

Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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

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

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

www.mhsa.org.au

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

EDITORIAL

Not unexpectedly, this initial centenary year of the First World War is already spawning a tidal wave of books on the period. One genre I'm beginning to notice takes the war as a whole and offers a particular hypothesis about the effects it has had on subsequent human history. So, for example, Frank Furedi's *First World War: Still No End in Sight* (Bloomsbury, 2014) sets out to demonstrate that the war not only led to the collapse of old empires, but also to the loss of what its author terms 'existential certainty'; that is, the 'Values and ideals which endowed existence with direction and meaning' (p.17). This in turn has given rise to the 'culture wars' that exist in our own time and still appear far from being resolved: 'East' versus 'West'; 'Right' versus 'Left'; democracy versus totalitarianism; and so on.

William Mulligan's *The Great War for Peace* (Yale UP, 2014), on the other hand, proposes an almost diametrically opposed thesis. He maintains that the experience of the Great War helped develop in society's leaders – politicians, intellectuals, social reformers and their ilk – the desire for a more humane and peaceful world order. This in turn has seen the formation of the League of Nations and its successor the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and other such embodiments of humanitarian ideals. 'The First World War', says Mulligan, 'was the crucible of twentieth-century visions of peace. Ideas formulated in the war and then experimented with in the 1920s were bequeathed to a later post-1945 generation of peacemakers' (p.374).

Whether or not the reader is ultimately convinced of the validity of their cases is, I suppose, a matter of opinion. To some extent I'm reminded of those more extreme forms of hypothetical that posit the notion that if we hadn't fought the First and Second World Wars we'd still be travelling around in steam-powered vehicles and thrilled that some scientist had at last invented Bakelite as a substitute for timber. There's a whole section of the entertainment industry flourishing on this kind of speculation, after all. But this is not to trivialise the work and ideas of Furedi, Mulligan and others who are capable of synthesising vast amounts of knowledge and research into a coherent argument. There is much to be gained from taking the occasional excursion away from our customary microscopic perspectives on history and trying to understand the bigger picture from time to time, or at least someone else's framing of that picture.

Nevertheless, it is to those of you with your eye on the microscope of history that *Sabretache* owes its existence, and to you I extend my continued and sincerest thanks for your enthusiasm and your contributions. Your work represents the building blocks on which the grander designs are constructed, but that does not belittle your efforts in any way. Quite the contrary, I would suggest. When those grand designs are forgotten or have fallen out of favour, your findings will continue to shed light on the past for generations to come.

Paul Skrebels

‘REMEMBER ME’: AUSTRALIANS IN THE ‘GREAT ESCAPE’

Kristen Alexander

Albert Hake sat down to write to his wife, Noela, on 23 March 1944. It was three weeks since the 27-year-old's last letter, written on their third wedding anniversary, and, on the face of it, it was a perfectly ordinary sort of letter. He thanked Noela for her most recent despatches and, as he had kept a record of their correspondence, was able to let her know that ‘I have everything to date’.¹ He apologised for the trouble she had taken to get some trousers for him, especially as he'd ‘rather have brilliantine any day, my hair gets so long and untidy’. He managed to put her mind to rest regarding his health and fitness. ‘Incidentally the back is OK now.’ It was a relief as he had been concerned that he was ‘beginning to crack up’. He even referred to his plans to upgrade his qualifications: ‘The air cond[itioning] course you mention has not arrived yet darling.’ (He had been a draftsman and apprentice engineer in an air conditioning firm when he enlisted. He had dreams of starting his own company after the war.)²

As is common with lovers who are separated, Albert referred to his future hopes. ‘Send me some wool you sweet kid and I'll help knit those baby clothes. I understand perfectly sweetheart, our thoughts on that subject run in true harmony.’ He also spoke of his fear that, not knowing how long he would be away, ‘I will be old before they are grown up’. A perfectly ordinary letter. For someone who was a prisoner of war.

But there was something different about this letter, the sixth he had written that year. Albert Hake had a secret. When he had left Australia on 7 September 1941, he had felt sure that it would not be for long. He believed the war would be over soon.³ How wrong he had been. But now, ‘after two years in this hole’, he was one of 200 men who had a ‘ticket’ to escape Stalag Luft III, a Luftwaffe-run prisoner of war camp located near the town of Sagan in the German province of Lower Silesia (now Zagan in Poland), about 100 miles southeast of Berlin.

They had planned and worked for months. They had dug three tunnels and concealed the evidence. They had stolen equipment and supplies and manufactured their escape kits, which contained the compasses Albert had painstakingly crafted from bakelite records, slivers of magnetised razor blades, glass from broken windows and solder gleaned from the seals of tin cans. All had been stamped ‘Made in Stalag Luft III. Patent pending’. The bid for freedom was set for the night of 24 March.

With all letters scrutinised by the Germans, Albert couldn't tell Noela of his plans but he risked dropping small hints that things might be different soon. In his last letter he had declared, ‘Well, dammit all, I'll be home for our next anniversary, darling’. In this one, he anticipated that, ‘Shouldn't be much longer darling and I'll relieve you from the perpetual grind of your daily life. I hope.’ It was as much as he dared. Underlying Albert's hopes was the dread that he would not make it home. He usually signed off with a simple declaration of love such as ‘All my love’, or ‘I love you’, followed by a happy ‘Cheerio’, or ‘Cheerio, Pal’.

¹ Private records: Preen family. Unless otherwise cited, all quotes are from Albert Hake's letters to his wife, Noela.

² National Archives of Australia A9301, 403218, service record Hake, Albert Horace; Vance, *A Gallant Company. The Men of the Great Escape*, Pacifica Military History, Pacifica, 2000, p.134.

³ Private records: Preen family. Noela Hake/Jonathan Vance.

This time there was a more sombre note to his farewell. ‘I love you as always. I hope I can justify your faith in me dearest one of these days. Remember me. Albert. XXX’.

24 March 1944 was a freezing, moonless night with snow on the ground. Most of those preparing to escape knew that they did not have a hope of making it back to Britain but every man had his own reasons for making the attempt. Other than knowing that Albert wanted to return to her and their life together and that life in the camp had often got him down, Noela would never know exactly why Albert decided not to continue waiting out the war. But she did know that he ‘was a bit of a rebel’ – he had, after all, risked RAAF ire by slipping out of the embarkation depot to see his young wife one last time. He ‘would tackle



anything, could see no danger’.⁴ And, according to his old friend David Hickey, ‘his two greatest passions were his love of the British Empire and his hatred of Nazism’.⁵ Of course, Noela realised later, her husband would do his best to escape, to put a spanner in the German works. He could not possibly let a chance for freedom go by. But on this venture, there was danger aplenty. No one knew quite how much, however, because they all assumed that, if they were caught, they would be returned to Sagan or another camp.

Only 76 escaped. The tunnel was too short and there were a few other glitches on the night. Some were still in the tunnel when the alert was sounded. Six of the escapees were Australian airmen: Flight Lieutenant Paul Gordon Royle of 53 Squadron RAF, Flight Lieutenant Thomas Barker Leigh, an air gunner from 76 Squadron RAF, Squadron Leader John Edwin Ashley Williams and Flight Lieutenant Reginald Victor Kierath of 450 Squadron RAAF, Squadron Leader James Catanach DFC of 455 Squadron RAAF, and Noela’s husband, Warrant Officer Albert Horace Hake of 72 Squadron RAF. Who were these young men and how did they come to be involved in what would later be dubbed by fellow Australian Paul Brickhill as *The Great Escape*?

Fig.1: Sqn Ldr Jimmy Catanach, August 1942, just before 455 Sqn flew to Russia (Author’s collection)

Western Australian Paul Royle was born on 17 January 1914. He had joined 53 Sqn RAF on a short service commission before the war. He was on ops during the Battle of France when Blenheim L4861 was attacked by Luftwaffe fighters on 18 May 1940. He and his two crew members force-landed in a field at Fontaine-au-Pire, southeast of Cambrai, and were captured. The observer was wounded so Paul and his air gunner carried him to the village and left him in the care of a priest. The air gunner went in search of an ambulance and, although injured, Paul returned to the Blenheim and destroyed it. He hiked back to the village but passed out from his wounds. Later that afternoon, the Germans arrived and the priest told them of the two RAF men. And then Paul was ‘in the bag’. He was initially sent to Stalag Luft I and was transferred to Luft III when it opened in March 1942.⁶ After the

⁴ Private records: Preen family. Noela Hake/Jonathan Vance.

⁵ Private records: Preen family. Unattributed news clipping ‘RAAF Man Defends Mate’.

⁶ Manson, *United in Effort. The Story of No. 53 Squadron Royal Air Force 1916–1976*, Air-Britain (Historians) Ltd, Tunbridge Wells, 1997, pp.31 and 102.

mass escape plan was hatched, he was detailed a number of tunnel tasks. ‘I had a lot of different jobs’, he recalled. They included ‘a bit of digging, a bit of soil disposal, and keeping an eye out for the goons’, the German guards.⁷

Thomas Leigh was born in Sydney on 11 February 1919 but spent most of his childhood in Shanghai before attending boarding school in England after the death of his parents. He was a former ‘Trenchard Brat’; he had joined the 32nd Entry at No.1 School of Technical Training (Apprentices) at Halton and passed out in 1938. Graduates of the aircraft apprentice scheme were the RAF’s best trained mechanics and most, including Tom, progressed to senior non-commissioned officer rank. Tom trained as an air gunner and, after joining 76 Sqn RAF, assumed the role of squadron gunnery leader. On 2 August 1941, Sgt Leigh was granted a commission for the duration of hostilities. On the night of 5/6 August 1941, Halifax L9516 was bound for Karlsruhe but was shot down near Glabbeek in Belgium. One of the crew died but Tom and five others survived and were captured. Tom was in Stalag Luft III when his promotion to flight lieutenant came through on 2 August 1943.⁸

Born on 6 May 1919 in New Zealand, Australian-raised John ‘Willy’ Williams, was an old boy of *Sydney Church of England Grammar School* (Shore). He had served with 94 and 260 Sqns RAF before transferring to 450 Sqn in June 1942. Sqn Ldr Williams took command four months later. He had built up a fine reputation as a fighter pilot, notching up four destroyed and two damaged since his first victory on 18 June 1942. On 31 October he was carrying out a long range strafing operation when his Kittyhawk was attacked. He and his adversary engaged in a furious dogfight but he failed to extricate himself.⁹ He was shot down, crash landed and taken prisoner. His Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) was gazetted in May 1943, with effect from 23 September 1942.¹⁰

Red-headed Reginald ‘Rusty’ Kierath, born on 15 February 1915, in Narromine was also an alumnus of Shore with a desert flying career. He had trained in Rhodesia and gained his wings in April 1941. Sgt Kierath had had a few near misses. In June 1941, during his operational training he ditched his aircraft and suffered skull and facial injuries which were not serious. Soon after his posting to 33 Sqn RAF in August, he was ground-strafed by enemy fighters while taking off from Sidi Haneish and his Hurricane burnt out. Two days later, on 9 September, while on a fleet patrol, the squadron was bounced by Me109s and his Hurricane’s port wing was struck by a cannon shell and he was wounded by shrapnel. He joined 450 Sqn in January 1942 and was commissioned in May. He was promoted to flying officer at the end of July. On 23 April 1943, while on a sweep, his Kittyhawk was hit by anti-aircraft fire. The engine was damaged and he was forced to bale out over the Mediterranean Sea. He was rescued by a German rescue launch and later sent to Stalag Luft III where he met up with his former squadron leader.¹¹

Willy and Rusty had important roles in the escape planning. Willy was the chief supply

⁷ Carroll, *The Great Escapers. The Full Story of the Second World War’s Most Remarkable Great Escape*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2004, p.17.

