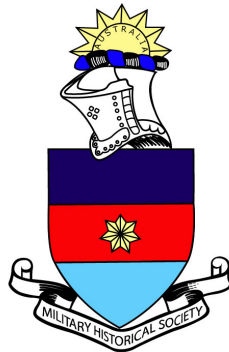


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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SABRETACHE

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

Vol LIX

December 2018

Number 4

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SABRETACHE

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

December 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.

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EDITORIAL

This is my final issue as editor of *Sabretache*; in June I announced my intention to stand aside from the position following the completion of this December 2018 issue. This will represent a period of just over seven years in the role, involving the production of 29 regular quarterly issues of the journal, plus a special Gallipoli centenary issue in 2015 and the first volume in the projected *MHSA Battle Series* memorialising the First World War, *Fighting on All Fronts*, in 2017. My decision is based on a wish to devote more of my time to personal research and writing projects, and on the notion that perhaps it is time to make way for someone younger and with fresh ideas about future directions for the journal.

I am therefore delighted to announce that the journal will have a new editor in the person of one of the Society's members, Katrina Kittel. Katrina is a librarian and university administrator by profession but also an emerging military historian, with articles published in *Sabretache* and at least one book on the way. She has academic qualifications in history and information management, and a long-term research interest in Australian WW2 POWs in Italy. I have no doubt that I am leaving the journal in safe and very capable hands, and that Katrina will not only ensure that *Sabretache* maintains its place in the field of Australian military history, but also will discover ways of extending its role as an expression of the Society's aims and as a frontrunner in the field generally. This is not an idle claim for the status of the journal, and I am pleased to be able to hand over a very healthy ongoing concern.

In leaving the position of editor, I extend my thanks to Federal Council and other members for their support and kind words over the years; to all those who contributed to the content of the journal; to John Meyers and his group for continuing to handle distribution in such an efficient fashion; and to Rainbow Press for their consistently excellent production standards in each issue. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation of the South Australian Branch of the Society, which for many years has served as a very welcoming home base for my activities. But most of all I want to warmly thank outgoing Federal President Rohan Goyne for his unstinting backing and encouragement throughout my tenure. I regard myself as very fortunate to have served as editor during his time as president, and wish him all the best in his future endeavours. I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming Nigel Webster as he takes over the role of Federal President, and in looking forward to the journal's continued success under its new editor.

Paul Skrebels

DECEMBER 2018

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ISSN 0048 8933

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THE BATTLE OF AMIENS CENTENARY AND THE CAPTURE OF THE AMIENS GUN

Jeff Hopkins-Weise and Rob Shiels

The Hundred Days was the climactic campaign by Allied forces that broke Imperial Germany's ability to resist on the Western Front and led to the Armistice on 11 November 1918. The Hundred Days was a series of offensives that began with the Battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918, shortly after the French (including US forces) launched a surprise counterattack against the German right flank of the Marne salient on 18 July, which resulted in the Second Battle of the Marne (Battle of Reims) during 15 July-6 August 1918 and defeat of the final German Spring Offensive of 1918. These offensives – the *Kaiserschlacht* or the Kaisers' Battle – had first been unleashed in March 1918.

A feature of the Spring Offensives was the vast accumulation of artillery gathered to support what was Germany's last gamble on the Western Front. The artillery included 3534 heavy trench mortars and 6608 guns of various types. Among the latter were 73 long-range rail and other super-heavy guns, which had to be transported in sections by rail for final assembly at specially prepared firing positions. These long-range weapons, combined with the large territorial gains over March-June 1918, enabled the Germans to target areas well behind the front lines including major cities and towns. One of the targets was the vital railway and communications hub of Amiens, which was bombarded during April-August by railway guns such as the 'Amiens Gun', a 28cm (or 11-inch) SK L/40 'Bruno' gun. The Amiens Gun was a quick-loading ex-naval 40-calibre gun originally part of the armament of the pre-Dreadnought battleship SMS *Hessen* which was decommissioned in 1916 after the Battle of Jutland. (SK L/40 'Bruno' gun: SK – *Schnelladekanone*, quick-loading cannon; and L – *Länge*, long, with a 40-calibre barrel.) This 28cm rail gun had a range upwards of 30km, and each high explosive projectile weighing more than 300kg.

The Amiens Gun was also known as the 'Harbonnières Gun' because of the location where it was eventually captured on 8 August, as well as 'Little Bertha', and was responsible for the bombardment of Amiens and the Villers-Bretonneux area.¹ As a war trophy, the Amiens Gun would become the largest First World War prize to be returned to Australia. Another gun involved in the bombardment of Amiens area was the even larger 38cm (15-inch) gun, 'Big Bertha', emplaced in Arcy Woods between the towns Proyart and Chuignes. On 23 August the colossal 'Big Bertha', later known as the 'Chuignes Gun', was captured by the 3rd Battalion AIF, although the Germans had already destroyed the gun to prevent its intact capture as they retreated during the Allied offensives of August. The following year, in a ceremony at Amiens Cathedral on 3 August 1919, Gen Sir William Birdwood, would present an Australian flag to the cathedral, and to the city itself, he presented the Chuignes Gun.² The

¹ Other publications dealing with the history of the Amiens Gun (including which Australian unit was responsible for its capture and war trophy claims) include: Anon., 'War Trophy: Baby Bertha', *N.S.W. Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1 May 1920, pp.351-54; Anon., 'Greatest War Trophy: 31st Battalion's Capture in France', *Reveille*, 1 July 1934, pp.6-7; C.F. Coady, 'Australia's Largest First War Relic', *Stand-To*, Vol.7, No.4, (July-August 1962), pp.6-10; C.F.C./Editorial Staff, 'The Amiens Gun: Australia's Largest First War Relic', *Army Journal*, No.311, (April 1975), pp.3-12; L. Hetherington, 'Little Bertha' – The Amiens Gun', *Sabretache*, Vol.29, No.2, (April/June 1988), pp.38-42; R. Nicols, 'The Capture of the Amiens Gun', *Wartime: Official Magazine of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 23, (2003), pp.6-9; & R. Burla, *Crossed Boomerangs: The History of all the 31 Battalions* (Loftus, NSW: Australian Military History Publications, 2005), pp.70-73.

² The French capital Paris had already come under fire from other types of super-heavy guns firing from a distance of 120km. On 23 March 1918, two days after the start of the massive Michael Offensive, the

latter quickly became an informal memorial to the Australian Corps well before the official unveiling of the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux Memorial in 1938. Gen Monash recalled:

This is the largest single trophy of war won by any Commander during the war, and it was a matter of great regret ... that the cost of its transportation to Australia was prohibitive. The gun, as it stands, was, therefore, fenced in, and it has been formally presented to the City of Amiens as a souvenir of the Australian Army Corps.

So long as any Australian soldier remained in France, this spot was a Mecca to which thousands of pilgrims wandered; and soon there was, over the whole of its immense structure, not one square inch upon which the 'diggers' had not inscribed their names and sentiments. There in the shade of Arcy Wood, the great ruin rests, a memorial alike of the sufferings of Amiens and of the great Australian victory of Chuignes.³

The British Fourth Army, commanded by Gen Sir Henry Rawlinson, would spearhead the offensive east of Amiens on 8 August, and thereafter continue with ongoing offensives through until the Armistice.⁴ The Australian Corps, along with the Canadian Corps, formed major components in this Fourth Army, contributing much to its successes through these last costly months of the war.⁵ But the fighting during the Hundred Days would still be heavy and continuous:

Hard-fought victories, like those at Amiens and the Hindenburg Line, were the result of well-rehearsed logistical support, artillery dominance, air superiority, the employment of tanks ... and more effective infantry tactics. Despite these improvements, casualties throughout were enormous, underlining how the battles of movement and manoeuvre were often more lethal than the periods of trench warfare that have become the enduring image of the First World War.⁶

Amiens would be one of the most important and influential engagements fought during the First World War and was a clear demonstration that the German Army was a beaten force on the Western Front. Nonetheless, the Germans could still fight doggedly after Amiens, as the Australian Corps experienced first-hand into early October. Gen Monash highlighted the skill, bravery and gritty determination of German machine gunners through these last months of war:

The manner in which the machine gunners stood their ground, serving their guns to the very last, and defying even the Juggernaut menace of the Tanks, won the unstinted admiration of our men. During these three days of retreat [to the River Somme over 27-29 August 1918] the enemy used his machine guns to the best advantage, and they constituted the only obstacle to our rapid advance.⁷

Germans unleashed 'Langer Max' or better known as the 'Paris Gun' or 'Big Bertha' – which was a collection of seven repurposed ultra-long-distance 21cm naval artillery pieces, supported by cables and capable of hitting targets up to 170km away.

³ John Monash, *The Australian Victories in France in 1918* (Melbourne, Black Inc., 2015; first published 1920), p.160.

⁴ From early April 1918, through until the withdrawal of the Australian Corps for much needed rest from the frontline in early October 1918, this Corps was under the overall command of British Gen Sir Henry Rawlinson, Commander of the Fourth Army.

⁵ In November 1917, the five Australian Divisions on the Western Front were combined to form an Australian Corps, but it would not be until May 1918, that this amalgamation was finally completed and an Australian officer, Lt Gen John Monash, commanded the Australian Corps.

⁶ Nicholas Lloyd: Hundred Days Offensive: 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*: <http://www.1914-1918-online.net/>

⁷ Monash, op.cit., p.166.

The Battle of Amiens, 8 August 1918

For the forthcoming Battle of Amiens, each Australian infantry brigade was provided with a company of engineers, along with additional support elements including a detachment of tanks to support each the four front line brigades. Here Monash outlined:

The open warfare Infantry Brigades were ... provided, out of their own divisional resources, ... a Company of Engineers, a Company of Machine Guns, a Field Ambulance, and a detachment of Pioneers, so that, in the most complete sense, they became a Brigade Group of all arms, capable of dealing, out of their own resources and on their own ground, with any situation that might arise.⁸

It is for this reason that the 8th Field Company, Australian Engineers, accompanied the 31st Bn during its advance towards Harbonnières, and in turn, why several of this unit's engineers would play a pivotal role with the capture and recovery of the Amiens Gun.

The decision to utilise both the Canadian and the Australian Corps for Amiens was vital to the success of this major operation. Both Corps were experienced and extremely battleworthy. Many British and French units had by this time been battered and their strengths diluted by men less fit, both physically and emotionally, than had earlier been the case. Morale was also waning, and Allied troops had become more cautious after four years of slaughter, where those surviving veterans had seen thousands of their comrades' lives needlessly sacrificed for little or no gains. The incoming masses of American troops, although fresh, were totally lacking experience and were not yet ready for major operations.

A friendly rivalry also existed between these two different Dominion troops. The Australians were the darlings of the press and received constant publicity. Their wide-brimmed slouch hats seemed to typify their flamboyant style, and made for eye-catching photos. ... [They were perceived as] rugged men possessed in battle by fierce joy and a readiness to take risks. They were crafty and clever and had an eye for the ground and for their foes' weaknesses.⁹

The Canadians by comparison, received less publicity, but were nonetheless popular wherever they served. The Canadians had also much lengthier experience with the horrors and evolving battlefield conditions on the Western Front since 1914-15, whereas the Australians had only been serving in this theatre since mid-1916. The Canadians had tempered their initial indiscipline and operational inexperience, and, were now one of the finest fighting forces in the Allied armoury in 1918, alongside the likes of Australian Corps and the New Zealand Division.

On the eve of the commencement of the Battle of Amiens, Gen Monash issued a message to all troops of the Australian Corps:

For the first time in the history of this Corps, all five Australian Divisions will tomorrow engage in the largest and most important battle operation ever undertaken by the Corps.

They will be supported by an exceptionally powerful Artillery, and by Tanks and Aeroplanes on a scale never previously attempted. The full resources of our sister Dominion, the Canadian Corps, will also operate on our right, while two British Divisions will guard our left flank. ...

Because of the completeness of our plans and dispositions, of the magnitude of the operations, of the number of troops employed, and of the depth to which we intend to overrun the enemy's

⁸ Ibid., p.89.

⁹ J. McWilliams & R.J. Steel, *Amiens 1918* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2004), p.30. Also refer to, C. Pugsley, *The ANZAC Experience: New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War* (Auckland: Reed Books, 2004), especially pp.12-13, 16, 28-30, 166-72, 200-03, 274-77, & 300-07.

positions, this battle will be one of the most memorable of the whole war, and there can be no doubt that, by capturing our objectives, we shall inflict blows upon the enemy which will make him stagger, and will bring the end appreciably nearer.¹⁰

Queensland newspapers would later publish news received from a former Brisbane Tramways employee, Reg Sparkes – 490 Private Reginald Sparkes, 31st Bn – who was a participant at Amiens. This soldier's letter provides clear evidence of the changing nature of warfare on the Western Front – mobility, effective combined arms operations, achieving almost unheard territorial gains, and in short periods of time:

No doubt you will have heard that the Australians were in the first day's advance. Our battalion, with many others ... were the leading battalions. We have, I think broken all records in advancing. We 'hopped the bags,' as the saying is, at 5.30 a.m. on the morning of August 8, with a barrage of about 2000 shells a minute, which lasted for about 3½ hours, advancing under it all the time. Of course it lengthened its range and we advanced accordingly. Three tanks accompanied each company, but we very soon had a few of our tanks put out of action by point blank artillery field guns. Then the cavalry went through us with armoured cars. The infantry [then] took the guns in good style. ... We advanced altogether about eight miles in the first day's stunt.¹¹

On the rapid advance towards Harbonnières a large rail gun (the Amiens Gun) with complete train elements was seen on the tracks to the north of this town, apparently firing un-aimed shots into Allied territory to the west. The gun crew then attempted to withdraw their gun, when they came under attack from two British aircraft (201 Squadron) which disabled the engine and set some carriages on fire. A squadron of British cavalry from the 5th Dragoon Guards were then sweeping forward through this sector and were able to capture this gun and train, capturing or killing some of the crew and forcing others to flee. These cavalymen then had to leave their prize as they had to push forwards to the towns of Vauvillers and Framerville to cover the advance of the oncoming Australian infantry. It is at this point that B Coy of the advancing 31st Bn took possession of the rail gun and train and 'claimed' it as their war trophy, but as no one in this unit was able raise steam and get the train operational. The whole train lay vulnerable in what had become No Man's Land until the arrival of an officer and two sappers of the 8th Field Coy, who had the combined technical and railways experience to secure the train from immediate danger from fire and return its locomotive to an operational state and then get this rail gun and train away. But it did not take very long at all before claims and counter claims as to who 'captured' this valuable war trophy rail gun started to be heard.¹²

In the immediate post-war years, and especially around news about the Amiens Gun being transported to Australia and its arrival and initial display outside Central Station in Sydney over 1919-20, public exchanges between former soldiers of the 31st Bn and the Australian

¹⁰ Monash, *op.cit.*, pp.118-19.

¹¹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 21 October 1918; & *The Queenslander*, 16 November 1918.

¹² For sources covering the events associated with the capture and recovery of the Amiens Rail Gun, refer to, *Australian War Memorial: AWM4 14/27/36 – August 1918 (8th Field Company, Australian Engineers, War Diary, August 1918); AWM4 23/8/33 – August 1918 (8th Infantry Brigade, War Diary, August 1918); & AWM4 23/48/37 – August 1918 (31st Infantry Battalion, War Diary, August 1918). Also see, Capt. A.D. Ellis MC, *The Story of the Fifth Australian Division* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1920), refer to Chapter XIV (but especially pp.335 & 337); Monash, *op.cit.*, pp.127-128; Williams & Steel, *op.cit.*, pp.172-174; & A. McCluskey, *Amiens 1918: The Black Day of the German Army* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009), pp.46-47 & 49.*

Engineers can be found in the press.¹³ It is not the intention here to detail these back and forth arguments as to whose war trophy the Amiens Gun was, but instead acknowledge this massive rail gun's capture and recovery as part of the overall achievement of the Australian Corps during the Amiens offensive. And of course, the other point to make with its capture is that it was very much a team effort of various arms all working in conjunction which resulted in snaring this major war trophy. So, the British pilots and the cavalymen, as well as the soldiers of the 31st Bn, combined with the engineers, all share a genuine claim in the capture of this massive enemy rail artillery asset.

Sapper J.H. Palmer MM, 8th Field Company, Australian Engineers

One object in the collection of The Workshops Rail Museum in Ipswich, Queensland, is the First World War Honour Board for the Ipswich Branch No.5, United Society of Boiler Makers and Iron and Steel Ship Builders. This wooden wall-mounted honour board with two doors records the names of men who fought in the First World War and opens to reveal a printed mural behind glass of ship building scenes.¹⁴ Additional names were added to the front of the honour board doors for boilermakers who later enlisted for service in the Second World War, so that this honour board marks the contribution of boilermaker employees of the Ipswich Railway Workshops who served in both World Wars. One of the WW1 Ipswich railways employees recorded is the gallantry recipient 2447 Sapper John Henry Palmer, 8th Field Coy, Australian Engineers.¹⁵

Palmer was one of three members of the 8th Field Coy who were involved in the capture and recovery of the Amiens Gun and train on 8 August. Palmer, along with 2998 Sapper Leslie James Strahan, a motor driver from Guildford, Western Australia, were both recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal for 'conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty', though their awards were downgraded, and each was awarded the Military Medal instead.¹⁶ The War Diary summary of the 8th Field Coy noted:

On reaching the Blue Line [objective] Lt. BURROWS & two sapper[s] went forward to the railway siding in front of the final objective to where a 11.2" German Railway Gun, 2 ammunition wagons, 2 armoured coaches, & other carriages abandoned by the enemy, was

¹³ Press detailing the nature of the capture and recovery of the Amiens Gun, the claims and counter-claims for its capture between the 31st Bn and the 8th Field Coy (and including captured by the British Fourth Army versus by the Australian Corps), as well as the attempt by the Mayor of Brisbane to obtain this war trophy for Queensland (during 1919), include: *The Argus*, 6 August 1919, p.10; *The Brisbane Courier*, 30 October 1919, p.7, 3 November 1919, p.6, 3 December 1919, p.6, & 17 January 1920, p.5; *The Sydney Mail*, 28 January 1920, pp.15 & 18-19, & 25 February 1920, p.24; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March 1920, p.6 & 5 June 1920, p.14; *The Telegraph* (Brisbane), 4 November 1919, p.4 & 4 December 1919, p.7; *The Queenslander*, 8 November 1919, p.39 & 24 January 1920, p.11; & *The Week* (Brisbane), 12 December 1919, p.4.

¹⁴ The insides of the doors when open also list the names of past presidents of the Ipswich Boilermakers No.5 Branch at the Ipswich Railway Workshops. *The Workshops Rail Museum*, Queensland Museum Network: R6573 Honour Board - Ipswich Branch No.5.

¹⁵ *National Archives of Australia*: B2455, John Henry Palmer, Service Number 2447 (First World War service file). *Australian War Memorial*: Honours and Awards (Recommendations): 2447 Sapper John Henry Palmer, Distinguished Conduct Medal, 11 August 1918, 8th Field Company, Australian Engineers; & Honours and Awards: 2447 Sapper John Henry Palmer, Military Medal, *London Gazette*, 24 January 1919, p.1253, & *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 23 May 1919, p.897. Also refer to, O. Wildman, *Queenslanders Who Fought in the Great War 1914 - 1918* (Valley, Brisbane: Besley & Pike Ltd., [1919?]), pp.164 & 212.

¹⁶ *National Archives of Australia*: B2455, Leslie James Strahan, Service Number 2998 (First World War service file). Honours and Awards (Recommendations): 2998 Sapper Leslie James Strahan, Distinguished Conduct Medal, 11 August 1918, 8th Field Company, Australian Engineers; & Honours and Awards: 2998 Sapper Leslie James Strahan, Military Medal, *London Gazette*, 24 January 1919, p.1253, & *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 23 May 1919, p.899.

standing. The carriages at the end of the train were on fire. These were disconnected and 3 shunted clear. Steam was raised, and Railway gun complete [with] two wagons of ammunition & two Armoured coaches were brought behind our own lines ...¹⁷

The original DCM recommendation for Palmer dated 11 August 1918 – the wording of which is the same for Strahan's recommendation – further outlines the extraordinary events surrounding their gallantry awards:

In the attack east of VILLERS BRETONNEUX near AMIENS on the 8th. August, Sapper PALMER was with a section accompanying the assaulting [31st Infantry] Battalion.

On the final objective being reached east of HARBONNIERES, a long range 11 ½ inch gun on railway mounting was seen on a siding 200 yards beyond front line. A locomotive with several ammunition wagons and coaches which were on fire was also on the siding. Without hesitation this man volunteered and went forward with his Section Officer, and in spite of enemy machine [gun] and rifle fire, assisted to raise steam on the locomotive, shunt the burning coaches on to another siding, couple up with gun and ammunition wagons and bring these back safely into our own lines. His great courage and determination in the face of the enemy resulted in the capture of an extremely valuable gun and locomotive, and is worthy of the very highest recognition.

Apart from these two sappers, they were commanded by Lieut George Burrows MC, a civil engineer from Penrith, New South Wales, who was recommended for the Distinguished Service Order on 11 August for his part in this action. Like Palmer and Strahan, Burrows' award was downgraded, and he instead was awarded a bar to his Military Cross.¹⁸ These three engineers were the only Australian troops to receive awards associated with the capture and recovery of the Amiens Gun. Today the huge barrel of this remarkable war trophy can be viewed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Of all the units associated with the capture and recovery of the Amiens, it is nonetheless the sappers of the 8th Field Coy who put in the longest and hardest toil to ensure the Amiens Gun and train were able to be safely recovered. A 'Salvage of Railway Gun and Train' section forms part of Appendix 1 of the unit's War Diary for August, and this documents the nature of the works required to get this rail gun and train safely off the battlefield over the night of 8/9 August:

A Party of one section of sappers was put on during the night of 8/9th to Repair B.G. [Broad Gauge] railway line ... This necessitated taking out damage[d] sections of rails and replacing them with rails taken up from [elsewhere] ... Rails which would not fit were successfully cut with one slab of gun cotton.

