Military Forces', *The Canberra Times*, 23 March 1940, p.3.

³ 'Forestry and Railway Units in England', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 24 July 1940, p.3.

⁴ 'In Private Homes', *The Mercury* (Hobart), 29 July 1940, p.1.

⁵ War Service Records, NAA B2455.

⁶ 'Forestry And Railway Units in England', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 24 July 1940, p.3.

Tyne.⁷ On 1 September the members of the headquarters group had their first real experience of war during a German air raid that bombed close by. Although they suffered no casualties the locals did, and many Australians assisted with 'fire-fighting and rendered general assistance to the Civil Authorities'.⁸

In Australia, the 3rd Forestry Company was being formed under Major M.A. Rankin and Capt A.W. Shillinglaw, both experienced foresters. When applications opened they were flooded with volunteers. Over 600 from both Victoria and Western Australia, 250 from New South Wales and Queensland and 50 each from South Australia and Tasmania volunteered.⁹ In order not to repeat the problem of inexperienced personnel being chosen, strict selection criteria were drawn up. However, those from New South Wales would be disappointed when the State Forestry Commission refused to release the men for service. Those who succeeded met at Caulfield Racecourse in Melbourne and were 'quartered in horse boxes'.¹⁰ Following initial training the unit departed Melbourne for Sydney, but even before they had left the train station one sapper managed to break three fingers while waving to the crowd outside when a tram went past. It was initially intended that the company would sail for the Middle East for service in Greece, but this changed when Greece was overrun by the Germans. Diverted to England, they arrived at Liverpool in August and entrained for Chathill, north of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where they were to operate.

Realising its importance, the forestry companies soon settled into their work. A divisional exercise planned for October was not attended owing to timber demand.¹¹ Their work, however, was hampered by inadequate equipment and supplies; even by December sawmill output at Numbers 2 and 3 Companies had decreased. Shortages were exacerbated by a lack of truck drivers to haul the logs to the sawmills.¹² Weather also hampered output, especially during winter and heavy snowfalls. Despite these setbacks the forestry companies managed to make and break output records. By the end of July, with good weather and healthy troops, they had surpassed all previous production. Number One Company cut 16,346 cubic feet of timber in one week, breaking the record for any company working in the UK. Again it was noted in the unit's war diary that 'production would have been even higher but for the continued difficulty in obtaining sufficient tractors for log haulage in the rather difficult country over which the Companies are operating'.¹³ The record, though, was set at 16,400 cubic feet, again by No.1 Company and was the result of a bet. The commanding officer, Major Jack Thomas, wagered 18 gallons of beer if they could beat their record.¹⁴

Much of the timber they were cutting was the result of another Australian, Sir Roy Robinson. Born in South Australia, Robinson was a Rhodes scholar who took a position as Assistant Inspector for Forestry at the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, London in 1909. Following World War One he became secretary for forestry on the Cabinet Reconstruction Committee and worked on the report that resulted in the Forestry Commission. He was technical commissioner initially, becoming chair in 1932 and remained in that position until his death in 1952. Robinson and the Commission were responsible for the creation of a wide-ranging

⁷ HQ Forestry Group, RAE War Diary entry 8 July 1941, AWM 52/5/32/8.

⁸ HQ Forestry Group, RAE War Diary entry 1 September 1941, AWM 52/5/32/8.

⁹ 2/3 Forestry Company, RAE War Diary entry February 1941, AWM 52/5/32/5.

¹⁰ 2/3 Forestry Company, RAE War Diary entry February 1941, AWM 52/5/32/5.

¹¹ HQ Forestry Group, RAE War Diary entry 10 October 1941, AWM 52/5/32/8.

¹² HQ Forestry Group, RAE War Diary entry 31 May 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

¹³ HQ Forestry Group, RAE War Diary entry 31 July 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

¹⁴ 'A.I.F. unit holds Britain's timber cutting record', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 20 March 1943, p.16.

government forestry program.¹⁵ So when the Australian foresters arrived they began logging forests established by a fellow Australian. Some of the forests worked were supposedly planted by Australian soldiers during the previous war.¹⁶

Unlike the Australian infantry units in the UK, the forestry troops did not live in tents or barracks, but were initially billeted in private homes. This was the start of many close relationships between the Australians and the locals. Even when camps were constructed they were generally close to a village. Number One Company spent time near the town of Alloway, just south of Ayr, the birthplace of poet Robert Burns. One sapper, a former kangaroo shooter, was given a tour of the village. The enthusiastic guide never discovered that the man's interest was misplaced, thinking it was where Tommy Burns, the well-known American boxer, was from.¹⁷ The men were given local leave, and most nights would walk to the local pub for a pint and play darts with the locals. The interaction with locals was not limited to a few drinks and games. Children would often watch the foresters at work and mimic their behaviour by carrying their shirts over their arms. One forester, Jack Fahey, said that in summer the Australians would 'work in their shorts, sun-tanned backs bare, much to the astonishment of the locals, who call them crazy'.¹⁸ Being away from home for three years many of the men met and married local women. By the time of their recall to Australia in late 1943, 120 men had married with 40 children being born.¹⁹

Military training was not ignored for the sake of lumbering. Frequent fortnightly periods of intense training occurred, as well as Sunday exercises. A motorised section was ready to transport the company, fully armed, at short notice. However, all the training was in vain; the only shooting that happened was when the foresters were 'attacked by pheasants'. The local landowner, the Duke of Buccleuch, sent a letter 'asking that they make certain that only cock birds attacked them'.²⁰

Overall, the Australian foresters behaved themselves. The Australian military representative in the UK, Lt Gen Kenneth Smart, remarked to the Chief of General Staff, Lt Gen John Northcott, that the 'men behave well and are a credit to Australia'.²¹ Sporting events were held often, as were chopping and sawing demonstrations. Seahouses, the seaside town near No.3 Company's camp, was the location of one event as early as October 1941. Local businesses and residents donated the not unreasonable sum of £25 for trophies. There was a large attendance, with wood-chopping and cross-sawing events together with foot races in the program.²² The greatest event for the foresters was the Inter-Dominion Axemen's Carnival held at Palmerston Park, Dumfries in September 1942. It was a large carnival with 1200 attendees, including the Australian and New Zealand High Commissioners. At the end of the day the Australians regained the Ministry of Supply Cup from New Zealand, 26 points to ten.²³ Recreation was not limited to competitive sports days. Three weeks' leave was granted annually and free rail travel to any part of the country allowed the men 'an opportunity to see

¹⁵ LT Carron, 'Robinson, Sir Roy Lister', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne: 1988.

¹⁶ 'A.I.F. unit holds Britain's timber cutting record', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 20 March 1943, p.16.

¹⁷ 'A.I.F. unit holds Britain's timber cutting record', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 20 March 1943, p.16.

¹⁸ 'A.I.F. unit holds Britain's timber cutting record', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 20 March 1943, p.16.

¹⁹ Letter from Smart to Northcott dated 16 July 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

²⁰ 'Our "Lost Legion" in Scottish Pine Forest', *e Telegraph* (Brisbane), 15 June 1942, p.5.

²¹ Letter from Smart to Northcott dated 30 April 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

²² HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry 3 October 1941, AWM 52/5/32/8.

²³ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry 26 September 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

something of the wealth of geographical and architectural splendor packed into that little island'.²⁴

For all these positive efforts some men misbehaved. Soon after their arrival the foresters were ordered not to solicit lifts by stepping onto the road and halting cars using the police halt signal.²⁵ More seriously, the first Field General Court Martial was held in November 1941 when Privates Sullivan and McHugh were sentenced to two years' hard labour on three charges each of desertion and being absent without leave.²⁶ Absenteeism was the most common charge in the Forestry Group, but in April 1942 the Regimental Quartermaster was charged with insubordination and failure to obey a lawful command. On the return from a liaison visit with Capt Hopkins to the headquarters of the Galloway Area in Ayr, Warrant Officer Class II K.T. Parmeter was placed under open arrest. On 7 April 1942, AIF Legal Officer, Major P. Crisp, arrived from London with the court martial being convened the following day. Parmeter was found guilty on all charges, fined £10 and reduced to the rank of corporal.²⁷ He was transferred to No.1 Company and returned to Australia the following month.²⁸

Parmeter's departure highlighted the growing issue of personnel. Reinforcements of thirty men were scheduled to arrive every six months and the first thirty men sailed at the end of 1941. They arrived in Liverpool, though short one sapper who was disembarked in New Zealand to have his leg amputated. The convoy arrived in port late, after being blown off course by a massive gale in the North Atlantic. Taken on strength by No.1 Company at Lockerbie, many of the reinforcements were found to be technically unsuitable for the work they were meant to do. Messages were despatched to Australia emphasizing 'the importance of having a competent technical authority in Australia to supervise the selection of future reinforcements'.²⁹ This advice was accepted and the next thirty reinforcements who arrived in Liverpool in July 1942 were 'better fitted generally for work in Forestry Coys than the previous draft of reinforcements'.³⁰ However, in August 1942 Cole, who by this time had been promoted to lieutenant colonel, was informed that no more reinforcements would be sent from Australia. Added to Cole's concerns over personnel strength was the return of those medically unfit and those on leave. Numbers were boosted by attached British Honduran civilian labour, but they would not work in the rain and had a high degree of absenteeism. In September, Italian prisoners of war, working with No.1 Company, were 'proving satisfactory'.³¹

By June 1943 the unit was 29 men under strength and, with no reinforcements, would dwindle further due to normal wastage, such as illness.³² Smart, writing to Northcott in April 1943, stated that without reinforcements one of the companies would need to be disbanded. He proposed that one company be returned to Australia for use in New Guinea with the other two being reinforced.³³ Northcott replied that he would take up the issue up with the

²⁴ 'Travels of a Jarrah Jerker', *Westralian Worker*, 12 October 1945, p.5.

²⁵ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary, Routine Orders dated 7 September 1941, AWM 52/5/32/8.

²⁶ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 24 November 1941, AWM 52/5/32/8.

²⁷ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 21 May 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

²⁸ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 29 May 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

²⁹ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 22 December 1941, AWM 52/5/32/8.

³⁰ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 6 July 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

³¹ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 30 September 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

³² Letter from Forde, Minister for the Army, to Curtin, Prime Minister dated 29 June 1943, NAA A816/52/301/126.

³³ Letter from Smart to Northcott dated 30 April 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

Commander-in-Chief, General Thomas Blamey, but was not optimistic.³⁴ Northcott was correct. On 29 June the Minister for the Army, Frank Forde, wrote to the Prime Minister, John Curtin, about a request by Blamey to return the forestry companies for work in New Guinea. Curtin concurred and cabled the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs asking for the return of the Forestry Group.³⁵ A reply was sent on 7 August that allowed the release of two companies, but 'it would be appreciated if the Commonwealth Government would consent to the 1st Company remaining in Scotland for two or three months in view of the importance of the work in which it is employed'.³⁶ This caveat was agreed to.

For the men of the Forestry Group this was a great relief. When Japan entered the war in December 1941 many of the men wanted to return home. Being so far from home and the only AIF units in the UK, they labelled themselves 'Australia's Lost Legion'.³⁷ In the officer's mess of the Third Forestry Company below the AIF emblem, printed in large letters, was 'nothing ever happens here'.³⁸ Concerns over returning home were raised by the troops to an Australian Parliamentary Party visit in May 1943. The situation was only exacerbated by the publication in the British *Reveille* magazine of an article entitled 'Sawdust soldiers raring to go'. The article advocated the return of the Australian foresters with the endorsement of Australian MPs.³⁹ Smart, reporting this from London, said that the article was 'scurrilous and misleading', and the magazine 'works rather on the *John Bull* and *Smith's Weekly* principle of criticizing everything in extravagant language'.⁴⁰

Another issue that Smart related to Northcott was what was to be done with the wives and children of the servicemen. Smart believed that the U-Boat and shipping situation in the Atlantic had improved and thought that the wives and families should travel together with the rest of the Forestry Group. He was concerned that if they had to wait until the end of the war in Europe 'there would be considerable delay in getting the wives out'.⁴¹ Despite his remonstrations the wives and children were left behind, the reasoning being lack of shipping. In an attempt to alleviate the situation, the Australian Government offered to pay £55 toward the passage, with priority given when vessels became available.⁴²

On 22 September 1943 the *Mauretania*, with the Forestry Group and fellow New Zealand foresters aboard, departed Liverpool for the United States. On arrival the troops moved in US Army trucks to New Jersey and Teaneck Armory.⁴³ The next day the men were given an escorted tour of New York in the morning with lunch at the 7th Regiment Armory on Park Avenue, where they were to stay. The afternoon was spent watching a baseball game between the New York Yankees and the Chicago Whitesox.⁴⁴ Amidst heavy rain that kept some spectators away, the six hundred Australian and New Zealand forestry troops marched up Broadway the following day. They were received by the Mayor, Fiorello La Guardia, at City Hall, who welcomed them.⁴⁵ Due to their uniforms being soaked through, their shopping

³⁴ Letter from Northcott to Smart dated 26 May 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

³⁵ Cable from Curtin to Forde, dated 20 July 1943. NAA A816/52/301/126.