⁸ <http://www.oldhaltonians.co.uk/pages/rememb/ROH/L.htm>;
<http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/35292/page/5659>.

⁹ Shores, and Williams, *Aces High. A Tribute to the Most Notable Fighter Pilots of the British and Commonwealth Forces in WWII*, Grub Street, London, 1994, p.637.

¹⁰ Vance, *A Gallant Company*, pp.132-133.

¹¹ *ibid.*, pp.168-170.

officer and head carpenter, responsible for appropriating 4000-odd bed boards which were used to shore up the tunnels. Rusty helped to build a network of false walls behind which were stashed forged documents and other items vital for the escape, such as Albert Hake's compasses.

Born on 23 Nov 1921 in Melbourne, Jimmy Catanach had enlisted when he was 18, within months of finishing his education at Geelong Grammar School. He had had some military experience in the school's cadet corps and was deemed fit for the RAAF on 18 March 1940. After training in Australia and Canada, he was posted to 144 Sqn RAF.¹² After 19 operational sorties, he was transferred to 455 Sqn RAAF, flying Hampdens. In June 1942, he was promoted to squadron leader and awarded a DFC for daring raids over Cologne, Hamburg, Essen, and Lubeck in Germany and Lorient in France. His gallantry was particularly noted: 'on three occasions, in spite of severe damage sustained by his aircraft, this officer flew it back to base and landed without further damage or injury to the crew'.¹³ And all before his 21st birthday.

On 4 September 1942, 455 Sqn and 144 Sqn were deployed to Russia as part of Operation *Orator*, which had been launched to protect convoy PQ18 as it ferried vital supplies to Russia. It was well acknowledged that Vaenga, an aerodrome near Murmansk in Russia, where they would be based, was beyond the Hampden's limit of endurance, even after refuelling at Sumburgh, in the Shetland Islands, and there had been no time to fit long-range fuel tanks. Any navigational error could prove fatal. Sumburgh's aerodrome was small and crowded and so 455's and 144's Hampdens lined up to take off one by one. It took more than two hours and some of the pilots grew restless as they sat in their cockpits, including Jimmy Catanach, 455's A Flight commander. He was too impatient to wait his turn and as soon as a gap in the line occurred, he nosed into it and took off like a 'blooming rocket'.¹⁴

Jimmy, who was piloting Hampden AT109, experienced a great deal of flak as he crossed the Norwegian coast. He realised they were rapidly losing fuel. Rather than risk the engines cutting out, he took the first opportunity to land. He touched down safely on a strip of heather adjoining a beach near Vardo, in northern Norway. Jimmy and his crew tried to destroy AT109, but they were fired on by soldiers from one direction and a patrol boat from the coast. The five were taken prisoner. Jimmy ended up in Stalag Luft III.¹⁵

Albert Hake, who had been born in Sydney on 30 June 1916, had been married to Noela for a little over six months before he embarked for Britain. (They had married while he was on a four days' leave pass from his training school. Noela later recalled that, when he obtained his wings, 'he was so proud of them'.)¹⁶ They had corresponded frequently since his departure and he told her as much as he could about his voyage to Britain, his flying training there and, later, his life as a prisoner of war. Before his capture, he had been rated 'above average' and ranked as one of the top three pilots on his operational training course. On 21 January 1942, he was posted to 72 Sqn, a Spitfire unit. Over the next few weeks (when weather permitted) he carried out convoy patrols, sweeps across France, escort duties and practice sessions. And then, on 4 April 1942, after 16.40 operational hours, and a total flying

¹² National Archives of Australia A9300, 400364, Service record Catanach, James.

¹³ <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/35609/supplement/2818>; <http://en.w2awards.com/person/45761>.

¹⁴ Lawson, *Four Five Five. The Story of 455 (RAAF) Squadron*, Wilke & Co, Melbourne, nd [1951] pp168-69.

¹⁵ Moyle, *The Hampden File*, Air-Britain (Historians) UK, 1989, p.46; Lawson, *Four Five Five*, p72.

¹⁶ Private records: Preen family. Noela Hake/Jonathan Vance.

time of 255.45 hours, he was missing in action.¹⁷ The squadron had been part of a larger wing escort for 12 Bostons to St Omer railway station in France. Just south of St Omer, the Luftwaffe pounced. Albert survived the dogfights but Spitfire AB258 was caught by an anti-aircraft shell. He was then bounced by ‘five [Focke-Wulf Fw190] fighters over France ... caught fire and had to bale out at 300 feet. However, I got one which evens up my loss’.



Fig.2: Noela and Albert Hake (Preen Family)

Warrant Officer Albert Hake landed close to a German troop depot. After a stint in hospital to repair his minor wounds and burns, he was packed off to Stalag Luft III, an officers' only camp.¹⁸ His rank insignia had burnt off and, when the Germans assumed he must be an officer as he had been flying a Spitfire, he did not disillusion them. He later admitted that, given the way he had exited

battle, the fact ‘that I am alive now is a miracle’. Even so, ‘I feel sad ending up like this darling’. Trying to make light of his incarceration, he told Noela that ‘being a prisoner of war is quite jolly’. It wasn't really, and he often experienced mood swings, or what he called a ‘fluctuating temperament’. Ups and downs of prison life aside, Noela was relieved that he was safe from combat and enemy fire, and she looked forward to his eventual return.

What had Albert, Jimmy, Tom, Paul, Rusty and Willy been thinking of as they waited to make their break? Was Albert recalling all the moments spent with his young wife and their dreams of children? Was Rusty aware that his promotion to flight lieutenant had come through less than two months earlier? Was Tom wondering if he would meet his recently born niece, Winifred, to whom he had become godfather by proxy? Did Jimmy, who was fluent in German, consider his chance of getting to neutral Sweden better than others'? Did these men trust that they would be successful in their attempt to escape the Germans? At the very least, they believed it was their duty to try.

Of the 76 who escaped, only three made it back to Britain. Twenty three were captured and returned to POW camps. One of those was Paul Royle. He had been caught within 24 hours and taken to Gorlitz prison, about 40 miles from Stalag Luft III. ‘An awful place’. He watched as some of his fellow prisoners were taken away, never to be seen again. He still hasn't ‘a clue as to why I wasn't chosen’.¹⁹

Fifty men were shot in the post-escape reprisals. Those 50 included Albert Hake, who was

¹⁷ Private records: Preen family. Albert Hake's flying log book.

¹⁸ Docherty, *Swift to Battle. No 72 Squadron RAF in Action. Volume I 1937 to 1942. Phoney War, Dunkirk, Battle of Britain Offensive Operations*, Pen & Sword Aviation, Barnsley, 2009, pp183–184; Vance, *A Gallant Company*, p.136.

¹⁹ <http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/editions/4604/history/story01.htm>.

number 70 out of the tunnel and Tom Leigh, who was number 73. They had no real chance of success. They were hard-arsers – they had to make their way, as best they could, on foot. Albert suffered excruciating frost bite and was captured near Gorlitz. It is thought that he had travelled perhaps less than 40 miles and had been free for about 72 hours, but no one knows for sure. It is also not known where Tom was captured, though it was perhaps not even 15 miles from the camp, and that he had been free for less than 48 hours. Both Albert and Tom ended up in Gorlitz prison. They, along with four others, were shot on a wooded road 3 miles south of Sagan. Willy Williams, number 32 from the tunnel and Rusty Kierath, number 35, travelled some of the way together by train, and partly by foot. They were captured somewhere in the mountains near Boberrohrs Dorf in Poland. They had covered about 50 miles and had been on the run for maybe 16 hours. Their place of death is unknown but it is presumed they were killed together near Reichenberg in Poland. Jimmy Catanach, 23rd out of the tunnel, had travelled by train. He had been on the run for 45 hours and had put 330 miles between him and the camp before he was captured at Flensburg on Germany's border with Denmark. He was shot in a field about 6 miles from Kiel in Germany.²⁰

Fig.3: Albert Hake in his Spitfire at Gravesend in 1942 (Courtesy of the album of Sgt Geoff Booth, via Erik Mannings, 72 Sqn Historian)



Back in the camp, when the sirens went off, those still in the tunnel made their way back to the hut.²¹ Former 3 Sqn RAAF pilot, Alan Righetti, who had been one of the many 'stooges' or lookouts over the previous few months, remembered hearing shots fired. It 'was pandemonium'. All traces of the escape were covered up or destroyed as the Germans rampaged through the camp looking for signs of a tunnel. When things quietened down, Alan recalled that 'we were bitterly disappointed that we hadn't got at least 200 out but at the same time, very proud of the fact that we had the whole of the area and the German Army rushing all over the place looking for our fellas.'²² And then they heard that 50 had been shot.

As Albert Hake had begged in his final letter, Noela remembered. She put in memoriam notices in the paper, year after year. She relived the handful of days they had spent together during their brief marriage, she recalled their dreams and future plans. They never had the children they wanted. She never remarried. She treasured Albert's personal effects, returned after the war. She read and reread his letters. She cherished the knowledge that to Reg Giddey and others of Albert's fellow prisoners in Stalag Luft III, her husband had been regarded as 'one of nature's gentlemen'.²³

²⁰ Walters, *The Real Great Escape*, Bantam Press, London, 2013, pp.308–315.

²¹ <http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/editions/4604/history/story01.htm>.

²² <http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/AAWRighetti.htm>.

²³ Private records: Preen family. Virginia Mongoles/Noela Hake



Fig.4: Albert Hake's headstone at Poznan cemetery (Preen Family)

Noela was not the only one to remember those who were killed in the post-escape reprisals. 24 March 2014 was the 70th anniversary of the Great Escape and well-attended and -reported commemorations demonstrate that we have not forgotten them and we still honour them. We continue to regret their lost lives, their unfulfilled futures and will ever empathise with the unassailable grief experienced by their families. Rest in Peace.

Bibliography

My thanks to the Preen family, Peter Kierath, Winifred Chevalier and Alan Righetti for access to private records.

National Archives of Australia A9301, 403218, service record Hake, Albert Horace.

National Archives of Australia A9300, 400364, service record Catanach, James.

National Archives of Australia A9300, 402364, service record Kierath, Reginald Victor.

Carroll, Tim, *The Great Escapers. The Full Story of the Second World War's Most Remarkable Great Escape*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, 2004.

Docherty, Tom, *Swift to Battle. No 72 Squadron RAF in Action. Volume I 1937 to 1942. Phoney War, Dunkirk, Battle of Britain Offensive Operations*, Pen & Sword Aviation, Barnsley, 2009.

Lawson, John, *Four Five Five. The Story of 455 (RAAF) Squadron*, Wilke & Co, Melbourne, nd [1951].

Mannings, Erik, 'The Great Escaper', *Flypast*, April 2014, pp. 20–28.

Manson, Jock, *United in Effort. The Story of No. 53 Squadron Royal Air Force 1916–1976*, Air-Britain (Historians) Ltd, Tunbridge Wells, 1997.

Moyle, Harry, *The Hampden File*, Air-Britain (Historians) UK, 1989.

Shores, Christopher, and Williams Clive, *Aces High. A Tribute to the Most Notable Fighter Pilots of the British and Commonwealth Forces in WWII*, Grub Street, London, 1994.

Vance, Jonathan F, *A Gallant Company. The Men of the Great Escape*, Pacifica Military History, Pacifica, 2000.

Walters, Guy, *The Real Great Escape*, Bantam Press, London, 2013.

<http://www.3squadron.org.au/subpages/AAWRighetti.htm>. Last accessed 30 April 2014.