As boiler of locomotive was practically empty 300 gals [300 gallons = approx. 1364 litres] were sent up in water cart from Bayonvillers.

Steam was raised early on morning of 9th but when starting loco on up grade train ran back a few yards with result that bogey of gun carriage ran off the rails on one side.

Work was then commenced jacking up carriage and eventually gun carriage was replaced.

¹⁷ *Australian War Memorial*: AWM4 14/27/36 – August 1918 (8th Field Company, Australian Engineers, War Diary, August 1918), pp.9-10.

¹⁸ *National Archives of Australia*: B2455, Lieutenant George Burrows (First World War service file, amalgamated with Second World War service file NX147965). *Australian War Memorial*: Honours and Awards (Recommendations): Lieutenant George Burrows MC, Distinguished Service Order, 11 August 1918, 14th Field Company A.E. (attached to 8th Field Company A.E.); & Honours and Awards: Lieutenant George Burrows, Bar to Military Cross, *London Gazette*, 7 November 1918, p.13143, & *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 4 March 1919, p.372.

Steam was again raised and gun and train moved back ...

Early on morning of 10th Lt Malcolm R.E. arrived from Corps HQ. with instructions to take over gun and train, Receipt was obtained from him[.]¹⁹

John Henry Palmer was born in Victoria in 1892. He commenced employment with Queensland Railways at the Ipswich Rail Workshops as a lad in February 1910, and by July 1915 was a boilermaker at these Workshops. He enlisted in the AIF in Brisbane on 20 March 1916, becoming Private 2447, 4th Pioneer Bn, and embarked for overseas service in August 1916. In November 1917 he transferred to the 8th Field Coy, and it would be with this unit that he took part in the Battle of Amiens alongside the 31st Bn. He later commenced his return voyage to Australia on 3 May 1919. Once back in Brisbane he was discharged on 7 August, and on 11 August 1919 was back at work as a boilermaker at the Ipswich Rail Workshops. Palmer's name today can be found on the impressive Queensland Railways Workshop War Memorial at North Ipswich, in what is now The Workshops Rail Museum, part of the Queensland Museum Network.

Success seems to have quickly followed Palmer and by mid-1923 he was appointed a part-time teacher in boilermaking by the Department of Public Instruction at the Ipswich Technical College.²⁰ By mid-1926 he was the Acting Leading Hand Marker Out at the Boilershop at the Ipswich Railway Workshops.²¹ Sometime between 1930-33, he was again promoted, becoming a Sub-Foreman in the Boiler Shop and then Assistant-Boiler Inspector for the Southern Division. The next step in his career came in mid-1933 when he was appointed the Boiler Inspector for the Central Division based in Rockhampton.²² Boiler inspecting was an extremely vital job in the railways. In 1940 he returned to the Southern Division and the Ipswich Railway Workshops where he was appointed the Chief Boiler Inspector for Queensland Railways. In this capacity he played an important role in making sure locomotives were kept in running order as part of a new World War's heavy demands, when Queensland was very much on the frontline in the campaigns in the South-West Pacific 1942-45. By becoming the Chief Boiler Inspector for the whole of the railways Palmer had reached the highest position a boilermaker could achieve. He was based in the Chief Mechanical Engineers Office at the Ipswich Railway Workshops and held this Senior Boiler Inspector role for 18 years before finally retiring in November 1958.²³

The Amiens Gun: One of the Big Three War Trophies

Australian troops during WW1 quickly developed a reputation for souveniring and trophy taking, as attested to by Gen Monash himself: 'the souvenir-hunting instinct of the Australian led him to help himself freely to such mementos as our orders had not forbidden him to touch. Prisoners rarely got as far as the Corps cage with a full outfit of regimental buttons, cockades, shoulder-straps, or other accoutrements.'²⁴ War trophies (or war prizes) are objects representing victories on the battlefield. War trophies such as cannon or other artillery, trench mortars and machine guns, and especially those associated with WW1, are to be found across

¹⁹ *Australian War Memorial: AWM4 14/27/36 – August 1918 (8th Field Company, Australian Engineers, War Diary, August 1918), 'APPENDIX No.1: Report on work carried out by 8th FIELD Co'y A.E. during the operation of 8/9th inst.', pp.37-38.*

²⁰ *The Brisbane Courier*, Tuesday 12 June 1923, p.9.

²¹ Marking out requires identifying where to shape the steel by showing where to bend, cut or drill as required.

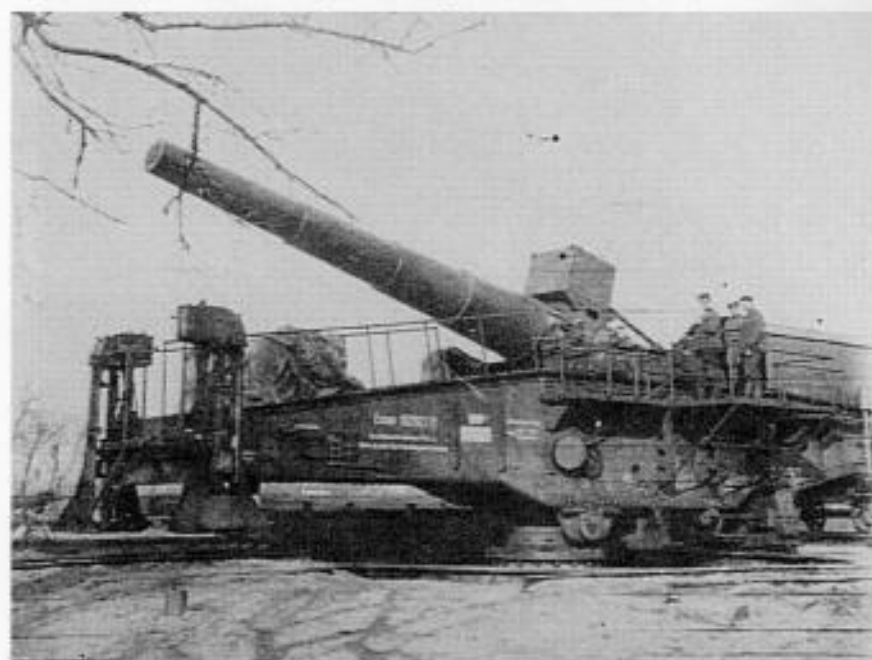
²² *The Queensland Times*, Friday 30 June 1933, p.6.

²³ *Queensland Rail Archive*, QR staff history card, & *The Workshop Rail Museum* collection, North Ipswich, Queensland.

²⁴ Monash, *op.cit.*, pp.207-08.

Australia. These trophies are often located in conjunction with war memorials or memorial precincts.

The largest and most unique Australian war trophies are those associated with Australia's role and triumphs on the Western Front during 1918 – the German A7V tank *Mephisto* captured and recovered near Villers-Bretonneux during July, and the Amiens Gun captured and recovered in August.²⁵ The sheer size of the massive Chuignes Gun dictated against its return to Australia, and its fate was sealed during WW2, when this super-heavy artillery relic was scrapped during the German occupation of France. Both other war trophies were shipped to Australia, where they assumed special significance as part of the Australian Corps achievements during the final months of the war on the Western Front. *Mephisto* and the Amiens Gun share a close connection with Queensland as each was captured by units raised or derived from Queensland – the 26th and 31st Infantry Bns, along with some help from a sapper and Ipswich Railway Workshops boilermaker from Queensland.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AO4858

Left: The so-called Amiens Gun before its capture by the 31st Bn AIF in the Allied offensive of August 1918. (AWM photo AO4858)

In one of the ironies of the First World War and the mythology that has arisen as a direct result of the 1915 Gallipoli campaign, it really is 1918 where the Australian

achievements on the Western Front were greatest, and which helped bring the war to a decided end with the Armistice on 11 November. Villers-Bretonneux (April), Le Hamel (July), Amiens (August), and then the further advances and victories at Peronne, Mont St Quentin, and the breaking of the Hindenburg Line culminating in the final Australian infantry battle at Montbrechain (October), receive too little recognition, yet the sacrifices were just as great. In this vein, the greatest war trophies returned to Australia are those associated with the Australian Corps achievements on the Western Front during 1918 – the A7V tank *Mephisto* and the Amiens Gun – which deserve a permanent place as part of commemorations and remembrance of Australia's costly Western Front experience.

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²⁵ Greg Czechura & Jeff Hopkins-Weise, *A7V Mephisto: The Last German First World War Tank* (South Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 2008. Revised & reprinted 2010 & 2016); & Jeff Hopkins-Weise & Greg Czechura, *Mephisto: Technology, War and Remembrance* (A Queensland Museum Discovery Guide: South Brisbane, 2018).

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JOHN 'BARNEY' HINES

Colin Holland and Peter Stanley¹



Fig. 1: Frank Hurley's well-known photo of John 'Barney' Hines at the Battle of Polygon Wood, 1917. (AWM photo E00822)

Many articles have been written about John 'Barney' Hines, who has been celebrated as the archetypal Australian 'larrikin' but also as a representative of the generation damaged by their war service. Many people will be familiar with Frank Hurley's photograph showing him souvenirising while serving with the 45th Battalion AIF in the Great War. He was a large, imposing man with a rough and ready approach to life. His bold and reckless behaviour earned him both praise and rebuke. He could be the best of the best or the worst of the worst. The 45th Bn's commanding officer, Arthur Allen, described Hines as 'worth two men' and 'a tower of strength ... while he was in the line'.²

Famous soldiers often come to represent qualities or traits that are believed to be common among their fellow soldiers. It's easy for myths to be created about controversial soldiers like Hines. The further away in time we become from historical events the more difficult it is to establish facts, especially when information has been copied from publication to publication. Mistakes are sometimes copied unknowingly because of the trust we have in seemingly

¹ Colin Holland is a member of Liverpool & South West Lancashire Family History Society. He is a volunteer researcher. He publicised new evidence found about another Liverpool-born soldier, William Connolly VC, in 2015. Prof Peter Stanley of UNSW Canberra is one of Australia's most distinguished military social historians. His 2010 book *Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny, Murder and the Australian Imperial Force* (in which he discussed Barney Hines) was jointly awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History.

² *Nepean Times*, 14 April 1938, Trove, National Library of Australia.

reliable sources on the subject. Such errors may go uncorrected for many years. But the essence of historical research is that we might be confronted with new evidence that challenges long-held beliefs. Much of what was once believed about Hines and his family background came from details that he himself provided. But, it becomes clear, he often gave false information about himself, so he was not always a reliable source.

In March 2018 members of the *RootsChat* website forum were asked for their help in researching the early life of Hines. *RootsChat* is a free online family history research website which enables researchers to assist each other. Questions posed on *RootsChat* have stimulated research that has radically changed our understanding of Hines's life. Hines was born in Liverpool, England, a part of the world that is well covered by genealogy websites. He should have appeared on some online records but for some reason he couldn't be found. One researcher, who was asking for help, became interested in Hines after reading an article about him by Peter Smith in *Ireland's Own* magazine in 2014. Hines claimed to be from an Irish background. On *RootsChat* a forum member posted about a Heim or Heims family who were living at Eldon Place, Liverpool on the 1871 census. She wondered if Hines could have derived from Heims. The next day yet another forum member, later joined by other members, cited a variety of records to build a case to prove that Hines was John Heim, the Liverpool-born son of German immigrants.

John Heim had indeed been born in Liverpool, England, in 1878, but the details of his life must now be accepted as very different to the story previously understood. He was baptised at St Joseph's Roman Catholic church in Grosvenor Street, Liverpool on 20 October 1878. The church baptism register is in Latin and recorded his name as Joannis Haim and says he was born on 11 October 1878. His father was Jacob Haim and his mother was Dora Fanhoff.³ When his mother registered the birth on 25 November 1878 she appears to have used the German form of the first name, 'Johannes' or 'Johann', but the registrar appears to have misunderstood her. The registrar recorded the birth of the child as a girl called Johanna Heim. The birth entry says the father was Jacob Heim, a labourer and the mother was Dora Hofaf. It gives the child's date of birth as 20 October 1878 and place of birth as 16 Grosvenor Street.⁴ There is a reasonable explanation why the wrong date of birth was given for the birth registration. A child born on 11 October, whose birth was not registered until 25 November 1878, would have been a 'late registration'. It was common practice for families to adjust the date of birth of their children in order to avoid the complications of registering after the specified period.

Census records give details of the family's composition and history. Jacob Heim worked in the local sugar refining industry.⁵ The family first appear on the Liverpool census records in 1871.⁶ They were living at 61 Eldon Place, Liverpool. Jacob Heim (33) had been born in Bavaria and his wife Dora Heim (26) had been born in Prussia, now both in Germany. Jacob's occupation was 'Labourer Sugar house'. Matilda Heim (8) was Jacob's daughter from his first marriage to Mary Ann Schmitt who had died in Liverpool in 1868. Jacob married his second wife Dora in 1870. Matilda died in 1878 and Jacob and Dora named their next daughter Matilda in 1881. On the 1881 census they were living at 69 Bevington Hill, Liverpool.⁷ The family consisted of: Jacob Heims (43), Sugar Refiner, born in Germany, his

³ 'Joannis Haim', St. Joseph's RC Church, Baptisms (282 JOS/1/5), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

⁴ 'Johanna Heim', birth: Oct/Nov/Dec 1878, Liverpool, GRO for England and Wales, UK.

⁵ The German Connection: <http://www.nurwer.clara.net/loc-liverpool.html>.

⁶ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1871, National Archives, UK.

⁷ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1881, National Archives, UK.

wife Dora F. Heims (33), born in Germany and their Liverpool-born children: Dora Heim (9), Jacob Heim (7), Mary Heim (4), John Heim (2) and Matilda (2 months). Jacob Heim died aged 50 years in 1890 leaving the family without their main breadwinner. On the 1891 census the family were living at 9 Arley Street, Liverpool.⁸ The family then consisted of: Dora Heim (40), widow and her children: Dora Heim (19), Mary Heim (16), John Heim (13), Matilda Heim (10) and Rose Heim (6).

John Heim's mother, Dora, married a widower called Thomas Wait, a blacksmith, at St Alban's Church of England in Bevington, Liverpool in 1893. Heim enlisted in the King's Liverpool Regiment on 27 September 1895. He gave his address as 114 Bond Street, Liverpool and his occupation as blacksmith, the same occupation as his stepfather. He gave his age as 18 years and 9 months; he was actually 16 at the time, a couple of weeks away from being 17. He was later discharged, for reasons unspecified.⁹ While his military service was brief, he claimed on his AIF enlistment papers to have served in the King's Liverpool, not the last misinformation Heim perpetrated. He joined the Royal Navy on 9 April 1896, giving his date of birth as 12 October 1876 and occupation as blacksmith. He was 'Discharged as objectionable' after eight months.¹⁰ He later went to sea as a merchant seaman working as a marine fireman (a stoker), perhaps following in the footsteps of his older brother Jacob Heim who was a leading fireman. John Heim married Hannah Maher on 22 May 1899 at Our Lady of Reconciliation Roman Catholic church in Eldon Street, Liverpool. He gave his address as 11 Eldon Place, the same address as his brother Jacob Heim who was a witness at the marriage.¹¹

John and Hannah Heim had two children together. Jacob Heim was born on 27 October 1899¹² and Hannah Heim was born on 15 July 1901.¹³ On the 1901 census the family were living at house 5 in court 2 in Silvester Street, Liverpool.¹⁴ The family living at the property on the night of 31 March 1901 consisted of: Hannah Heim (22), her son, Jacob Heim (1), her mother, Frances Maher (46), hawker, and her brother, Martin Maher (14), port bread boy. All were born in Liverpool. John Heim was probably away at sea at the time of the census. Some Liverpool Record Office crew lists from around this time show that Heim was working away at sea. From September to October 1899 Heim was a fireman and trimmer on the ship *Ottoman* going between Liverpool and Canada.¹⁵ He was on the ship *Majestic* going between Liverpool and New York in 1901, from May to June 1901 as a fireman and from June to July 1901 as a greaser. The captain of *Majestic* at the time was Edward Smith, later notable as the captain of *Titanic*.¹⁶

Electoral rolls confirm that Heim was living with the family in Silvester Street. 'John Heims', formerly of 5 in 2 court Silvester Street, was at 5 in 6 court Silvester Street in 1902-03. Heims was at the same address in 1903-04 but there was no eligible voter listed at that address in 1904-05 and he doesn't appear on any further electoral rolls in Liverpool.¹⁷ For some reason around this time he left his wife and children. Hannah Heim married James

⁸ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, National Archives, UK.

⁹ John Heim, British Army Service Records, National Archives, UK.

¹⁰ John Heim, Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services, National Archives, UK.

¹¹ Our Lady of Reconciliation RC Church, Marriages (282 REC/2/2), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

¹² Our Lady of Reconciliation RC Church, Baptisms (282 REC/1/8), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

¹³ St. Sylvester RC Church, Baptisms (282 SYL/1/3), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

¹⁴ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1901, National Archives, UK.

¹⁵ Crew Lists, *Ottoman* (387 CRE/658), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

¹⁶ Crew Lists, *Majestic* (387 CRE/557), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

¹⁷ Liverpool Electoral Registers, Burgess rolls and Voters Lists, Liverpool Record Office, UK.

May, a labourer, in Liverpool in 1906, describing herself as a widow.¹⁸ Most working-class people were unable to obtain a divorce at this time so many separated people said they were widowed so they could marry again. James May died in hospital seven weeks into the marriage and Hannah married Robert Melvin, a marine fireman, in 1907.¹⁹ Hannah lived at 51 Elstow Street, Kirkdale, Liverpool for many years. The address appears on her son's first merchant seaman crew list in 1915,²⁰ and she was at the same address when she died, aged 72 years, in 1952.²¹

As a seaman, John Heim was able to travel to Australasia. The New South Wales State Archives Gaol Photographic Description Book images 14800²² and 17589²³ confirm that Hines was living in New Zealand from at least 1904 and came to Australia on the ship *Somerset* in 1915. A crew listing from 1915 for *Somerset* includes a crewmember named J. Heim, a fireman, age 29, born in Liverpool.²⁴ This tells us that when Hines worked as a fireman on the ship *Somerset*, on his way from New Zealand to Australia, he did so under the name John Heim. The photographs of Hines in images 14800 and 17589 are useful as a comparison to the Hurley photograph. They provide conclusive proof that the souveniring soldier and the habitual criminal of these records are the same man. Articles written about Hines often portray him as a lovable rogue. He was usually allowed by journalists to tell his own story in a series of anecdotes. This gave him the opportunity to reinvent himself to an extent and show himself in a better light. Understandably, he kept his German background and his violent criminal past hidden. The considerable, detailed evidence now available about 'Hines's' criminal past needs to be recorded, and should dislodge any suggestion that he was merely a harmless larrikin.

New Zealand and Australian newspapers put flesh on the bones of the convictions for Hines listed in the NSW Archives. The first of many criminal convictions under the name 'John Sydney Hines' was in New Zealand in 1904. He was convicted at Auckland on 7 November 1904 for threatening behaviour at Ellerslie Racecourse, also of vagrancy and consorting with thieves.²⁵ In support of the charges against Hines the prosecution said of him, 'his mode of living had not been satisfactory for some time past. He had been associating for four or five months with well-known and reputed thieves and women of ill-fame'. Hines 'had not done a stroke of work for a long time.' Hines in a 'pathetic appeal' to the magistrate said, 'when I came out here years ago I came with the intention of joining the police force.' 'And did you join?' replied the magistrate sarcastically. Hines remained silent. 'Well,' said the magistrate, 'a man can always be judged by his companions. You are sentenced to three months'.²⁶

In January 1906 Hines pleaded guilty to threatening behaviour in Albert Street, Auckland. Police Sub-inspector Black said Hines and another man were fighting but the other man got away. Hines claimed to be a gum digger and said he had been in town for a week. He told the court the other man came up to him and hit him. Hines admitted having committed several offences, including assaults on other men. 'The accused is one of the worst men in town,' said Black. A constable added that Hines 'loafed about town and kept company with drunken

¹⁸ St Nicholas CE Church, Marriages (283 NIC/3/110), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

¹⁹ St Nicholas CE Church, Marriages (283 NIC/3/111), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

²⁰ James Melvin: <http://1915crewlists.rmg.co.uk/document/191725#&gid=1&pid=9>.

²¹ Ford Cemetery, Liverpool Catholic Church Registers, Liverpool Record Office, UK.

²² https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/index_image/2467_a006_a00603_6091000177r.

²³ https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/index_image/2467_a006_a00603_6105000147r.

²⁴ J. Heim on *Somerset*: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C14700447>.