³⁶ Cable from Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Curtin dated 7 August 1943, NAA A816/52/301/126.

³⁷ 'Our "Lost Legion" in Scottish Pine Forest', *The Telegraph* (Brisbane), 15 June 1942, p.5.

³⁸ 'Nothing Every Happens', *Army News*, 27 May 1943, p.2.

³⁹ Cable from Smart to Northcott dated 30 May 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

⁴⁰ Letter from Smart to Northcott dated 2 June 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

⁴¹ Letter from Smart to Northcott dated 16 July 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

⁴² '£55 Fare for British Brides of A.I.F. Men', *South Western Advertiser* (Perth), 15 October 1943, p.4.

⁴³ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 29 September 1943, AWM 52/5/32/8.

⁴⁴ 'Anzac Foresters on Way Home', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 1 October 1943, p.12.

⁴⁵ 'Up Broadway From "Down Under"', *New York Times*, 2 October 1943, p.7.

expedition scheduled for the afternoon was cancelled and they returned to the Armory to change. That night the men were guests of Madison Square Garden to watch the ice show *Ice-Capades*.⁴⁶ They departed New York the next day and sailed from San Francisco a fortnight later. The ship arrived at Brisbane after dropping off the New Zealand troops in Auckland, and the foresters were sent on leave.

Not all of the men returned home, as Smart requested approval 'to hold back a small number'. He wanted three officers and 12 other ranks to work as a staff 'to deal with POWs ex Germany who may come to this country'.⁴⁷ Some Australian escapees had already been placed with the Forestry Group for refitting in early November 1942.⁴⁸ Smart interviewed Cole a few weeks before the group departed asking for volunteers. One such officer who remained in the UK was Lt Felix Carpenter who was attached to the Royal Engineers. He landed at Normandy in June 1944 and worked providing timber for bridges, railways and hospitals. He returned to Australia in February 1945 and rejoined his original forestry company in New Guinea.⁴⁹

The wives and children of Forestry Group members slowly began arriving in Australia in August 1944. The first 35 war brides of Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen were the vanguard of over 400 that were to rejoin their partners.⁵⁰ One bride to reunite with her husband was Ivy Buckingham, accompanied by her 19-month-old daughter. Her husband, Brian, saw his child for the first time when he met them as they disembarked.⁵¹ Not only had the men missed their wives and children, they were also penalised by the Taxation Department. Normal deductions for wives and children were refused on the grounds that they were not resident in Australia. The president of the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and women, B.J. McDonald, raised the issue citing a Sydney man who had served for over four years. This ex-serviceman had attempted for over a year to get his wife and three-year-old daughter to Australia. He was taxed at £1/4/ from his income of £6 a week rather than the married rate of 8/0. Every fortnight he would cable £5 to his wife, but this, due to exchange rates, actually cost him £6/4/6, with a further 10/0 cable cost. The result of this gave him £1/3/9 a week to live on.⁵²

The forestry companies returned from their leave to the Engineers training centre at Kapooka, south-west of Wagga Wagga in New South Wales. Here they began training and refitting before transferring to New Guinea to work alongside the forestry companies that were there already. From the freezing snows of a Scottish winter, these members of the forestry companies spent the rest of the war sweating in tropical heat.

-o0o-

⁴⁶ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 1 October 1943, AWM 52/5/32/8.

⁴⁷ Letter from Smart to Northcott dated 16 July 1943, AWM 113/MH 1/88/1.

⁴⁸ HQ Forestry Group RAE War Diary entry dated 6 November 1942, AWM 52/5/32/8.

⁴⁹ 'Army Forester', *The Daily News* (Perth), 8 August 1945, p.3.

⁵⁰ 'British War Brides', *Army News*, 2 August 1944, p.3.

⁵¹ 'Arrived from Britain Today', *News* (Adelaide), 5 September 1945, p.3.

⁵² 'Bachelor Tax on A.I.F.', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 1945, p.5.

BREAKING THE 'FORREST CODE': THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR JOHN FORREST PC GCMG

Major Paul A. Rosenzweig (retd)¹

*The man that once did sell the lion's skin
While the beast lived, was killed with hunting him.*

William Shakespeare, *Henry V* (1598)

As the centenary of the Great War draws to a conclusion, it is timely to consider an Australian statesman honoured at this time a century ago just before his death. Although Sir John Forrest is primarily remembered as a founding father of Australian federation, one item of particular interest to military historians is that his last act as federal Treasurer was to authorise the payment of money for the raising of the Australian Imperial Force.² But incidental to the story of his immense contribution to Australia's nationhood is a list of obscure letters and numbers on a yellowed slip of paper in a musty old book found in a Melbourne market stall – the stuff that mysteries are made of, a code worthy of Da Vinci himself perhaps.

While acronyms such as 'GCMG' and 'DSO' might puzzle a lay person, they belong to a dialect which is readily understood by any medal collector or military historian. And when that aged slip of paper is contained within the pages of a publication such as *Dod's Peerage*, the seemingly irrelevant and unconnected numbers suddenly take on a clear and very precise meaning.

Sir John Forrest

A 1917 volume of *Dod's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage, etc of Great Britain and Ireland* contains much valuable content relating to wartime personalities, and is worthy of a place in any military library. But the value of one particular volume is all the greater due to the presence of not only the biography³ but also the personal bookplate of the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest PC GCMG, indicating that the volume had originally belonged to the redoubtable first Premier of Western Australia (Fig.1).

John Forrest (1847-1918) gained significant recognition not only at state level, but he also held ministerial office in Australia's first federal parliament: he was Minister for Defence, Minister for Home Affairs, Treasurer five times, and Acting Prime Minister. He was also a Privy Counsellor,⁴ and was promoted through the grades of the Order of St Michael and St George. Forrest has been referred to as 'A Great Australian' and Western Australia's 'greatest son'. His story is either well known, especially to West Australians, or can easily be

Notes

- AWM = Australian War Memorial
 LG = *London Gazette*
 NAA = National Archives of Australia
 NLA = National Library of Australia

¹ Paul Rosenzweig is a collector of orders, decorations and medals, who has contributed to various journals and publications for 35 years.

² Crowley (1979) p. 90; Crowley (1981a); Hawkins (2007) pp.147-148.

³ *Dod's Peerage* (1917) p.307.

⁴ The terms 'Privy Counsellor' and 'Privy Councillor' are equally correct, but the former more accurately reflects the role of members 'giving advice' to the sovereign, rather than simply being 'members of a council'.

looked up in a multitude of sources.



Fig.1: The 'John Forrest' bookplate inside the front cover of Forrest's personal copy of Dod's Peerage (1917), used after his elevation to GCMG in 1901. It features the emblazoned armorial in which his arms are encircled by the circlet and the collar of the Order of St Michael and St George with heraldic supporters. The plates were correctly (for the era) titled 'The Right Honourable Sir John Forrest GCMG' – in which his status as a Privy Counsellor is denoted by the title 'Right Honourable' rather than the post-nominals 'PC'. (Author's collection)

Forrest was born at Picton near Bunbury on 22 August 1847, in what was then the British Colony of Western Australia. Between 1869 and 1874, he led three expeditions into the remote hinterland and uncharted inland deserts, opening up vast tracts of the colony for pastoral expansion. In 1875, he went to London to give public lectures on

these expeditions and to have his journals published as *Explorations in Australia*. He was appointed a Knight (5th Class) of the Order of the Italian Crown (*Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Corona d'Italia*).⁵

In 1876, Forrest was promoted to Deputy Surveyor-General; in the same year he married Margaret Hammersley, and he received the Founder's Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society of London. In 1882, he was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London, and was admitted to the Order of St Michael and St George as a Companion (CMG) 'for distinguished services in exploration'.⁶ Typical for the period, portraits show that Forrest wore the insignia as a medal on the left breast, with a gold buckle on the suspension ribbon.⁷ Forrest was then Commissioner of Crown Lands and Surveyor-General (1883-90), holding a seat in the colony's Executive and Legislative Councils. In 1887 he represented the colony at the first Colonial Conference in London, and received the Jubilee Medal while attending

⁵ See portrait in Crowley (1979) p.79.

⁶ LG 23 May 1882, Supplement No.25111 dated 24 May 1882, p.2461.

⁷ See portrait in Crowley (1979) p.79. A portrait held by the Battye Library shows Forrest wearing the CMG and Order of the Italian Crown: J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History: 3121B, 'Sir John Forrest, Baron Forrest 1868-1918'; http://www.sjwa.wa.gov.au/federation/fed/010_fore.htm

Queen Victoria's jubilee celebrations.

During the period of Responsible Government ('self-rule') from 1890, Forrest held the seat of Bunbury in the Legislative Assembly, and from 1890 to 1901 was the first Premier of Western Australia, its only premier as a self-governing colony.⁸ In 1891 Forrest was knighted (Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George, KCMG) in recognition of his services as Premier and Treasurer, the first native-born Australian to be so honoured.⁹ He presided for a decade over a stable administration, noted for rapid development, extensive land settlement and large-scale public works (including railway construction, harbour improvements, the development of the goldfields and the inauguration of the Goldfields Water Scheme), all of which transformed Western Australia from a struggling colony to a wealthy state.

He was specially invited to attend Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee celebrations, notably joining his fellow colonial premiers preceding the Queen's Procession to St Paul's on 22 June.¹⁰ When the Colonial Premiers were introduced to Her Majesty by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir John received the '1897' clasp to his 1887 Medal. On 7 July at the Court at Windsor, Sir John was sworn of Her Majesty's Privy Council – from this time he was entitled to the honorific 'the Right Honourable'.¹¹

Forrest was a forceful advocate of federation and, in a referendum called by Forrest, West Australians voted to join the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901. Meanwhile, Forrest resigned and in the first federal election on 29 March 1901 was elected unopposed to the seat of Swan in the House of Representatives. He was briefly Postmaster-General in the first federal government, and then held the Defence portfolio from 18 January 1901 to 13 August 1903, dealing with the Commonwealth's commitment to the Boer War as well as the integration of the six colonial forces into a unified Commonwealth Military Force.

In 1901, Forrest was elevated to Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG), 'in recognition of services rendered in connection with the Federation of the Australian Colonies and the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia'.¹² A portrait held by the National Library of Australia shows Sir John wearing the GCMG sash insignia and breast star, and Queen Victoria's Jubilee Medal.¹³ A portrait published in 1925 shows Sir John wearing the GCMG regalia and a brooch of three miniatures: the Order of St Michael and St George, the 1887 Jubilee Medal and the 1902 Coronation Medal.¹⁴ He had attended King Edward VII's coronation as a Privy Councillor, and he did so again in 1911 for the coronation of King George V.¹⁵

Following a double-dissolution in June 1914, Forrest retained his seat but the Liberal Party was soundly beaten and he stood down as Treasurer. In December 1916, a split in the Labor Party over conscription left Prime Minister Billy Hughes with a minority government;

⁸ Commonwealth of Australia (1918).