<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/editions/4604/history/story01.htm>. Last accessed 30 April 2014.

<http://en.ww2awards.com/person/45761>. Last accessed 8 April 2014.

<http://www.oldhaltonians.co.uk/pages/rememb/ROH/L.htm>. Last accessed 30 April 2014.

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/35292/page/5659>. Last accessed 30 April 2014.

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/35609/supplement/2818>. Last accessed 30 April 2014.

THE MEDICAL SERVICE OF HMAS *SYDNEY* DURING THE ENGAGEMENT WITH SMS *EMDEN*, 9 NOVEMBER 1914

Geoffrey Miller

This account of HMAS *Sydney*'s medical service during the engagement with SMS *Emden* off the Cocos-Keeling Islands falls into three sections. The first is a description of the medical facilities available to the medical service before and during the engagement, most of these being inadequate. Then follows an account of the management of HMAS *Sydney*'s casualties during the actual engagement. Finally is the post-engagement activity, when suddenly a large number – two sources give between 70 and 80 – of German wounded were evacuated from the wreck of *Emden* to *Sydney* for treatment.¹

HMAS *Sydney*, a 5,400 ton British Chatham Class 6-inch light cruiser, was commissioned into the RAN as a new ship in 1913 under the command of Captain John Glossop RN, who had been seconded to the Royal Australian Navy. She was armed with eight 6-inch (15.2cm) guns and was originally designed as a long-distance cruiser with a pre-war crew of 376, but was overcrowded with her wartime crew of 475 composed of members of the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Navy. She was designed as a fighting ship and very little provision had been given for the management of any wounded apart from a Sick Bay; there were steep stairways, ladders and narrow passages that made the movement of wounded men on stretchers through the ship very difficult.

The two medical officers were Surgeon-Lieutenant Leonard Darby, aged 24, the Senior Surgeon, who had qualified as a medical practitioner two years previously in 1912 and who had joined the Royal Australian Navy the same year. The assistant surgeon was Surgeon-Lieutenant Arthur Charles Robert Todd, aged 25, who had qualified as a medical practitioner in 1914 and had joined the ship only a fortnight before the engagement. There were two sick berth attendants and, when the ship was at action stations, stretcher bearers and a First Aid Party whose usual occupations were the regulatory, commissary and clerical staff. First Aid bags were also situated at each gun and at the fire control stations.

Before the action, one of the stoker's bathrooms had been converted into a permanent operating theatre. The bathroom was 10 feet (3.05 metres) x 8 feet (2.44 metres) and 7 feet (2.134 metres) in size and was equipped with hot and cold water. Unfortunately this water supply failed to survive the concussion of the guns and, as Dr Darby wrote in his Post Action Report to Capt Glossop, it came 'black, muddy and useless' through the taps after ten minutes of gunfire. However, Dr Darby had the foresight to ensure that an emergency supply of boiled water was stored in the Captain's and the Wardroom's galley.

This permanent operating theatre was equipped with an operating table, instruments and dressings that were stored for immediate use. It was subsequently found, however, that the instruments for eye surgery were so old that they could not be used and the immediate supply of morphine had passed its use-by date and was ineffective. Also, only two days before the action, the operating theatre had been cleared for painting and there was very little time for the equipment to be replaced and properly stowed, thus causing considerable confusion and

¹ Parts of the preparation of this paper relied on the Post Action Report on the Action between HMAS *Sydney* and SMS *Emden* on the 9 November 1914, by Dr Darby, the Principal Medical Officer of HMAS *Sydney*, to his Captain. This was published in Australia in 1915 by the Government Printer of the Commonwealth of Australia. This is referred to subsequently as the 'Post Action Report'.

delay when the theatre was first used. When the ship went to action against SMS *Emden* and the wounded men began to be brought down to the sick-bay, another stoker's bathroom was converted to a temporary second operating theatre. This was hurriedly fitted out with a mess table as an operating table and equipment that was brought from the first operating theatre. Six other bathrooms were also cleaned and served as shelters for the wounded as they were brought below.

The Engagement off the Cocos-Keeling Islands, Monday 9 November 1914

SMS *Emden* had put a landing party ashore on Direction Island, one of the northern Cocos-Keeling Islands, to capture and destroy the wireless station of the Eastern Telegraph Company. However, the Telegraph Company was able to send a message about the approach of the *Emden* and HMAS *Sydney* was detached from convoy duty to investigate. *Emden*'s wireless operator intercepted the message that dispatched *Sydney* to the Cocos Islands and, when she saw masts on the horizon, *Emden* quickly weighed anchor. She was able to open well-aimed fire on the *Sydney* causing fifteen casualties. The faster and more heavily armed *Sydney* soon found the range of the *Emden* and caused massive damage to her, setting fire to her stern. Her Captain, Karl von Müller, ran *Emden* ashore on North Keeling Island, the northernmost island of the chain, in order to surrender and reduce the casualties.

During the action *Sydney*'s wounded, some being very badly injured, were transported below to the medical officers. These included a man with a fractured right leg and thirteen different shrapnel wounds and another with a chest wound that exposed his heart; this could be seen pumping at the left front of his chest. There was a man with multiple shrapnel injuries and a fragment of shell penetrating his eye, another with severe burns from head to foot and a man whose foot was shot away. Crew members suffered burns and one man had an abdominal wound that was soon to be fatal. Most suffered from loss of blood. The last casualty was from the bridge, his left leg had been shot away at the junction with his body and he too was suffering from marked loss of blood. His carriage below through the winding passages and narrow hatches caused significant delay before he could be treated.

All patients, apart from the last, had arrived in a steady stream and had to be assessed individually by a surgeon before operative treatment could be given. Morphine and first aid was given while the assessment was continuing and the Wardroom was commandeered to accommodate them, beds and blankets were taken from the cabins. The casualty from the bridge was given priority for immediate surgery and was given a pint (0.57 Litres) of saline under his skin as blood transfusion was at that time too dangerous for general use. Unfortunately he died of blood loss and shock during the long operation to close his wound. It is noteworthy that the safe use of blood transfusion, containing citrate to prevent blood from clotting during transfusion, was first described by a Belgian, Albert Hustin, in 1914, the same year as the *Sydney-Emden* engagement.²

The medical staff worked for two hours, non-stop, in a temperature of over 40°C, assessing the wounded and giving them treatment. Surgeon Todd was handicapped due to his Sick Berth Attendant fainting four times in the heat. There had been four deaths but the eleven surviving cases were occupying beds in the Wardroom by 11am. Most were restless and groaning in pain and it was only then discovered that the morphine had deteriorated in the ampoules supplied and was so ineffective that fresh morphine had to be given.

² Hustin, A. (1914) 'Note sur une nouvelle méthode de transfusion'. *Annales et Bulletin des Séances: Société des Sciences Médicales et Naturelles de Bruxelles*, 72e Année, pp.104, 111.

As soon as the sick bay staff could be spared, Dr Darby ordered the conversion of the sick bay into a better temporary operating theatre as soon as possible. The sick bay had been flooded with water from the fire mains and there was an enormous amount of work clearing up from this and the recent activities. The volunteer First Aid party, including the Paymaster and the Chaplain, nursed the wounded and the wardroom was converted into a hospital ward. The surgeons' work was frequently interrupted all through the afternoon and evening as German sailors were being picked up after they had jumped, or been blown overboard, from the *Emden*. One man had been in the shark-infested sea for nine hours, and in Dr Darby's words, 'was brought round after much trouble. Next day he was no worse off for his immersion'.

It was impossible to do any operative surgery until the next day because of overcrowding, the flooding of the sick bay, a shortage of trained theatre staff and the need for the two surgeons to rest before they could perform any reparative operative work. As it was, they were up until midnight caring for their patients. The sick bay attendants had been sent to bed at 10pm and the surgeons then took four-hourly watches from midnight. Volunteers from the crew and the First Aid party, even though untrained, also took four-hourly watches doing the nursing, under the supervision of the Paymaster and the Chaplain.

The Post-Engagement period

Early on Tuesday, the next morning, the ship arrived off Direction Island to find that the *Emden*'s landing party had escaped on board a captured schooner on the approach of *Sydney*. Dr H.S. Ollerhead, the Australian Medical Officer to the Telegraph Station, and his two assistants, came on board *Sydney* to assist the medical staff and it was now possible to assess the wounded under chloroform anaesthesia. Chloroform can cause burns if used in direct contact with the skin and accordingly, it was administered by a drop bottle onto a piece of cloth stretched over a metal frame, called the Schimmelbusch mask. This was placed over the patient's mouth and nose. Chloroform also has to be administered slowly and very carefully by the anaesthetist as chloroform poisoning and liver damage is always possible if too much is used. Despite these limitations, a total of two pounds, or nearly a kilogram, of chloroform was used during and after the engagement. Ether was first used to demonstrate the value of anaesthetics by a dentist, Dr Morton, in 1846, at the Massachusetts General Hospital in America, but this much safer anaesthetic was not available aboard *Sydney* in 1914.³

The first case to be operated on was the Able Seaman whose heart was exposed; unfortunately he died of blood loss two hours after extensive surgery to the chest. While they were operating on the next case, the ship arrived off North Keeling Island, about ten miles (16km) north-west of Direction Island. SMS *Emden* was beached there and was flying distress signals so *Sydney* anchored and a party under Dr Ollerhead went aboard. The exact number of German wounded on board the wreck is not known, but according to Dr Luther, the surviving German surgeon, there were about 80.⁴ Capt von Müller's Report to the German Admiralty stated a total of 65,⁵ but his numbers do not accord with the report of Dr

³ In later years chloroform was used only for the induction of anaesthesia and the much safer ether was then used to continue the operation.

⁴ Post Action Report.

⁵ Captain von Müller's Report to the German Admiralty, in A.W. Jose, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, vol.9, *The Royal Australian Navy*, p.202.

Danby of between 70 and 80. Julian Corbett gives 56 but does not state from where he obtained this information.⁶

However many there were, these injured men, about 35 to 40 being very severely injured, had been lying without any medical attention for up to 30 hours in a wrecked ship without water and in tropical heat. Their wounds were crawling with large maggots and were seriously infected. All available stretchers and hammocks were sent to *Emden* where, according to Dr Darby's Report, 'Men were lying killed and mutilated in heaps, with large blackened flesh wounds ... the ship was riddled with large gaping holes, and it was difficult to walk about the decks, and she was gutted with fire.' The wounded were evacuated from *Emden* to be taken by boat to *Sydney*. This transfer was difficult, and most painful for the injured, as there was a large surf running on the beach and the *Emden* was such a shambles that the lifting, carrying and lowering of the wounded from the ship onto the boats was necessarily rough, and *Emden* had no functioning boat davits left. When they reached *Sydney* the injured men were hoisted on board, in cots and stretchers using her davits, and taken below to the temporary Wardroom hospital.

SMS *Emden*'s assistant surgeon had been blown overboard and had swum ashore to the beach. There he had suffered from such severe thirst that in desperation he had drunk sea water and died.⁷ *Emden*'s surviving surgeon, Dr Luther, was physically unwounded as his station in action was the stokehold, but was described by Dr Darby as being 'a nervous wreck' for a short time as he had been alone on the wrecked ship with so many injured men and had no equipment and none of his staff. He was temporarily unable to help treat any injured on board *Sydney*, but eventually recovered and was then able to assist in the care of the wounded by performing surgery and giving anaesthetics.