²⁵ *Auckland Star*, 7 November 1904, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

²⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 8 November 1904, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

men'. Hines said the police 'followed and hounded him down.' 'The police do not hound anyone down,' replied the magistrate. 'In any case, a man with your character wants watching.' Hines was given a fine of £2 or a sentence of two months' imprisonment with hard labour.²⁷

Hines was arrested in Auckland in April 1908 after police had been looking for him for some time.²⁸ It was alleged that Hines was involved in the theft of £115 from a deaf and dumb man named David Sutherland at Wellington on 27 May 1907. Hines was alleged to have been an accomplice of a man named Archibald McNab who was previously convicted of the robbery. On 18 June 1907 Sutherland's drowned body was found in Wellington Harbour.²⁹ It was believed that Sutherland had committed suicide while suffering grief at the loss of the money. Hines was tried at the Wellington Supreme Court, with witnesses appearing to give evidence that included a man named Ryan who gave 'King's evidence'. When Sutherland was discharged from the Terrace Gaol on 21 May 1907 he received £120 0s 3d, the money found on him when he was arrested, from the chief gaoler. He was handed a cheque for £115 and the balance in cash. On 23 May 1907, when Sutherland was fined for drunkenness, he still had the cheque in his possession. On 27 May 1907 he went out on a carouse with McNab and Hines and was later joined by Ryan. McNab stole the cheque and the money was afterwards divided between the three men. Hines was convicted on 22 May 1908 and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour.³⁰

Robert Murphy claimed that on Friday 10 December 1909, at about 11pm, he and another man named O'Brien were in the vicinity of the timber mills in Customs Street, Auckland when they heard a noise coming from the timber. Murphy went to investigate and found Hines and a woman amongst the timber. Hines noticed a bottle of beer in Murphy's pocket; he half asked for it and half took it without any resistance from Murphy. He and the woman drank the beer then Hines suddenly grabbed Murphy, demanding to know if he had any money. Murphy accused Hines of attempting to steal his watch and chain, striking him in the face, butting him with his head and chasing him. He said several women, who had come out of their houses in the vicinity, remonstrated with Hines for his brutality and bad language. The case was referred to Auckland Supreme Court. Murphy's evidence was found to be insufficient to prove theft, but Hines was convicted for assault and using obscene language on 20 December 1909 and sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour.³¹

Hines appeared again at the Supreme Court in Auckland on 29 August 1910. He appeared before the Chief Justice charged with breaking and entering the gum store of Francis Deacon at Kumeu. Previously a man named Denny, charged with being one of the two men responsible, was acquitted. Hines conducted his own defence and pointed out the absence of evidence connecting him with the offence. The jury returned a guilty verdict and Hines was remanded for sentence. 'Can I appeal, your Honour?' asked Hines. His Honour answered, 'Yes', then criticised the jury in the Denny trial: 'I suppose you feel sore because the other jury acquitted your companion and you have been found guilty. The fact is the other jury was gulled but this jury has not been gulled.'³² Hines was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment

²⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 29 January 1906, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

²⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 20 April 1908, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

²⁹ *New Zealand Times*, 22 May 1908, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

³⁰ *Dominion*, 22 & 23 May 1908, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

³¹ *Auckland Star*, 16 & 20 December 1909, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

³² *New Zealand Times*, 30 August 1910, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

with hard labour and was declared to be a habitual criminal.³³

At the Police Court in Auckland on 10 November 1911 'John Sydney Hines, a burly sailor' and Margaret Piper alias Braslin were charged with stealing £2 10s and a metal watch valued at 15s from a gum digger named Joseph John Bradley in Customs Street. Both prisoners were committed to the Supreme Court for trial. The prosecution case in the trial was that at about midnight on 3 November Bradley was making his way along the waterfront to his home in Freeman's Bay. He saw Hines, another man and Piper struggling together. Bradley kept his distance but Hines grabbed hold of him, backed him into a shed and up against a wall. Hines told him to be quiet and not to struggle or else it would be worse for him. Hines snatched Bradley's watch, breaking the chain in the process, while Piper searched his pockets, taking his money. Both prisoners were convicted on 24 November 1911 and were found to have unenviable records. Hines was sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour and four years' detention for reformatory treatment.³⁴

Hines first joined the Australian Imperial Force on 24 August 1915, within a week of arriving in Australia (the *Somerset* arrived in Sydney on 18 August 1915).³⁵ When submitting the information for his next of kin he initially put down 'Mother Dora Hines, 23 Eldon Place, Liverpool, England', then corrected it to 'Sister Mrs Mary Thompson' and left the address as it was. Dora was the name of John Heim's mother. John Heim's sister Mary Heim married David Thompson at St Nicholas Church of England, Liverpool on 17 December 1893. John Heim was a witness at that marriage and his signature appears on the marriage record.³⁶ The address Eldon Place appears a number of times in connection with the Heim family. A family member was known to be living at 23 Eldon Place in 1915. Mary Thompson married Dennis Hayde at Our Lady of Reconciliation church on 30 December 1915, the witnesses, Patrick and Rose Ann Cleary, being recorded as living at 23 Eldon Place.³⁷ Rose Ann was John Heim's sister. When Mary died in 1916 the address on her burial record was 23 Eldon Place.³⁸

In 1915, when he first joined the AIF, Hines gave his age as 28 years. When he re-joined the AIF on 8 May 1916, he gave his age as 36. Age variations occur in records for both John Heim and John Hines. They match on at least one occasion. Heim gave his date of birth as 12 October when he joined the Royal Navy in 1896. The NSW Gaol Photographic Description Book image 14800 for Hines gives the same date of birth, 12 October. The years given are different but the fact that both records give 12 October, the day after his baptism certificate says Heim was born, is close enough a match that it couldn't be a coincidence. They have to be the same man. NSW Gaol Photographic Description Book image 17589, like image 14800, gives his year of birth as 1884 but gives a different date of birth, 17 March. That date, St Patrick's Day, was a memorable date in the predominantly Liverpool-Irish district Hines grew up in. Hines was probably having a laugh giving that date. The Heim children, being Catholics, would have been educated at a local Catholic school where most of their friends would have come from an Irish background.³⁹

³³ *Evening Post*, 31 August 1910, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

³⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, 11, 13, 24 & 25 November 1911, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand.

³⁵ *Evening News (Sydney)*, 19 August 1915, Trove, National Library of Australia.

³⁶ St Nicholas CE Church, Marriages (283 NIC/3/99), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

³⁷ Our Lady of Reconciliation RC Church, Marriages (282 REC/2/2), Liverpool Record Office, UK.

³⁸ Ford Cemetery, Liverpool Catholic Church Registers, Liverpool Record Office, UK.

³⁹ For local RC schools see: <http://www.liverpool-schools.co.uk/index.html>.

The Australian convictions date from 1916 onwards. The first conviction occurred within two weeks of his first medical discharge from the AIF. John Hines and Matthew Geercke appeared at the Central Police Court in Sydney on 31 January 1916. Constable Ellis said he saw the two accused coming up the steps near the Darling Harbour railway. They were found to be carrying 62 dinner plates in a bag. Geercke left Hines with the bag and Ellis followed Hines. He asked him what he had in the bag. Hines said he only had a few plates. Ellis told Hines he would have to accompany him to the police station. Hines replied, 'No chance' and struck Ellis. After Hines had struck Ellis three or four times Ellis drew his baton and Hines said, 'Stop; I'll give in and come to the station.' Hines said an unknown man had given him two shillings to carry the bag up the steps. Both accused were fined £5 or two months hard labour. Hines was also fined £5 or two months for assaulting constable Ellis.⁴⁰



Fig.2: Gaol image of John Hines, 1916. (New South Wales State Archives)

In August 1920 John Hines, 'a fitter's labourer', appeared at a coroner's inquest in Sydney into the death of Margaret Johnson of George Street, Waterloo.⁴¹ A witness, Ethel McNevin, a nurse at the Coast Hospital, said Johnson was admitted on 12 July. She was bleeding from the mouth and

appeared very sick. She had bruises on the left hip and abdomen. Johnson stated to the witness that her husband had given her a hiding. Johnson died of internal injuries on 14 July. Another witness, Matilda Annie Clark, visited Johnson on 7 July. Johnson told Clark that Hines would do anything for her if she did not drink. Johnson confessed to her that there were times when the craving became too strong for her and she 'had to go the whole hog or nothing.' Hines said he had lived with Johnson for about 18 months. He said she was addicted to drink. He said she complained of being ill and two days later he summoned a doctor. He denied that he had struck Johnson. The coroner returned an open verdict.⁴²

James Drummond, a rigger, of Devonshire Street, Sydney, gave evidence against John Hines, 'a fitter', at Redfern Police Court on 25 October 1920. Drummond recalled sitting in a low chair in a kitchen in a house in George Street, Waterloo with Hines, Martin Tobin and a woman. Hines suddenly grabbed Drummond by the lapel of his coat and forced him to the floor. Before Drummond could rise Hines kicked him about the face. Half-conscious, with his

⁴⁰ *Daily Telegraph (Sydney)*, 1 February 1916, Trove, National Library of Australia.

⁴¹ *Evening News (Sydney)*, 5 August 1920, Trove, National Library of Australia.

⁴² *Daily Telegraph (Sydney)*, 14 August 1920, Trove, National Library of Australia.

eyes filled with blood, he saw Hines standing over him with Tobin beside him. A gold watch and chain were taken from him.⁴³ Hines was convicted of robbery with violence on 7 December 1920 and was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment with hard labour for this crime.⁴⁴



Fig.3: John Hines, 8 Dec 1920. (NSW State Archives)

Hines continued to get himself in trouble in Australia for many years to come but his offences were not as bad as in New Zealand. His later convictions included assault, stealing, indecent language, drunk and disorderly, resisting a constable and breach of a municipal bylaw. For

these offences he received fines or short sentences. The longest of these sentences was three months' imprisonment with hard labour for stealing in 1929.⁴⁵

In 1933, after the photograph of Hines by Frank Hurley was displayed at the temporary Australian War Museum in Sydney, there was press interest in Hines. Magazine and newspaper articles followed. The public learned that Hines was now living near Mount Druitt, out of work and mainly subsisting on his war pension. After reading about his poverty some people sent him money. He lived a lonely existence for many years, in a 'humpy' – a primitive shelter. It is not known if he had any contact with his family in Liverpool in his latter years. He died in 1958 aged 79 years, a lonely, sick and disturbed man.

John 'Barney' Hines is a well-known figure in Australian military history. The new evidence disclosed as a result of the queries posed to the *RootsChat* site gives us a much more detailed, and realistic, understanding of his life. It shows that far from being a romantic larrikin, he was an undeniably unpleasant man, perhaps damaged by alcohol abuse, although we may never know for certain what shaped his bad character. The reality should not blind us to the hardships and danger of his war service, but it should deter us from seeing his life as anything but the grim tragedy it was.

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⁴³ *Sun (Sydney)*, 25 October 1920, Trove, National Library of Australia.

⁴⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December 1920, Trove, National Library of Australia.

⁴⁵ New South Wales State Archives, Gaol Photographic Description Book image 17589.

THE AUSTRALIAN 26TH INFANTRY BRIGADE DURING WORLD WAR 2

Joseph A. Morgan

Introduction

The 26th Infantry Brigade was one of 12 infantry brigades raised as part of the Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF) during World War 2. The second last of these brigades to be raised, the 26th was formed in July 1940. Largely recruited from Victoria, the brigade was initially assigned to the 7th Division, although after it had been sent to the Middle East, it was transferred to the 9th Division, with which it saw all its combat service. The brigade first went into action in April 1941, when it moved to Tobruk and subsequently took part in the famous defence of the port after it fell under siege. It remained there, holding the town, until October when the Australian garrison was relieved by British and Polish troops and withdrawn back to Palestine. After occupation duties in Syria, in mid- to late-1942 the brigade took part in the fighting around El Alamein, which arguably turned the tide in North Africa.

In early 1943, the brigade returned to Australia where the 9th Division was reorganised for jungle warfare against the Japanese. Later in the year, the brigade took part in the capture of Lae, and then the envelopment of the Huon Peninsula. Its final campaign came in the last few months of the war, when it took part in the fighting on Tarakan as part of the Allied effort to liberate Borneo. Following the end of hostilities, the brigade's personnel were demobilised and it ceased to exist in January 1946.

Throughout their service, the troops of the 9th Division gained many accolades. One of the most significant fell to one of the 26th Infantry Brigade's infantry battalions, the South-Australian 2/48th, which had the distinction of being the most decorated infantry battalion of the 2nd AIF, with four members receiving the Victoria Cross. It also has a legacy in the establishment of the Regular Army, through its contribution to the occupation forces assigned to the 34th Infantry Brigade in the post war period.

Formation

The 26th Bde was raised on 22 July 1940 as part of the 2nd AIF, establishing its headquarters at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne.¹ Upon formation, its first commander was Brigadier Ray Tovell, a citizen soldier/accountant who had been commissioned in the 4th Pioneer Battalion during World War 1 and then served as a staff officer with the 4th Bde. Continuing in the Citizen Forces after the war, he had risen to command the 10th Bde by late 1939 before accepting a 2nd AIF appointment.²

The brigade's main units were three infantry battalions: the 2/23rd, 2/24th and 2/48th. Of these, the first two were formed in Victoria, while the third was raised in South Australia.³ The haphazard designation sequence of the brigade's battalions was not unique, and was in part due to the desire to try to raise the 2nd AIF battalions in the same states that the corresponding original AIF battalions had been raised.⁴ As a result, the 2/25th Bn was raised in Queensland,

¹ AWM52 8/2/26/1: July-November 1940; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.107.

² Smith 2002.

³ AWM52 8/2/26/1: July-November 1940.

⁴ Johnston 2007, p.6.

and formed part of the 24th Bde, headquartered at Grovely, in Brisbane.⁵ In addition to the 26th's three infantry battalions, several support units were assigned to the brigade upon formation; these were the 26th Anti-Tank Company and the 78th Light Aid Detachment.⁶ These units formed at Albury, New South Wales, and Broadmeadows, Victoria, respectively.⁷

Despite being the second-last 2nd AIF brigade raised during the war, the 26th was initially assigned to the 2nd AIF's second division, the 7th, rather than its fourth division (the 9th). This was due to a reorganisation following the assignment of the 18th Bde, after its dispatch to the United Kingdom, to the 7th Division (swapping the 19th Brigade with the 6th Division). This meant that the 7th Division had two brigades forming in Australia – the 20th and 21st – while it had another in the United Kingdom. The 18th was subsequently reassigned to 'Austral Force', and then later to the 9th Division. As a result, the 26th Bde took its place with the other two 7th Division brigades, allowing the division to form as a body in Australia before deploying.⁸

Training took a little while to begin, as the first month of the brigade's existence was occupied with headquarters staff marching in, and initial recruiting efforts for its battalions. However, in mid-August 1940, the brigade moved its headquarters to Albury, on the Victoria-New South Wales border, where it was closer to the training grounds being used by the 2/23rd and 2/24th Bns and the 26th Anti-Tank Coy, which were concentrating recruits for training in Albury and Wangaratta.⁹ Initial training was hampered by a lack of equipment and supplies. While some of this was made good locally, largely these deficiencies would not be rectified until the brigade reached the Middle East, where British resources could be tapped.¹⁰ On 25 September, the 26th Anti-Tank Coy and 2/23rd Bn moved from Albury to Bonegilla, on the southern side of the border. They were joined there by the 2/24th a few days later, following a route march from Wangaratta. Meanwhile, the brigade's headquarters remained in Albury.¹¹ Conditions at Bonegilla were poor and while the facilities were improved some of the troops enjoyed a period of leave.¹²

Training continued at Bonegilla throughout October and November, as the brigade made preparations for deployment to the Middle East.¹³ Meanwhile, the 2/48th undertook its own evolution separately. After rudimentary training at the Wayville Showgrounds, the battalion moved to Woodside, in the Adelaide hills, where they began collective training. Accommodated in tents which proved inadequate in the climate, many of the recruits developed chest infections and other ailments, which would have hampered training. Nevertheless, in early November the 2/48th moved by rail to the Outer Harbour to embark on the transport *Stratheden*.¹⁴ Meanwhile, in Melbourne, the rest of the brigade embarked on the troopship *Strathmore*, joining a convoy bound for the Middle East, and eventually linking up with the *Stratheden* in the Southern Ocean. Sailing via Fremantle and Colombo, in Ceylon, the convoy reached Egypt in mid-December 1940.¹⁵ There, the 26th Bde subsequently joined

⁵ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.101.

⁶ AWM52 8/2/26/1: July-November 1940; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.107.

⁷ McKenzie-Smith 2018b, p.5.482

⁸ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.042; Johnston 2005, p.2.

⁹ AWM52 8/2/26/1: July-November 1940.

¹⁰ Thompson 2010, p.112; Kuring 2004, p.117.

¹¹ AWM52 8/2/26/1: July-November 1940.

¹² Johnston 2002, p.4.

¹³ AWM52 8/2/26/1: July-November 1940.

¹⁴ Johnston 2002, p.5; Glenn 1987, pp.2-6.

¹⁵ AWM52 8/2/26/1: July-November 1940; Share 1991, pp.18-22.

the other two 7th Division brigades in Palestine, concentrating at Dimra Camp.¹⁶

Campaigning in the Middle East: Tobruk, Syria and El Alamein

In the Middle East, the brigade continued its training with the 7th Division. Meanwhile, in January 1941, the 6th Division went into action for the first time around Bardia against the Italians. The following month, the three brigades of the 7th Division, including the 26th, were inspected by Prime Minister Menzies in Palestine. Shortly afterwards, as the 7th Division was prepared for action, a further reorganisation resulted in the 20th and 26th Bdes being transferred to the 9th Division, as the more experienced brigades – the 18th and 25th – were transferred to the 7th Division in preparation for deployment to Greece, where they were scheduled to join the 6th Division.¹⁷ Shortly after joining the 9th Division, the 26th Bde was assessed as being ‘relatively untrained and short of transport, guns and ammunition’. To rectify this, the 9th Division, under Major General Leslie Morshead, was subjected to rigorous training while its equipment deficiencies were improved through a variety of officially sanctioned and potentially less reputable methods.¹⁸

With the commitment of the 6th Division to defend Greece, where a German invasion was expected, the 9th Division was tasked with taking over the Allied positions in Libya between Derna and Tobruk. It was envisaged that they could complete their training here as it was assessed that an Axis counter-attack in the region was unlikely. By this time, the division’s infantry still lacked most of their allocated crew-served and indirect-fire support weapons, and the division’s cavalry and artillery was left behind, possessing almost none of their guns and vehicles. In late March, the 20th Bde deployed forward towards the frontier, while the 26th remained at Baracca, to defend the Benghazi Plain. Shortly afterwards, the Germans launched an offensive in Libya, and by early April they were striking towards Derna. This threatened to cut off the 20th and 26th Bdes, which were positioned to the west of Derna, and forced them to begin a withdrawal towards Tobruk, in a race – hampered by the transport situation – to avoid envelopment in what became known as the ‘Benghazi Handicap’.¹⁹ After fighting a rearguard action at Tmimi on 7 April, the 26th dug in outside Tobruk the following day, along with the rest of the 9th Division, and the 18th Bde, which had been detached from the 7th Division and hastily moved from Alexandria, to defend the vital port, which then fell under siege.²⁰

For the better part of the next six months, the brigade helped hold the town, initially occupying the western approaches before moving to ‘The Salient’ in late April and early May, where they endured heavy fighting. During this time, the brunt of the German attack, which included tank support, fell on the 2/24th around Bianca. Resisting stubbornly, the battalion was reduced to half strength, with hundreds being captured from the forward positions, before the remainder of the 26th Bde, supported by the 18th, launched a strong counterattack. After this, the brigade was rotated through several sectors around the Allied perimeter.²¹ By July, the Australian troops had been heavily depleted, having suffered 30 per cent attrition, and plans to relieve them were formulated. In August and September, Polish and British troops began arriving, while the 26th undertook another stint in The Salient where

¹⁶ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.042; Glenn 1987, pp.7-16.

¹⁷ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.024 & 2.107; Johnston 2002, pp.2-3; Johnston 2005, p.2.

¹⁸ Thompson 2010, pp.111-112.

¹⁹ Johnston 2002, p.17.

²⁰ Wilmot 1993, pp.68-69, 78, 80; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.107.

²¹ Wilmot 1993, pp.128-153; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.107.

they improved the Allied defences re-laying wire and minefields.²² Finally, over the course of several nights in late October the 26th Bde was relieved by the British 23rd Bde, and was withdrawn by sea aboard several Royal Navy destroyers, back to Alexandria and from there to Palestine.²³

Following their evacuation from Tobruk, the brigade concentrated at Julis on 25 October,²⁴ and over the next few months was rebuilt and reorganised. During this time, the 26th Anti-Tank Coy was briefly reallocated to the 7th Division, before disbanded in December 1941, with its personnel being absorbed into the 2/4th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, which was assigned to the 9th Division.²⁵ In early 1942, the 9th Division was sent to Syria to undertake occupation duties, taking over from the 7th Division, which had earlier been involved in its successful capture from the Vichy French. The 26th Bde was initially located along the coast, around Tripoli, before moving inland briefly. The dispatch of the 2nd New Zealand Division to Egypt saw an increase in the brigade's area of responsibility, but their stay in Syria was cut short when they were hastily transported to Egypt in early July amidst a renewed German offensive that was threatening Alexandria.²⁶

After briefly occupying defensive positions at Amiriya, the brigade was sent forward to El Alamein to meet the German offensive. Throughout July and August, they would take part in a series of defensive actions. Briefly, the 2/23rd Bn was detached to remain behind to defend Alexandria; however, in mid-July they joined the attack around Tel el Eisa alongside the 2/48th. In this endeavour, they were successful in capturing a cutting dubbed the 'railway station', before exploiting the position with the 2/24th and carrying the advance forward to the Tel el Eisa Ridge. Although successful, the 2/23rd suffered heavily and as a result had to be re-organised into two infantry companies and a headquarters. By August, the 26th was relieved by the 20th Bde and placed in reserve. Later they were withdrawn to the coast for a brief rest; the 2/23rd was subsequently rebuilt and re-equipped.²⁷

In early September 1942, Brig David Whitehead took over the brigade when Tovell temporarily assumed command of the 9th Division. Tovell was later posted to Headquarters II Corps in Australia,²⁸ leaving Whitehead as the brigade's permanent commander. A World War I veteran, Whitehead had previously commanded the 2/2nd Machine Gun and 2/32nd Infantry Bns, and subsequently led the brigade through what was probably its heaviest fighting during the Second Battle of El Alamein in October and November 1942 when the Allies went on the offensive.²⁹ At this time, the Australians were tasked with achieving a break-in against the strongest enemy defences, which were located around Tel el Eisa. As part of this, the 26th was assigned a position on the right where they were to establish a northern flank. Preliminary movements began in late September, as the 26th Bde relieved the 20th around the coastal sector. They held this until mid-October when they were relieved by the 24th Bde to conduct rehearsals and training, including tank co-operation, prior to the opening assault on the night of 23/24 October.³⁰

²² Wilmot 1993, pp.203 & 282-84.