⁹ LG 29 May 1891, Supplement No.26167 dated 30 May 1891, p.2923.

¹⁰ *The London Gazette Extraordinary* No.26947 of 14 March 1898, pp.1578, 1689, 1639, 1640.

¹¹ LG No.26871 of 9 July 1897, p.3768. As a Privy Counsellor he was also entitled to the post-nominals 'PC' but by the custom of that era his status was sufficiently denoted by the title 'Right Honourable'. By modern convention, both honorifics may be used together.

¹² LG 28 December 1900, Supplement No.27261 dated 1 January 1901, p.1.

¹³ NLA: nla.pic-an23378547; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an23378547>.

¹⁴ *Western Mail* (Perth, WA) 7 May 1925, p.1S.

¹⁵ *Hamilton Spectator* (Victoria) 9 February 1918, p.6.

Hughes and his colleagues formed the National Labor Party, and the Liberal Party joined with them in the formation of a new government. Forrest served as Treasurer for the fourth time in this National War Government.

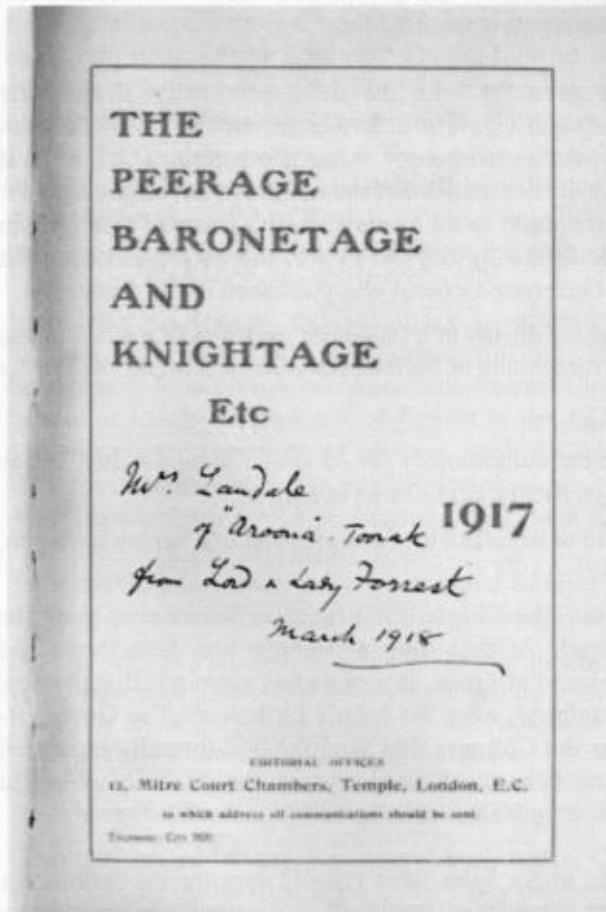


Fig.2: Forrest's hand-written dedication to Mrs Landale inside his copy of Dod's Peerage (1917): 'From Lord and Lady Forrest'. (Author's collection)

Forrest began suffering from a cancer on his temple in early 1917, and within a year was very ill. After a second operation in early 1918 to remove a cancerous growth, on 21 March he resigned as Treasurer – but not from Parliament, indicating the strength of both his ambition and optimism. Shortly afterwards he boarded a ship for London, where he hoped to obtain specialist medical attention.

'Lord Forrest'

In the second week of February 1918 meanwhile, it was widely announced by the media that a Barony of the United Kingdom was to be conferred upon the Australian federal treasurer, Sir John Forrest.¹⁶ As early as October 1917 the Governor-General Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson GCMG had expressed his desire to have nominated Sir John for a peerage, but observed

that this would not be supported by the Prime Minister.¹⁷ Noting that Sir John was already 'GCMG and PC', it was suggested that should the Order of Merit be available for the most eminent citizens of each of the three Dominions, Sir John would be a natural candidate for consideration. On 3 January 1918, the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggested the GCMG, perhaps not appreciating that Forrest already held that status. In a return cablegram, the Governor-General proposed the peerage in lieu of the offered GCMG for Forrest, who was described as, 'most outstanding figure in Australia and universally popular'.¹⁸

This time it was noted that the Prime Minister, Mr Hughes, warmly supported the suggestion. There was some speculation later though, that the peerage had been orchestrated by Prime Minister Hughes (Labor Party) to deny Forrest (Liberal) any opportunity to compete for the prime ministership:

How much the peerage bestowed on the veteran from the West was due to the affection of a

¹⁶ *Northern Star* (Lismore, NSW) 9 February 1918, p.5; *Cairns Post* (Queensland) 11 February 1918, p.8; *The Farmer and Settler* (NSW) 12 February 1918, p.4; *Bendigonian* (Bendigo, Victoria) 14 February 1918, p.27.

¹⁷ NAA: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – memorandum from Sir R Munro-Ferguson, 8 October 1917.

¹⁸ NAA: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – cablegram from Sir R Munro-Ferguson, 9 January 1918.

grateful sovereign and how much to the astute Little Digger's realisation that Baron Forrest of Bunbury would be safer taking his seat in the House of Lords than on the Treasury benches behind himself the discerning will decide.¹⁹

Accordingly, on 6 February the Secretary of State for the Colonies advised by cablegram that the King was indeed pleased to confer the peerage upon Sir John.²⁰

The Governor-General reported that he gave Sir John the news personally: despite the discomfort of his illness – 'Her Excellency and I gave it to him in his sick room' – Sir John received the news of the peerage with quiet satisfaction.²¹ After a meeting of the Federal Cabinet on Friday 8 February, the Prime Minister stated that the members of the government all congratulated 'Baron Forrest' on his elevation to the peerage.²² The British Press Bureau made the announcement that day, and the following day the text of the cablegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor-General was published in the press:

His Majesty has been pleased to confer the dignity of a Barony of the United Kingdom on the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest, in recognition of his long and distinguished services to the Empire.²³

At this time, Sir John had been in parliament continuously for 35 years. Most notably, it was observed, Sir John was the first native-born Australian to be so honoured:

Lord Forrest, for such he is now entitled to be called, by the conferment of a barony upon him, is the first Australian to wear a coronet.²⁴

But the use of present tense was premature – the King had indicated *an intention* to grant the barony, but it had not yet been conferred. At that time a peerage was hereditary, and automatically meant membership of the House of Lords. It was widely surmised that the new peer's title would be 'Lord Forrest of Bunbury', after Sir John's birthplace. The Governor-General advised the Secretary of State for the Colonies that Sir John had formally requested permission to assume the title of 'Lord Forrest of Bunbury, in the State of Western Australia'.²⁵

The Governor-General also recommended to Sir John three equally appropriate options for his signature: 'Forrest', 'Forrest of B' or 'Forrest of Bunbury'.²⁶ Ensuing correspondence from the Grand Hotel in Melbourne was indeed signed 'Forrest' – as if he were already a peer.²⁷ Official government correspondence throughout 1918 referred to him as 'Lord Forrest', and continued to refer to him as 'the late Lord Forrest' well into the 1920s.²⁸ After his death, the solicitors representing the executors of Sir John's estate used the title 'Baron Forrest of Bunbury in the Commonwealth of Australia and of Forret in the United

¹⁹ *The Mail* (Adelaide, SA) 16 August 1947, p.4.

²⁰ NAA: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – cablegram dated 6 February 1918.

²¹ Scott (1941) p.173.

²² *Singleton Argus* (NSW) 12 February 1918, p.2.

²³ *Examiner* (Launceston, Tasmania) 9 February 1918, p.7.

²⁴ *Border Watch* (Mount Gambier, SA) 12 February 1918, p.2.

²⁵ NAA: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – memorandum from Sir R Munro-Ferguson, 12 February 1918; Sir John Forrest, letters to the Governor-General dated 10 and 12 February 1918.

²⁶ NAA: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – letter from Sir R Munro-Ferguson, 13 February 1918.

²⁷ NAA: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – for example: letters to the Governor-General dated 18 and 26 February 1918. See also Crowley (1979) p.91.

²⁸ See for example NAA: A1, 1918/5886, item barcode 36792; A1, 1920/6729, item barcode 38624.

Kingdom',²⁹ reflecting Sir John's family heritage in Scotland.³⁰

After standing down and being weakened by surgery, Forrest left Melbourne in May 1918 to seek further medical aid abroad. He was undoubtedly hoping that when the legal formalities relating to his peerage had been completed he might sit for a time in the House of Lords as an elder statesman of the Empire.³¹ On 30 July he left Albany with his wife Margaret and a nurse in the troopship HMAT A74 *Marathon*, which was bound for London with AIF reinforcements. Forrest celebrated his 71st birthday at sea on 22 August off the west coast of Africa. He died however, on 3 September when the ship was anchored off Sierra Leone.³² Forrest was taken ashore and buried, but his remains were later brought back to Western Australia and interred in Karrakatta Cemetery.³³ The couple had no children, and ultimately their estate was divided equally amongst their living nieces and nephews.

John Forrest's legacy survives today in a significant number of correctly titled forms, including the settlement of Forrest on the Trans-Australian Railway, Glen Forrest, Forrestdale, John Forrest National Park, Forrest Chase, Forrestfield, John Forrest Senior High School in Morley, the suburb of Forrest in the ACT, and the Forrest Highway. His name is perpetuated on a number of plaques, such as the foundation stone of the Royal Mint of Western Australia (now the Perth Mint), laid on 23 September 1896. A statue by the noted Australian sculptor Sir Edgar Bertram Mackennal KCVO stands in King's Park in Perth.

An interesting observation on the proposal to raise Sir John Forrest to the peerage was made by the Australian official war historian Charles Bean in his personal diary:

It came as a shock to us to see by the newspapers a couple of days ago that Sir John Forrest has been made a peer. One never dreamt that there was any possibility of any Australian, least of all one of our politicians engaged in active work in Australia being given a hereditary title. The country – the whole spirit of the nation – is so utterly opposed to the introduction of the hereditary system, that one would have said it was quite impossible for any Government to have introduced it without previously getting the authority of Parliament.³⁴

Bean anticipated 'a very big outcry' back home. Certainly, the Secretary of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Labor Party objected to the bestowal of the title, and said that the party resented any attempt to establish any form of hereditary aristocracy in Australia.³⁵ But apart from these, it seemed that everyone in Australia actually *did* want to claim Forrest as a Lord. The newspapers called him 'Lord Forrest' when they announced his death: 'Many marks of worldly honour his merits had won, the latest being the Barony conferred upon him by the King'.³⁶ When his will was lodged for probate, it was announced that 'The Late Lord Forrest' had bequeathed 'his orders, decorations, peerage, letters patent, manuscripts, public mementoes, etc' to the trustees of the Perth Museum and Art Gallery.³⁷

²⁹ *The West Australian* (Perth, WA) 8 November 1918, p.3; LG No. 31005 of 12 November 1918, p.13347; LG No.31019 of 19 November 1918, p.13657.

³⁰ Some references incorrectly cite his title as 'Forrest in Fife' believing that it should reflect his name, whereas the title actually refers to 'Forret in the County of Fife in the United Kingdom': see for example see Stokes (1947).

³¹ See Crowley (1979) p.91.

³² *The West Australian* (Perth, WA) 8 November 1918, p.3.

³³ NAA: A2, 1919/589, item barcode 48623; <http://www.mcb.wa.gov.au/OurCemeteries/Karrakatta.aspx>

³⁴ AWM: AWM38-3DRL606/99/1, pp.6-7 – C E W Bean, diary entry for 12 February 1918.

³⁵ *Singleton Argus* (NSW) 12 February 1918, p.2.

³⁶ *The West Australian* (Perth, WA) 5 September 1918, p.6.

³⁷ *The Mercury* (Hobart, Tasmania) 29 October 1918, p.5.