As the German wounded were taken on board to the wardroom, it soon became overcrowded and many of them had to put up with most unsuitable accommodation for wounded men. They had to be placed along the corridors near the sick bay and soon there was scarcely room to move. All available cots and beds were drawn from the stores and blankets were given up to them by the ship's officers, but these were insufficient and some of the lesser wounded perforce went without any cover. It must also be remembered that the already overcrowded ship had taken on board not only the wounded but over 128 unwounded prisoners from the *Emden* and from the attending collier that had been scuttled after the engagement.

Further surgery on the patients from *Sydney* was ceased until an initial assessment could be made of the German wounded. Drs Danby, Todd and Ollerhead attended the more severe cases in the wardroom hospital and directed the First Aid party on how to treat the simpler ones. Some 35 to 40 of the German wounded were very serious. Some had legs hanging by ligaments, others had arms nearly blown off by shell explosion and all these required amputation of the limbs. There were several with severe facial injuries and one particular man had an extensive facial injury that was severely infected with foul-smelling pus. The odour was so appalling that, after cleaning and dressing the wound under morphia, he had to be removed from the Wardroom to the fresh air outside. This man died six hours later. Overall four German wounded died on board *Sydney*.

⁶ *History of the Great War, Naval Operations*, vol.1, 1920, p.384.

⁷ Post Action Report. Dr Darby wrote that 'After much persuasion he got a sailor to bring him some salt water, of which he drank a large quantity, and straightaway became raving mad and died.'

During the action, many of the injured had applied tourniquets of spun yarn, handkerchiefs or a piece of cloth to their limbs to stop bleeding. This had saved them from bleeding to death but they had failed to release their tourniquets, causing the limb below the constriction to become gangrenous and require amputation. Operations on the German wounded started at 6pm on Tuesday 10 November and continued until 4.30am on Wednesday the next morning, involving some ten and a half hours of very intensive surgery. The ship sailed to Direction Island on that day to return Dr Ollerhead, and then set sail for Colombo. The last batch of German wounded were given surgical attention during the day and the operating theatres had then to be cleaned again before they could be used.

On Thursday 12 November attention was able to be given to *Sydney*'s own wounded. These had been stabilised before the wounded from *Emden* came aboard but had not been given any surgery. The first patient had thirteen wounds due to shell fragments and one fragment had fractured both bones of the lower right leg above the ankle. In those pre-antibiotic days the usual treatment for a compound fracture, that is a fracture that communicates with an open wound, was amputation because of the danger of infection. However, Dr Darby attempted to save the foot and, after two hours of surgery the patient was placed in charge of a volunteer nurse in the Commander's cabin. His dressings had to be given under anaesthesia for the next fourteen days but the foot was eventually saved.

By nightfall the three doctors had finished all the major surgery, Dr Luther and Dr Todd alternating as anaesthetists and surgeons. There was no time to treat the lesser wounded cases, which were treated by the First Aid Party, and the wardroom hospital and its equipment had to be reorganised. The patients were fed and nursed by the First Aid Party and unwounded German prisoners helped with the German injured. The casualties from *Sydney* were nursed in the wardroom, but often had to be taken on deck because of the oppressive heat. The Germans filled the waist deck; they were cooler there, although they were regularly washed by heavy rain despite awnings and side curtains. A special party under the Chaplain was formed to look after the feeding of all the patients. The stretcher party attended to the movement of patients to and from the sick bay but this was difficult because of the overcrowding of the ship and the narrow hatchways and doorways.

The British armed liner, the *Empress of Russia*, joined *Sydney* at sea on the evening of Thursday the 12th. She had been sent to help with the wounded and to relieve *Sydney* of the German prisoners from *Emden* and the Chinese seamen from the collier. The weather was calm and on Friday the 13th the unwounded prisoners, the walking wounded and the cot cases were transferred. All of *Sydney*'s wounded and the more serious of the German wounded were kept back, including all those who had had surgery. New bedding was also transferred from *Empress of Russia*, as most of *Sydney*'s bedding that had been used on the patients was, in Dr Darby's words, 'most horribly filthy, foul and offensive', and had to be thrown overboard.

Now that they had more room, every case had a change of dressing, some badly needing this. The remaining bedding and blankets were put through the steam disinfecter. The parts of the ship adjacent to the wounded were in a filthy condition because the hot humid weather had contributed to the rapid decomposition of blood and wound discharge that had unavoidably leaked onto the corticene decks.⁸ The decks of the sick bay, the ward-room and starboard

⁸ [Editor's note: Corticene was a non-slip material used on ships' decks, described in one source as 'a linoleum, held down by thin brass strips. Colour: Medium brown ... the colour of milk chocolate' (<http://www.worldnavalships.com/forums/showthread.php?t=6040>; accessed 21 May 2014).]

corridors had to be scraped and scrubbed, but despite this an offensive odour still persisted in the lower decks.

It had been decided to make for Colombo because there was a Military Hospital there and *Sydney* arrived on the morning of Sunday 15 November. The German wounded were sent to the Military Hospital, and when this was full to the Civil Hospital. *Sydney*'s wounded remained on board but the ship was still in a most unsanitary condition and the Colombo health authorities were brought in to inspect and spray the ship. All this was done hurriedly as the Captain was anxious to put to sea after coaling. She left Colombo on Thursday the 19th, her medical staff continuing to treat those of her wounded who had not been taken off in Ceylon.

In conclusion it should be emphasised that in November 1914, during and after the engagement with SMS *Emden*, the young medical officers of HMAS *Sydney* treated the eleven surviving casualties from their own ship and then were suddenly required to treat about 70-80 wounded German sailors from *Emden*, of whom at least 35 were very seriously injured. Dr Darby, who had qualified as a doctor only in 1912 and Dr Todd, who had qualified only in 1914, were required to perform complicated chest, facial and abdominal operations and many amputations under the most difficult conditions imaginable on board a ship that had quite inadequate medical facilities.

Dr Charles Todd remained with HMAS *Sydney* until June 1916 when he developed pneumonia following an attack of influenza and was returned to Australia. He was subsequently invalided out of the Royal Australian Navy in 1917 and died from chronic heart disease ten years later in 1927.⁹ After the action Dr Darby was given accelerated promotion to Staff Surgeon (Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander) and was promoted to Surgeon Commander in 1922. He had a distinguished career in the post war Australian Navy, retiring as Surgeon Captain and a Commander of the British Empire. He had held the positions of the Director of the Australian Medical Services and then had two terms as Honorary Surgeon to His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia. He died in March 1980.¹⁰

-o0o-

The Society's Website <http://www.mhsa.org.au>

The Society's website offers information about Society and Branch activities as well as links to other military organisations. There is a Members' Notices page where members can post military-related notice regarding events or research assistance, or anything military! Please contact the webmaster to add notices or links shaw@iinet.net.au.

Have Your Say

Readers – want to respond to something you've seen in *Sabretache*?

Contributors – need to answer feedback, or to update information you've had published?

The 'As You Were ...' column is there for you!

Email the editor at editor@mhsa.org.au and have your comments included in the next issue.

-o0o-

⁹ The Australian National Archives.

¹⁰ The Medical Directory of Australia and the Australian National Archives.

FILIPINO AIF VOLUNTEERS FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY PART 3: THE SPAIN FAMILY

Major Paul A Rosenzweig (retd)¹

A tangible record of the Filipino diaspora in northern Australia² can be found in Darwin's 'Pioneer Cemetery', the old Palmerston Cemetery on Goyder Road. Darwin City Council has noted the historic significance of this site:

A glance at the headstones reveals that Darwin's cultural diversity emerged early in the town's history. Memorials reflect that Chinese, Japanese and Malay people were among our first and most enduring settlers. Typical was the Spain family, with its antecedents in the Philippines and Thursday Island before patriarch Antonio Spain arrived here in the 1880s. The family is still here, though it has moved on from trepang fishing, pearling and hairdressing.³

Antonio Spain and his English wife Elizabeth contributed two sons to the AIF during the Great War – and this family's contribution in the following war was equally noteworthy, with three grandsons serving in uniform while one son, a son-in-law and a great-grandson were killed.

Antonio and Elizabeth Spain

Dionisio Antonio Puerte Spain (1863-1926) was part of the first wave of Filipino migration to Australia in the third quarter of the 19th century – the adventurous seafarers and divers who established communities on Thursday Island and then later in Port Darwin. Typical of most of these pioneer families, little is known of their early history: there are very few surviving records, generally no letters or diaries, and little oral history passed on – typically, family history together with their secrets were all taken to the grave. This paper attempts to reconstruct this family history, using the most accurate interpretation of what few records exist.

Antonio was born in Cebu in the Philippines on 9 October 1863, the only child of Santa Puerte and his wife Matea Monthera. Antonio came to Thursday Island as a teenager in the late 1870s to dive for *bêche-de-mer* (sea cucumber or *trepang* – Antonio knew it as *balatan*). 'Puerte' could not be understood or pronounced on Thursday Island, so Antonio was instead known by the nickname of 'Antonio from Spain' (his homeland still being a Spanish colony) and 'Spain' became his adopted surname. In time, Antonio progressed to diving for pearls and through this became reasonably wealthy.

In Cooktown, north Queensland on 12 May 1885 Antonio, aged 23, married a 19-year-old English girl named Elizabeth Massey (1866-1951) who had come out from London the previous year, and they raised four sons on Thursday Island. In Philippine tradition (drawn from the Spanish custom), a mother's surname is typically given to a child as a 'middle name'. Because this custom was foreign to Elizabeth, Antonio instead gave their children his father's surname 'Puerte' (but for the first three children, officials incorrectly recorded the

¹ Major Paul Rosenzweig is a non-professional military historian and biographer. He is a Life Member of the RSL (Angeles City Sub-Branch) and Life Member of the Philippine Australian Defence Scholars Association, and a recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Medal (Republic of the Philippines).

² A demographic group of Filipino people who have settled in other parts of the world.

³ <http://www.darwin.nt.gov.au/live/cemeteries/pioneer-cemetery>; the Palmerston Cemetery closed in 1919 when the Garden Road Cemetery near the Botanic Gardens opened; it was gazetted as closed on 24 January 1922.

name as 'Portia'). After living a decade in the Colony of Queensland, Antonio was naturalised as a British subject on 4 April 1889.

In 1894, as the Japanese came to dominate the pearl industry in Torres Strait, Antonio and Elizabeth moved to Palmerston, at a time when the Northern Territory was, 'a far-off frontier area, separated by long sea voyages from civilisation'.⁴ The Filipino divers maintained their customs and traditions, and communicated with each other through a mix of Spanish, regional dialects and English. The men played music at social gatherings, and actively participated in sporting activities such as billiards, boxing and football.

Antonio continued as a pearler, and he and Elizabeth had a house on the Esplanade (although, had Elizabeth died, Antonio would have been forced out to the Police Paddock like the Conanans described in Part 2 of this series). Later, Antonio was a pearlshell processor and then a barber in Cavanagh Street. Elizabeth was an early businesswoman and entrepreneur: she opened Darwin's first newsagency and book store in Wood Street. She was a foundation member of the Darwin branch of the Australian Red Cross, and was very active in fund-raising: her extensive support of charitable organisations earned her the title 'Queen of Darwin'. In particular, she secured the contract for the quarrying of stone for the new Christ Church, and Antonio with his first four sons, Anastasio ('Pedro'), Catalino, Hignio ('Harry') and Felix, worked in quarrying, cutting and carting the stone: the foundation stone was laid in July 1902 and the church was consecrated later that year. While all of Darwin's Filipino families were Roman Catholic, the Spains were Church of England through Elizabeth's influence. Antonio himself was baptised at Christ Church on 2 June 1906.

In total Antonio and Elizabeth had eleven sons and one daughter (although five sons died in infancy). The children attended Darwin Public School, and were active participants in community activities such as the 'juvenile fancy dress ball' held each year at the Town Hall. During the Great War, two sons served in the AIF – one with honour, and the other less so.