²³ AWM52 8/2/26/10: September-October 1941; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.107.

²⁴ AWM52 8/2/26/10: September-October 1941.

²⁵ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.371.

²⁶ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.107-2.108.

²⁷ Share 1991, pp.198-208; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.108.

²⁸ Smith 2002.

²⁹ Stevenson 2016; Johnston 2002, p.xv.

³⁰ AWM52 8/2/26/22: January 1943, Report on Operations 'Lightfoot', part 1 of 2.

Supported by an intense artillery bombardment, on the opening night the Australians pushed through strong defences and thick minefields.³¹ While the 26th achieved their initial objectives, overall the attacks failed to achieve a breakthrough on a broad front. As a result, on 25 October the brigade struck north to divert enemy attention and extend the northern flank, and carried out several attacks around Trig 29 and the Fig Orchard, securing and holding captured positions against determined counter-attacks. During this time several attachments and detachments occurred as ad hoc formations were created to meet the needs of combat: the 2/23rd was detached to the 20th Bde, while the 2/32nd and 2/3rd Pioneers joined the 26th Bde. Finally, in early November, having reached the main road and railway around the coast, the 26th was relieved by the 24th Bde, which had been holding a base along the coast.³² Once the break-in had been achieved, other Allied units exploited the gap and began the pursuit phase of the offensive, while the 9th Division remained behind to consolidate the initial gains. By the end of November, the 26th Bde was withdrawn to Palestine for reorganisation prior to embarkation for Australia in January 1943;³³ there they would join the 6th and 7th Divisions, which had been withdrawn almost a year earlier to take part in the fighting in New Guinea.³⁴

Securing Lae and the Huon Peninsula

Embarking on the troopship *Nieuw Amsterdam* at Port Tewfik on 1 February 1943, the 26th Bde reached Fremantle on 19 February before continuing on to Port Melbourne. Arriving there on 25 February, the brigade's personnel briefly concentrated at Seymour before being granted leave. In late March, the brigade marched through the streets of Melbourne before beginning the move by rail to Kairi, in northern Queensland.³⁵ There, the 9th Division was reorganised for jungle warfare. This resulted in a reduced establishment for each of the brigade's infantry battalions, as well as a reduction in the amount of internal transport and indirect-fire support allocated, among other changes.³⁶

After amphibious warfare training in Cairns and then later, Milne Bay, the brigade joined the two-pronged assault on Lae in early September 1943. The task of carrying out the initial landing to the east of the town was given to the 20th Bde, although the 26th Bde's 2/23rd Bn was attached to them for this, landing after the assaulting forces, and beginning the advance westwards towards Lae once the beaches had been secured. The rest of the 26th Bde followed shortly afterwards, and they subsequently took control of the 2/17th Bn as they advanced along the coastal route to the Burep River. From there, the 26th moved inland, while the 24th Bde continued on the previous axis of advance. The crossing of the Busu River inland proved difficult, with engineers being required to force the crossing under fire, after which the brigade fanned out with the 2/24th Bn moving into blocking positions around Musom, while the 2/23rd took Kamkamun and the 2/48th invested Butibum. Lae subsequently fell on 15 September to elements of the 7th Division, which had advanced overland from Nadzab.³⁷

In the aftermath, the 26th rested around Lae, while other elements of the 9th Division began securing the Huon Peninsula, landing at Scarlet Beach and then advancing towards

³¹ Kuring 2004, p.135.

³² AWM52 8/2/26/22: January 1943, Report on Operations 'Lightfoot', part 1 of 2; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.108; Kuring 2004, p.135.

³³ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.108.

³⁴ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.039-2.042.

³⁵ AWM52 8/2/26/21: January-May 1943; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.108.

³⁶ Johnston 2002, p.147; Palazzo 2004, p.94.

³⁷ Keogh 1965, pp.306-311; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.108.

Finschhafen. On 20 October, the 26th Bde was landed around Langemak Bay,³⁸ as the lodgement around Finschhafen was reinforced, amidst a determined Japanese counter-attack. They assumed a defensive role around Katika and Heldsbach initially, before being assigned the task of advancing inland towards the Japanese stronghold around the abandoned Lutheran mission at Sattelberg in mid-November, which was carried by an individual effort by Sgt Tom Derrick of the 2/48th. Later, the 2/23rd and 2/24th helped push the advance towards Wareo, during which time the 2/24th was used to complete portage tasks as the supply lines became strained.³⁹ Following the capture of Wareo, the 26th Bde rested at Gusika before supporting the advance along the coast towards Sio, providing security to vital lines of communication and landing beaches. In January 1944, the Militia 5th Division relieved the 9th Division, and the 26th Bde began preparations to return to Australia, with the brigade concentrating around the Song River in the middle of the month. Embarking at Langemak Bay on the transports *Edward B. Westcott* and *Andhui* on 10 February, they arrived at Brisbane on 21 February and moved into a staging camp at Yerongpilly.⁴⁰

Liberation of Borneo: Landing on Tarakan

Following their return to Australia, the brigade's personnel enjoyed a period of leave until they re-formed in May at Ravenshoe, on the Atherton Tablelands, in Queensland where I Corps had concentrated in preparation for future operations. The brigade's personnel waited over a year for their final operation of the war: a landing on Tarakan, in the Dutch East Indies. Part of the wider Allied operation to liberate Borneo and Java, known as Operation Oboe, the objective of the operation was to secure important anchorages and airfields, and petroleum facilities, for the advance towards Japan.⁴¹ In the intervening period, the brigade undertook an intense period of training. There was also a high turnover of personnel, with many of the more experienced men being transferred to other units, or discharged due to medical reasons or to meet the needs of civilian industry, which had been experiencing a manpower shortage since 1942-43.⁴²

Staging through Morotai where rehearsal landings were carried out, for the operation the 26th Bde received strong reinforcements, including the attachment of a pioneer battalion, a machine gun company, a commando squadron, an artillery regiment, and an armoured squadron. There were also a number of logistics and base support, and engineers assigned from corps troops.⁴³ The convoy carrying the brigade, consisting of over 170 vessels of various types, departed Morotai on 27 April.⁴⁴ After preliminary operations to emplace an artillery battery on Sadau Island, on 1 May, a heavy artillery, naval and aerial bombardment fell on the three landing beaches on the south-western coast of Tarakan Island. After this, engineers cleared the beach obstacles in Lingkas Bay, and the brigade landed, led ashore by the 2/23rd and 2/48th Bns. The 2/24th Bn followed them up and assumed the role of brigade reserve, later helping to push the advance north. On the northern beach, the 2/48th quickly gained a foothold, coming up against limited opposition around the Tank Farm, but the 2/23rd faced tougher opposition, coming under fire from the southern flank. Nevertheless, most first-day objectives were captured.⁴⁵

³⁸ Keogh 1965, p.328.

³⁹ Share 1991, pp.315-323; Kuring 2004, p.183; Johnston 2002, pp.181-82.

⁴⁰ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.109; AWM52 8/2/26/30: January 1944; AWM52 8/2/26/31: February-May 1944.

⁴¹ Keogh 1965, p.431-34; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.109.

⁴² Share 1991, p.342; Johnston 2002, pp.186-90; Glenn 1987, pp.228-229; Grey 2008, pp.183-84.

⁴³ Kuring 2004, pp.200-01; McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.109.

⁴⁴ Glenn 1987, pp.233-38.

⁴⁵ Keogh 1965, pp.441-42; Johnston 2002, pp.199-200.



Fig.1: Troops of the 26th Infantry Brigade on Tarakan, May 1945. (AWM image 090932)

On the second day, the beachhead was consolidated and the Australians began the advance towards Tarakan town, the Pamusian oilfields in the southeast, and the airfield and Djoeata oilfields in the north. Over the course of several days heavy fighting took place against bunkers and tunnels around Hospital Hill, and as a result the area overlooking the beaches was not secured until 4 May. Meanwhile, Commandos reinforced the brigade from Sandau and helped secure Tarakan town. At this point, Japanese resistance in the north became increasingly determined, and the advance was held up as large numbers of mines were encountered. As a result, the 2/3rd Pioneers were released from beach defence duties and brought up to increase the weight of combat power. Finally, on 5 May, the main objective of the operation – capture of the airfield – was completed, although it was heavily damaged. Organised resistance would continue into mid-June, as the Japanese forced the Australians to fight for the high ground around the airfield and the town.⁴⁶ Following this, the Australians began mopping up operations against isolated pockets, but by July the Japanese began surrendering as supplies of food ran out. This continued until the war came to an end with the announcement of Japan's capitulation on 15 August, after which the brigade oversaw the surrender of the Japanese garrison in the area.⁴⁷

Disbandment and legacy

In the immediate post war period, the brigade remained deployed on Tarakan for several months while the demobilisation process began. During this time they were mainly engaged in processing surrendering Japanese prisoners, while education and training was provided to prepare troops for their return to civilian life. A number of sporting and other recreational activities were also set up during this time to keep the troops occupied. In early September, the brigade was warned out for a deployment to reoccupy Ambon. However, this was later cancelled as the task was reallocated to the newly-raised 33rd Bde, consisting of the 63rd and

⁴⁶ Johnston 2002, pp.207-12; Keogh 1965, p.443.

⁴⁷ Mackenzie-Smith 2018, p.2.109.

64th Bns, which were raised specifically to provide an occupation force until civilian administration could be re-established.⁴⁸

The demobilisation process began in mid-October, using a points system to determine priority for personnel to return to Australia. During this time, the 9th Division was also tasked with raising a battalion for occupation duties in Japan. This was designated the 66th Bn, and was formed by transferring equipment from the 2/48th Bn, and concentrating volunteers from across the division. A total of around 300 personnel from the 26th Bde contributed to the 66th Bn and other supporting elements assigned to the 34th Bde; both of these formations would form the core of the Regular Army when it was established in 1948 as they evolved into the 2nd Bn, The Royal Australian Regiment and the 1st Bde respectively.⁴⁹ This transfer occurred in late October 1945, with the 2/48th disbanding on the 25th of that month. Those 2/48th personnel who chose not to serve in Japan were transferred to the 2/3rd Pioneers.⁵⁰

Throughout November, small numbers of Japanese personnel continued to be disarmed and processed for movement to Morotai Island. Meanwhile, the demobilisation process was hampered by a lack of available shipping; nevertheless, several drafts of high priority personnel were dispatched during this time as the British aircraft carrier HMS *Formidable* was provided to help rectify the situation.⁵¹ The following month, the shipping situation improved and as more personnel from the brigade were returned to Australia, a number of supporting units were declared redundant and prepared for disbandment. On 10 December, Brig Whitehead relinquished command of the brigade, and Lt Col John Anderson, of the 2/3rd Pioneers, assumed administrative command.⁵² Demobilisation continued throughout the month, although a small number of personnel remained over Christmas. Brigade headquarters embarked aboard three Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) – 324, 9 and 498 – on 27 December, with the last draft of Australians to leave Tarakan. They reached Morotai Island on 31 December and were at sea for New Year, which was enjoyed in the traditional Australian manner. On 11 January 1946, the LSTs docked at Hamilton Wharf in Brisbane, and from there the brigade's cadre moved to Chermiside. In the final weeks of January stores and equipment were returned and the remaining personnel marched out for discharge or transfer to other units for further service. On 25 January, the brigade was officially disbanded.⁵³

For their service during the war, many members of the brigade received gallantry or distinguished service awards. Indeed, the 2/48th was the most decorated unit of the 2nd AIF, with four of its members receiving the Victoria Cross: Stan Gurney, Bill Kibby, Percy Gratwick, and Tom Derrick.⁵⁴ Jack Mackey, of the 2/3rd Pioneers, also received the VC for actions on Tarakan while his battalion was in support of the 26th Bde.⁵⁵ All of these men, except Derrick, received the award posthumously; Derrick was, however, unfortunately killed in a later action on Tarakan in late May 1945 after being commissioned. Together these VCs represent more than two-thirds of the VCs awarded to the 9th Division. In addition, there were 22 Distinguished Conduct Medals awarded to members of the brigade's three infantry battalions, and 10 Distinguished Service Orders bestowed upon its officers. There were also

⁴⁸ AWM52 8/2/26/50; September-October 1945.

⁴⁹ Kuring 2004, p.219; Horner & Bou 2008, pp.43-44.

⁵⁰ AWM52 8/2/26/50; September-October 1945.

⁵¹ AWM52 8/2/26/51; November 1945.

⁵² Stevenson 2016; AWM52 8/2/26/52; December 1945.

⁵³ AWM 52 8/2/26/52; December 1945; AWM52 8/2/54; January 1946.

⁵⁴ '2/48th Australian Infantry Battalion', Australian War Memorial. Accessed 4 August 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/L156079>.

⁵⁵ Long 1963, p.432.

at least 285 other decorations.⁵⁶

For all of these accolades, the brigade's personnel paid a heavy price. Over the course of the war, it is estimated that a total of 9,447 personnel served in the 26th Bde's three infantry battalions. Of these, at least 764 were killed in action and another 244 died from other causes (wounds, accidents, illness etc). At least another 2,301 were wounded in action and 415 were taken prisoner.⁵⁷

The author would like to acknowledge Benjamin Morgan's assistance with researching and preparing this article.

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⁵⁶ Johnston 2002, p.253.

⁵⁷ Johnston 2002, p.247.

OUTGOING FEDERAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Fellow Members,

After thirteen years on the Federal Council (FC) of the Society – from 2005 first as Federal Vice President, then since 2010 as Federal President, and also as Secretary and Treasurer (2010-2016) – I decided not to seek election for a further term as a Councillor on FC for 2019-2020.

I must commend specifically following fellow members of FC during my time, particularly as Federal President:

- Robert Morrison (Federal President, immediately prior to my time in the position)
- Kristen Alexander (long-time Federal Secretary)
- Colin Simpson (Federal Councillor and former ACT President)
- Rick Pelvin (former Federal Vice President)
- Nigel Webster (current Federal Vice President)
- David Pearson (Federal Councillor)

for their particular efforts in their respective voluntary roles towards the goals of the Society.

Paul Skrebels (the outgoing Editor of *Sabretache*) and Anthony Stanton (immediately previous Editor) have both made significant contributions to the Society by reinforcing the Society's publication, *Sabretache*, as a historical journal of merit. The many unsolicited comments I have received from professional military and social historians from Australia and overseas is testament to their work as Editors.

The highlights during my time as President have been, notably,

- the Society securing Commonwealth Government grants following my grant applications to produce
 1. The Gallipoli Special Issue of *Sabretache* in 2015
 2. *Fighting on All Fronts: The MHSA Battle Series Book vol.1*, in February 2018 (the Society's first published book in twenty-odd years)
- The initiation with David Pearson of the Battle Series of articles from prominent military historians from within Australia and overseas, fourteen of which were published in *Fighting on All Fronts* and the most recent from Greg Swinden on the RAN in Home Waters.
- The securing of the publication of the Amiens Series of articles authored by David Pearson and Paul Thost exclusively for *Sabretache*, showing the German side of the wire for the battle of Amiens. The quality of this original material has seen David and Paul's book on the subject about to be published by the Australian Army History Unit, a project which was born at the launch of the Gallipoli Issue of *Sabretache*.
- The establishment of the Society Notices section of *Sabretache* for Society-wide matters to be communicated to all members, and the inclusion of a colour pages into issues of *Sabretache* since the Gallipoli Issue

The FC has also supported conferences in the ACT, QLD and SA with substantial grants from FC funds towards conference costs, most recently \$2000 for the SA Conference in 2017. The next conference will take place in WA in June 2019.

I personally have continued to research and publish material in *Sabretache*, the *Naval Historical Review* and more recently overseas publications such as *The Armourer*. However, the time spent doing voluntary FC business up until recently in several roles at the once, particularly during the Centenary of the Great War 2014-2018, have been dominating the time I would normally devote to my writing. Nevertheless, it is pleasing to see that after

many years some other members have come forward to carry the load equally. After all, the Society is only as good as the efforts its members are willing to put into it.

In closing, let me wish all members of the Society a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2018.

Rohan Goyne
Immediate Past President
Military Historical Society of Australia

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MHSA 2019 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Fremantle, Western Australia

The Western Australian Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia will be hosting the National Biennial Conference of the Society in 2019

Dates: Saturday 8 June to Monday 10 June 2019. (This coincides with the Queen's Birthday Public holiday long weekend in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia)

Venue – The Army Museum of Western Australia, Artillery Barracks, Burt Street, Fremantle

A general outline of the program is for a Meet and Greet of attendees with conference registration on the evening of Friday 7 June; further conference registrations prior to official conference opening on the Saturday morning, 8 June, and for presentations during Saturday with a Conference Dinner on the Saturday evening. Sunday 9 June will include a further three presentations and formal closure of the conference. There will be opportunity for a 45 minute to hour face to face Federal Council and Branch Representatives meeting after lunch on the Sunday and the Army Museum will remain open during Sunday afternoon for attendees to view the museum displays.

On the morning of Monday 10 June, it is proposed to organise a special visit by attendees to the Special Air Service Historical Collection based in the Perth suburb of Swanbourne. Those attending this tour will be requested to make a nominal donation towards the SAS Collection.

Call for Conference Papers

Abstracts of no more than 250 words, together with a brief biography of the presenter(s) should be submitted to the WA President and Conference Coordinator, Mr Steven Danaher (steveidanaher@gmail.com) by **31 March 2019**. At this stage we have allowed for approximately 9 presentations, including keynote address, throughout the whole conference with 40 minutes presentation time per paper including questions. Depending on the number of papers received the session times may need to be adjusted.

Further details and conference costs will be provided when finalised and will be included on the MHSA website at <https://2019conference.mhso.org.au/> and in the March 2019 edition of *Sabretache*.

Accommodation and Tourism Options

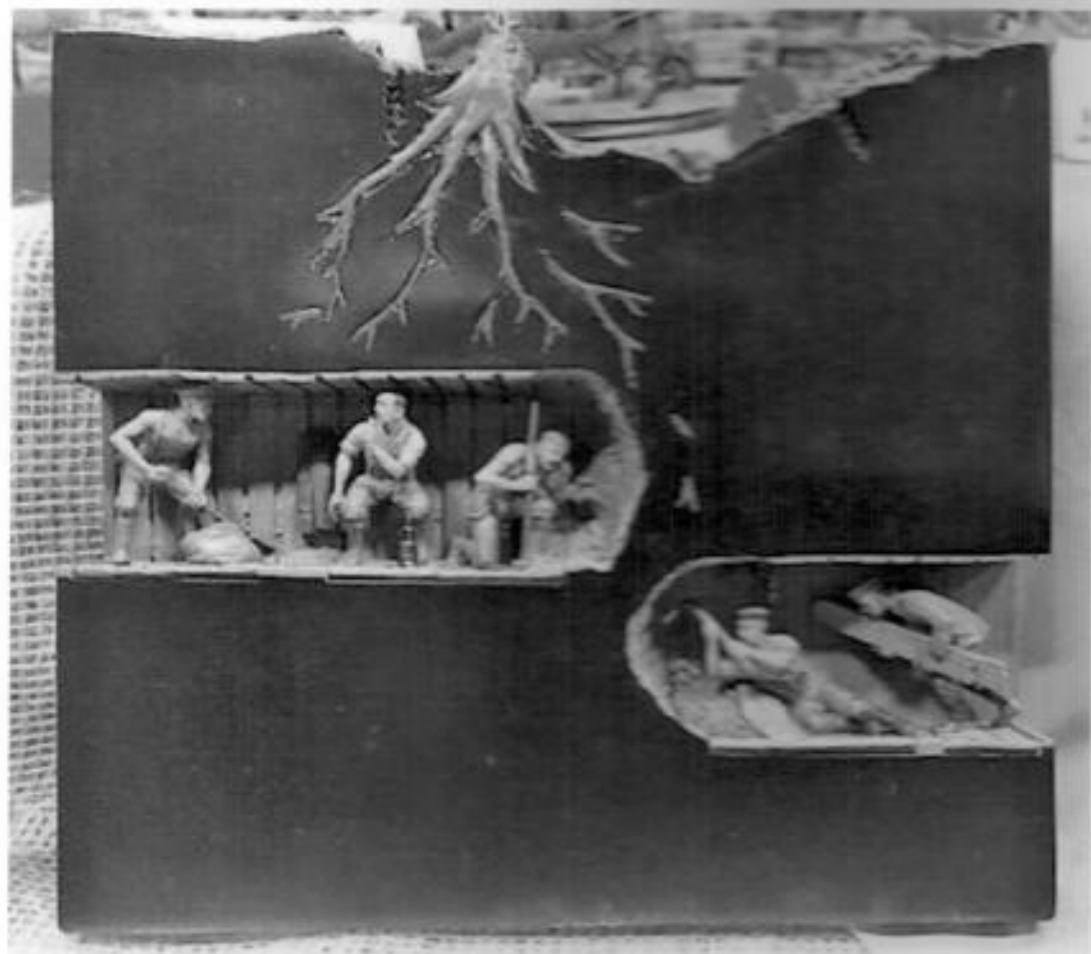
Information on accommodation and some other tourism options in the Fremantle and Perth areas will be posted on the website from time to time. If anyone has specific requirements and/ or enquiries in these aspects, please do not hesitate to contact Pat Hall at patehall@ozemail.com.au

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COLLECTORS CORNER

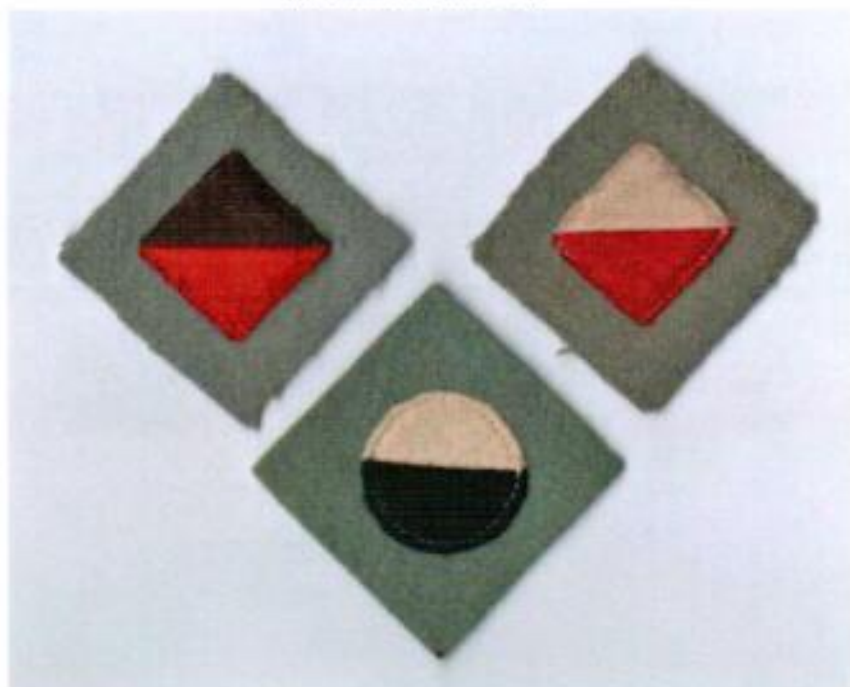
ACT 2018 Model Expo

I recently attended the Scale ACT 2018 Model Expo on Remembrance Day, 11 November 2018 at Kaleen High School in Canberra. The ACT Scale Model Society stages this event annually. It included a very popular swap stall where modellers are either adding to or reducing their stash (modellers term for their collection of unconstructed kits). There was also a strong representation from national retailers. The competition tables were filled with model entries in many categories, which is a healthy sign. It also included a tribute to the Centenary of the Armistice with a special display of which the attached photograph of a diorama depicting tunnellers was a standout.