In a review of the 'Makers of Western Australia' in 1925 he was named as 'Lord Forrest of Bunbury' and it was stated, 'On February 2, 1918, he was raised to the Peerage'.³⁸ Many authoritative works and biographies refer to him with the title 'Baron Forrest' or '1st Baron Forrest of Bunbury'.³⁹ *Who's Who* in Australia has repeatedly stated that Forrest was created '1st Baron Forrest of Bunbury in 1918'.⁴⁰ When it was speculated in 1932 that Sir Isaac Isaacs PC GCMG, the ninth Governor-General of Australia and the first Australian to hold that office, would be elevated to the peerage it was observed, 'Sir Isaac is a contemporary and colleague of the late Lord Forrest, who was created Baron Forrest of Bunbury in 1918'.⁴¹

The second Olympic-size pool built in Australia was opened in Kalgoorlie in 1938 and was proudly named the 'Lord Forrest Olympic Pool'. The 'Lord Forrest Centenary Booklet, 1847-1947' marked the centenary of his birth in 1947, while that same year a memorial to 'Lord Forrest' was unveiled in Fremantle with the inscription:

Erected on August 22, 1947, to commemorate the centenary of John Forrest, Baron Forrest of Bunbury, G.C.M.G., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.G.S., explorer and statesman, by whose foresight and resolution the Fremantle Harbour and many other important projects were due.⁴²

A souvenir 2½ pence First Day Cover was released in 1949, commemorating 'John Forrest 1st Baron Forrest of Bunbury'. More recently, a plaque installed in the Bunbury City Council grounds also refers to him as 'Baron Forrest of Bunbury'.⁴³

It is true that in secret correspondence to London immediately following receipt of the formal notification, and to Sir John himself, the Governor-General referred to him as 'Lord Forrest' as a polite courtesy.⁴⁴ Similarly, an avalanche of telegrams congratulated 'Lord Forrest' and 'Lady Forrest'. And the title persisted. A summary of Ministerial offices under the Crown published by the Commonwealth Government refers to Sir John as 'the Right Honourable LORD FORREST of Bunbury, P.C., G.C.M.G, LL.D., M.P.'. Despite Bean's protestations, even a companion volume to his *Official History of Australia in World War 1* listed Sir John as 'Rt. Hon. Lord Forrest'.⁴⁵

Curiously, *A New History of Australia* (1974) indexed Sir John as 'Forrest, Lord' yet the only mention of the peerage is the delightfully vague statement, 'Forrest became the first Australian to be recommended by his country for elevation to the British peerage and a seat in the House of Lords'.⁴⁶ Recommended, he certainly was; legally appointed by Letters Patent, no. An encyclopaedia of Australian Events published in 1997 correctly indexed him as 'Forrest, Sir J' yet also vaguely stated, 'Forrest retired from Cabinet and Parliament to take up the peerage Hughes had secured for him'.⁴⁷

However, while His Majesty might surely have been 'pleased to confer' this Barony, all

³⁸ *Western Mail* (Perth) 7 May 1925 p.1S.

³⁹ Keith (1927); Scott (1941) pp.436-437; Stokes (1947); Serle (1949); Crowley (1981a); Crowley (1981b); Orchard (1999); Baigent, E (2004).

⁴⁰ See for example Information Australia (1995) p.8, and others.

⁴¹ *Riverine Herald* (Echuca, Victoria) 17 August 1935, p.2.

⁴² *The Daily News* (Perth) 20 August 1947, p.8.

⁴³ <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/government---state/display/98969-john-forrest-plaque>; the plaque is located at Prinsep & Wittenoom Streets, Bunbury WA 6230.

⁴⁴ NAA: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – for example, memoranda from Sir R Munro-Ferguson dated 12 February 1918; 13 February 1918; 13 July 1918.

⁴⁵ Scott (1941) Appendix 1, 'Commonwealth Ministries during the war period', p.868.

⁴⁶ Crowley (1974) p.350.

⁴⁷ Fraser & Atkinson (1997) p.169.

reporting seems to have been done merely on the basis of the cablegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and nothing more. There is no corresponding entry in the *London Gazette*, which might typically be found, whereby 'The King has been pleased, by Letters-Patent ... to confer the dignity of a Baron'. And equally following his death, there was no entry bestowing the title 'Lady Forrest' upon his wife in perpetuity, 'as if he had survived'.

Had Sir John become 'Lord Forrest', he would have been the first Australian to be so appointed with a hereditary title. Since that time, several Australians have been made life peers or peeresses of the United Kingdom, but these titles were not hereditary.⁴⁸ There have also been many hereditary peers with an Australian connection, including several Governors-General, whose peerages pre- or post-dated their appointment in Australia, but only one such Australian. The only Australian to receive a hereditary peerage was Mr Stanley Bruce, former Prime Minister of Australia, who was created a viscount in the 1947 British New Year's Honours list; he was childless however, and the viscountcy became extinct on his death. Nevertheless, one newspaper report said, 'He is the second Australian ever to be raised to the peerage, the first having been the late Baron Forrest of Bunbury'.⁴⁹

However despite the many announcements that Forrest was to be raised to the British peerage, and indeed the official cablegram which clearly stated that His Majesty 'has been pleased to confer the dignity of a Barony of the United Kingdom',⁵⁰ Letters Patent had not been issued at the time of his death so the peerage was never officially created. Most tellingly, his peerage is not mentioned in any authoritative reference works such as *Burke's Peerage*.⁵¹ Curiously, in 1979 his official biographer initially referred only to the announcement, but refrained from referring to Sir John as 'Lord Forrest' or using the title Baron, but for the entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* in 1981 he referred to Forrest as '1st Baron Forrest of Bunbury'.⁵² Nevertheless, Sir John's correct title at the time of his death was: 'the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest GCMG', or perhaps 'Sir John Forrest PC GCMG'. By modern convention, the title 'the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest PC GCMG' would also be appropriate. But any references to him as 'Baron Forrest' or 'Lord Forrest', even as a courtesy, are technically incorrect.

Heraldry

The Forrest name has its origins in Scotland: John Forrest's father William came from Bervie, near Stonehaven in Kincardineshire (while his mother Margaret came from a Dundee shopkeeping family). The obvious derivation of the name is from a 'forester' or a 'dweller in a forest'; from these arose the place-names Forret in the north of Fife and Forres in Morayshire, which in turn gave rise to family names which were eventually corrupted to 'Forrest'. William and Margaret migrated to Western Australia in December 1842 where they settled as farmers. When John Forrest visited London in 1875, he took the opportunity to visit the birthplaces of his parents, and he arranged for his family to be registered with a coat of arms and a motto: *Vivunt dum Vivent* ['While they live they flourish'].

From 1882, John Forrest CMG was permitted to display the circlet of the Order of St Michael

⁴⁸ For example, Baron Casey of Berwick and Baron Florey of Adelaide were created life peers in 1960 and 1965 respectively.

⁴⁹ *The Argus* (Melbourne) 2 January 1947, p.3.

⁵⁰ *Examiner* (Launceston, Tasmania) 9 February 1918, p.7.

⁵¹ Rubinstein (1991): 'his peerage is not mentioned or included in *Burke's Peerage*, *The New Extinct Peerage*, the *Complete Peerage*, or any other standard reference work on the subject'.

⁵² Crowley (1979) p.91; Crowley, F.K. (1981b).

and St George on his arms, and these arms did not change when he was knighted in 1891. However on being elevated to GCMG in 1901, he became entitled to enhance his arms with heraldic supporters: encircling his arms with a depiction of both the circlet and the collar of the Order, with the badge of the Order suspended from the collar. This fully emblazoned armorial was used by Sir John Forrest after 1901 to adorn decorative bookplates for his personal library (see Fig.1). These bookplates were designed by Allan Wyon (1843-1907), Chief Engraver of Her Majesty's Seals – of the celebrated dynasty of coin, medal and seal engravers whose names are well known to collectors of medals. The plates carried the Forrest family motto and were titled 'The Right Honourable Sir John Forrest GCMG', Sir John denoting his status as a Privy Counsellor by the title 'Right Honourable' rather than using the post-nominals 'PC' which was the appropriate convention for the time.



Fig.3: A letterhead sheet from the Grand Hotel, Melbourne, found folded in half and tucked between pages of Sir John Forrest's personal copy of Dod's Peerage (1917). (Author's collection)

In early 1918, before leaving Australia, it would appear that Sir John and Lady Forrest called on their good friend Mrs Landale in Melbourne – the former Jessie G. Campbell (1857-1929), and the widow of the late Mr Alexander Landale Esq (1839-1911). Alexander and his brother had been farmers in Victoria in the 1850s, and then at Deniliquin where Alexander kept Border Leicester stud sheep on his property 'Wandook'. Alexander was active with the Melbourne Royal Agricultural Society, and he died in London in 1911 while representing the society (his wife had accompanied him on that visit, and they witnessed the coronation).⁵³ Having held the Defence portfolio, Forrest had a keen interest in the fact that their son George Landale (1877-1948) had served with the 3rd King's Own Hussars in South Africa and the Great War, attaining the rank of Major⁵⁴ while another son Douglas (1890-1914) had served with the Rifle Brigade from 1911 and then as a Lieutenant with the Sixth Division, British Expeditionary Force, killed in action on 23 October 1914 (he 'was brave as a lion' according to his Commanding Officer).⁵⁵

Mrs Landale's residence was the historic 'Aroona' in Toorak, a two-storey mansion with pillars at ground level and a curved driveway bordered with flowers and shrubs.⁵⁶ This property dated back to the first Crown Land sales of 1840 north from Toorak Road to the Yarra River, and 'Greenmount' (built in 1869) was renamed 'Aroona' when Alexander Landale acquired it in 1884. After Mrs Landale died 'Aroona' was demolished and the land

⁵³ *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 June 1911, p.9.

⁵⁴ *The Argus* (Melbourne) 15 November 1948, p.6.

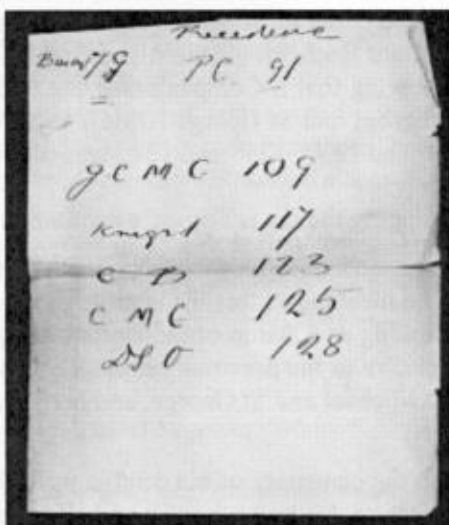
⁵⁵ *Pastoral Review* 16 November 1914, p.1045.

⁵⁶ Stonnington Library and Information Service – ID 11802 ('Aroona'); Org ID 7855: <http://www.picturevictoria.vic.gov.au/site/stonnington/miscellaneous/11802.html>

subdivided in the 1920s – ‘Landale Road’ today honours the memory of Alexander and Jessie Landale.

The significance of Forrest’s visit in March 1918 is that it would appear that he presented Mrs Landale with his personal copy of *Dod’s Peerage*, which contained his biographical entry. And, while the ‘John Forrest’ bookplate inside the front cover is of substantial significance in its own right, the hand-written dedication on the title page is indicative of Sir John’s thinking at that time (see Fig.2). He signed the book, ‘From Lord and Lady Forrest’ – as if he had already been raised to the peerage.

Fig.4: A list of acronyms and numbers on the reverse of the Grand Hotel letterhead sheet, titled ‘Precedence’, where Sir John Forrest seems to have charted his rise to Baron, ranking 79th in the Commonwealth Order of Precedence. (Author’s collection)



‘The Forrest Code’

The third item of significance relating to this volume of *Dod’s Peerage* is that, unbeknown to Forrest, he had left a slip of paper nestled between the pages, which lay undisturbed for nine decades until the book found itself for sale in a market. Such a random piece of paper might have been thrown out at any time, but fortunately this one survived. The page was a sheet of letterhead paper bearing the title of the Grand Hotel in Melbourne (see Fig.3). One biography of Sir John noted:

He was by then a big man by achievement, by reputation, and by personality ... He was one of the wealthiest of the first generation of Federal politicians, and when in Melbourne on ministerial and parliamentary duties hired a large suite of rooms in the Grand Hotel and entertained on a princely scale.⁵⁷

On the reverse of this old sheet from the Grand Hotel is a list of obscure letters and numbers written with a fountain-pen, presumably by Sir John Forrest himself, which could be assumed to relate to anything or nothing at all (Fig.4). They seem to be headed by the title ‘Procedure’. It could be any scrap of paper from any one of Sir John’s many stays in the Grand Hotel. The annotations would certainly have been meaningless to Mrs Landale in 1918, and also to whoever might have been browsing in the market where this volume was offered for sale. But to a medal collector, these acronyms have clearly defined meanings.