Felix Beato Puerte Spain (1893-1966)

Served as: 3496 Private Felix Spain⁵

Felix Spain was born on Thursday Island on 21 February 1893, Antonio and Elizabeth's fourth son, and he was brought to Palmerston when he was one. The town was just 24 years old at that time, and it was later noted that Felix 'grew up with it' – apart from his AIF service, he lived in Darwin continuously for 73 years. On his passing in 1966 it was recorded that 'a link was broken with the really early days of Darwin'.

Felix worked as a railway fireman with the Public Works Department, and he and Harry (Hignio Salvo Puerte Spain) were active shooters in the Darwin Rifle Club. When Felix applied for the AIF, he had already served in uniform for seven months with the Darwin Cable Guard. This was the first defence presence in the Top End after the Northern Territory came under control of the Commonwealth in 1911, established in 1912, 'for the defence of the Cable Landing Station' based on the existing rifle club.⁶ As the threat from a German raider increased considerably in 1914, the Guard was called up for active service. Each

⁴ *Army News* (Darwin) 14 October 1944, p.3.

⁵ NTTG 31 December 1914; NAA: B2455, 'SPAIN FELIX', item barcode 8087909; AWM: AWM4-23/66 – War Diary, 49th Battalion AIF.

⁶ NAA: D845, 1912/2B, item barcode 442717 – 'Establishment of a cable guard at Port Darwin' – Secretary, Department of Defence, S1 Defence 1374/1/17 dated 15 January 1912.

member received the militia rate of pay, in addition to their government salaries – as a private soldier Felix Spain received an additional 5 shillings per day.

Among Felix Spain's colleagues in the Cable Guard was Anthony William Hare, employed in the Government Secretary's Department.⁷ Before coming to Darwin in 1913, 'Willy' Hare had served for 2½ years under the Compulsory Service Scheme with the Senior Cadets of the 74th Infantry Regiment in Adelaide. Hare attained the rank of Sergeant in the Cable Guard, and in April 1915 assumed command with the rank of Honorary Captain; he was also the Darwin Recruiting and Enlisting Officer for the AIF. The 'active service' call-out period ended on 19 August 1915,⁸ and Hare continued to command the Guard as a part-time organisation until he himself enlisted in the AIF in May 1916.

Felix Spain enlisted on 8 November 1915, aged 21. He correctly stated that he was a 'natural born British Subject' because he was of Filipino-English parentage, and his father was 'Australian' by virtue of having become naturalised in Queensland prior to federation. Felix stated that he was not married, although Army officials noted that he had a wife: he had married in Darwin in October 1913 (as a Catholic much to his mother's annoyance) and a *decree nisi* for the dissolution of his marriage to Maudie Spain was made absolute in June 1914. But annotations on his papers in 1915 identify another wife in Brisbane.

Felix was assigned to the 2nd Depot Battalion in Brisbane, but from June was allocated to a succession of reinforcement details, possibly because of his skills as a cook. He faced a District Court-Martial at Enoggera on 29 December 1916 for absenting himself from the Rifle Range Camp in November until he was apprehended in Brisbane on 14 December, and because he lost 'by neglect' his uniforms and regimental necessaries.⁹ In his defence, Felix stated that he was 'attending to matters' prior to his embarkation – his kit had gone away with his reinforcement detail, but he still had in his possession his sea kit. Eva Miriam Spain wrote an emotional letter ('My husband is in the Birdcage'), stating that Felix had been trying to secure his discharge on account of her health and impending operation. Felix was sentenced to undergo 35 days' detention and make good his losses, although this punishment was to cease upon his embarkation.

Felix embarked on 24 January 1917 with the 9th Reinforcements for the 52nd Bn AIF on A33 HMAT *Ayrshire*. He underwent training with the 13th Training Bn at Codford at the same time as his younger brother Percy was with the 7th Training Bn at Rolleston. Joining his battalion on the Ypres Salient in October, he met up with Willy Hare from the Cable Guard, and heard that Private William John Williams, a Boer War veteran from Darwin, had been killed just four months earlier. Hare himself was killed at Villers-Bretonneux on 24 April 1918, aged 27.

Felix suffered from gastritis and was evacuated to England, where he stayed until April 1918, attached to the Overseas Training Brigade for some of the time. He rejoined his battalion south of the River Ancre and faced the German offensive. Because of the heavy casualties incurred and shortage of reinforcements from Australia, the 52nd Bn was disbanded on 16 May 1918 in order to reinforce the 13th Brigade's remaining battalions. Accordingly, on 20 May Felix was transferred to the 49th Bn AIF, and he went with them from the Somme Reserve Line into the Bouzencourt Line. On the evening of 10 August the battalion advanced

⁷ NAA: B2455, 'HARE A W', item barcode 4968754; NTTG 26 March 1914, p.7.

⁸ NTTG 16 September 1915, p. 10 – Government Notice 161-15.

⁹ NAA: A471, 961, 'SPAIN Felix (Private)', item barcode 7119884.

on Etineham, on the north bank of the River Somme, some 9 kilometres south of Albert. At 9.35pm the battalion moved forward in column preceded by a tank, with another tank to the flank, and overran the machine-gun posts to successfully take the village.¹⁰ The battalion suffered just three wounded – among them Felix Spain, with gunshot wounds to the shoulder. He was evacuated through a casualty clearing station to the 18th General Hospital at Camiers. After recuperating, Felix joined the Australian Corps School at Calais in October and was there at war's end. He was granted 'indefinite leave' in London because earlier that year, on 9 March 1918, he had married Miss Edith Edetta Edmonds (1898-1985) of Spring Hill, Birmingham. Felix eventually embarked on the *Zealandic* on 27 March 1920 with his wife and newly-born daughter Queenie Eddetta Spain (1919-1923). They arrived in Sydney on 15 May, and Felix was discharged in Brisbane on 30 June 1920 (see Fig.1). Felix and Edith Spain lived in Wood Street in Darwin, and ultimately had seven children. Felix initially managed a couple of pearling luggers, while Edith managed the Blue Bird Café in Cavenagh Street.



Fig.1: 3496 Pte Felix Spain (1893-1966) with daughter Queenie who had been born in London in 1919; pictured in Brisbane in 1920 (photo provided by the Spain family)

Of Antonio and Elizabeth Spain's other surviving children after the war, Catalino and Harry were waterside workers in Darwin, Pedro and Joe had moved to Brisbane, and on 11 November 1924 their only daughter Lizzie (Elizabeth Louisa Puerte Spain) married Mounted Constable Joe Green of Maranboy, a decorated AIF veteran. Joseph Edwards Green of

Fifeshire, Scotland had enlisted on 19 November 1914, aged 21. He was at Gallipoli with the New Zealand & Australian Divisional Train, progressed to the Signal Squadron of the Anzac Mounted Division in March 1916, was a Temporary Sergeant, and then served with the Anzac Provost Corps. He was demobilised and discharged in the UK on 24 October 1919.¹¹ His medals were posted out as usual, but were returned to Base Records Office; in 1941 Green thought it might be time to claim them, 'if they are still lying around'. Apart from the 1914-15 Star trio, as a Provost Corps Corporal attached to HQ Australian Mounted Division he had also received the Romanian *Medaille Barbatie si Credinta* ('Valour & Loyalty

¹⁰ AWM: AWM4, 23/66/27 – 49th Battalion AIF War Diary, August 1918.

¹¹ NAA: B2455, GREEN J, item barcode 1926262; A471, 3360, item barcode 7239120.

Medal') 1st Class,¹² one of just three awarded to Australians in this grade.¹³ Green died in Sydney on 28 August 1961; in 1967 Elizabeth wrote to claim his Anzac Commemorative Medal.

Meanwhile in Darwin, Antonio Spain died of bowel cancer on 21 July 1926, after having lived in Australia for most of his life:

Another well known old identity passed away on Wednesday in the person of Antonio Spain. He was a native of the Phillipines [sic] but came to Australia about 50 years ago. His age is given as 64. He leaves a widow and a grown up family of five sons and one daughter.¹⁴

Antonio was buried in Garden Road Cemetery near the Botanic Gardens, in an unmarked grave in row 708; his son Harry was also buried there in 1957. Felix then took over his father's hairdressing saloon in Cavanagh Street, famous for the 'Spain Special' which was one of the fastest haircuts possible. In 1928, Edith's café was renamed the 'Canberra Café' and was being operated by Felix's sister-in-law Mrs Catalino Spain (Gertrude Conanan) and Mrs Henry Lee (Emelia Conanan) – the sisters of Great War volunteers Ricardo and Elias Conanan.¹⁵

Felix Spain's Great War entitlement was the British War Medal and Victory Medal pair, plus one 'Wound Stripe' and the 'Discharged Returned Soldier Badge'. France and Belgium were not to be Felix Spain's only experience of war. After the first Japanese bombing raids on Darwin of 19 February 1942, in which his brother Catalino was killed on the wharf, Felix evacuated his family to Glebe, NSW and he worked for the Allied Works Council. His elder son and two nephews served in uniform during that war. In January 1945, Felix sought a replacement Discharge Certificate and Returned Soldier Badge, stating: 'Evacuated from Darwin after the first raid leaving everything behind. House bombed to the ground'.¹⁶

A new badge was sent to him on 12 January 1945, costing him one shilling. In 1966 Felix sought replacements for his lost medals: 'Due to the bombing of Darwin by the Japanese in 1942 I lost all my service medals'. He submitted a statutory declaration in which he claimed:

Consequent to the bombing of Darwin by the Japanese aircraft on 19th February, 1942 and following raids, my first war campaign medals were taken from by home by an unknown person. I now declare these medals lost.¹⁷

The replacement medals, which cost him \$3.47 in the 'new' currency, were forwarded in December. Two weeks later Felix Spain died, on 17 December 1966, aged 74. His obituary called him the 'longest established resident of Darwin' and referred to him as a 'man of lively nature and strong character'. Felix was buried in the old 'Pioneer Cemetery' with earlier family burials.¹⁸

¹² *London Gazette* No. 31560 of 20 September 1919, Second Supplement dated 20 September 1919, p.11753; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* No. 10 dated 29 January 1920, p.86; AWM: RCDIG1068703-61 – recommendation dated 24 April 1918: <http://www.awm.gov.au/people/rolls/R1564275/>

¹³ Williams, R D (1981) *Medals to Australians* (3rd Edition, 1990). Pocket Book Publications, p.83: there was a total of 16 awards to Australians (all grades).

¹⁴ NTTG 23 July 1926, p.3.

¹⁵ NTTG 3 April 1928, p.2; *Sabretache* LV-1, March 2014, pp.35-47.

¹⁶ NAA: B2455, item barcode 8087909 – Statutory Declaration by F Spain dated 28 December 1944.

¹⁷ NAA: B2455, item barcode 8087909 – Statutory Declaration by F Spain dated 6 April 1966.

¹⁸ *Northern Territory News*, 19 December 1966; Palmerston Cemetery, Plot 185; buried 20 December 1966.

Prudencio Vidal Puerte Spain (1897-1919)

*First served as: Private Prudencio Spain*¹⁹

Prudencio ‘Percy’ Spain was born in Palmerston on 28 April 1897, Antonio and Elizabeth’s eighth child. He had served a year-and-a-half as an apprentice fitter with the Public Works Department when he attended a recruiting meeting at Darwin Town Hall on 20 September 1915, with fellow Filipinos Ricardo Conanan and Matthew and Palencio Garr, and volunteered immediately. He returned his Application to Enlist the following day bearing the signatures of his parents giving their consent (for persons under 21 years of age): he gave his age as 18½ years, which was correct.