Rohan Goyne

Colour Patches of the 26th Infantry Brigade, 2nd AIF (see article pp.20-28)



Above: Colour patches of the infantry battalions of the 26th Inf Bde worn between October 1940 and November 1942; top left, 2/23rd Bn; top right, 2/24th Bn; bottom, 2/48th Bn. They represent miniature versions of the patches worn by their 'parent' units in WW1, superimposed on a larger grey diamond to indicate 7th Division. 26th Bde maintained the diamond shape despite being transferred to 9th Div in early 1941. The brigade HQ patch was a plain green diamond on a grey background.



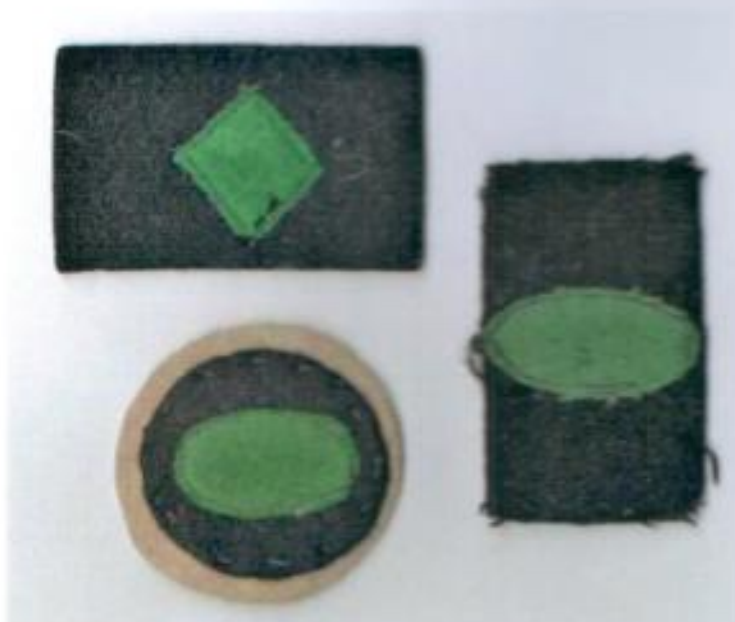
Above: In December 1942 the entire 9th Div was issued a new scheme of 'T'-shaped colour patches, which indicated each infantry battalion's position within the divisional structure. 26th Bde's colour was light blue, with a smaller black 'T' for its senior battalion (2/23rd, left) and white for its junior battalion (2/48th, right). 2/24th Bn had a purple smaller 'T', while Bde HQ used a plain light blue 'T'.

Paul Skrebels

Colour Patches of the Australian Garrison Battalions, WW2 (see article pp.35-42)



Above: From their formation until late 1942, all Garrison units – brigades, battalions and companies – wore a two-inch (50mm) green square colour patch with a one-inch (25mm) black square superimposed. Left: an example of the patch; right: a Christmas card issued in 1940 by the South Australian 4th Garrison Brigade illustrating the patch.



Above: From December 1942 each Garrison unit adopted a different shape for its patch, but still in the green and black colours. Top: 7th Garr Bn (Internal Security), or 10th Garr Bn (Coast Defence) if worn upright. Right: 19th Garr Bn (Coast Defence). Bottom: 25th (later 25th/33rd) Garr Bn (Internment Camp). This battalion guarded the Loveday Internment Camp in South Australia; the patch has been roughly tacked onto a grey background, indicating that its original owner was a member of the AIF.

Paul Skrebels



*Moonrise over General Monash, Australian War Memorial, 10 November 2018
(photo by Rohan Goyne)*

AUSTRALIAN GARRISON BATTALIONS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Benjamin James Morgan



Fig 1: Soldiers of a garrison battalion (apparently the 127th, judging by the colour patch) in Melbourne, 11 November 1943. Note miniature patches worn by men with prior service in the AIF or militia. (AWM photo 139933)

Introduction

During the Second World War the land defence of Australia was provided by a number of disparate Army organisations, each of which maintained their own manning and unit structures. These consisted of the Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF), Militia, Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC), and garrison battalions.¹ The garrison battalions were units of over-age and medically restricted soldiers formed for guard duties in Australia,² and were mostly made up of older men who were veterans of the First World War not fit for front-line service.³ By mid-October 1939 the equivalent of eight garrison battalions had been raised for service; however, the organisation continued to expand, and by early 1942 it had grown to 13 battalions tasked with coastal defence, with another five battalions and two companies responsible for internal security. Garrison battalion personnel were also used to guard prisoner of war and internment camps. A total of 33 garrison battalions and approximately four individual companies subsequently saw service during the war.

¹ Kuring 2004, p.138.

² Pratten 2009, p.168.

³ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.388.

Background

As part of the initial mobilisation which occurred in Australia following the outbreak of war, a limited call up of the Militia was undertaken to guard vulnerable points around the country, man coastal and anti-aircraft defences, and provide internal security. Later, on 11 September 1939 the Military Board was also authorised to activate a number of garrison battalions from men of the AIF Reserve.⁴ Their personnel were mostly Class B soldiers, aged between 48 and 55, who had previously seen war service, predominantly during the First World War.⁵ Many of the battalions were commanded by officers who were considered too old or otherwise unsuitable to lead Militia battalions in combat.⁶ Although lacking a fixed establishment, the garrison battalions were formed along the lines of an infantry battalion with a Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters Company, and a number of rifle companies.⁷ However, with the commandants free to vary units according to local requirements,⁸ the number of rifle companies sometimes differed; while many battalions had four, at times some had as few as two or three, and others as many as five, six, or even seven. Some units also initially included a mix of full-time and part-time companies (although these were mostly mobilised from December 1941).⁹ Primary weapons consisted of rifles, bayonets and machine guns.¹⁰

Table 1: Distribution of Garrison Battalions, October 1939

Location	Units
Northern Command	1 battalion
Eastern Command	2 battalions
Southern Command	4 battalions (less 2 companies)
Western Command	1 battalion
7 th Military District	1 company

The equivalent of eight battalions were initially raised and by mid-October 1939 they had relieved the Militia of their guard duties.¹¹ Northern Command raised the 1st Garrison Bn for the defence of Brisbane, Fort Cowan, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns in Queensland. In Eastern Command the 2nd and 11th Garrison Bns were formed for defensive duties around Sydney, Newcastle and Port Kembla in New South Wales. In Southern Command the 3rd and 12th Garrison Bns were mobilised to provide for the defence of the Port Phillip Fortress near Melbourne in Victoria, the 4th Garrison Bn to defend Fort Largs and Port Adelaide in South Australia, and the 6th Garrison Bn for security duties throughout Tasmania, including the defence of Hobart and Fort Direction. Meanwhile, Western Command raised the 10th Garrison Bn to defend Fremantle and Perth in Western Australia, while in the 7th Military District 'Z' Garrison Company was authorised to be raised in Darwin in the Northern Territory.¹² The garrison battalions were subsequently also used for internal security and as guards at prisoner of war (POW) and internment camps once they were established.¹³ However, units tasked with guarding POWs and internees were placed on a special establishment which waived the need for prior war service, and sometimes even included a

⁴ Palazzo 2001, pp.136-37.

⁵ '2nd Garrison Battalion (NSW) Coast Defence'. *RSL Virtual War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://rslvirtualwarrememorial.org.au/explore/units/522>.

⁶ Pratten 2009, p.175.

⁷ Kuring 2004, p.138.

⁸ Kuring 2004, p.518; Palazzo 2001, p.137.

⁹ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.388-2.410.

¹⁰ Kuring 2004, p.138 and 518.

¹¹ Palazzo 2001, p.137.

¹² McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.390-2.398. Although listed as being raised in Darwin in 1940, it is unlikely 'Z' Garrison Company ever formed due to a lack of recruits. See McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.409.

¹³ Palazzo 2001, p.137.

number of female personnel.¹⁴

Wartime service in Australia

From 1940, in commands where more than one battalion had been raised, a small Garrison Brigade headquarters was raised for administration (of which there were eventually five).¹⁵ By January 1941 the garrison battalions had a strength of 4,967 men.¹⁶ Additional units raised during this period included the 5th and 19th Garrison Bns, and 'M' Garrison Coy in Western Australia, the 7th, 8th, 13th and 16th Garrison Bns in New South Wales, the 9th and 17th

Table 2: Garrison Brigades, c.1942

Formation	State
1 st Garrison Brigade	Queensland
2 nd Garrison Brigade	New South Wales
3 rd Garrison Brigade	Victoria
4 th Garrison Brigade	South Australia
5 th Garrison Brigade	Western Australia

Garrison Bns in Victoria, the 14th and 15th Garrison Bns in Queensland, and the 18th Garrison Bn in South Australia. Many of these units were formed by splitting existing battalions.¹⁷ An example of this was the 1st Garrison Bn, which was split in November 1940 as the size of internal security task in Queensland increased, with the new 14th and 15th Garrison Bns being raised from two of its sub-units. The 1st Garrison Bn was subsequently given responsibility for internal security in South Queensland, while the 15th Garrison Bn was allocated North Queensland, and the 14th Garrison Bn took over the defence of the coastal batteries.¹⁸

The organisation continued to expand following Japan's entry into the war, and by early 1942 it had grown to 13 battalions tasked with coastal defence, with another five battalions and two companies responsible for internal security, and a total strength of 12,873 personnel.¹⁹ Units subsequently raised included the 20th, 21st, 22nd and 31st Garrison Bns in New South Wales, the 23rd, 24th and 27th Garrison Bns in Victoria, the 25th and 33rd Garrison Bns in South Australia, the 29th Garrison Bn in Western Australia, the 30th Garrison Bn in Tasmania, and the 32nd Garrison Bn in Queensland.²⁰ The garrison battalions subsequently formed a small part of the much wider defensive arrangements implemented throughout Australia to guard against a potential invasion during this time. Forces initially available consisted largely of Militia units after they were called up to full-time duty, supported by the VDC and the garrison battalions, and augmented by 2nd AIF personnel still completing training before deploying overseas. Later, they were joined by 2nd AIF units returning from the Middle East, and US forces as they began to build up in Australia.²¹ Although raised in a particular state, units were sometimes reallocated when required. For instance in May and June 1942 the 7th and 13th Garrison Bns from New South Wales moved to Brisbane in Queensland to replace units that had moved north. Meanwhile, the 18th Garrison Bn from South Australia moved to

¹⁴ '2nd Garrison Battalion (NSW) Coast Defence'. *RSL Virtual War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/units/522>.

¹⁵ '2nd Garrison Battalion (NSW) Coast Defence'. *RSL Virtual War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/units/522>. McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.126-2.129.

¹⁶ Palazzo 2001, p.137.

¹⁷ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.390-2.403.

¹⁸ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.388.

¹⁹ Kuring 2004, p.138; Palazzo 2001, p.138.

²⁰ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.404-2.409. In August 1942, the 26th Garrison Bn (Prisoner of War) was listed to be raised in New South Wales and the 28th Garrison Bn (Prisoner of War) in Victoria; however, neither unit was subsequently formed. See McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.407.

²¹ See for instance, Grey 1999, pp.170-174 and Palazzo 2001, pp.162-171.

Strathfield in New South Wales to replace the 7th Garrison Bn.²² Other units were widely dispersed, such as the 4th Garrison Bn which by mid-1942 was responsible for defending the entire coastline of South Australia as well as other internal security duties following the departure of units to the eastern states in light of the reduced threat to southern Australia. In August 1942, the unit restructured as an internal security battalion with a company at Birkenhead and outposts at St Kilda, Marino, and Teworie. Later, a detachment was also established in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.²³

Defensive tasks undertaken by the garrison battalions included constructing and manning beach positions, guarding coastal batteries and other fixed emplacements, as well as providing security for road and rail bridges, airfields, ports and harbours, water supplies, and conducting anti-sabotage operations. Some battalions were even allocated mobile defensive, counter-attack and reserve roles on occasion. Examples included the 8th Garrison Bn, which in January 1942 was allocated to the 32nd Infantry Bde formed to control the sector south of Newcastle, in New South Wales. Another was the 19th Garrison Bn, which moved to Geraldton in May 1942 to provide close defence of the port in support of the 6th Infantry Bde as part of arrangements to reinforce Western Australia.²⁴ The unit was subsequently involved in Exercise Robber in October 1942, which was the largest anti-invasion exercise conducted by the Australian Army during the war.²⁵

Early on, some battalions had adopted a secondary title which indicated their specific role, e.g. '(Internal Security)', '(Coast Defence)', '(Close Defence)', '(Internment Camp)' or '(Prisoner of War)', and in 1942 this was formalised to include most battalions.²⁶ The role of many units changed over time and some were subsequently redesignated on multiple occasions.²⁷ For instance, in December 1941 the Victorian 3rd and 9th Garrison Bns were briefly renamed as Reserve Battalions, following the call-up of their reserve companies, and came under the command of the Queenscliff and Nepean Covering Force, along with a number of AIF companies. In this role they maintained forward positions along key beaches in the area, rotating companies between them and their base camps. Yet by mid-1942 the threat to southern Australia had reduced and both units reverted to Garrison Battalions.²⁸ To begin with all battalions wore the same unit colour patch, which consisted of a black square on a mid-green background. However, following a number of requests from battalions for individual patches, on 11 December 1942 a system of different geometric shapes was approved, consisting of mid-green on a black background in a reversal of the original design (see colour illustrations, p.33).²⁹

As the threat of invasion passed and the strategic situation became less acute with the Allies going on the offensive in the Pacific, some units were re-roled, or were reduced to company-strength, while others were disbanded or absorbed into the various Internment or Prisoner of

²² McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.394-2.402.

²³ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.390-2.391.

²⁴ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.388-2.410; p.2.403.

²⁵ McKenzie-Smith 2018b, pp.61-62.

²⁶ '2nd Garrison Battalion (NSW) Coast Defence'. *RSL Virtual War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018.

<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/units/522>.

²⁷ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.388-2.410.

²⁸ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.390 and 2.396.

²⁹ Department of Defence 1993, pp.5B-6, 3B-1, and 21-12 - 21-15; 'Badge, Australian, Unit, 25th Australian Garrison Battalion (Internment Camp), 25th/33rd Australian Garrison Battalion (I.C.)', Our Collection: Uniforms and Insignia. *Imperial War Museum*. Accessed 17 June 2018.

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30109577>.

War Groups.³⁰ Meanwhile, the brigade headquarters were absorbed into other formations or disbanded between early 1942 and late 1943.³¹ Command arrangements subsequently evolved over the course of the war, with the garrison battalions at various times being attached to one of the covering forces, fortresses, fixed defences, lines of communications areas, or commands.³² Although not indicative of the wider experience, in December 1942 the 14th Garrison Bn – which had been formed in Brisbane in November 1940 and later incorporated a number of AIF sub-units, before subsequently being stationed in the Torres Strait – was redesignated the 62nd Battalion and was soon after gazetted as an AIF unit due to the background of the majority of its members, allowing it to serve outside Australia. The only garrison battalion to do so, it saw active service as an infantry battalion in Dutch New Guinea in 1943 as part of Merauke Force.³³

Perhaps more representative of the changes many units experienced was the service of the 24th Garrison Bn. The unit was formed on a reduced scale in December 1941 in Melbourne to guard Italian POWs at Myrtleford. In December 1942, the unit was split into the 50th Garrison Coy which moved to Dhurringile POW Camp to guard the German prisoners there, and the 51st Garrison Coy, which remained at Myrtleford. In July 1945 both companies were absorbed by other units of the POW camp organisation.³⁴ The experience of the 13th Garrison Bn is also partially indicative.

Raised in Port Kembla in November 1940 when the 2nd Garrison Bn had been split to form three new battalions (the 7th, 8th and 13th), following its relocation to Brisbane it subsequently moved to Cape York in December 1942 to defend the airfields there. However, by September 1943 the facilities it was guarding were no longer in use, and the battalion concentrated at Wallgrove in New South Wales, where it was disbanded in October of that year.³⁵ Meanwhile, in South Australia the 25th and 33rd Garrison Bns were amalgamated to form the 25th/33rd Garrison Bn in September 1943, before being subsumed into the Loveday Internment Group in November 1944 as internee numbers were reduced.³⁶ In June 1944 the Tasmanian based 6th and 30th Garrison Bns were also linked to form the 6th/30th Garrison Bn. Following further reductions in strength in April 1945 it was renamed the 6th/30th Garrison Coy, which continued to guard facilities in the state until the end of the war.³⁷

Despite not deploying overseas, service in the garrison battalions would have often been demanding, sometimes dangerous, and occasionally even cost men their lives. One example was V160322 Pte Arthur Willis, posted to the 3rd Garrison Bn, who was murdered on 29 May 1942. Willis was one of two soldiers shot in the space of several months near Fort

Table 3: Distribution of Garrison Battalions, early 1942

Location	Coastal defence	Internal security
Northern Command	1 battalion	2 battalions
Eastern Command	5 battalions	1 battalion
Southern Command	4 battalions	2 battalions 1 company
Western Command	3 battalions	1 company

³⁰ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.388-2.410.

³¹ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.126-2.129.

³² McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.388-2.410.

³³ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.399-2.400.

³⁴ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.406-2.409.

³⁵ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.398-2.399.

³⁶ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, p.2.406.

³⁷ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.393-2.394.

Queenscliff, Victoria in circumstances likely connected to the wartime black-market.³⁸ Among those who died on duty was W55686 Pte John Adams of the 29th Garrison Bn, who was killed in action during a Japanese air-raid on an airfield in Port Hedland, Western Australia, on 30 July 1942.³⁹ The 22nd Garrison Bn also lost three men killed and three wounded during a suicidal mass escape of Japanese prisoners of war in Cowra, New South Wales on 5 August 1944. N103951 Pte Benjamin Hardy and N244527 Pte Ralph Jones were overwhelmed before being clubbed and stabbed to death while defending their Vickers machine gun post, and were later posthumously awarded the George Cross for their bravery.⁴⁰ N387872 Pte Charles Shepherd was also killed during the breakout, being stabbed in the heart as he left the company guardroom.⁴¹ Although many of the Japanese were subsequently killed by the guards during the attempt, 334 prisoners succeeded in getting clear. During the search for the escaped prisoners a fourth Australian was killed. Some of the Japanese later chose to commit suicide rather than be recaptured, and over the next nine days the survivors were taken back into custody with the assistance of recruits from a nearby army training camp, the local police, and some civilians. Of the 1,104 Japanese in the camp, 234 were killed and 108 wounded.⁴²

Besides these incidents, the Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour also includes the names of more than 400 men who died while serving in one of the garrison battalions, mostly from illness or accident.⁴³ While this is presumably largely reflective of the older age of many of the men who served in these units and average life expectancy at the time, it might also be indicative of the rigours of wartime service, even on the home front.⁴⁴ By the end of the war a total of 33 garrison battalions and approximately four individual companies had

³⁸ 'Arthur Roy Willis'. Roll of Honour. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 27 October 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1693352>. 'John Joseph Hulston'. Roll of Honour. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 30 October 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1690064>. The other soldier killed was V236228 Gunner John Hulston from Fixed Defences Queenscliff RAA, who was murdered on 1 September 1942, three months after Willis. Neither man was implicated in the crimes and may have been killed in an attempt to conceal them. Although investigated at the time, no charges were laid over the deaths due to lack of evidence. See Pearson 2016.

³⁹ Massey 2012; 'Private John Adams'. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10314408>.

⁴⁰ Long 1963, pp.623-24; 'Benjamin Gower Hardy'. Roll of Honour. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1705102>. 'Ralph Jones'. Roll of Honour. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1688598>.

⁴¹ Seaman 1979, pp.59-62; 'Charles Henry Shepard'. Roll of Honour. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 17 June 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1698691>.

⁴² Clark 2010, pp.246-47; Dennis et al 2008, p.164; VX52878 Lieutenant Harry Doncaster from the 19th Infantry Training Bn was ambushed and fatally stabbed on 5 August 1944 during the search of a nearby hillside. See Seaman 1979, pp.59-62 and 'Harry Doncaster'. Roll of Honour. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1709838>. Of those prisoners who escaped, 309 were recaptured and 25 bodies were recovered. Japanese casualties included 183 who died from gunshot wounds, 20 from hanging or strangulation, nine from stabbing, two who committed suicide under a train, and 20 from 'combined causes'. See Clark 2010, p.247 and Seaman 1979, p.61.