What then of the numbers beside them?

PC	:	91
GCMG	:	109
Knight	:	117
CB	:	123
CMG	:	125
DSO	:	128

When these letters and seemingly random numbers are reviewed in conjunction with Sir John Forrest’s biographical entry within the volume, their meaning becomes very clear. The

⁵⁷ Crowley (1981b).

numbers actually relate to the relative rankings of the various grades of orders and knighthoods which are given in the introductory pages of *Dod's Peerage*. The list is in fact headed by the title 'Precedence', again presumably in Forrest's own hand, which mirrors the page headers within the order of precedence pages of *Dod's Peerage*.

King George V of course ranked first in precedence within the Commonwealth and his heir the Prince of Wales ranked second, and so forth through the Royal Family to the Archbishop of Canterbury (ranked ninth) through to dukes, marquesses, earls and viscounts. At that particular time, Privy Counsellors – denoted in Forrest's list as 'PC' – ranked 91st in the Order of Precedence. Working down the order of precedence in *Dod's*, a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG) ranked 109th in the Commonwealth, and a Knight Bachelor ('Knight') ranked 117th. And so forth, with the order of precedence in *Dod's* showing that a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB), a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) and a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) ranked 123rd, 125th and 128th respectively.

Topping the list is Forrest's annotation:

Baron : 79

The meaning of this list is quite clear: in 1918, Sir John Forrest had charted his intended new ranking as a Baron of the United Kingdom (79th in the Commonwealth Order of Precedence) relative to his previous status as a Privy Counsellor and Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George, and perhaps the knighthoods and honours held by friends.

*

As the centenary of his death approaches, Sir John Forrest is still regarded as a champion of Western Australia, known affectionately as 'Big John' not simply because of his height and girth. Bedecked with his honours he was called, 'a massive man, bearded and bronzed'.⁵⁸ In 1918 the Governor-General had called him 'a most gallant old gentleman'.⁵⁹ In the arena of federal politics he was known as 'the bluff old Emperor of the West' – he had spent a total of 26 years 9 months, in a period of 35 years, holding ministerial office at the colonial, state and federal levels.

Sir John Forrest has been noted as being fond of pomp and ceremony, and he reputedly always insisted on being treated with appropriate respect. Photographs of him are typical for the period: a robust man wearing the sash and insignia of grand honours, reflecting his standing in parliament and the community. It was noted that Sir John frankly confessed that, 'he appreciated the decorative symbols of distinction'.⁶⁰ Similarly, 'Forrest took an honest delight in the honors conferred upon him, although modest in all public references to himself'.⁶¹

Sir John had received a foreign decoration and four royal commemorative awards, and had risen through the three grades of the Order of St Michael and St George. Elevation to the British peerage would have seemed to him to be a natural progression. So it is perhaps not surprising that sometime in February or early March 1918, upon being informed that he was to be so honoured, Sir John sat down with a sheet of Grand Hotel letterhead paper and his copy of *Dod's Peerage* to calculate his impending new status. On this slip of paper, Forrest

⁵⁸ *The Mail* (Adelaide, SA) 16 August 1947, p.4.

⁵⁹ Scott (1941) p.172.

⁶⁰ Scott (1941) p.173.

⁶¹ *The Mail* (Adelaide, SA) 16 August 1947, p.4.

charted his rise from CMG (ranking 125th) to GCMG (109th) and thence to PC (91st), and now to Baron, ranking 79th in the Commonwealth.

It is unfortunate though that this high honour was never bestowed, with Forrest dying *en route* to London. A wise officer of the Military Historical Society of Australia likened Sir John's presumptive use of the title 'Lord Forrest' to King Henry's allusion to the unfortunate man who sold the lion skin before he went on the safari, only to be killed by the lion during the hunt.⁶² Today, this simple slip of paper represents Sir John Forrest's expectations unfulfilled.

References

- Alexander, J A, ed (1950) *Who's Who in Australia*. 14th Edition. The Herald, Melbourne, p. 738.
- Australian National Herbarium: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/forrest-john.html>
- Australian War Memorial: AWM38, Records of C E W Bean, Official Historian, item 3DRL606/91/1 – Diary for February 1918: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/awm38/3drl606/awm38-3drl606-99-1.pdf>
- Baigent, E (2004) 'Forrest, John, first Baron Forrest (1847–1918)'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press; <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33207>
- Commonwealth of Australia (1918) 'Ministerial Offices under the Crown held by the Right Honourable LORD FORREST of Bunbury, P.C., G.C.M.G, LL.D., M.P., from 1883 to 1918 (35 years)'. Government Printer, Melbourne.
- Crowley, F K, ed (1974) *A New History of Australia*. William Heinemann, Melbourne.
- Crowley, F K (1979) 'Sir John Forrest, The Statesman'. In Hunt, L, ed (1979) *Westralian Portraits* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands), pp. 78-91.
- Crowley, F K (1981a) 'Forrest, Sir John (1847–1918)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8. Melbourne University Press.
- Crowley, F K (1981b) 'Forrest, Sir John (1847–1918)'. National Centre of Biography, Australian National University: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/forrest-sir-john-6211/text10677>
- Crowley, F (1988) 'Forrest the politician 1890-1918'. *Early Days* (Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society), 9(6): 13-26.
- Dod's Peerage (1917) *The Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage, etc of Great Britain and Ireland*, 77th Edition. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, Temple, London.
- Forrest, J (1875) *Explorations in Australia*. Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, London.
- Fraser, B & A Atkinson, eds (1997) *The Macquarie Encyclopedia of Australian Events*. Revised Edition. The Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, Sydney.
- Hasluck, P (1977) 'The early years of John Forrest'. *Early Days* (Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society), 8(1): 69-97.
- Hawkins, J (2007) 'John Forrest: Four times treasurer'. In *Economic Roundup* (Treasury Research Institute), Spring 2007, pp 137-150. [accessed online 26 December 2017]: <https://research.treasury.gov.au/roundup-paper/john-forrest-four-times-treasurer/>
- Information Australia (1995) *Who's Who in Australia*, 31st Edition. Information Australia Group Pty Ltd, Melbourne.
- Keith, A B (1927) 'Forrest, John, first Baron Forrest, of Bunbury 1847-1918'. The Peerage: <http://www.thepeerage.com/e1430.htm>
- National Archives of Australia: A2923, H3, item barcode 232208 – 'Honours - Sir John Forrest's Peerage and correspondence regarding Sir John Forrest's title on being raised to Peerage – 1917-1918'
- National Archives of Australia: A11804, 1918/199, item barcode 249193 – 'Forrest, Lord of Bunbury (Western Australia) Appointment as Baron and death'.
- National Archives of Australia: A2, 1919/589, item barcode 48623 – 'Forrest, Lord. Removal of his Body to Australia'.
- Obituaries Australia – 'Landale, Alexander (?–1911)', National Centre of Biography, Australian National University: <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/landale-alexander-1231/text1221>

⁶² Shakespeare, W (1598) *Henry V*, Act IV, Scene 3; <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org>

- Orchard, A E (1999) 'A History of Systematic Botany in Australia'. *Flora of Australia Volume 1*, 2nd edition, Australian Biological Resources Study.
- Rubinstein, W D (1991) *The Biographical Dictionary of Life Peers*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Scott, E (1941) *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume 11: 'Australia During the War'. 7th Edition, Australian War Memorial Canberra.
- Serle, P (1949) 'Forrest, Sir John, first Baron Forrest of Bunbury (1847–1918)'. *Dictionary of Australian Biography*. Project Gutenberg Australia: <http://gutenberg.net.au/dictbiog/0-dict-biogF.html#forrest3>
- Stokes, J P, ed (1947) 'Lord Forrest Centenary Booklet, 1847-1947'. S H Lamb, Perth ('Baron Forrest of Bunbury and the Forrest in Fife : a tribute to a great explorer and statesman from the scholars of Western Australian schools'): <http://www.librarything.com/work/3021312>
- Webb, M (2003) 'John Forrest: Architect and founder of modern Western Australia'. *Early Days* (Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society), 12(3): 250-272.

-o0o-

NEW SABRETACHE EDITOR

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The current editor of *Sabretache* will retire at the end of 2018 and Federal Council is seeking expressions of interest for the position of editor to take effect from early 2019 (with a handover period during the production of the December 2018 issue).

The editor handles both editorial and manuscript production and, while answerable to Federal Council, is responsible for all aspects of the publication of *Sabretache*, including receipt, selection and editing of material for publication, and preparation of a manuscript for the printer. Selection of the printer is the responsibility of the editor with the assistance of Federal Council. Note that distribution of the journal is no longer the responsibility of the editor.

Skills/attributes required include: managing deadlines and budgets; good communication skills, including liaison/negotiation with members, printers, book publishers and government organisations (including the Copyright Agency Limited); demonstrable ability with writing/editorial skills; and a working knowledge of military history. Although *Sabretache* has been published and printed in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia for a number of years, the new editor and printer may be based in any state or territory.

Expressions of interest should state the experience and background of the applicant, including samples of work. Applicants should also consider how they would ensure that *Sabretache*:

- continues to be a relevant, quality journal
- best meets the needs and expectations of the membership
- adapts to the challenges of changing technologies

For further information contact the editor at editor@mhsa.org.au. Written expressions of interest should be sent to:

The Editor, *Sabretache*
 Military Historical Society of Australia
 PO Box 247
 Marden SA 5070

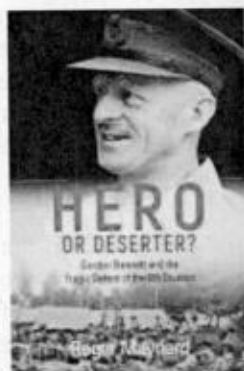
Or editor@mhsa.org.au

All submissions will be acknowledged.

-o0o-

REVIEWS

Roger Maynard, *Hero or Deserter? Gordon Bennett and the Tragic Defeat of 8th Division*, Penguin Random House Australia, North Sydney, 2017. ISBN 9780143783923, softcover, 234 pages. RRP \$34.99 AUD.



Singapore was surrendered to the Imperial Japanese Army on 15 February 1942. British Lt Gen Arthur Percival signed the document for unconditional surrender and thus committed Allied troops to three and a half years as prisoners of war. Present at the final meeting in the underground bunker HQ of Allied Command, where the decision was made to capitulate, was the GOC of the 8th Division 2nd AIF, Maj Gen Henry Gordon Bennett. It is Bennett's decision to escape through Japanese lines, with the intention of making his way back to Australia, that is the focus for Maynard's account. Bennett felt it was his duty to escape and return with the knowledge of what had occurred during the battles for the Malayan Peninsula and Singapore. Around 10.30pm, after the ceasefire, Bennett with two of his senior staff officers, having

handed over divisional command to Brig Cecil Callaghan, began the dangerous trek to freedom. His decision has divided opinion ever since.

Bennett was not the only one intent on escape. Many war-weary soldiers had similar thoughts. Lionel Wigmore's official account indicates that there were three categories of those seeking to escape: those who had deserted, those who had become detached from their units in the chaos of the Battle for Singapore, and those who escaped after its fall. Wigmore (cited by Maynard) observes that 'the dividing line between desertion and escape was in some instances indefinite'. He comments that the question of exactly when such activities took place was important, as attempting to escape when a POW was considered legitimate, but the charge of desertion might be applied if an escape or voluntarily leaving of one's post were made before.