Prudencio and his fellow Filipinos were sworn-in for the Fourth Northern Territory Contingent on 6 October 1915. A farewell smoke social was held in Darwin Town Hall the next evening, and a commemorative program printed on silk recorded the names of each of the contingent members, including four Filipino-Australians. On arrival in Brisbane on 20 October, Prudencio was assigned to D Company, 7th Depot Bn at Bell’s Paddock Camp, Enoggera. He faced several military disciplinary hearings and then, during periods of leave in April and September 1916, Prudencio (‘alias B Carter’) was charged by the Queensland Police for falsely pretending to be a returned soldier, claiming he had been wounded in the leg at Gallipoli.²⁰ In Enoggera, he was back-squadded to the 12th Depot Bn and was ultimately discharged on 11 May 1916 as ‘services no longer required’.

Prudencio Vidal Puerte Spain (1897-1919)

*Served again as: 6645 Private Percy Spain*²¹

Determined to enlist, Prudencio went to Perth: he gave his age as 21 (avoiding the need for parental consent) and falsely claimed five years’ substantive service in the Darwin Government Workshops. He was enlisted on 19 December 1916 under the name of ‘Percy Spain’, underwent training at Blackboy Hill Camp, and embarked on A28 HMAT *Miltiades* in Fremantle on 29 January 1917.

Percy went to France on 13 June 1917 with a draft for the 52nd Bn AIF. His ensuing career unfolded as a tragic spiral of charade and deceit: he told his mother in a letter that he survived a bomb blast in September 1917 that killed the other eight around him (he actually suffered a cut head – ‘accidental’).²² He was evacuated with ‘trench fever’ (a condition transmitted by body lice) and was gone by the time Felix joined the battalion, but insisted that he had shell-shock. He would later tell people, and indeed he swore on oath during his court-martial, that he had enlisted at the age of 17, both his parents were dead, he had lost five brothers killed at the Front, and that he had been decorated for bravery at Gallipoli.

Late in 1918 Percy was twice court-martialled: firstly for wearing rank and ribbons he was not entitled to (the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Conduct Medal, Military Medal and 1914-15 Star) and then for masquerading as an officer (and also for wearing ribbons with no

¹⁹ NAA: B2455, ‘SPAIN PRUDENCIO’, item barcode 8082278; Northern Territory Library, 243112: Manuscript 37; NTTG 23 September 1915, p.18; 7 October 1915, pp.6, 15, 18; 14 October 1915, pp.18, 24.

²⁰ *The Brisbane Courier*, 11 April 1916, p.10; *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 11 April 1916, p.2; NAA: B2455, ‘SPAIN PERCY’, item barcode 8087917.

²¹ NAA: B2455, ‘SPAIN Percy’, item barcode 8087917; AWM: AWM4–23/66 – 49th Battalion AIF War Diary; AWM4–23/69 – 52nd Battalion AIF War Diary; AWM4–23/82 – Overseas Training Brigade War Diary.

²² NTTG 19 January 1918, p.9.

entitlement, but this charge was dropped).²³ For this latter offence he was sentenced to 90 days' detention in Lewes Detention Barracks in Sussex (His Majesty's Prison Lewes). The National Australian Archives file for this second court-martial includes his brooch of three ribbons (but lacking the miniature VC device), and a Military Registration Form for a hotel stay on 18 November 1918 which Percy, claiming to be a Lieutenant, signed as 'Percy Boyle VC DCM MM'.

After his release in March 1919, during the passage back to Australia he failed to re-embark in Durban and then falsely claimed to be 66 Regimental Sergeant-Major Percy Boyle of the 45th Bn (it is noteworthy that his Service number was '6645'). He was embarked 'under close arrest' on the *Durham Castle* for Capetown, and then embarked 'in Detention' on 10 May 1919 on HT *Commonwealth*. He disembarked on 30 May in Perth, and was discharged there on 4 July 1919. Even in his discharge medical, he claimed that scars on his back were from wounds received at Gallipoli. Perhaps his most telling statement though was that tendered in mitigation at his first court-martial:

When I went to France I was only seventeen years of age. I have recently lost my parents . . . Since my parents have died I do not know what I have been doing. I have been examined by an M.O. who said that I was mad.²⁴

On 27 September Percy collapsed in a theatre in Perth, in uniform and still claiming to be 'Percy Boyle'; of note, 'the deceased was wearing the Anzac, the D.C.M., and M.M. ribbons, which decorations he won at the war'.²⁵ He died in the Perth Public Hospital, aged 22, and was buried in Karrakatta Cemetery where he is listed as 'Percy Spain, also known as Percy Boyle'.²⁶ Evidence tendered to the inquest clearly showed the cause of death to be a self-administered dose of strychnine – Percy did not want to die in obscurity, but instead as the decorated war hero 'Percy Boyle'. A photograph found in the deceased's pocket was forwarded to Darwin, and Mrs Spain was asked for a recent photograph of her son. The photograph Elizabeth sent to Base Records confirmed that 'Percy Boyle' was indeed Percy Spain, and the Secretary of the Darwin RSL advised Base Records that the photograph in Percy's effects was in fact a photograph of Mrs Spain. This exchange of photographs put to rest any doubt regarding the identity of the deceased. Percy's service record confirms his medal entitlement as the standard pair only: his British War Medal was received by his mother on 30 November 1921, and the Victory Medal on 12 June 1923.

At his first medical in 1915 he was noted to only have various scars, but by December 1916 he had acquired a tattoo of his mother's name on his right arm. This tattoo and the photograph he carried attest to the affection he felt for his mother. But on hearing of the circumstances of Percy's death Elizabeth effectively disowned him because of the disgrace he had brought upon the family, which was by then of significant standing in the Darwin community.

*

²³ NAA: A471 '13244', item barcode 7528370 (Court Martial of 10 October 1918); A471 '22023', item barcode 7654613 (Court Martial of 17 December 1918).

²⁴ NAA: A471 '13244', item barcode 7528370 (Court Martial of 10 October 1918).

²⁵ *The West Australian* (Perth) 17 October 1919, p.8.

²⁶ <http://www2.mcb.wa.gov.au/NameSearch/details.php?id=KB00022084> – Grave reference Anglican, MC, 0296.

World War 2

Except for an occasional visit to Brisbane, the Northern Territory had remained as Elizabeth Spain's home continuously from 1894. After Antonio's death, Elizabeth went to live with her daughter south of Darwin. She then moved to Brisbane in October 1932: at the age of 66, 'Granny Spain' was considered one of Darwin's oldest inhabitants.²⁷ During World War 2, Elizabeth Spain saw three grandsons enlist in the military forces. Yet it was her son Catalino that she lost due to enemy action.

DX605 Private Felix Spain (1923-2001).²⁸ Felix Richard William Spain was born in Darwin on 23 February 1923, Felix and Edith Spain's third child and first son; his younger brother Dennis was born in 1934 and was still at school during the war. Young Felix was a prize-winner at the King's Jubilee Celebrations held in Darwin in June 1935, together with fellow Filipinos Miguel and John Perez, and Priscilla and Joey Conanan. Felix enlisted in Darwin on 25 June 1940 at the age of 17, but giving his age as 20; he is believed to be the youngest Territorian to have enlisted for active service in World War 2 (see Fig.2). Late in the war Felix was serving with the 2/101st General Transport Company, AASC in Port Moresby and then in Morotai; he was discharged on 25 September 1945. Felix passed away in Tumbi Umbi, NSW on 8 July 2001.



Fig.2: DX605 Private Felix Richard William Spain (1923-2001), the first son of Felix and Edith Spain (photo courtesy of Leanne Wood)

Q268434 Private Ernie Spain (1913-1996).²⁹ Ernest Herbert Spain was born in Darwin on 3 June 1913, the youngest of three children of Anastasio ('Pedro') Spain and his wife Fanny (nee Chapman). As a youth, Ernie was a tennis player of note and like most of the Filipino boys played Australian Rules with Wanderers Football Club. He escorted his only sister Louisa when she married Dick Butler in 1931. Later that year he went to Queensland and changed codes: he was a winger in the Toowoomba first grade rugby team, described as 'short of body, but long limbed and well shouldered'.³⁰ Ernie Spain volunteered for home defence in Charleville, Queensland on 6 May 1942, and served with the 18th Line of Communication Signals in Queensland until 27 November 1944. He passed away in Brisbane on 29 September 1996.

²⁷ *The Brisbane Courier* 22 October 1932, p.22; *The Queenslander* (Brisbane) 27 October 1932, p.34.

²⁸ <http://www.wv2roll.gov.au/Veteran.aspx?ServiceId=A&VeteranId=844212>; NAA: B883, 'DX605', item barcode 6663209; *Northern Standard* 29 November 1940, p.4.

²⁹ <http://www.wv2roll.gov.au/Veteran.aspx?serviceId=A&veteranId=98253>; NAA: B884, 'Q268434', item barcode 4875847.

³⁰ *Northern Standard* 9 September 1938, p. 4.

Catalino Portia Spain (1887-1942).³¹ Catalino Spain was the second son of Antonio and Elizabeth Spain, born on Thursday Island on 25 November 1887 (Fig.3). Catalino married Tolentino Conanan's first daughter Gertrude Maria Da Souza Conanan (1891-1955) on 9 February 1909 in the Roman Catholic chapel: this was no doubt at Tolentino's insistence, but it angered Catalino's mother Elizabeth. Nevertheless, the wedding was followed by a celebration at the Spain residence on the Esplanade, as would be expected at a Filipino ceremony of this nature: 'There was music, dancing, singing, and oratory, and the festivities were kept going merrily till about midnight.'³²



Fig.3: Catalino Portia Spain (1887-1942), the second son of Antonio and Elizabeth Spain, circa 1924. Also in the photograph (left to right): Catalino's son Dan (later served RAAF), his wife Gertrude (nee Conanan), her brother Ricardo Conanan (standing), Mrs Elizabeth Spain, and Mrs Lizzie Green with her husband Mounted Constable Joe Green (photo courtesy of Leanne Wood)

Catalino Spain was an employee of the Commonwealth Railways, and became a notable member of the Darwin community. He and Gertrude lived in McMinn Street and had two children: Christina Liboria Spain (1908-1973) and Daniel Cathalino Spain (1914–2010) – Antonio would have called them his *dos hijos* in Spanish, or *dos ihos* in Filipino. On 4 December 1924, at the age of 16, Christina married Doroteo Francisco from Manila at Saint Mary's 'Star of the Sea' Catholic Church in Darwin. He was aged 22, the wireless operator

³¹ Griffiths (1947) p. 79; Hall (1980) p. 48; Lockwood (1984) pp. 69-71.

³² NTTG 12 February 1909, p. 3.

on the Norwegian cattle boat *Pronto* which had come to collect cattle; when she left for Manila on 6 December she was ‘gaily decorated with flags’ for the bride and groom.³³ Christina gave birth to six children in the Philippines, but returned to Darwin at the beginning of 1937 pregnant with her youngest Filipino child, Roderick. Doroteo Francisco served with the US Navy during World War 2, and her eldest child fought as a guerrilla.

Christina remarried in Darwin on 4 April 1939, to Raymond Brooks of the Darwin Mobile Force, a mixed infantry-artillery garrison force stationed in Darwin during the period known later as ‘BB’ – ‘Before Blitz’. Brooks was a descendant of Captain Richard Brooks, who had come to the Colony of New South Wales in 1802 as captain of a convict transport, and was granted land at Cockle Bay on Darling Harbour by Governor Macquarie. When the DMF was disbanded on 20 August 1940, Brooks continued serving with the 18th Field Battery RAA as part of the Darwin garrison. Young Roderick, born in Darwin, was adopted by Brooks and grew up as the eldest child in their Australian family. By 1942 Christina had given birth to a further three children, the youngest born in September 1941.