⁴³ Database search conducted returned 416 names, see 'Roll of Honour'. *Australian War Memorial*. Accessed 27 October 2018. https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?people_preferred_name=&people_service_number=&people_unit=Garrison&people_fate_date=&roll=Roll+of+Honour&facet_related_conflict_sort=10%3ASecond%20World%20War%2C%201939-1945&ppp=100.

⁴⁴ Life expectancy at birth of Australian males born between 1891 and 1900 – as many of the men serving in the garrison battalions would have been – was 51.1 years. See Queensland Government Statisticians Office, *Life expectancy at birth (years) by sex, Queensland and Australia, 1881-1890 to 2014-2016*, Accessed 10 June 2018. <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/life-expectancy-birth-years-sex-qld/index.php>.

seen service.⁴⁵ The last units appear to have been disbanded in 1947.⁴⁶

List of Garrison battalions and companies ⁴⁷

- 1st Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – Queensland
- 2nd Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – New South Wales
- 3rd Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – Victoria
- 4th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence / Internal Security) – South Australia
- 5th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – Western Australia
- 6th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – Tasmania
- 6th/30th Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – Tasmania
- 7th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – New South Wales / Queensland
- 8th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – New South Wales
- 9th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – Victoria
- 10th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – Western Australia
- 11th Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – New South Wales
- 12th Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – Victoria
- 13th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – New South Wales / Queensland
- 14th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – Queensland (later 62nd Battalion AMF, 'The Merauke Regiment')
- 15th Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – Queensland
- 16th Garrison Battalion (Internment Camp) – New South Wales (later Hay POW Group)
- 17th Garrison Battalion (Internment Camp) – Victoria (later Tatura Internment Group)
- 18th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – South Australia / New South Wales
- 19th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – Western Australia
- 20th Garrison Battalion (Close Defence) – New South Wales
- 21st Garrison Battalion (Internment Camp) – New South Wales (later Liverpool POW and Internment Camp)
- 22nd Garrison Battalion (Prisoner of War) – New South Wales / Victoria (later Cowra POW Group)
- 23rd Garrison Battalion (Prisoner of War) – Victoria (later Murchison POW Group)
- 24th Garrison Battalion (Prisoner of War) – Victoria
- 25th Garrison Battalion (Internment Camp) – South Australia
- 25th/33rd Garrison Battalion (Prisoner of War and Internment Camp) – South Australia (later Loveday Internment Group)
- 27th Garrison Battalion (Prisoner of War) – Victoria
- 29th Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – Western Australia
- 30th Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – Tasmania
- 31st Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – New South Wales
- 32nd Garrison Battalion (Internal Security) – Queensland
- 33rd Garrison Battalion (Internment Camp) – South Australia
- 50th Garrison Company (Prisoner of War Officers) – Victoria
- 51st Garrison Company (Prisoner of War Officers) – Victoria
- 'M' Garrison Company (Internment Camp) – Western Australia
- 'Z' Garrison Company (Internal Security) – Northern Territory

⁴⁵ '2nd Garrison Battalion (NSW) Coast Defence'. *RSL Virtual War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/units/522>.

⁴⁶ For instance the 1st Garrison Bn remained on the ORBAT until at least this time; see Commonwealth Gazette, No.198, 16 October 1947, p.2990 and '1st Garrison Battalion (QLD) Internal Security'. *RSL Virtual War Memorial*. Accessed 10 June 2018. <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/units/669>.

⁴⁷ McKenzie-Smith 2018a, pp.2.388-2.410.

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AS YOU WERE ...

Dave Wilkins writes concerning the September 2018 issue:

- Many thanks for the latest journal, always a pleasure to read. I was glancing through it before a thorough read when I noticed on page 48, the item by Noel Tregoning ['Ernie Corey: Australia's Forgotten Hero'], that he has fallen into error, one which often occurs. On the second line and twice more occurring in his text, he refers to 'Bullecourt'. This should read 'Bellicourt' which was located on the Hindenburg Line near the St Quentin Canal. The second citation for Corey in the article has it correct, i.e. Bellicourt. Bullecourt was of course the site of two major battles in 1917, on a different part of the Hindenburg Line. In case there is any doubt I attach the war diary of the 55th Bn for October 1918 (but the operation report is very faint) plus the first page of the diary for the end of September and early October 1918, which clearly shows their location at BELLICOURT.*

*Space doesn't permit the inclusion of Mr Wilkins' attachment, but readers may access the relevant 55th Battalion war diary for October 1918 on the Australian War Memorial website at this address: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1344281>.

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THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY DURING THE KOREAN WAR 1950-53: AN OVERVIEW

William Westerman

At dawn on Sunday, 25 June 1950, the Korean People's Army crossed the 38th parallel and entered the Republic of Korea. In response to this act of aggression, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 82, condemning the invasion, and Resolution 83, calling on member states to provide military assistance to the Republic of Korea. UN Security Council Resolution 84 of 7 July 1950 recommended the creation of what became the United Nations Command (UNC) in order to, as Resolution 83 recommended, 'repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area.'¹ The contributing nations of the UNC, of which there were seventeen (including South Korea itself) provided a mixture of land, sea and air forces. Though the war was fought predominantly on land, the UNC's naval forces made an important contribution to the conflict. Australia's official historian of the conflict, Robert O'Neill, noted that the sea exerted a great influence on the war because of the geographic operating environment, and with almost complete command of the sea the UNC forces were able to benefit from the combat support and logistic advantages that ensued.²

In Australia, Prime Minister Robert Menzies was quick to commit the armed forces to support the UN effort in Korea. While the land component of the Australian commitment is perhaps the best known, the Royal Australian Navy also played a role from the time its ships within the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) were placed under the UNC's command in June 1950, until the armistice came into effect in July 1953, and then afterwards conducting armistice patrols on behalf of the United Nations.

Presiding over the RAN's operations in Korea was the First Naval Member and Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Sir John Collins. His available fleet was a shadow of that which had fought in the Second World War half a decade earlier. Having reached its largest numerical strength by the end of the war, by 1949 the RAN had been reduced to 34 ships in commission and approximately 667 officers and 9,247 men as sea-going personnel, as it reorganised as a peacetime force within a shifting strategic landscape.³ Although the total number of vessels had decreased, the RAN had at least made a major capability advance with the acquisition in 1948 of HMAS *Sydney*, a *Majestic*-class light aircraft carrier, able to provide up to three squadrons of anti-submarine and fighter aircraft.

As Australia's land force for Korea was being put together, the navy was already going into action. On the morning of 28 June 1950 the Australian Government gave approval for the two Australian ships in Far Eastern waters, the frigate HMAS *Shoalhaven* and destroyer HMAS *Bataan*, to be placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief, UNC, General Douglas MacArthur.⁴ At the time, *Shoalhaven*, was deployed with the BCOF in Japan and *Bataan* was

¹ UNSCR 82, 25 June 1950; UNSCR 83, 27 June 1950; UNSCR 84, 7 July 1950; Paul J. Morton, 'United Nations Command', in James I. Mackay (ed.), *Historical Dictionary of the Korean War* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), p.507.

² Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53: Volume II Combat Operations* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1985), p.413.

³ Alastair Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', in David Stevens (ed.) *The Royal Australian Navy* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.155; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No.38 - 1951* (Canberra: L.F. Johnston, 1951), pp.1194-6.

⁴ Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53: Volume I Strategy and Diplomacy* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1981), p.50.

on passage to relieve her. Both warships were at MacArthur's disposal the following day and were immediately allocated to the Commonwealth naval force under the command of Rear Admiral William Andrewes, RN, second-in-command of the British Far East Fleet.⁵

In the initial division of command and responsibility, Vice Admiral Turner C. Joy, Commander, US Naval Forces Far East, was made directly responsible to Gen MacArthur. Command arrangements and task group designations would change throughout the war, but essentially the UNC naval force was split into two elements, each with responsibility for either the east or west coasts. The larger US aircraft carriers required the deeper and more open waters of the east coast, so responsibility for the peninsula's west coast fell to the British Commonwealth naval forces.⁶ Andrewes' task group was an amalgam of ships from the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands and France, as well as those from Australia. For the duration of the war the RAN's ships operated out of the port of Sasebo in Japan. This facility was already in use by the Americans to support their naval forces in the area and soon became a crowded naval base supporting both US and Commonwealth ships.

Sailing from Sasebo, *Shoalhaven* became the first Australian force element to carry out an operation in the war, escorting the American ammunition ship USNS *Sergeant George D. Keathley* into Pusan Harbour on 1 July. She continued to escort convoys between Sasebo and Pusan until the destroyer HMAS *Warramunga* relieved her in August.⁷ However, *Bataan* had already achieved the distinction of firing the navy's first shots in anger when she engaged an enemy shore battery near Haeju, north-west of Inchon on 1 August 1950.⁸

Shoalhaven's time in the operational area was brief. She had been due to return to Australia just before the outbreak of the war, and in August she was finally relieved by HMAS *Warramunga*. The two ships remaining in theatre, *Warramunga* and *Bataan*, would thereafter be the RAN's workhorses, each completing two separate rotations over the duration of the conflict. The Naval Board had originally intended to maintain the two destroyers on station for six-month rotations, but the lack of obvious or suitable replacements in early 1951 forced the Board to extend their deployments to a full year.⁹

Both ships would be in the area of operations to witness some of the most dramatic moments of the war. Together, *Warramunga* and *Bataan* supported the amphibious landing at Inchon on 15 September, Gen MacArthur's ambitious operation to break out of the Pusan perimeter. Both sailed as part of the screening force for the British aircraft carrier, HMS *Triumph*, which throughout the day provided spotting aircraft for the large bombardment force conducting the pre-landing and close-support bombardments. *Triumph* also provided reconnaissance aircraft for patrols on the west coast.¹⁰

After the success of the Inchon landings, *Warramunga* and *Bataan* operated primarily on the west coast, patrolling, providing naval gunfire support, protecting minesweepers, and supporting amphibious operations. After engaging in shore bombardments on 30 September,

⁵ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.417.

⁶ *ibid.*, p.415.

⁷ *ibid.*, p.419.

⁸ Report of Proceedings, July 1950, 7 August 1950, HMAS *Bataan*, AWM78, 58/3.

⁹ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.425.

¹⁰ HMAS *Warramunga* – Report of Proceedings For Month of September 1950, 4 October 1950, AWM78 358/4 – December 1949 – November 1952.

Warramunga's commanding officer, Commander O.H. Becher, noted in his report: 'In view of the military situation ashore, these bombardments were of a very limited nature and the main object was to remind the enemy that a close blockade was being maintained and to discourage any attempt by him to escape by the sea route'.¹¹ In October, after several days at Sasebo, *Warramunga* deployed to the east coast with, among others, the battleship USS *Missouri*, for shore bombardments. Later that month the task group supported the amphibious landings at Wonsan.¹² Meanwhile, *Bataan* was engaged in patrol and blockading duties on the west coast.¹³ Returning to the west coast, at the recently captured port of Chinnampo just south of Pyongyang, *Warramunga* participated in the last major mine clearance operation of the war, for which her executive officer, Lieutenant Commander G.V. Gladstone, RAN, was awarded a bar to his Distinguished Service Cross.¹⁴

The course of the war changed dramatically in November 1950. The South Koreans and their allies had pushed the North Korean army back to the border with China on the Yalu River. Now, on 25 November, Chinese army troops crossed into North Korea and advanced southwards, driving the UNC back towards Seoul. The entry of China into the war changed the strategic calculus; while the UNC's naval elements still retained control of the seas around the Korean peninsula, their operations needed to adjust to support a more contested ground war. *Warramunga* and *Bataan* saw this shifting strategic picture first hand, when they supported the evacuation of Chinnampo – so recently seized – in the face of the oncoming Chinese army.¹⁵ By the start of 1951 the pendulum had swung North Korea's way and the Communist ground forces continued pushing south. Just as the RAN's ships had supported amphibious operations to land troops on the peninsula, now they were helping evacuate personnel off the shore, with *Warramunga* supporting the evacuation of 'men and material and the steady stream of refugees' from Inchon on New Year's Day.¹⁶

In February 1951 *Warramunga* operated off the east coast with the USN. She took part in investing the port of Wonsan, North Korea's major seaport, with Task Group 95.2. With USS *Lind*, she took up a bombardment anchorage nicknamed by the Americans 'Purple Heart Corner', and known for being particularly 'hot'.¹⁷ While *Warramunga* continued to operate down the east coast providing naval gunfire support, the nature of the war at sea became less dramatic with the cessation of amphibious operations.¹⁸ *Bataan* had spent much of the start of the year away from the area of operations, and only returned to the west coast in later February.¹⁹ She continued to conduct patrols on the west coast and screen aircraft carriers for the following several months. At the start of May while screening the carrier HMS *Glory*, her namesake, the American carrier USS *Bataan* joined the task element. *Bataan*'s commanding

¹¹ HMAS *Warramunga* – Report of Proceedings 28 September – 4 October 1950, 4 October 1950, AWM78 358/4 – December 1949 – November 1952.

¹² HMAS *Warramunga* – Report of Proceedings For Month of October, 1950, 31 October 1950, AWM78 358/4 – December 1949 – November 1952.

¹³ HMAS *Bataan* – Report of Proceedings – October, 1950, 4 November 1950, AWM78, 58/3 – January 1950 – January 1952.

¹⁴ Recommendation for Periodic Honour or Award (Naval Personnel), HMAS *Warramunga*, Geoffrey Vernon Gladstone, 10 August 1951, NAA, A816, 66/301/407.

¹⁵ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, pp.434-5.

¹⁶ HMAS *Warramunga* – Report of Proceedings For Month of January 1951, 2 February 1951, AWM78 358/4 – December 1949 – November 1952.

¹⁷ HMAS *Warramunga* – Report of Proceedings For Month of February 1951, 2 March 1951, AWM78 358/4 – December 1949 – November 1952.

¹⁸ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.446.

¹⁹ HMAS *Bataan* – Report of Proceedings – February 1951, 7 March 1951, AWM78, 58/3 – January 1950 – January 1952.

officer recorded that the previous months had demonstrated how effectively the UNC naval elements could work together, a skill that had been allowed to diminish after 1945. This was the final month of *Bataan's* first rotation in Korea.²⁰

On 11 April 1951 Rear Admiral A.K. Scott-Moncrieff replaced Andrewes as the commander of the Commonwealth Naval Force.²¹ Another long serving element of the Commonwealth naval force to leave the area of operations was *Warramunga*, which returned to Australia after supporting bombardments of the Haeju area in early August 1951.²² Relieving her was the newly commissioned destroyer HMAS *Anzac*, on a temporary deployment until *Bataan* could be turned around for a second rotation.²³

Despite the preference from the British Far East Fleet for destroyers rather than frigates to be sent to Korea, the only suitable choice to relieve *Bataan* was the anti-aircraft frigate HMAS *Murchison*.²⁴ In July 1951 she arrived in Korean waters and was soon put to use on the west coast. At that time peace talks began between the North and the South. As a show of strength, Admiral Joy wanted patrols and naval gunfire support operations in the Han River estuary.²⁵ With the armistice talks taking place in the nearby town of Kaesong, the UNC's operations in the estuary were intended to demonstrate to the Communists that the UNC controlled the terrain to the north of the estuary, the only area south of the 38th Parallel controlled by the Communists.²⁶

Over the summer and autumn of 1951, *Murchison* patrolled the Han River estuary, eventually becoming the longest serving ship in the area.²⁷ Operating in this environment was difficult; the estuary was poorly charted and difficult for navigation, with shifting sandbanks, fast currents and a large tidal range.²⁸ When the frigate first arrived, *Murchison's* commanding officer, Lt Cdr A.N. Dollard, RAN, reported: 'The anchorage was reached with difficulty through waters which bore little resemblance to the charted depths'.²⁹ The task group navigated up and down the estuary's waterways and engaged enemy targets on shore. On 28 September, *Murchison*, with Rear Admiral George Dyer, commander of Task Force 95 (UN Blockade and Escort Force), on board for a visit, came under heavy fire from enemy forces concealed in villages near the estuary. Despite taking fire, *Murchison* managed to manoeuvre out of the narrows to escape.³⁰ This event was recorded as a 'sharp engagement with enemy shore positions'.³¹ Lt Cdr Dollard, was afterwards awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for this action, the recommendation noting his 'steadiness ... and imperturbability' under fire,

²⁰ HMAS *Bataan* – Report of Proceedings – May 1951, 1 June 1951, AWM78, 58/3 – January 1950 – January 1952.

²¹ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.447.

²² HMAS *Warramunga* – Report of Proceedings For Month of August 1951, 4 September 1951, AWM78 358/4 – December 1949 – November 1952.

²³ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.461-3.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.450.

²⁵ *ibid.*, pp.452-5.

²⁶ Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', p.175.

²⁷ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, pp.452-5.

²⁸ Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', p.175.

²⁹ Report of Proceedings For the Month of July 1951, 8 August 1951, AWM78, 228/1 – December 1945 – December 1951.

³⁰ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, pp.455-6.

³¹ Report of Proceedings HMAS *Murchison* Month of September 1951, 10 October 1951, AWM78, 228/1 – December 1945 – December 1951.

and his 'great skill' in successfully extricating his ship from a very narrow, unmarked river.³² *Murchison's* final day operating in and off the Han River estuary came on 31 January 1952.³³

In October 1951 Australia's naval commitment to the war changed significantly with the arrival of the carrier *Sydney* to replace *Glory*, making Australia one of only three nations to provide the UNC with a naval aviation capability.³⁴ She embarked the 20th Carrier Air Group, consisting of two squadrons of Sea Furies (Nos.805 and 808) and one squadron of Fireflies, No.817.³⁵ *Sydney* conducted patrols of approximately nine flying days in length (with a replenishment day in the middle); her aircraft engaged in armed reconnaissance, army cooperation, naval gunfire spotting, combat air patrols, anti-submarine patrols and aerial photography.³⁶ Providing escort during the passage north to Japan was HMAS *Tobruk*, which then relieved her sister ship *Anzac* in September.³⁷

Sydney's first patrol began on 5 October 1951. These early patrols allowed the members of the carrier's air component to test their ability to handle high intensity combat operations.³⁸ She faced problems of a different kind later in the month, when she and other Commonwealth ships in Sasebo harbour were ordered to put to sea to ride out an approaching typhoon.³⁹ Several aircraft were lost or badly damaged in the extreme conditions. Further losses occurred in combat. On 26 October one of *Sydney's* aircraft was forced down south-west of Sariwon, with her rescue helicopter, flown by Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate A.K. Babbitt, USN, conducting a dramatic rescue by extracting the pilot and observer from the downed Firefly while under fire from North Korean troops.⁴⁰ *Sydney* continued to operate into 1952, with her pilots flying a total of 2,366 sorties, losing thirteen aircraft to enemy fire, deck accidents or rough weather; three pilots were killed in action.⁴¹ *Sydney's* final day of service in the Korean War was on 25 January 1952. The day proved to be uneventful, as bad weather prevented flying.⁴²

While *Sydney* was providing naval aviation capability, *Tobruk* and *Murchison* continued to patrol around the western islands and enforce the UNC's blockade. Occasionally one or the other would have the opportunity to operate with *Sydney*. One such instance occurred with *Tobruk* on 20-21 November, involving a two-day bombardment of the port city of Hungnam on the eastern coast by air and sea. This was conducted in conjunction with HMS *Belfast* and HNMS *Van Galen*. *Tobruk's* commanding officer, Commander R.I. Peek, noted that the combined air, gun and rocket strike provided 'a most spectacular performance'.⁴³

In early February 1952 *Bataan* and *Warramunga* returned to Korea to relieve *Tobruk* and *Murchison*.⁴⁴ On passage to Japan, on 6 February *Warramunga* received word of the death of

³² Far East Station, Recommendation For Decoration, Dollard, Allen Nelson, 28 January 1952, NAA, A816, 66/301/407.

³³ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.458.

³⁴ Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', p.177.

³⁵ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.466.

³⁶ Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', p.177; O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.471.

³⁷ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, pp.467, 469.

³⁸ *ibid*, pp.470-1.

³⁹ *ibid*, p.472.

⁴⁰ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, pp.474-5; Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', p.178.

⁴¹ Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', p.177.

⁴² O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.482.

⁴³ HMAS *Tobruk* – Report of Proceedings – November 1951, 1 December 1951, AWM78 343/1 – May 1950 – December 1951.

⁴⁴ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.497.

King George VI. Cdr J.M. Ramsay, RAN, immediately informed the ship's company and was conscious of 'a distinct air of gloom over the ship'.⁴⁵ While *Bataan* and *Warramunga* adjusted to being Her Majesty's Australian Ships, they returned to the familiar work of patrolling on the west coast of the Korean Peninsula. Having come from the heights of summer, the depths of the Korean winter were somewhat jarring. On 16 February, as *Bataan* was sailing towards Taechong-Do with the spray breaking over the fore-castle turning into ice flakes in mid-air. Within the ship, liquids were freezing in the piping, affecting the delivery of fuel to the galleys and water passing to and draining from the heads and bathrooms.⁴⁶

Bataan and *Warramunga* continued as they had begun, working in combined task groups to enforce the blockade and engage targets ashore. As with her first deployment, *Warramunga* spent some time on operations off the east coast supporting the USN. Between them, the two destroyers served for a total of 37 months in Korean waters.⁴⁷ By September 1952 *Anzac* and the frigate HMAS *Condamine* had replaced them both. As *Bataan* had done, *Condamine* supported amphibious operations, as well as providing naval gunfire support against shore batteries.⁴⁸

By 1953 peace negotiations between the two sides were reaching a conclusion. From the UNC's perspective, the main aim of naval operations in the final months of the war was to make adequate preparations for departure from North Korean waters, although they still needed to apply pressure before the armistice was signed.⁴⁹ Yet right up until the armistice was signed the RAN was rotating vessels to the conflict. On 1 April 1953 the frigate HMAS *Culgoa* arrived to relieve *Condamine*.⁵⁰ *Anzac* remained until June, when *Tobruk* relieved her.⁵¹ *Tobruk's* combat operations in her second deployment to Korea came to an abrupt end on 27 July 1953 when the armistice came into effect.