After a hazardous journey, Bennett managed to get back to Australia late on 27 February. Maynard covers his return, his reception by the Government and by the Army hierarchy and what Bennett perceived as a deliberate side-lining of his experience, with his then appointment as commander of the 3rd Corps in Western Australia. The mixed reception, which he was to receive for the rest of his life, began with his arrival. The Prime Minister and Cabinet received him warmly. But senior Army men, including the Chief of the General Staff, Maj Gen Vernon Sturdee, advised him not to speak of the defeat and surrender of the 8th Division, and he was informed that his escape, as Maynard reports, was 'ill-advised'.

Maynard sets the scene for the debate about Bennett's motives and actions with the dramatic days in the fighting retreat down the Malayan Peninsula and the final days in the Battle for Singapore. While these events are generally effectively and vividly described, Maynard occasionally indulges in rhetorical flourishes that advance the narrative for a popular audience, but which detract from a balanced depiction of the key players and the events. He has a tendency to impute to troops generally and to key players specifically – Blamey and particularly Bennett – emotions or thoughts which might serve a journalist's narrative, but which cannot necessarily be substantiated by evidence, even in a revisiting of Bennett's own account of his decisions at the time.

For example, how can we know, as Maynard suggests, that as the Battle of Singapore drew to a close, Bennett's 'more immediate responsibility was to himself' (p.139)? Or that supposedly with his 'conscience pricked ... for whatever reason he decided to address the welfare of his men' – arranging for fresh clothing and two days' rations for the troops (p.196)? Or that such 'caring gestures' might 'enhance his image once his escape became known', and that 'for whatever reason he was apparently keen to be seen to be doing the right thing'(p.197)? Or that he deliberately noted the time of his departure from his HQ (10.30pm) to make sure it was clearly after the signing of the surrender document (5.30pm) and the ceasefire (8.30pm)? On the last, one should not be surprised that an army officer will make sure that times are recorded. One should also expect that a Commanding Officer took responsibility for his men – not because of conscience, not because his actions might be construed as 'caring gestures', but because it was his duty during a battle and its aftermath.

Maynard links Bennett's predicament with the overall reception and public perception of the 8th Division – which he describes as having been 'much maligned over the years'. Yet, the warm public attitude to the POWs of the 8th Division, judging by the press after the return of the POWs and the years that followed, was not in doubt. As Maynard says, Bennett was 'one of the most unconventional and controversial leaders in Australian military history'. He acknowledges the respect the men of the 8th Division had for him, but the use of the rhetorical flourish undermines what he intends when he writes, 'Yet for all the criticism he attracted, the men who served under him remained surprisingly loyal'. 'Surprisingly': it's a flourish that implies something other.

The question of Bennett's escape reached renewed public attention with the dispatch of a document from Percival in August 1945, indicating that he had not sought permission to escape. A court of military inquiry followed by a Royal Commission tested this proposition. Whether Bennett was justified in his escape depended on when in the sequence of events leading up to and including the signing of the formal surrender and the time of the armistice and cease-fire, he actually left for the difficult journey back to Australia. Bennett himself was clear that he was not going to fall into Japanese hands, but had he escaped after the time when he was clearly a POW? In 1948 Tom Fry, a lawyer and ex-military man, produced a report in a legal journal in which he argued that the contentious issue of the timing of the ceasefire, and the internment of POWs at Changi, raised issues of international law for soldiers in combat and at the time of surrender, since from the moment of the signing of the surrender and the ceasefire, a soldier is deprived of his role as a combatant. His role as combatant would thus be substituted for that of POW, whether he was behind barbed wire or, as was the case in Singapore, in Changi gaol. 'At last', writes Maynard, 'common sense had prevailed'. But had it silenced the debate?

Maynard leaves the reader with the words of men of the 8th Division such as, Leslie 'Bunny' Glover (ex-2/26th Battalion) who when asked in 2017 whether Bennett's decision was right, said simply, 'Yes ... The war was over and he felt he would be able to give more back to Australia by escaping than being in a prison camp'. Maynard provides a lively and, particularly in the final chapters where he stays close to the documentary evidence, a generally balanced account of the issues underpinning the book's title. Bennett – hero or deserter? It's a question that readers will find effectively presented with useful maps and photographs (several from the Bennett archive) to complement the text. A new generation of readers and military historians will find this a useful account of the issue.

Mark Johnston, *An Australian Band of Brothers: Don Company, Second 43rd Battalion, 9th Division, NewSouth Publishing, Sydney, 2018. ISBN 9781742235721, softcover, xiv + 434 pages, photos, maps. RRP \$34.99 AUD.*



Amid the plethora of published material arising out of the centenary of the First World War, it is reassuring to find that high quality research and writing continues on other areas of Australia's military history. Such work is exemplified in Mark Johnston's *An Australian Band of Brothers*, which charts the activities of an infantry battalion in the 2nd AIF during World War 2. The 2/43rd Battalion was raised in South Australia in 1940, forming part of 24th Brigade which was initially allocated to the 8th Division. (Incidentally – and a fact not mentioned in the book – it was by sheer serendipity, as the junior battalion in the junior brigade of a division with an elliptical colour patch, that the 2/43rd found itself issued from the outset with exactly the same patch as its WW1 forebear, the 43rd Bn.) The brigade was soon shifted to the 9th Division, which not only saved the 2/43rd from the fate suffered by the 8th Division upon the fall of Singapore, but saw it embark on a tough and illustrious campaign career involving the siege of Tobruk, both battles of El Alamein, New Guinea and Borneo.

Johnston bases his study around the writings of, and subsequent interviews with, three men who served at some stage of their military service in D ('Don') Company of the 2/43rd: Gordon Combe, Allan Jones and John Lovegrove. All three were original enlistments into the battalion, with Gordon Combe subsequently receiving a wartime officer's commission and being instrumental in the production of the 2/43rd's unit history in 1972. Taken together, the observations and thoughts of these men constitute a solid foundation for what anthropologists might term a 'thick description' of the life of the battalion, that is, an account which gets well beneath the surface of the catalogue of actions and events usually found in unit war diaries and official histories. But *An Australian Band of Brothers* is not a simple annotated edition of these men's writings or a transcription of their interviews. Instead, Johnston has woven a tightly constructed yet highly readable narrative of a battalion at the forefront of Australia's war effort, by carefully selecting the essential elements of Combe's, Jones' and Lovegrove's stories, and combining them with material from other sources relevant to his project. The result is powerful, moving and very revealing.

At a time when we are served a great deal of information about what it is/was/might be like to be under fire – whether via news and documentary footage, fictional and dramatised versions, or even, dare one say, the multitude of video and computer games played by many – works such as Johnston's operate as a welcome corrective. Two things stand out in his account. The first is that in pure manpower terms (as opposed to the moral and psychological dimensions), the concept of an actual 'band of brothers' is a rather transient one. Very quickly in its career an AIF battalion's specifically state-based structure became diluted and dissipated as men were killed, invalided out or transferred, to be replaced by personnel from all over the country. The second striking feature is the extent to which, for want of a better term, combat fatigue affected everyone at some stage of their front-line service. It doesn't seem to matter how good the record of the unit or the individual, the issue of morale was ever-present, and it is noteworthy how tolerant and understanding the troops were towards those who suffered from temporary lapses in their ability to carry on.

All of this makes *An Australian Band of Brothers* as invaluable a study of the human element in modern warfare as one is likely to encounter from any source, yet (unlike the work of some others involved in similar projects) Johnston doesn't indulge in sentimentality or bombast. Instead he gives us an honest, informative and memorable account of what the ordinary Australian infantryman endured and achieved against all sorts of odds. *An Australian Band of Brothers* is a fitting tribute to a worthy military unit, but primarily to all those who served at the 'sharp end' in the Australian land forces during WW2; it should be read by anyone seeking to understand the significance of their place in our history.

Paul Skrebels

Mike Colman, *Crew: The Story of the Men who Flew RAAF Lancaster J for Jig*, Allen and Unwin, 2018. ISBN 9781742379111, softcover, 326 pages, illustrated. RRP \$32.99 AUD.



In February 1944 Lancaster J for Jig of No.460 Squadron RAAF, serving with RAF Bomber Command, was shot down over France on a mission to bomb factories in Schweinfurt, Germany. Its crew of seven, five Australians and two Scots, is the subject of this outstanding book. I have read many books about military aviation and this is one of the best.

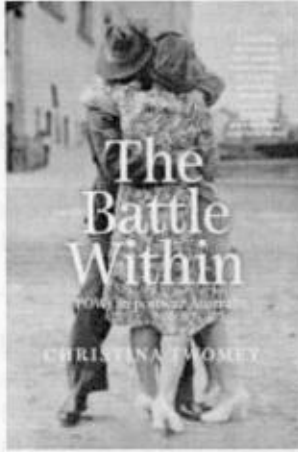
Of the crew, four were killed as a result of being shot down but the three survivors withstood incredible hardships and adventures, one as a prisoner of war and the others as evaders. The book, written by a respected Australian newspaper journalist, is about the lives of the crew –who they were, what they did, whom they loved and whom they left behind. It starts with detailed biographies of each of the crew, from pilot through to the rear gunner, then covers their coming together as a crew, somewhat differently to other crewing-up stories that I've read, and their posting to No.625 Squadron RAF.

The crew's first and only operation, or 'trip' as it was called, with that squadron was on 18 November 1943 – to Berlin at what became known as the Battle of Berlin. Talk about a baptism of fire! Having been blooded, the crew was posted to No.460 Squadron RAAF and flew on further raids, including Berlin, before being shot down. The book covers their experiences on 'trips' and the times they shared when off duty. The stories of the three survivors of the loss of the aircraft are amazing accounts of courage, resilience and endurance. In the case of the two evaders, the assistance given to them by various French civilians in what was occupied France was vital to their eventually reaching neutral Switzerland. I found the part of the book covering the prisoner of war's experiences and his struggle to survive and the two evaders' time in Switzerland to be most interesting and revealing.

The last part of the book covers the survivors' return to Australia and their lives after in detail, not always happy and with times of great sadness and loss. This is a fine book, well written after six years of wide ranging research, and captures the achievements, hardships and enduring legacy of the seven crew of J for Jig. Highly recommended.

Peter Harvey

Christina Twomey, *The Battle Within: POWs in Postwar Australia*, NewSouth Publishing, 2018, ISBN 9781742235684. Softcover, 320 pages, includes bibliographical references, index, photos and maps. RRP \$39.99 AUD.



When I was 25, having dinner with my father, I cheekily snatched a morsel of food from his plate. Like a shot, his arm seized mine. Col was a gentle bloke. He'd never before lifted an arm to me. In that reflex moment I glimpsed our ex-POW who had been deeply affected by food privations during Italian captivity and after his escape from a prison camp.

Repatriated prisoners of war filtered back onto home soil during latter years of the Second World War but not all coped well with their return to Australian society and in rebuilding their life. Professor Christina Twomey's book focuses on the cohort of Australian prisoners of war after their release from Japanese captivity. In the early 1950s, a discretionary fund controlled by government-appointed trustees, the Prisoners of War Trust Fund,

began assessment of applications from ex-POWs who sought financial assistance. On their application forms, POWs expressed difficulties in returning to pre-war occupations, and in their ability to support wives and families. Trustees were at times unsympathetic in their assessment of these applications. In a widening of her analytical lens, Twomey sees that an 'examination of the fund documents tells us much about the attitudes towards charity, welfare and entitlement in postwar Australia.'