After being evacuated from Darwin, Raymond Brooks served in the RAAF for 22 years from 3 March 1944 until 23 April 1966, retiring on his 55th birthday with the rank of sergeant. Christina and Raymond lived in Dulwich Hill, NSW where Raymond worked at the local train station. They ultimately had eight children together: they could all understand the Filipino language that Christina and her family spoke, but were unable to speak it themselves. Even today, Filipino dishes feature prominently in the kitchens of Christina’s descendants. Christina passed away on 21 October 1973 and was cremated (as later was Raymond); she was memorialised at Botany Cemetery, where her mother Gertrude was buried.

Meanwhile in Darwin on 19 February 1942, Catalino Spain was rostered to work with No.3 Gang on the MV *Neptuna*, moored on the outer berth and heavily laden with defence stores, depth charges and anti-aircraft ammunition. As the raid commenced, No.3 Gang had just opened the No.1 hatch to unload the cargo. Three bombs from the first high level attack struck the wharf forward of *Neptuna* and another landed directly on the hold where the men were working: Domingo Dominic was killed instantly. Then a dive-bomber released a bomb directly through the bridge and into the saloon; another struck the engine room, causing the depth charges to start exploding. The mid-ship winchman was John Cubillo, of mixed Scottish-Larrakia-Filipino descent christened ‘Juan Roque Cubillo’ but popularly known as ‘Johnny’ or ‘Rocky’: he was last seen running on the wharf before he was lost in a bomb blast.

Catalino Spain, aged 54, was also blown off the wharf by a bomb. His mate Jack Rogers found him floating face-down but still barely alive: despite being wounded himself, Rogers supported Catalino in the water before he passed away. Moments later the *Neptuna* exploded, raining debris and flames over a wide area, and sank beside the wharf. Catalino’s body was later recovered, washed up on the shore, and was buried in one of the collective graves on the beach. These bodies were all reinterred at East Point the following day, and on 1 July they were exhumed and taken to Adelaide River War Cemetery for burial.

Raymond Brooks was lucky to survive the bombing – he had just left the Post Office before it was destroyed in a direct hit. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that when Brooks was

³³ *Townsville Daily Bulletin* 19 December 1924; NT Certificate of Marriage issued 17 February 2014.

evacuated from Darwin he had the unpleasant duty of informing his wife Christina that both her father and uncle (Ricardo Conanan) had died in the raid:

Grim stories of the two attacks by Japanese aircraft on Darwin were told by 400 evacuees who arrived in Sydney by train yesterday. Most of the evacuees were men and some bore scars, as mementoes of their experience ... Mr Raymond Brooks was met by his wife carrying her six month-old baby in her arms. He had to tell her that her father, Mr. Catalino Spain and her uncle had been killed. Mr Spain was machine gunned, and his body was hurled into the harbour by a bomb blast.³⁴

135069 Leading Aircraftman Dan Spain (1914-2010).³⁵ Daniel Cathelino Spain was born in Darwin on 5 September 1914, Catalino and Gertrude Spain's second child and only son. The only son, or *único hijo* as Antonio would have said, drawn from the Spanish, is significant in Filipino culture as he ensures patronymic survival – the continuation of the father's surname. In this family, this custom proved to be of particular significance following Catalino's death. As a boy, Dan used to hunt in the scrub south of Darwin with the Cubillo boys: his mother Gertrude would give him a small bottle of soy sauce to have with the kangaroo that they caught. In Sydney on 25 January 1943, Dan married Bess Que-Noy from an old Chinese family which had been resident in the Northern Territory longer than most European families. They were living in Surrey Hills when Dan enlisted in the RAAF just six months later, aged 28: he served from 15 June 1943 to 15 April 1946. Dan Spain proudly marched or rode with the RAAF contingent in Matraville each Anzac Day until he passed away on 8 May 2010. He was buried at Botany Cemetery with his mother.

Commemoration

The names of Felix and Prudencio Spain were recorded as volunteers from Darwin on a Public Works Department Honour Roll which was unveiled by the Administrator on 13 May 1916.³⁶ By 1916 some 82 government employees had departed for active service, while another six volunteers had been medically rejected. With such a significant contribution the Superintendent of Public Works Mr Kellaway expressed his hope that the Honour Roll should be a reminder to all that, 'when duty called, the "Public Shirks" ... did not shirk the grandest call of all – that of their Empire'.³⁷

On the Darwin Soldiers' Monument (Darwin Cenotaph) however, the name of Percy Spain was wrongly included because the committee believed that he had died as a result of shell-shock. Unfortunately the belief in Percy's claimed DCM and MM persisted: even the local Darwin newspaper, under the heading 'The Late Sergt. Spain', cited his decorations.³⁸ But at least after his period of incarceration he no longer claimed to have a VC. The family did not receive a memorial plaque in his name and, quite correctly, Percy Spain is not listed on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial.

Following the unveiling of the Darwin Soldiers' Monument on Sunday 24 April 1921, a number of wreaths were laid, including ones by Elizabeth and Antonio Spain and family, and Mr and Mrs Felix Spain. Even though Elizabeth had burnt all of Percy's letters, his name was on the cenotaph and paying their respects was the proper thing to do. One night in October

³⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW) 4 March 1942, p.11; see also Powell (2007) p.215.

³⁵ <http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/Veteran.aspx?serviceId=R&veteranId=973894>; NAA: A9301, '135069', item barcode 5352045.

³⁶ NTTG 25 May 1916, p.16.

³⁷ NTTG 18 May 1916, p.12.

³⁸ NTTG 25 October 1919, p.7.

1927, Elizabeth Spain's residence in Wood Street was forcibly entered and one of Percy's war medals and a sum of money were stolen:

The crime is a particularly mean one in as much as the thief was obviously aware that he was robbing from a lonely woman who was absent at work and the war medal the only remembrance left to her of a lost son.³⁹

Also listed on this monument was the name of 'Willy' Hare, whom Felix had served beside in both the Darwin Cable Guard and the 52nd Bn AIF. In 1968, 'Hare Street' in the Darwin suburb of Moil was named in his memory.⁴⁰ The name of William John Williams from Darwin, who was killed in action in Belgium on 7 June 1917 while also serving with the 52nd Bn, was one of several inadvertently omitted by the Soldiers' Monument Committee.

During World War 2, Christina's son Florenco Francisco had fought in the defence of the Philippines and was beheaded by the Japanese. His remains were interred as an 'unknown soldier' in the Republic Memorial Cemetery in Manila, established in May 1947 and renamed *Libingan ng mga Bayani* ('Heroes' Cemetery) on 27 October 1954. Florenco is among the many honoured there by the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, to which Christina and Raymond paid an emotional visit in 1967. This memorial is today the site of the annual Anzac Day service conducted by the Australian and New Zealand Embassies in Manila.

Catalino Spain and Ricardo Conanan were among 22 waterside workers killed on Darwin wharf on 19 February 1942. Every year since, just before the main 'Bombing of Darwin' service at the cenotaph, these wharf labourers have been honoured in a private ceremony where families would cast wreaths onto the water in their memory. Together with all of the civilians killed, Catalino and Ricardo are commemorated on a large Darwin City Council plaque which was unveiled on 19 February 1971 (see *Sabretache* 55.1, March 2014). On the 60th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin in 2012, a Wharf Memorial was unveiled to specifically commemorate the waterside workers killed on the wharf: among them, five Filipino-Australians – 'Chico' Chavez, 'Johnny' Cubillo and Domingo Dominic plus the Great War volunteer Ricardo Conanan and his brother-in-law Catalino Spain.

On her death in Brisbane on 3 April 1951 at the age of 85, Elizabeth Spain was described as 'a grand old lady', survived by more than 20 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren.⁴¹ Among them, the name of Catalino Spain was perpetuated when Christina named one of her daughters 'Catalina Victoria Brooks' in his memory.⁴²

Elizabeth and Antonio had certainly lived through the fullest range of military experiences. Their son Felix had mobilised locally with the Darwin Cable Guard in 1915, was wounded in France in 1918, and then lost his home in 1942 during the Japanese attacks on Darwin. Percy on the other hand had a much less illustrious war record, while their only daughter Lizzie married a decorated Gallipoli veteran. In the next war, Elizabeth saw three grandsons serve in uniform, but lost her son and son-in-law to enemy action on 19 February 1942 – as well as a great-grandson who fought and died in the Philippines. The family's contribution to Darwin

³⁹ NTTG 4 October 1927, p.2.

⁴⁰ *Northern Territory Gazette* No.42, dated 25 September 1968.

⁴¹ Death Register (Queensland) 1951/B31712; *Townsville Daily Bulletin* (Queensland) 4 February 1936, p.10; *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) 5 April 1951, p. 12; *Northern Standard* 6 April 1951, p.5.

⁴² Because Catalino is most commonly mentioned in connection with the Bombing of Darwin, his name has often been given as 'Catalina', taken from the flying planes that were destroyed in the air-raids, but this is incorrect. In Filipino custom, based on the Spanish, 'Catalina' is the female equivalent of 'Catalino'.

was honoured in 1962 with the naming of ‘Spain Place’ in memory of the Filipino patriarch Antonio Spain.⁴³

*

Acknowledgments

I am again grateful for the assistance of Mr Januario John Rivas, Consul General *ad honorem* for the Philippines in Darwin. Of interest, in 1972 John had come from the Philippines to Sydney to teach Science, and was taken in as a lodger by Christina and Raymond Brooks. John heard about Christina’s grandparents Antonio and Elizabeth, her parents Catalino and Gertrude, and the bombing of Darwin, and was soon drawn north. He achieved ‘Master Teacher’ status, was a Founding Member and First President of the Filipino Association of the Northern Territory, and ultimately became the Philippine Consul General. I would also like to thank Mrs Isabel Conanan Silva Lagas, Mrs Leanne Wood, Mr Roderick Brooks and other Spain family descendants for kindly providing photographs and information.

References

- Administrator’s Annual Report for 1915-16 & 1916-17, dated 30 September 1917.
- Australian War Memorial: First World War Nominal Roll and Embarkation Rolls.
- Darwin City Council: <http://www.darwin.nt.gov.au/live/cemeteries/pioneer-cemetery>
- Griffiths, O (1947) *Darwin drama*. Bloxham & Chambers.
- Hall, T (1980) *Darwin 1942. Australia’s Darkest Hour*. Methuen Australia.
- Lockwood, D (1984) *Australia’s Pearl Harbour*. New Edition. Rigby.
- Lockwood, D (2005) *Australia under attack: The bombing of Darwin – 1942*. New Holland, Frenchs Forest, NSW.
- ‘NT Place Names Register’, Northern Territory Government:
<http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/placenames/index.jsp>
- Northern Territory Library, Bombing of Darwin Roll of Honour:
<http://www.ntlexhibit.nt.gov.au/exhibits/show/bod>
- Parsons, V (1966) ‘Brooks, Richard (1765–1833)’. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.1, Melbourne UP: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/brooks-richard-1830>
- Powell, A (2007) *The Shadow’s Edge*. Charles Darwin University Press, Darwin, NT.
- Spain family records: <http://www.mundia.com/au/Tree/Family/5100331/6291015718>
- Spain family records: <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/w/o/o/Leanne-M-Wood/WEBSITE-0001/UHP-0001.html>

Abbreviations used in Notes

AWM = Australian War Memorial
 NAA = National Archives of Australia
 NTTG = *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*

-o0o-

⁴³ *Northern Territory Gazette* No.46, dated 3 October 1962.