The naval dimension of the Korean War was never the main game, yet without naval operations, neither the land nor air campaigns could have been conducted. When required to perform their roles (primarily enforcing a blockade on the peninsula, ensuring the safe delivery of troops, equipment and stores, and providing direct support to operations ashore), the UNC naval forces did so effectively. Control of the seas around the Korean peninsula also gave the UNC unique advantages, notably the ability to project force into the exposed flanks of communist territory and thereby maintain tactical pressure on the communists even when the land forces were in retreat. This pressure also proved particularly useful during the armistice negotiations.⁵² While this was ever a decisive advantage for the UNC, the Communists' own lack of naval strength limited how they could operate on land, virtually restricting them to costly frontal attacks.⁵³

⁴⁵ HMAS *Warramunga* – Report of Proceedings For Month of February 1952, 1 March 1952, AWM78 358/4 – December 1949 – November 1952.

⁴⁶ HMAS *Bataan* – Report of Proceedings – February 1952, 1 March 1952, AWM78, 58/4 February 1952 – December 1953.

⁴⁷ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.508.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, p.510.

⁴⁹ *ibid*, p.511.

⁵⁰ HMAS *Culgoa*, Report of Proceedings April 1953, 5 May 1953, AWM78, 95/3 January 1951 – February 1954.

⁵¹ HMAS *Tobruk*, Report of Proceedings – Month of June, 1953, 1 July 1953, AWM78, 343/2 January 1952 – December 1953.

⁵² O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.523.

⁵³ *ibid*, p.525.

From an Australian perspective, the RAN could be proud of how its ships, aircraft and personnel performed during the war, enforcing a blockade, landing raiding parties, helping supply isolated units and maintaining an ongoing bombardment of coastal targets.⁵⁴ The experience also gave the navy further tactical and logistic experience in operating as part of a maritime coalition.⁵⁵ In relative terms the number of personnel the RAN deployed to Korea was considerable; at one point it had 2,000 personnel, almost 20% of its effective strength, committed to combat operations. Over 4,500 men served in the operational area, with five killed and at least six wounded.⁵⁶ As Robert O'Neill observed, the cost the navy paid for its operations was light, compared with the impact its ships and aircraft had during the war and the strategic benefit gained by strengthening ties with both the Royal Navy and the United States Navy.⁵⁷

My thanks go to Dr David Stevens for generously reading a draft of this article and providing valuable feedback.

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SOCIETY NOTICE



Never Forget Flanders

To commemorate 100 years since the Signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918, and as a mark of respect and everlasting gratitude to the service personnel who volunteered for the Great War, two Queensland members, Diane Melloy and her husband Jacques Follet, have given a quantity of car bumper stickers, sufficient to be enclosed with each copy of *Sabretache*, to members of MHSA.

Details about Diane's Australian husband: Armourer-Sergeant R.S. (Bob) Melloy. He was an original member and the Last Man – of 2,954 – of the 42nd Battalion AIF. Born 29 December 1897, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. Died 23 January 1995, Southport, Queensland.

Details about Diane's French husband: Jacques Follet (formerly *Régiment de Chasseurs*), Founder and Curator of the Franco-Australian Memorial Museum, Vieux-Berquin, Le Nord, France. Born 11 December 1944, Hazebrouck, France. We were married 10 December 1999.

Diane Melloy
Vice-President MHSA(Q)
Federal Councillor MHSA

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⁵⁴ Cooper, '1945-1954: The Korean War Era', p.173.

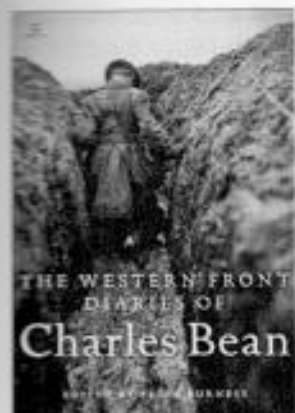
⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.178.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp.172-3.

⁵⁷ O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War Vol.II*, p.529.

REVIEWS

Peter Burness (ed.), *The Western Front Diaries of Charles Bean*, NewSouth Publishing (with the Australian War Memorial), Sydney, 2018. ISBN 9781742235868, hardcover, 640 pages, fully illustrated with photos, sketches, maps and artworks. RRP \$79.99 AUD.



War historian C.E.W. (Charles) Bean left a legacy not only of the Australian official histories of the First World War and the setting up of the War Memorial itself, but also a large collection of personal documents in the form of diaries, notebooks and other papers. These latter were bequeathed to the AWM in the 1940s, and are available in digitised form on the Memorial's website. Extracts from the Gallipoli period of the diaries were published in 1983, but now thanks to the efforts of renowned military scholar Peter Burness and his editorial team, the same has been achieved with those covering the AIF's (and Bean's) service on the Western Front, from early 1916 to the Armistice in November 1918 and beyond. It only takes a brief visit to the originals (catalogued under the number AWM38 3DRL 606) to see what a daunting task such

an edition represents in terms of deciphering, transcription, selection and arrangement. To the credit of all involved, however, the end product is an impressive volume physically, but more importantly, one which offers valuable, and often unexpected, insights into the man and his times.

In following Bean's career as war correspondent and official historian, as narrated by himself, we are introduced to a vast range of characters within military, government, journalistic and literary/artistic circles, many with whom he became closely associated. But Bean comes across as no name-dropper or dilettante; instead we are left with the impression of a consummate professional who created and maintained networks of all kinds and at all levels in order to do his job properly. When it came to understanding conditions on the battlefield and the activities of the ordinary soldier, his experiences at Anzac Cove obviously had already blooded him for front-line service, to the extent where he had no trouble wandering along trenches and through wrecked villages with shells still falling and bullets flying. The nature of the Western Front was such that in the course of a single day, he might observe an early-morning attack; discuss operations with generals and staff officers over lunch; and by evening have caught a cross-Channel boat or train and found himself in London sorting out some matter requiring his administrative or organisational abilities. And such are his skills as a diarist (not to mention those of Burness and his team as editors), that we are swept along with him, as if experiencing at first-hand his observations, conversations and reflections.

In its introduction to the digitalised collection, the AWM site says of Bean's diaries that these 'chronologically arranged passages of the author's thoughts and feelings ... are a wonderful record from the perspective of an educated and thoughtful observer. Within detailed narratives and notes describing battles and engagements, Bean often recorded his own reactions of fear, revulsion, and grief' (<https://www.awm.gov.au/research/awm38-3drl606-description>). This edited collection certainly provides the reader with many examples of attitudes and opinions expressed by Bean which reveal his own prejudices and preferences. He would rather the AIF were taken over by Gen Brudenell White than Sir John Monash, for example, and not always for reasons we would regard as particularly savoury today. His

reservations about the efficacy of the British soldier compared to that of the Australians and Canadians might not consistently withstand objective judgement either. And his generalisations about the relative quality and performance of certain AIF units and their officers at particular times tend to be rather spur-of-the-moment if not downright rash. A comments such as in his 27 May 1918 entry – when noticing the ‘very big men’ among the newly arriving Americans – that ‘those big men are gone from Australia now, never to return in this generation’, has an undeniably poignant and rhetorical impact, but isn’t the kind of assertion one would want to make against any empirical analysis.

There is one strain of thought, however, which appears to run consistently through his writing, and to which the edition gives a certain prominence. It comes as something of a surprise – given Bean’s outwardly Edwardian schoolmasterly appearance and ‘old world’ sensibilities – that he was at heart quite the progressive social revolutionary, at least during the latter part of the war. Reflecting on the horrors of Pozières (a battle that haunted him considerably), he wonders ‘whether we should not be better in all future dealings to be independent of these British people; and allies rather than dependants’ (p.147). His disillusionment with Britain leads him on the one hand to suspect that Australian soldiers ‘do not clearly distinguish what they are fighting for’; they ‘gather the idea that it is England they are fighting for, and not for their idea of the world as it should be’ (p.174). On the other, he believes that this is an opportunity for Britain itself to change. Prime Minister Lloyd George should

seize his chance after the war and say straight out: I had to organise you for war – how much more am I going to organise you for peace – and then nationalise the railways, nationalise or abolish the drink, take a cut straight into the slums, act like either a radical or a socialist and clean out the English class system – and – I wouldn’t hesitate – abolish the monarchy because it perpetuates the snobbery which paralyses England ... (pp.262-63)

Extraordinarily, at a moment in history when the world was in the early throes of polarising into Eastern and Western blocs, Bean in January 1918 was extolling ‘the Russian socialists [as] men of earnestness and principle’, and declaring ‘that whatever the revolution brings to Russia, it is a tremendous benefit to her’. He laments that this is something ‘the English will or cannot see – at least their ruling classes cannot’, and how ‘English comment is almost all bitterly cold, suspicious and unsympathetic towards the Russian Government’ (p.409). Being the thinker he so obviously is, he puts two and two together to come up with his own reasons why the British war effort is on the verge of breakdown following the German March offensive: ‘The real cause ... is far deeper than the failure of this or that division or general’:

The real cause is the social system of England, or the distorted relic of the early Middle Ages which passes for a system; the exploitation of a whole country for the benefit of a class – a system quietly assumed by the ‘upper class’ and accepted by the lower class ... (p.456)

The net result is a society where the upper class can rule ‘without dependence on brains’, and ‘the lower class has no rights to develop either brains or bodies’, and thus you get ‘Generals without brains and an army without physique’ (p.458). By war’s end he has enough conviction on this issue to declare openly to Gen White himself, that ‘I did not think that a little revolution would do England any harm’ (p.617).

Given all of this, it’s not surprising that Bean took to heart his colleague and friend Henry Gullett’s advice in 1917 not to write the history of the AIF ‘too much for the military critic ... and not enough for the people’ (p.330). Indeed, Bean had already realised that his history would be of a different order to the kind written by an established military historian. He sensed – without the least hint of pomposity – that ‘as far as Australia was concerned, my

history would be all important':

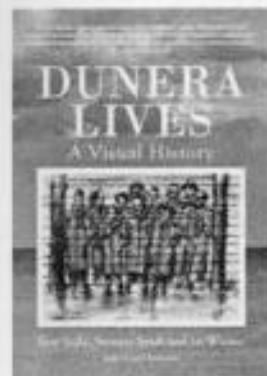
I felt I was in a position in which scarcely any historian of a war had ever been – that of a man who will write about a war which he has seen all through, in which he has been in every important trench, and seen almost every important event. (pp.324-25)

Bean made this comment in the context of arguing for an Australian official photographer, so it is very gratifying to have *The Western Front Diaries of Charles Bean* liberally salted with many of the photographs taken by Hubert Wilkins and others holding that position. Each illustration has been placed as close as possible to the relevant diary entry, enhancing the sense of immediacy implicit in the writing, while the large format of the book allows for a fresh look at the detail in many of the photographs. The text itself has been sensitively edited, without too many interventions, and reads very satisfactorily as a continuous narrative. Additional information is provided in the form of footnotes, photo captions and the occasional text box.

Australia was fortunate to find a voice in Charles Bean's official history of the war, which he quite rightly predicted to be unprecedented in works of its kind. With this edition of his Western Front diaries, we can properly appreciate the more personal side of that project, while also arriving at a better understanding of the man himself; and so we are doubly fortunate. This is a superb volume, worthy of ranking among the landmarks in Australian historical publication.

Paul Skrebels

Ken Inglis, Seumas Spark Jay Winter and Carol Bunyan, *Dunera Lives: A Visual History*, Monash University Publishing and NewSouth Books, Sydney, 2018. ISBN 9781925495492, softcover, 576 pages, fully illustrated. RRP \$39.95 AUD.



I was one of the many Australians who discovered the story of the Dunera from the 1985 TV series *The Dunera Boys*, and consequently sought out the book *The Dunera Scandal* by Cyril Pearl. As a result of this discovery, I learned that I knew one of the 'Dunera Boys' and have since got to know the son of another. So I was more than pleased to be asked to review this book. My ambition in life after seeing the TV series was to own a 'goodonya', the name they gave to the camp currency. It seems the name 'goodonya' was poetic licence by the TV script writer, but nevertheless in 2006 a shilling note designed and printed in Hay and used as camp currency fetched \$12,500.

Dunera Lives is a collection of reproductions of art works, sketches, ephemera and documents gleaned from private collections, Jewish archives and state libraries. The sketches are the sort pre-photographic explorers used to illustrate their adventures. The limitation for this book being of course, that if your memorabilia escaped the net, your mention is considerably less than those who had a large archive to share. I will not repeat the story of the *Dunera* here. It is acknowledged as one of Churchill's great blunders, and is covered sufficiently in this book so that the newcomer to the story knows the bones of the matter.

The editor of the camp newspaper instructed his readers, 'your mind is not interned, nor is it confined to this camp', which set the standard for an impressive educational program, no doubt in keeping with the Jewish philosophy that education is one thing they can't take away

from you. To quote from an introduction to one of the chapters: 'They were part of the German and Austrian diaspora whose absence reduced German social and cultural life during the war, and whose presence enriched the societies in which these emigres found refuge.'

Photographing internees was prohibited but the art works reproduced in *Dunera Lives* tell volumes about how these foreigners saw Australia. Some of them were cultured, educated, urbane Europeans used to far more sophisticated housing and culture than they found in Hay. Theodore Engel puts a bare corrugated iron roof into his paintings, no lining, no ceiling. The heat in summer must have been a massive shock to the European inmates. A foreign world indeed. Not surprisingly, the annoyance of flies was recorded. There are poems about internment, one of which by Oswald Volkmann could well be an anthem for the inmates on Nauru. There are photos which tell incredible stories, like the Jewish inmate who married in 1943 in the Toorak Road synagogue Melbourne, the father of the bride and the father of the groom both Great War veterans, but from opposite sides.

I only have two quibbles about this book. First, because it is printed on wonderful quality gloss paper, which of course, accommodates the artwork nicely, it is very heavy and not suitable for reading in bed. Second is that the two people I actually know from this story are very much underrepresented. Both were highly respected in their fields, one economics and one in the theatre. I am surprised that Max Bruch, who was very well known in Melbourne theatre circles and later on Australia-wide when he took over the role of Tevye in *Fiddler On the Roof*, didn't get more coverage, particularly as he also acted in the *Dunera Boys* TV series. Next time you watch the movie *Eureka Stockade*, look out for Dunera Boy Sigurd Lohde, known as Sydney Loder, who plays a miner with a thick German accent. He moved back to Berlin in 1955 and opened a tavern called 'Das Känguruh'. Unfortunately my German is inadequate so I can't tell if this wonderful name is amusing on more than one level.

This book is the closest you will ever get to one of the Dunera Boys actually sitting you down with his private album and telling you who all his friends were and what their story is. It is a very nice social history.

Gail Gunn

Jeff Hopkins-Weise and Gregory Czechura, *Mephisto: Technology, War and Remembrance*, Queensland Museum, South Brisbane, 2018. ISBN 9780648094425, softcover, 366 pages, copiously illustrated in colour and B&W. RRP \$44.95 AUD.



In July 1918, following an attack which straightened out the line forward of Villers Bretonneux, the 26th Battalion AIF captured a derelict German A7V tank with the serial 506 and bearing the name 'Mephisto'. The 26th being a mainly Queensland unit, Mephisto found itself shipped to that state as a war trophy, and is now preserved in the Queensland Museum in Brisbane as the only surviving original example of an A7V tank. To mark the centenary of Mephisto's capture, the Museum has produced this comprehensive and impressive publication.

After a brief introduction to the causes and outbreak of the First World War and the stalemate of trench warfare on the Western Front, the book focuses on the

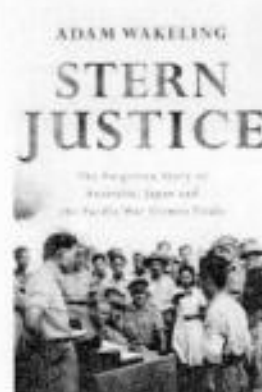
various technologies directed at attempts to break that stalemate. These led to the idea of vehicles which could overrun and destroy enemy defences, and thus the concept of the 'tank', and *Mephisto* provides a very useful summary of these developments. While the Allies were the first to put the concept into practice in the form of Britain's 'rhomboidal' tank series and France's more varied outputs, the book details the processes by which the Germans, operating in the face of considerable resource difficulties arising out of the Allied blockade, eventually produced 20 examples of the A7V.

Subsequent chapters examine the actual employment of tanks in combat, covering both sides; the introduction of the A7V in the Michael offensive of March 1918; the fighting around Villers Bretonneux which saw A7V 506 Mephisto knocked out and abandoned; and the capture of Mephisto by the AIF and its subsequent dispatch to Australia. Finally, we are given an insight into its various phases of restoration and display at the Queensland Museum. Along the way the authors provide us with considerable additional information, such as the fate of the other A7Vs; biographies of the members of the 26th Bn involved in the capture; the political wranglings in acquiring Mephisto by Australia, and much more. Together with the literally of hundreds of illustrations, there are a number of useful tables which aid in our understanding of the various topics covered.

Collectors will no doubt revel in the array of artefacts depicted in colour and, owing to the book's large format, in quite some detail. Historians will find the many photographs and documents highly informative and an excellent source for their own endeavours. Young or new researchers will also appreciate the amount of contextual and background information offered in this fulsome account. Mephisto (the tank) is a unique survivor of WW1 and one whose preservation and restoration are of major importance both nationally and worldwide. Those responsible for *Mephisto* (the book) are to be commended for producing an attractive, well researched and very fitting tribute both to the object itself and, just as significantly, to the events and the people involved in its story.

Paul Skrebels

Adam Wakeling. *Stern Justice: The Forgotten Story of Australia, Japan and the Pacific War Crimes Trials*, Viking Australia, Melbourne, 2018. ISBN 9780143793335. Softcover, 390 pages, photos, map and appendices. RRP \$34.99 AUD.



At the conclusion of the Second World War, 8031 Australian service personnel had died in Japanese captivity. The Allied death rate was 27%, compared with only 4% in Europe. Australian authorities commenced gathering evidence of atrocities as early as 1942 in preparation for prosecutions in the Pacific. Author Adam Wakeling, a law graduate, presents a well-written four-part account of the political and military background of events leading to the trials of those suspected committing war crimes, the parts being the Emperor, Ministers, and Soldiers, followed by a section on Reactions and Resolution.

In contrast to Allied nations, Australia was the only belligerent to press for the prosecution of Emperor Hirohito. Despite recent historians advocating that the 'Final Campaigns' were justified, to secure representation in the peace settlement – a role which never eventuated – Australian demands for recognition of the status of the Emperor

(that he should sign the surrender, then abdicate and be tried) were ignored. In his surrender speech, Hirohito presented himself as a pacifist. He subsequently abrogated responsibility for the war and defeat. Foreign Minister and Attorney-General Herbert V. Evatt, an early proponent of international law, led the push for Hirohito to head the suspect list of major war criminals, for the Class A trial in Tokyo. Nevertheless, Japanese supporters of the Emperor and General MacArthur, as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, agreed it was 'better to leave him in power and govern the country through him, to aid in 'the democratisation and demilitarisation of Japan'.

Twenty-eight defendants, mostly ministers and senior officers, faced the International Military Tribunal for the Far East held in Tokyo, presided by Queensland's Chief Justice, Sir William Webb. The three types of offences were: starting wars of aggression, or crimes against peace (Class A – the major crimes), conventional war crimes (Class B), and crimes against humanity (Class C), with B and C being 'minor' crimes. The author deals with the definition of counts, development of procedure for conduct of the trial, and due process, with an overview of events leading to indictment rather than proceedings of individual cases. The Class A counts were filled with legal wrangling due to lack of precedent in previous wars and whether they were crimes under international law, whereas there was ample evidence for the Class B and C counts.

In the trials conducted by Australian courts, crimes committed by soldiers are represented by the Sandakan death marches (Class B), and the rape of Chinese civilians and killing natives (Class C) as illustrative examples. Common criticisms of trials were the relaxation of the rules of evidence and jurisdictions of the courts. Under threat of communist expansion, and Japan offering a buffer zone, MacArthur instructed that the trials be completed by the end of 1948. Australia opposed this, and the last trials were concluded on Manus Island in 1951. Wakeling quickly covers the trials for the massacres of captive Australian soldiers at Parit Sulong, Malaya, and Laha airfield, Ambon (where the author incorrectly identifies the Australian garrison unit as 2/22 Bn, rather than 2/21 Bn). Nevertheless, he omits to mention the resistance to terminate trials being prepared for the beheadings of captured aircrew at Matupi, near Rabaul, the investigation of which revealed the sophisticated network of deceit by the Japanese involved to conceal executions. In reviewing the attitudes of those convicted of 'BC' crimes, Wakeling states, 'While most admitted these crimes took place, they generally denied their own involvement, or, if they admitted involvement, denied responsibility'.

Law scholars are adept at criticising the legality of the international Class A trials, and sympathetically portray those who were tried for crimes as victims of revenge – commonly referred to as 'Victor's Justice'. However, despite the brutality of the atrocities committed, the examination of justice for unlawfully killed Australian personnel in Class B war crimes is neglected.¹ The few examples discussed by Wakeling present a rather sanitised version of their horrific scale. Astoundingly, he claims that 'it was obvious that the Japanese in Timor had a different attitude to those elsewhere – for example, in Borneo'. What of the ration truck massacre of at least 14 members of 2nd Independent Coy on 20 February 1942 near Dili? Clearly, Law studies fail to address crimes where there was no trial.