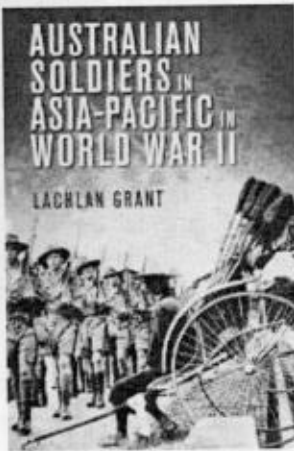
Twomey examines postwar perceptions of POWs by government, repatriation authorities and the general public from the 1950s. She identifies ambivalence by authorities in the early years after the war, when attitudes towards POWs were equivocal and arbitrary. There was increasing societal awareness during postwar decades about trauma within captivity and of PTSD. A new sensibility developed about captivity as a potentially traumatic experience. But as Twomey points out, any perception that *all* returning POWs were damaged men was an unhelpful generalisation that could foster prejudice by employers and authorities. By late 1990s, a more compensatory climate had developed, and POWs were lauded as worthy veterans. A generous one-off payment was made to living Australian ex-prisoners of the Japanese. Twomey argues that the stories of the traumatised survivors of captivity contributed to a renewed cultural interest in the history of war. In this book, she examines themes of masculinity, shame, forgiveness and Australia's reconciliation with Japan. Twomey bookends her work with prologue and epilogue in which she describes her recollections and responses from visits to the Thai-Burma Railway and the Yasukuni Shrine. She expresses her gut response as a parent and tourist, and that of a trained scholar.

In contrast to POW memoirs that may focus on humorous incidents and bravado, this book examines the expressions by former POWs of vulnerability, of physical and psychological struggle. Examples of POWs who applied for compensation are selected by Twomey to illustrate a range of individual experiences and circumstances. The words of William, Kenneth, Roy and Ronald and other former POW of the Japanese demonstrate that there was both commonality and individuality across their postwar experience. The inclusion of comments by their women tell us that to every wife and descendant, there were reasons to adapt, assist, stay with or leave their men. Former POWs poured out their personal worries to Fund Trustees, saying that they could 'never attain a peaceful state', 'could not stand being

caught in a crowd' or having 'anyone bossing and standing' over them, who were 'unable to settle down.' In the mid-1980s, I'd glimpsed an ongoing inner battle that my mother had known since she was a bride at age 18. Quite probably my mother would have nodded her head on reading an observation by Betty, wife of ex-POW of the Japanese Robert, that the war was 'not over in the homes.' In recent years, I have viewed about fifty Trust Fund applications lodged by my father's peers, ex-prisoners of the Italians. Twomey's work offers contextual background and inspires me to look again, and to write about this cohort's cries for support.

Katrina Kittel

Lachlan Grant, *Australian Soldiers in Asia-Pacific in World War II*, New South Publishing, Sydney, 2014. ISBN 9781742231419. Softcover, 276 pages, photos, maps and bibliography. RRP \$39.99 AUD.



The Menzies Government followed England into the Second World War, committed our Army to travel overseas and thus exposed many Australian servicemen to Asia (and other spheres) for the first time. Then the Curtin Government joined the USA in the Pacific War and exposed additional servicemen to the New Guinea group of islands. What were the short and medium-term effects of this exposure on the servicemen and on Government foreign policy? Lachlan Grant has researched this little-known perspective of the War against Japan resulting in a doctoral thesis and later this book.

In selecting countries in Asia exploited by European nations, Grant writes inevitably about imperialism, colonialism and racism. Grant takes our gaze away from the battlefield and focuses on the varying attitudes of Army servicemen towards the people they encountered – the locals and their rulers in some Asian countries and in New Guinea. He reveals the soldiers' and officers' impressions, interactions and judgements through the use of many Australian sources: letters, diaries, books, newspapers and official material. The space necessarily allocated to quotations from servicemen is a feature of this book and the soldiers' directness has an even stronger impact than the academic arguments of the author.

The reader will gain valuable information from this book although Grant appears to have limited his primary sources to those available in his home State, Victoria, or available from his employer, the Australian War Memorial. Even the secondary sources have a heavy weighting to Australian publications. Of the nineteen newspapers and magazines cited, only one was published in Asia. Also, the images used to illustrate this book were sourced almost exclusively from the Australian Women's Weekly or the Australian War Memorial. What is mostly missing in this book is sufficient space for the voices of Asian or Pacific nationals. So we are reading mainly one side of the story.

The material presented here is provocative or challenging to some Australian notions of how our servicemen acted in the Asia-Pacific region during the War and what they concluded about its peoples. Choosing one country can provide us with an insight into Grant's approach. Grant begins his chapter on the New Guinea islands by confronting the stereotype of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel. He deconstructs this, and other myths held by Australians at home, while summarising Australia's colonial and legal control of this Territory prior to 1942. Grant

then displays, using their own written statements, evidence of the racist opinions held during the War by influential government officials and many ANGAU staff. While racism also appeared in the writings of some war correspondents, Grant shows that other new arrivals, such as Army officers and soldiers, were critical of this white colonial society in New Guinea.

Conditions in New Guinea during the War, Grant observes, led the Australian soldiers to appreciate and admire the extraordinary service given to the Allies by the local carriers and labourers. The harsh and debilitating conditions of jungle fighting in mountainous New Guinea have been documented elsewhere, and today are being appreciated by Australian hikers, but the harsh working conditions for Army (whether Australian, American or Japanese) labourers and carriers are here carefully detailed by Grant. While he canvasses the opinions of many noted historians on this issue, Grant appears to concur with the Australian official historian, Gavin Long, that 'Australians drove Papuans and New Guineans harder than they drove themselves'.

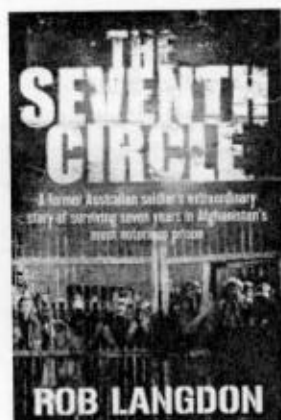
It is difficult to understand why Grant makes no mention of New Guinea's indigenous soldiers and their vital role of facilitating the operations of the Australian and American forces across their home Territory. Sections of the Papuan or New Guinea Infantry Battalions were attached to larger Allied units and were engaged in all major conflicts of the New Guinea islands from 1942 to 1945, except one. (This exception was the Battle of Milne Bay, because the indigenous soldiers were already active in the Kokoda Campaign at that same time.) From their formation in June 1940, these indigenous battalions were trained and led by Australian officers and non-commissioned officers in battle and in rest periods behind the front lines. The diversity of personnel, the variety of locations, and the long time span involved would have provided Grant with great potential for testing his New Guinea hypotheses about cross-cultural experiences.

Grant pulls together the threads of his Asian and New Guinea research in his final chapter. Having observed early in his book that the Pacific War was 'an imperial war, fought between colonial powers over colonised regions', Grant reviews the attitudes of Australian servicemen to notions of Empire, as revealed in their own writings. Grant faced a challenging task in drawing logical conclusions from the range of experiences by many servicemen, over five years, away from the battlefield, in multiple countries – and presenting these in less than four pages. The generalisations in his Conclusion do no justice to the source material or to the reader.

Although there are gaps in the selection of source material, it is fair to say overall that the material presented is novel, valuable and relevant. Relevant, that is, to increasing our understanding of what the Australian servicemen experienced and wrote, away from the Asian and New Guinea battlefields, during the Second World War. Whether the reader finds the book's contents surprising and enlightening or finds some arguments and conclusions less than convincing, these wartime writings of our servicemen will attract and challenge those interested.

Gregory J. Ivey

Rob Langdon, *The Seventh Circle*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, 2017. ISBN 9781760296407, softcover, 304 pages. RRP \$32.99 AUD.

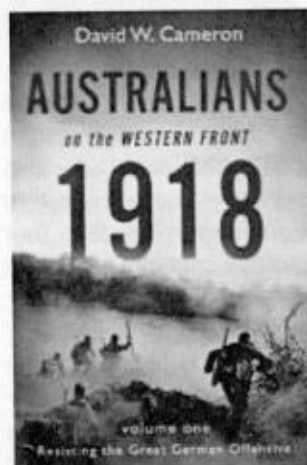


This autobiography is the story of a former Australian soldier who survived seven years in Afghanistan's worst prison, Pol-e-Charkhi. This was after his original death sentence was commuted to twenty years. He worked for a Private Security Contractor and was able to get an inside view of their operations. We learn how the Afghan police, the military, the government and even the Taliban are paid off to allow convoys of supplies 'safe' passage. Also involved was the judicial system, which took payment for reducing the sentences of criminals.

The 'murder' took place while Rob Langdon worked as security on a convoy. What follows is a tale which is sometimes difficult to believe due to the craziness of how Afghanistan is run. He writes his story in an earthy yet easily read manner, which non-military readers who are unfamiliar with military jargon would understand. However, I was left wondering if he was as innocent as he claimed – but this is up to the reader to decide. Nevertheless, it is a gripping tale and I would recommend it to anyone as a good read.

David Hobbs

David W. Cameron, *Australians on the Western Front 1918 Volume One: Resisting the Great German Offensive*, Penguin Random House Australia, Melbourne, 2018. ISBN 9780143788614, softcover, 401 pages, photos and maps. RRP \$34.99 AUD.



On 21 March 1918 the Germans launched their final push, the Michael Offensive, to drive a wedge between the French and British Armies, and force the British back to the Channel ports to end the war before the American Expeditionary Force entered the fray in large numbers. David Cameron in his first volume on Australians on the Western Front 1918 divides his coverage of that period into four parts: the Breakthrough, the Somme, Hazebrouck and [the Second Battle of] Villers-Bretonneux.

As Field Marshal Hindenburg and QM General Ludendorff unleashed a torrent of artillery and *Sturmtruppen* against General Gough's overextended Fifth Army on the old Somme battlefields, the recently formed Australian Corps was resting near Armentières. With the Germans having made rapid territorial gains, Field Marshal Haig was prepared to abandon the Fifth Army – Gough having been dismissed – and contemplated peace talks. The 3rd and 4th Divisions of the AIF were moved south to plug the gaps in the British lines. Fourth Brigade defended Hébuterne, and 12th Brigade faced German assaults at Dernancourt to stop the strategic enemy advance on Amiens, a key rail hub. Third Division linked up with the northern flank of the Fifth Army near Corbie and its 9th Brigade held Villers-Bretonneux. By April, Albert to the Somme was held by these two divisions, less one brigade each. A British retreat around Villers-Bretonneux opened an opportunity for the Germans to again advance. On 4 April, the 36th Battalion and British 7th Battalion, The Queen's Regiment rallied and halted the enemy's

advance at Monument Farm and Wood, preventing its southern pincer movement from taking Amiens.

At this stage in the book, the author's long-winded approach to unit designations and biographical details in the text become irritating, and interrupt the flow of the narrative. The Australian Order of Battle at the beginning of the book adequately explains to which brigade and division each battalion belonged, while biographical backgrounds should have been relegated to footnotes. Referral to Gallipoli veterans' service in the narrative only serves as self-promoting Cameron's earlier publications.

On 5 April (incorrectly shown as 4 April on the Second Battle of Dernancourt map, p.169), the Germans opened Operation *Sonnenschein* [Sunshine] as the northern pincer. The major thrust was made at Dernancourt with three divisions thrown against three battalions, the 47th, 48th and 52nd. Inevitably the weight of the German assault broke the Australian front-line defence. (Significant numbers of Australians were captured but this is largely overlooked by Cameron.) Late in the afternoon, led by 49th Bn, the Australians successfully counter-attacked and stemmed the German advance. On this day, Ludendorff called off Michael, however, the author does not discuss whether or not the actions of the Australians on the Somme contributed to his decision.

The third part covers Georgette I & II, which was launched to the north in Flanders on 9 April, with the alternative key rail junction at Hazebrouck (which is incorrectly spelled on the map) as the objective. The 1st Division was recalled from their recent arrival at Amiens to defend the line, which it duly secured. Subsequently, Ludendorff diverted his attention back to Villers-Bretonneux. In the final part of the book, after the British 8th Division lost Villers-Bretonneux on 24 April, the recently relieved 15th Brigade and 4th Division's 13th Brigade were ordered to counter-attack to retake the town. They conducted a pincer movement rather than a frontal attack, without preliminary artillery support, to bypass the town and regain their former lines. The British were given the task of mopping up the township. Encouraged by the third anniversary of the Anzac Landing, the diggers drove the Germans out of the lines and won the day.