Wakeling presents a valuable study on the role Australia played in the trials for crimes

¹ See my article, 'The Carnival of Blood in Australian Mandated Territory', *Sabretache* vol.54, no.4 (December 2013).

committed throughout Japan's war to establish their Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The appraisal provides clarity, understanding and criticism for the three classes of trials conducted. The trials' success or otherwise is less fully dealt with, arguably due to polarising views regarding their achievement and legacy. Additionally, we gain an insight into the Japanese cultural mindset which led to militarist revival of the bushido code and the claim to being the leading race in Asia, and particularly to opposing Western colonialism and communism as justifications for waging war. The book will increase the awareness of and accessibility to the trials for the broader reading public, rather than their being confined to academia.

Brenton Brooks

Bruce Hunt, *Australia's Northern Shield? Papua New Guinea and the Defence of Australia since 1880*, Monash University Publishing, Carlton, 2017. ISBN 9781925495409. 374 pages, softcover, 13 B&W photos and maps. RRP \$ 39.95 AUD.



In this valuable history, Bruce Hunt analyses the intersection of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea on Australia's defence policy and the influence, over the course of 100 years, of cabinet ministers and public servants on our official relationships with these neighbours. Hunt uses four broad and evolving themes as he views the islands of New Guinea from the perspective of Australian officials. Within each theme, he examines, in chronological order, the defence issues for a defined period. This clear structure allows readers to begin with the time period of most interest and then browse or study the other periods as they wish. Also, the precise headings for each chapter allow the reader to initially peruse the geographical territory of their preference (either West New Guinea or Indonesia or Papua New Guinea).

Although Hunt allocates only six pages to the Second World War in New Guinea, what emerges is the perception that this war was a turning point in Australia's relations with New Guinea. Before WW2, our parliamentarians attached more importance to New Guinea than did our military advisers. After the war, the situation was reversed.

With Hunt's scholarly use of sources and the integration of extracts from cabinet notebooks, this book throws up some revelations about several cabinet leaders such as Sir Robert Menzies, Sir John McEwen and Gough Whitlam. For example, Menzies' statement in London in February 1965 that Australia's first obligation was the 'almost instinctive obligation, unwritten but nonetheless, to do all ... to help Britain', while the sixth and final obligation was 'the territorial defence of Australia itself'. Another possible surprise for some readers is the cabinet evidence that John McEwen dominated, and overshadowed Menzies, in foreign and defence policy for a long time. Hunt describes 'McEwen's leading role' in these areas and shows that 'no decision was taken (in Cabinet) on Australia's security policies in the 1950s and 1960s with out his full support.'

Unexpected also is Hunt's evidence of the continuity and change, in policy towards TPNG, which marked the tenure of the Whitlam government. Hunt provides evidence of the ALP's historic attention to New Guinea and Whitlam's personal familiarity with the Territory. For example, Andrew Fisher (ALP) told Parliament in 1901 that, 'it would be better ... if we

could secure the whole of New Guinea'. Hunt chronicles the repeated resistance from the UK government to state or federal plans to annex or occupy the island of New Guinea and nearby islands. That 1901 wish was resurrected in an (ill-fated) ALP proposal to the Menzies government in 1954 that Australia ought to purchase West New Guinea from the Dutch government.

The currently powerful rise of the Indonesian economy carries implications for Australian defence policy in addition to the opportunities, for example, in education and trade. This book could be relevant background reading for Australian officials working in defence or other agencies with Indonesia. The audience for this book would also include researchers and people with a political, historical or military interest in PNG.

PNG voices are generally lacking, especially the voices of senior PNG military officers, and the PNG primary sources are very limited. Further consideration could have been given to the book's sub-title. Taking into account the number of chapters allocated to West New Guinea and Indonesia, it may have been more accurate to use New Guinea Island (rather than Papua New Guinea) in the sub-title. Consistent with his doctoral thesis, Hunt's PNG focus, especially in the later chapters, is on the post-Independence defence relationship with Australia, which was settled in 1977. For this book, Hunt has added a final chapter to cover the joint declarations of 1987 and 2013. Although Hunt deals with Sir Michael Somare and Sir Albert Maori Kiki, the audience in PNG may find limited analysis of the role of their national agencies in the international relationship.

Putting such concerns to one side, this book is a work of considerable scholarship and great interest. Hunt's chapter notes are comprehensive and demonstrate his craft and consideration for the reader. Finally, Hunt accepts the credibility of the cabinet notes of the period at face value. It may be useful for everyone to heed the caution of one commentator who noted after the first Canberra meeting of Federal Cabinet on 30 January 1924, 'the picture from Cabinet is never rounded or even necessarily accurate.'

Gregory J. Ivey

Wes Olson, *The Last Cruise of a German Raider: The Destruction of SMS Emden*, Seaforth Publications, Barnsley, 2018. ISBN 9781526737298, hardcover, 274 pages. RRP \$65.99 AUD.



Finally, after 104 years, the definitive history of the action between HMAS *Sydney* and SMS *Emden* has been written. The first known published account of the action, in a book, appeared in July 1918 as a chapter titled 'How the *Sydney* met the *Emden*' in Bennet Copplestone's *The Secret of the Navy*. Over the next hundred years, books on the action have appeared regularly, ranging from the quite good – such as Mike Carlton's *First Victory 1914: HMAS Sydney's Hunt for the German Raider Emden*, published in 2014 – through to the barely readable and often incorrect *Guns in Paradise: The Saga of the Cruiser Emden* by Fred McClement, published in 1968.

Wes Olson has done an outstanding job in detailing *Emden's* history, from her construction during 1906-08 to her final action with HMAS *Sydney* on 9 November 1914 off the Cocos Islands. The final action is dealt with in great depth, with several first-

hand recollections from both sides – but the story does not end there. Olson details the extensive activity to recover *Emden* survivors and the subsequent medical work done by both RAN and German medical staff to keep the numerous badly wounded and dehydrated men alive. *Emden*'s landing party under *Kapitanleutnant* Helmuth von Mucke and their epic journey in the schooner *Ayesha* to the neutral Dutch East Indies and then via steamer to the Red Sea, and afterwards overland to Constantinople, also receives a lengthy analysis.

The story of the wreck of *Emden* finalises the history of this famous ship. Several of her guns were recovered and, along with other artefacts, brought to Australia for display, with many still visible today in Sydney and Canberra. In a little-known event in 1933, the Australian Government returned *Emden*'s nameplate to Germany. It was formally presented to the German President Paul von Hindenburg in recognition of the bravery of *Emden*'s ship's company and the chivalry of her commanding officer Karl von Muller.

The book is well illustrated and contains the complete nominal roll of both ships' companies, including the often forgotten civilian canteen staff in *Sydney*. The German nominal roll also details the 47 *Emden* prisoners of war who were held captive in Australia during the war. If you want to read the complete history of the *Sydney-Emden* action, then this is it!

Greg Swinden

Peter Moore, *Endeavour: The Ship and the Attitude that Changed the World*, Vintage Books, North Sydney, 2018. ISBN 9780143780267, softcover, 420 pages, plates and maps. RRP \$34.99 AUD



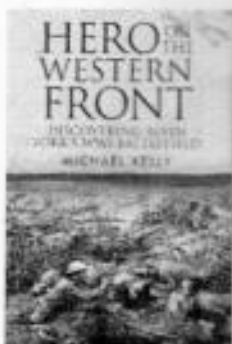
Australian and New Zealand readers will need no introduction to His Majesty's Bark *Endeavour*, Captain James Cook's ship on his epic voyage to the Pacific in 1768-70. This work from British author Peter Moore, however, is bound to put a fresh spin on our understanding and appreciation of that vessel and its place in the history of exploration and, indeed, of the 18th century generally. Cleverly, Moore sees in that name the whole spirit of an age: 'To endeavour', he says, 'is to quest after something not easily attained, perhaps verging on the impossible.' As such, endeavour 'was a fundamental component of the Enlightenment approach and it was in the years 1750-80 that the impulse was at its strongest.' That impulse involved 'bold projects, undertaken with conviction, often for the benefit of the public and at high speed.'

With that as a premise, Moore is able to set Cook's exploratory voyage within a broader context of contemporary attitudes and enterprise, whether mercantile, technological, scientific or political. Thus we ourselves are led on a fascinating voyage covering the construction and launching of the *Endeavour* as the coastal collier *Earl of Pembroke* in Whitby in 1764; her acquisition and renaming by the Royal Navy as Cook's ship in 1768; her strange career in the Falkland Islands in 1771-74; her resurrection as the *Lord Sandwich* in 1776 and eventual scuttling off Newport, Rhode Island in 1778. Along the way we are offered some wonderful insights into, for example, the conduct of trade and economics, the conflict and negotiation between radically differing cultures, and the political and social scenes in operation at the time.

This is not military history in the strict sense of the term, but *Endeavour* is excellent history nevertheless. Even so, there are some powerful scenes of confrontation between Polynesian and British participants, and Moore offers a view of the American Revolutionary War that is original and thought-provoking. This latter aspect arises from the fact that as the *Lord Sandwich*, the bark was redeployed as a troop transport in that war. Yet despite her rather sad demise, the little ship emerges as the real hero of Moore's intricate narrative. Joseph Banks himself wrote of the *Endeavour's* performance and handling during one strong gale, that she 'has shewn her excellence in laying too remarkably well, shipping scarce any water tho it blew at times vastly strong; the seamen in general say they never knew the ship lay too well as this one does, so lively and at the same time so easy.' Moore's book reminds us, however, that she herself, and all she helped achieve, were the product of an era when endeavour served as a guiding principle behind thought and action.

Paul Skrebels

Michael Kelly, *Hero on the Western Front: Discovering Alvin C. York's Great War Battlefield*, Frontline Books, Barnsley UK, 2018. ISBN 9781526700759, hardcover, 343 pages. RRP \$65.99 AUD.



Sometimes, the germ of an idea formulated over a beer can have profound consequences. Such an idea was determining the true location of the fight in which Sergeant York was involved that led to his award of the US Congressional Medal of Honour. In one of the most remarkable incidents of the Great War, (then) Corporal York, 328th US Infantry Regiment, single-handedly killed 21 Germans and captured 132 others in a desperate fight in the Argonne Forest. For this he was promoted to sergeant and awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour.

If there was one thing really important in the recording of military history it is getting the facts right from the best available evidence. The recording of history is quite properly a process of revision, especially when advances in technology and other determinants dictate that secondary records made after the event are later suspected or found to be inaccurate. For a hundred years, there has been controversy regarding the exact location of that fight, even though a monument to it had been built indicating the supposed location. Several efforts had been made after 1919 to place on record what happened and where it happened, additional to the routine war records of both sides.

Recently, a US-led group carried out an investigation that resulted in a claim of 100% accuracy in determining where the York fight occurred. This is a challenging claim, not consistent with normal scientific enquiry and rigour, and one might well ask why such a claim needed to be made. National pride and sentiment can sometimes cloud judgement, an unfortunate influence on otherwise laudable intent. Others disagreed with that research and claim. However, another group, led by battlefield investigator and historian Michael Kelly, has been able to definitively disprove the US version and in its place, demonstrate the true location. Using sophisticated and accepted scientific enquiry methods, official translations of German records, wider sourcing and GIS technology, this international group also included archaeological experts. They present compelling evidence. The real location of the York fight is revealed along with much visual and technical evidence.

This book presents the story of how a group of enthusiastic people supported Michael Kelly in his efforts to determine, beyond doubt, where the York fight really took place. Kelly pays tribute to co-investigators Thomas Nolan, Brad Posey and James Legg who played major roles, among many, to help this publication come to fruition. The team, which Kelly modestly terms the Nolan Group, are to be applauded for presenting this necessary revision to the record. The world now knows, in my opinion, where Sergeant York and his men really fought on that extraordinary day. It is both a compelling story and one that leaves the reader well satisfied that in the case of Sergeant York and those who perished on both sides of the fight in the Argonne Forest back in 1918, revisionism of published history is in fact both right, and necessary.

Russell Linwood, ASM

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OBITUARY: BRIGADIER 'TAN' ROBERTS (RET'D) FMHSA 7 June 1931-26 November 2018

Brigadier 'Tan' Anthony Rodgers Roberts, aged 87 years, who had been in poor health for eighteen months, died suddenly in Canberra on Monday 26 November 2018. Tan was a long-time member of the Military Historical Society of Australia (MHSA), serving as Federal President for fifteen years from 1984 until 1999 and subsequently granted the accolade of Fellow of the MHSA in 2002.

Tan was born in Melbourne on 7 June 1931 to Richard and Bertha Roberts. His older brother, Kenneth Richard, had joined the Australian Army in 1939, aged 20. He was Mentioned in Despatches for his work in 1945 with the 6th Australian Division Signals. In 1950, he was with BCOF Signals in Japan when he became ill and died at the BCOF General Hospital, Kure, on 30 July 1950. He was buried at Yokohama War Cemetery, Japan.

In 1951, Tan Roberts entered the Officer Cadet School, Portsea and graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant, Australian Staff Corps, on 7 June 1952. From December 1958 until May 1961 he served in the United Kingdom before being posted to 3rd Bn Royal Australian Regiment. In August 1964 he spent 12 days in Vietnam. In 1967, he attended the RAAF Staff College. On 21 October 1969, Tan Roberts, was posted to 2RAR and served as Operations Officer with the battalion during its tour of Vietnam from 29 April 1970 until 5 May 1971. The following year *The Anzac Battalion, 1970-71*, which he edited, was published for 2RAR.

Tan Roberts retired from the Australian Army as a brigadier and then spent a number of years working for the Department of Foreign Affairs. He was married for 60 years and is survived by his wife, Pat, his children John and Susan and his grandchildren. Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of Tan Roberts was held at the Church of St Peter Chanel, Yarralumla on Tuesday, 4 December 2018 and was followed by a private burial at Woden Cemetery.

Pat Hall and Anthony Staunton

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REGULATING THE AUSTRALIAN HOME FRONT FOR TOTAL WAR – THE WAR PRECAUTIONS ACT 1914

Rohan Goyne¹

The *War Precautions Act 1914-15* governed the Australian economy whilst on a war footing. The regulations passed by the then Governor-General governed activity of everyday life in Australia, from the importation of knitting needles to the conduct of race meetings and other sporting events. The wide-ranging effects of this Act have not adequately formed a part of the historical lexicon in recent writings on the Centenary of the First World War. This article will address this omission by examining the Act from legal and military historiographical perspectives, through particular reference to four case studies of the regulations passed under the Act during the War.

The Legislative Framework – The War Precautions Act 1914

The War Precautions Act 1914 (the Act) received royal assent on 29 October 1914. The Act was the pivotal piece of legislation which facilitated the transition of the Australian domestic economy on the home-front to a war economy geared for a total war. Under s4 of the Act the Governor-General could make regulations for 'securing public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth and for conferring such powers and imposing such duties as he thinks fit'.²

Further, under s5 of the Act, the Governor-General could have regulations published in the Commonwealth Gazette, in particular in relations to activities of aliens in the Commonwealth of Australia. By virtue of s4 and 5, the Act conferred an unfettered power on the Governor-General to make regulations from October 1914. As a result, the Commonwealth Government implemented a greater range of regulations than it would have otherwise been able to. Under s6 of the Act, the penalty for a contravention of the regulations made under the Act was either a fine of one hundred pounds or six months' imprisonment, or both.

During the parliamentary debate on the Bill, various members of the Commonwealth Parliament commented on the ambit of the Bill as enacted in s4 and 5. The following commentary is from various members of the House of Representatives.

- Sir William Irvine highlighted the following: 'We all recognise that in a time of war the Executive is entitled to be invested with authority which Parliament would not think of entrusting to it in ordinary times. Before the Bill passes, it is desirable that honourable members should understand fully the immense range of the Executive power which it confers on the Governor-General'.³
- During the debate of the Bill through the Commonwealth Senate, Senator Stewart stated with respect to s5: 'I do not find fault with this section, except with paragraph 5(f) which applies to naturalised aliens'.⁴ Under s5(f) the Governor-General could make regulations applying to naturalised aliens. Senator Stewart expressed his concern over the potential application of any regulations to naturalised citizens thus: 'But we ought to assume that

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² The War Precautions Act 1914 www.austlii.edu.au (site accessed July 2015).

³ Commonwealth, Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, 28 October 1914, 371.

⁴ Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, Senate 28 October 1914, 346.

persons who become British subjects are not going to do anything which will injure the Commonwealth and unless there is a strong ground for suspicion, these persons ought to be treated exactly as the rest of the community are treated'.⁵

Regulation No.38 (Enemy Shareholders Regulations)

Regulation No.38 came into effect on 24 March 1916 and established a scheme for the transfer of shareholdings held by aliens or naturalised persons of enemy origin to be the custody of the public trustee until twelve months after the end of the war, or to sell the shareholdings in accordance with the regulation.⁶ The regulation also required any company with shares held by aliens to forward to the Commonwealth Attorney-General a verified list of all such shareholdings. Companies could also request evidence of shareholders as to their nationality in order to comply with their obligations under the regulation.

The breadth of the Act is shown by this regulation whereby a company had the power to request of shareholder's proof of their nationality, otherwise the shareholding would be transferred to the public trustee. This represents the intervention of the Commonwealth Government into a fundamental element of the market economy, the sharemarket solely for war purposes.

Regulation No.79 (Wharf)

Regulation No.79 came into effect on 4 April 1917 and provided for the compulsory acquisition of any wharves in Port Pirie in South Australia by the Commonwealth without any compensation for the owners.⁷ Prima facie, this regulation was contrary to s51 (xxxi) of the Commonwealth Constitution, which imposes a duty on the Commonwealth to acquire property such as wharves on just terms. If challenged, the constitutional validity of this regulation would have been in significant doubt, but that would have required significant financial resources to bring the matter before the High Court of Australia. It further demonstrates the breadth of the regulations made under the Act to include constitutionally unsound regulations.

Regulation No.192 (Knitting Needles)

This regulation came into effect on 4 April 1917. It provided for government control over the importation of knitting needles into Australia by the Director of Munitions.⁸ Knitting needles were made of steel, which as a raw material was required for a wide variety of higher priority items and purposes in the Allied war effort, thus the regulation of the passage of needles through the Empire. This regulation graphically highlights the extent of government control over the microeconomic elements of the economy during the Great War for a greater purpose, in this case the need to guarantee the supply of critical raw materials such as steel for war-related purposes.

Regulation No.233 (Control of Sports)

This regulation was enacted on 13 September 1917 and provided for the control of all forms of sporting events, including as race meetings and football matches, by the Commonwealth

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ War Precautions Regulation No.38, www.austlii.edu.au (site accessed July 2015).

⁷ War Precautions Regulations No.79, www.austlii.edu.au (site accessed July 2015).

⁸ War Precautions Regulations No.192, www.austlii.edu.au (site accessed July 2015).

Government.⁹ As with Regulation No.192, No.233 showed the government using the Act to extend its control into everyday recreational pursuits of Australians, which the Commonwealth Constitution did not provide for in ordinary circumstances.

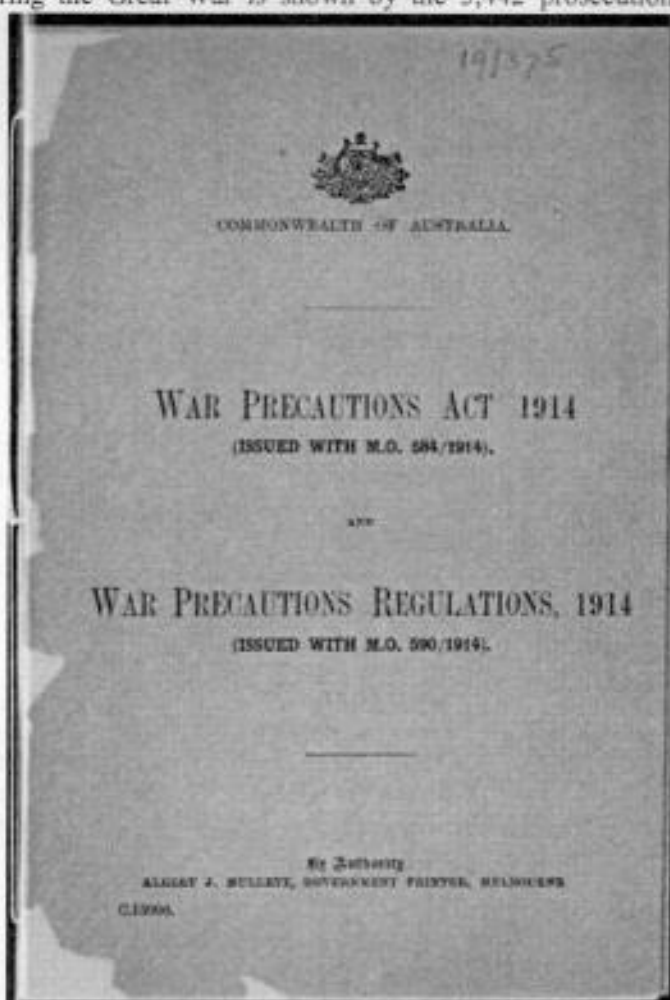
The four case studies of the regulations made under the Act illustrate its broad reach into Australian society, from the acquisition of property in a unilateral method (strongly arguably in breach of the Constitution), to the availability of knitting needles and the control of sporting events and the shareholdings of naturalised Australians born in certain designated countries. The regulation of these activities was deemed necessary in the management of the home front economy and within a society on a total war footing.

The Act and its Regulations in Operation

The test of any form of legislative framework or black letter law is known as the law in action. The Act in operation during the Great War is shown by the 3,442 prosecutions brought under it. The majority of these prosecutions were successful, and the penalties handed down by the courts included imprisonment and fines.¹⁰ It is possible that conscription itself could have been introduced by regulation under the Act, but this use of the broad powers available under it was never tested. Ultimately, the Act was repealed by the *War Precautions Act Repeal Act 1920*.

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Right: The front cover of a surviving copy of the *War Precautions Regulations, 1914*. (Trove <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-38369983/view?partId=nla.obj-38369994#page/n0/mode/1up>)



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⁹ War Precautions Regulation No.233, www.austlii.edu.au (site accessed July 2015).

¹⁰ www.wikipedia.org, (site accessed 27 April 2015).

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