Frustratingly, throughout the work there are many incorrect or misleading unit and individual identifications, for example: 'the machine guns of the 9th Company' instead of 9th Machine Gun Company; and '15th Brigade was commanded by ... Brigadier Harold "Pompey" Elliott ... who was attached to the Australian 5th Division'. Similar concerns apply to the naming of British units, e.g. '7th Queen's Battalion'. Additionally, 48th Battalion's Major Montague Brearley is incorrectly spelt 'Brierley', while on page 182 'Captain Imlay' is attributed as Lt Col Alexander Peter Imlay, the commanding officer of 47th Battalion, rather than correctly as his brother Norman George Imlay. There are many similar errors.

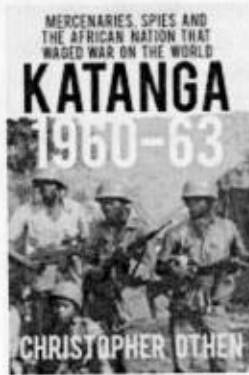
There are several other criticisms. The chapters are titled from quotes which deny the reader any sense of structure. The first chapter relating the sectarian divide on conscription does not integrate with the main subject matter of the book. Cameron does not elaborate how the failed conscription referenda in Australia underpin the fact that there were not going to be reinforcements to replace Australian losses during ongoing campaigns, forcing battalions to be broken up in 1918. Part of the publisher's blurb claims 'With vivid descriptions drawing on the diaries and letters of soldiers on the battlefields'. In fact, the 'research' is derived mostly from secondary sources, with the majority extracted from Bean's official history and

Cutlack's, *The Australians: Their Final Campaign, 1918*. This is supplemented by minor inserts from unit histories.

The predominant primary sources used are war diaries, but only to a minor extent. The claimed use of soldiers' diaries and letters in the book is a fallacy. The result is a conglomeration of passages, which at times lack cohesion, while the detail on unit movements and locations creates a certain degree of textual congestion. There is also no discussion on the contribution of advances in tactics or technology to victory. Highlighting the significance of the battles is omitted – was the Second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux a pivotal battle? Hopefully these criticisms can be addressed in Volume Two. Overall, and unfortunately, the book caters more to the centenary 'franchise', and presents nothing new to our understanding of the final victorious year of the Great War.

Brenton Brooks

Christopher Othen, *Katanga 1960-63*, The History Press, Stroud, 2015. ISBN 9780750962889, hardcover, 256 pages, photos, maps. RRP \$49.99 AUD.



The nation of the Democratic Republic of Congo has earned, and deservedly so, a reputation for instability, corruption and violence. Following the decision by the Belgians to bow to international pressure and declare their colony of Congo to be independent, factions vying for control, position and influence clashed both politically and militarily in an effort to cement their claims to power. Thus rose, in 1960, the nation state of Katanga in the southeast corner of Congo under the charismatic leader Moïse Tshombe.

What followed over the next three years was a dizzying dance of international and domestic intrigue featuring the Congolese leadership under Lumumba, the United Nations, mercenaries, former colonial masters, globalized corporations, East/West manoeuvring and inter-tribal conflict. No institution was free from the stain of violence and assault including, it would appear, the UN. Before it ended in January, 1963, thousands would be dead or maimed, a Secretary-General (Dag Hammarskjöld) would be killed and the aspirations of the breakaway country of Katanga, crushed. The author presents a balanced view of the roles of the different actors in the tragedy of Congo. He spares no one or any organisation either praise or criticism as earned. His research is thorough and comprehensive, drawing upon a myriad of declassified primary source material from the UN archives as well as interviews and memoirs.

It is particularly interesting to compare the changes in the perceived role of the UN from its Katanga intervention to the present day. For example, there does not appear to have been a declaration of Chapter 6, 7 or 8 by the Security Council and skirmishes with Belgian military seconded to the Katangan government were common. The UN was not, nor did it attempt to appear to be neutral; rather its role was aggressive and very *realpolitik* in nature. U Thant, replacing Dag Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General, is presented as more than willing to use force to shut down Katanga. The analysis of the foundations of the separatist movement in Katanga is enlightening, revealing the complexities of tribal, colonial and international competition. As Othen discusses, it was often impossible to determine whose side an individual was on, such was the speed of change. Further adding to the myriad of actors were those outliers who appeared to have no plan or allegiance other than anarchy and murder. The

Simbas, roving gangs of loosely affiliated youth, high on drugs and using terror and the edge of the machete as their preferred method of discussion, overlaid the already crowded battlefield.

Othen's style is dynamic and engaging; he is able to show and describe effectively the struggles that the UN had regarding its role and the financing of its operations. There is no question that Katanga represented an unprecedented engagement environment for the UN and that much of what it undertook was unfamiliar ground. Overall this is a well written and fascinating study of an event that had a foundational impact on operations within Africa by the International Community as well as the United Nations. Othen has portrayed the complexity and brutality of the conflict in stark and unvarnished terms (including the pictures that accompany the book). While not well remembered today, the conflict surrounding the transition of Congo from colony to independence was indicative of the challenges faced by the nascent African nations as well as the world community. Recommended.

Chris Buckham

Ron Austin, *The Courtneys: A Victorian Military Family*, Slouch Hat Publications, McCrae Vic, 2009. ISBN 9780980637304. Hardcover, 200 pages, photos index, bibliography. RRP \$45.00 AUD.



The Courtneys is an interesting contribution to military literature, mapping the military service of five generations from the one family. It starts with John Courtney who served with the British army before migrating to Victoria to start the Australian dynasty. It then moves through the next generation where two family members served in the Army; then six Army members in the third generation; two in the Army and one in the Navy in the fourth; and finally, one Air Force and one Army member in the fifth.

The book is generally entertaining as it weaves the stories of the Courtneys' military service with the rest of their lives and relationships with the Victorian community. It is certainly very informative and descriptive of life as it was in those days, telling us something of the social structures especially with respect to volunteerism and the use of influence in the part-time forces during constant restructuring.

The Courtneys produced a range of military members – ten in all at the time of publication, most of whom made prominent impacts on public life as well as within the military; at one stage four were commanding officers at the same time, no mean feat, and not known to have been matched by another Australian family. Those who served in the pre-Federation forces and shortly after the turn of the twentieth century made their mark in volunteer/militia services while also engaging in successful civilian careers. Some joined the AIF and served in the Great War including at Gallipoli, where the family name is enshrined in Courtney's Post. That location remains a famous battle landmark which many regard as a crucial lynchpin in the Anzacs' defensive line, without which the stay on the Peninsula might have been briefer than it was.

One member served with the British Army in World War 2, including at Arnhem and as a POW, and another with the Royal Australian Navy as a doctor. The most recent of this family

served a career with Australian Cadets, thereby providing a most interesting range of operational and support military experiences over more than 150 years. As a family history in this respect, it makes for compelling reading. One might ask the question why a Courtney did not take up flying; perhaps a future family member will.

The author relies mainly on primary sources – especially diaries – and period newspapers for his material, and in the process, generates a useful addition to military sociology literature. The book comes to a somewhat abrupt end, lacking a conclusion or postscript, the addition of which one feels might have been a better way to close the work. This is compensated for with effective notes to support each chapter, plentiful original photographs mainly from the family annals, good abbreviations and a bibliography. I found the family tree diagram inside both covers most helpful, indeed necessary, as a practical aid to understanding the Courtney family story, given the similar names across each generation.

Russell Linwood, ASM

-o0o-

MILITARY FORCES OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1840-1903

Anthony F. Harris

South Australian Volunteer Militia Brigade (*Infantry & Cavalry*)

Raised 1840, dissolved c.1842-43

No enabling Act promulgated

Volunteer Military Force (VMF) (*Rifle Companies, Cavalry, Artillery*)

Raised 1855, disbanded 1856

Act No.2, 1854

Re-raised 1859,

Act No.7, The Auxiliary Volunteer

Auxiliary Volunteer Act introduced 1860

Act 1860

One company formed under this Act, The *S.A. Free Rifles Corps*

V.M.F. re-organised 1866

Act No.18, The Volunteer Act,
1865-66

S.A. Free Rifles Corps disbanded under this re-organisation

Volunteer Military Force (VMF) disbanded 1869-70

Re-raised 1877, dissolved 1886. Becomes the SA Militia

South Australian National Rifle Association (SANRA) (*Rifle Companies*)

Raised 1878

Act No.118, 1878: The Rifle

Re-formed 1881 as the Rifle Volunteer Force (RVF)

Companies Act, 1878

Rifle Volunteer Force (RVF) (*Rifle Companies*)

Raised 1881

Act No.215 The Local Forces Act

Reformed 1886 as the Volunteer Force (VF)

Amendment Act, 1881

Permanent Military Force (PMF) (*Garrison Artillery, HQ Staff*)

Raised 1882

Act No125 The Military Force

Transferred to Commonwealth 1903

Act, 1878

South Australian Militia (SAM) (*Active & Reserve, Artillery, Infantry, Cavalry*)

Raised 1886
Dissolved 1895

Act No.390 The Defence Forces Act, 1886

Volunteer Force (VF) (*Mounted Infantry, Rifle Companies*)

Raised 1886
Reformed Dec. 1890 as the Volunteer Militia Reserve Force

Part of Act No.390, 1886 (above)

Volunteer Militia Reserve Force (VMRF) (*Mtd Infantry, Infantry*)

Raised 1891
Dissolved 1895

Act No.500 The Defence Forces Act Amendment Act, 1890

South Australian Military Forces (SAMF)

Raised 1896
Transferred to Commonwealth 1903

Act No.643 The Defences Act, 1895

Comprising:

Permanent Military Force
Active Force (partially paid)

*HQ Staff, Garrison Artillery
Attached Staff, HQ Staff, Mtd. Rifles, Field & Garrison Artillery, M/C Gun Corps, Infantry, Signals, Medical Staff, Supernumerary List*

Reserve Force (partially paid)

Mtd Rifles, Infantry, Medical Staff, Supernumerary List



Left: A member of the Kapunda Rifles, c.1880. (Author's collection)



Right: Bugler of the South Australian Mounted Rifles, 1890s. (Author's collection)

MHSA BRANCH OFFICE BEARERS

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

President	Ian Stagoll 165 Belconnen Way Hawker ACT 2614 ian.stagoll@gmail.com , 02 6254 0199	2.30pm, 4 th Thursday of the month, Jan to Nov Southern Cross Club Jamison
Secretary/Treasurer	James Smith jackieandjames.1@bigpond.com , 0414 946 909	

QUEENSLAND

President	John Meyers	2 nd Saturday Jan, Mar
Vice President	Allan Fuary	May, Jul, Sep and Nov
Secretary	David Geck geck5@bigpond.com	various locations South East Queensland
Treasurer	Michael Carkagis	

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

President	Michael English	7.30pm, 2 nd Friday of each month
Secretary	Elizabeth Hobbs PO Box 1209, Littlehampton SA 5250 jasper51@iprimus.com.au 08 8391 4114 (h)	except Good Friday Army Museum of SA Keswick Barracks Anzac Highway, Keswick
Treasurer	Peter Harvey	

TASMANIA

President	Andrea Gerrard	Meetings bimonthly, Queen Victoria Gunpowder Magazine, Queens Domain Hobart and Glenorchy RSL, 320 Main Road, Glenorchy
Secretary	John Presser PO Box 309 Glenorchy, TAS 7010 03 6272 2332 johnpresser@bigpond.com	
Treasurer	(vacant)	

VICTORIA

President	Leigh Ryan	8pm, 4 th Thursday of each month except December Oakleigh RSL Drummond Street Oakleigh
Vice President	Mark Moncrieff	
Secretary	George Ward PO Box 854, Croydon Vic 3136 vicsec@mhsa.org.au	
Treasurer	Bill Black	

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

President	Steven Danaher	3 rd Wednesday of every month Officers' Mess, Army Museum of WA, Artillery Barracks Burt St Fremantle
Secretary	Peter Shaw 3 Clubb Court, Winthrop WA 6150 wasec@mhsa.org.au	
Treasurer	Rod Bird	