SOCIETY NOTICES

A Report on the Queensland Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia 2014 Biennial Conference

I had the great pleasure of attending the Queensland Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia (MHSA) 2014 Biennial Conference with Air Vice Marshal Barry Gratton AM, DFC (Retd) representing Federal Council. The choice of conference venue at the Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum was inspired and I was greatly impressed by the presentation and quality of exhibits there. Everyone appreciated the opportunity for participants to wander at their leisure. The conference program was eclectic and had something of interest for all tastes. I enjoyed every presentation and can say that I came away more knowledgeable on a wide variety of topics.

It was a great privilege to hear Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith SG MC (Retd) speak on the Battle of Long Tan and I also greatly enjoyed Pat Hall's presentation on 'Isandhlwana: An Australia Connection' and David Howell's 'The Capture of German New Guinea'. Gail Gunn gave a paper on '*Mutiny on the Bounty*' about the cinematographic atrocities inflicted on history by the silver screen which was witty and erudite. The short talks by members on 'Works in progress' revealed the breadth and dogged hard work that often our unsung researchers undertake.

One of the strengths of this conference was the wide variety of topics presented, as I believe that a specific theme is too limiting for the MHSA, whose members' interests embrace all facets of military history, collecting and reenactment. The MHSA should be and is a broad church. It was refreshing to have papers presented ranging from 'History of Talbot House: Toc H 1915-1918' by Raymond Geise OAM, KSI to 'WO2 Max "Dad" Kelly AATV: The only Australian soldier at the United States and South Vietnam Battle of Hamburger Hill in May 1969', delivered in period uniform by Allan Fuary.

The lunch and dinners reflected this mix of interests and were a unique opportunity to network. The conference was a most enjoyable time spent among a knowledgeable and welcoming group of enthusiasts. Where else could you have a learned conversation about Oliver Cromwell and amphibious operations by the New Model Army with Paul Sutton, who is an expert on the subject!

A meeting of Federal Council was chaired by me and resulted in a valuable and frank exchange of views and even better suggested solutions. The Federal Council intends to provide teleconferencing facilities for future meetings to allow better representation of the views of the States and Territories. There is also strong support for the use of electronic funds transfer (EFT) to modernise the banking of monies from branches.

It was identified that there is governance work to be done in revising federal and state constitutions, incorporation, examining legal liabilities, creating more effective reporting mechanisms and some business process re-engineering to refine administrative processes. Gail Gunn very kindly accepted the role of Membership Secretary for MHSA. As Gail is based in South Australia there is a good synergy in this appointment as Paul Skrebels (the Editor of *Sabretache*) is based in Adelaide.

The organisation throughout the conference was excellent and resulted in a memorable 2014 Biennial Conference. I believe the Queensland Branch have set a benchmark for other

States/Territories to aspire to in future years. I am awaiting confirmation of the state that will host the next conference in 2016. Federal Council recognises that these events are becoming more expensive to run and can assist with operating costs as was done for the Queensland Branch in 2014.* In my career I organised many public events and international visits so have a better appreciation than most of the sheer volume of administrative and logistic work that goes into running a successful event like this.

Nigel Webster, Federal Vice President

* Members please note the following additional statement from the Federal President: Federal Council approved a grant of \$2250 to the Queensland branch for the running of the 2014 conference after representations from the branch President, Anthony Staunton, following an offer from Federal Council of August 2013 in accordance with past practice. The Federal President discussed the offer with Mr Staunton in February 2014, which had previously been communicated to the Queensland branch in August and November 2013.

Special Gallipoli Issue of *Sabretache* – Update

Federal Council of the Society has secured an ANZAC Centenary Grant from the Commonwealth Government to cover the production of a special Gallipoli Edition of *Sabretache* to mark the Centenary of the Great War to be released in January 2015. The grant covers the production of 1,000 copies of the Gallipoli Edition of *Sabretache* which will be in addition to the usual four editions for that year. Federal Council through the Editor of *Sabretache* now welcomes articles with a Gallipoli theme from members. Please forward any articles for consideration marked Gallipoli Edition to the Editor.

Rohan Goyne, Federal President

Renewals for the 2014/15 membership year now due

Branch membership: Branch members please contact your treasurer for the necessary payment details. *Corresponding membership* (individuals and families): \$A35, overseas \$A45. *Institutional membership:* \$A40, overseas \$A50.

Cheque (drawn on Australian Bank in \$Aus) made out to Military Historical Society of Australia. Please send cheque and details to: Gail Gunn, Membership Secretary MHSA, PO Box 550, Mitcham, South Australia 5062, Australia. Or direct deposit to: MHSA Federal Account: BSB Number 803205 and Federal account number 20538555. Reference details should include organisation name and INSTCOR to denote corresponding member. If paying via direct deposit, please also send membership renewal form to Gail Gunn as above.

POW Diaries of Cpl Edward Long AIF Available for Research

Member Damien Finlayson was attending the Victorian annual reunion lunch of the Defence Reserve Association and met a gentleman, Mr John Paul, who discovered the handwritten POW diaries of Cpl Edward Long who was captured at the fall of Singapore. Mr Paul has scanned each page of the dairies and compiled them onto a CD. He has returned the original diaries to the family they came from, but he has a lot of very detailed information in relation to Cpl Long's experiences as a POW and is happy for all the information he has collated to go somewhere and something to come out of it. Damien is therefore seeking interest from a member who might have special interest in WW2 and our POWs in particular – please contact Mr Paul directly by phone: 03 90780918, or email: johnpaul@optusnet.com.au.

Damien Finlayson

AS YOU WERE ...

Feedback from Readers and Contributors

Dennis Mulroneu follows up his book review in the March 2014 issue with this piece of additional research:

- Researching for my review of *A Magnificent ANZAC, The untold story of Lieutenant Colonel Maurice Wilder Neligan*, I was intrigued by the verse written by Neligan during his return to Australia at the end of the war. Author Peter Holmes found the original, in French in Neligan's hand, and his translation reads 'Life is vain, a little hope / A pretty dream, and then goodnight'. The original verse was attributed to Leon Montenaeken, more properly known as Louis Moreau Constant Corneille van Montenaeken (1859 - ?) and the version attributed to him in the foreword of *The Sentimental Bloke*, published in 1915 was in French too:

*La vie est vaine, Un peu d'amour, Un peu de haine, Et puis – bonjour!
La vie est brève, Un peu d'espoir, Un peu de rêve, Et puis – bonsoir!*

There are many translations on the internet (often titled *Nought and too Much*) and this is one I have used to demonstrate how Neligan adapted it:

Life is vain, A little love, A little hate, And then – good day!
Life is short, **A little hope**, **A little dream**, **And then – goodnight!**

This is sometimes attributed to George Du Maurier, the French-born British author and cartoonist, because of its similarity to a poem in his book *Trilby* (1894). But the question remains, how else might Neligan have come across Montenaeken? It appears to have been a very popular piece or song. The National Library of Australia website has a music score for voice and piano titles '*A song of life*' / words by Leon De Montenaeken; music and English version by Teresa Del Riego, published in London and Melbourne in 1902. The lyrics are in English and French.

A less flattering example of its popularity was an appearance in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 20 January 1894 when a reader nominated it for a correspondence column called 'One or Two Most Pathetic Lines'. This nomination was reported the *Star* of Christchurch, New Zealand on 24 May 1894 in a column titled 'Miss Colonia in London: Hints to her cousins across the sea' (datelined 27 January). In reporting from the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s list, 'Miss Colonia' said: 'Quite a number of people quoted Leon Montenaeken's little song, which you may remember the "tired-of-life" carpet-cleaner had in his pocket when he committed suicide last summer', and included the two stanzas in French.

So Neligan is likely to have been familiar with the lines, which appear to have been popular enough to become somewhat tiresome, either at home in London or Australia or even during his visit to New Zealand. And now I want to know who the carpet-cleaner was, blessed internet!

Sources (accessed 6 March 2014):

A Sentimental Bloke, First Edition

Australian Literature Electronic Gateway, University of Sydney Library

<http://adc.library.usyd.edu.au/data-2/densong.pdf>

A Song of Life, Teresa Del Riego, 1902

National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn3496293-s1-e-cd>

The Star, Christchurch, National Library of New Zealand
<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=TS18940324.2.17&l=mi&e=---10--1----0-all>

Pall Mall Gazette, Saturday 20 January 1894

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1894-01-02/1894-01-27?basicsearch=%2bmontenaeken&sortorder=score&freeseach=montenaeken&contenttype=article&newspapertitle=pall%20mall%20gazette>

-o0o-

PAGE AND SCREEN

Resources for the Researcher and Collector

Review of the photographic exhibition of photographs of Charles Snodgrass Ryan: Manning Clarke House, Canberra, April 6-26, 2014

I attended an exhibition of the photographs of Sir Charles Snodgrass Ryan (1853-1926), taken by him at Gallipoli in April and May 1915. The large-scale prints were printed from the glass negative plates held in a private collection in Melbourne. The images showed everyday life in the rear areas at Anzac Cove during the first few months of the campaign. Ryan was a medical officer attached to the force and he had a passion for documenting the events around him, and which are very evocative today, 99 years later. The images showed among other things the activities of the Naval Bridging Train and the construction of piers at the ANZAC landing sites, and the work of the mule teams. There were around thirty images in large format which allowed for an in-depth view. However, the exhibition could have benefited from being shown in a dedicated gallery space with some more interpretative material including maps. The viewer could easily get lost in the amount of visual information which was being presented. I note the Australian War Memorial is planning a travelling exhibition of Ryan's work which hopefully may include some of these images, which deserve a wide audience during the centenary.

Rohan Goyne

Maintenance of Artefacts: State Library of Queensland Information Sheets

On my drive home from the MHSA Conference I was passing through Brisbane and saw an edition of the *Courier Mail* for Wednesday 23 April which included the special lift-out 'From Anzac to Afghanistan: 100 Years of Untold Stories'. While this topic is obviously of interest to our readers, I felt that one article on the proper compilation and storage of documents and other artefacts, with reference to information contained in data / information sheets available on the State Library of Queensland website, might be particular value. Irrespective of our special areas of interest we all end up collecting 'stuff'. Looking after our 'stuff' becomes important. I've had a quick look at the SLQ site and the sheets have good information – especially on where to obtain some of the specialty materials for correct archival storage. The information sheets can be accessed at <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/>.

Leigh Ryan

-o0o-

A MAN OF 1914: THE WAR SERVICE OF JEAN RENOIR AND ITS AFTERMATH

David Vivian

Jean Renoir (1894-1979) was the son of the important and famous French Impressionist artist Auguste Renoir (1841-1919). In his own right Jean Renoir has been described as ‘perhaps the greatest of French (film) directors.’¹ His best known and most popular work is his magnificent 1937 film *La Grande Illusion*. This article, while taking a look at this important film, will concentrate on Renoir’s interesting and varied First World War career.

After study at the University of Aix-en-Provence Renoir enlisted in the cavalry. He wrote about this period in his life in a very laconic fashion: ‘After my course in philosophy, I took a year in mathematics, and then enlisted in the cavalry.’² Presumably this must have been in 1913 as he wrote in the very next sentence in his book about his father, ‘In August the following year the war broke out.’³ Renoir described himself as a ‘man of 1914’ and stated elsewhere in his autobiography that the war was the ‘event which most greatly influenced the Frenchmen of my generation.’⁴ Something of this will be explored later on in this article. The fact that Renoir was literally a ‘man of 1914’ is shown by the fact that his regiment of Dragoons was in action very soon after the outbreak of war.

However before his unit went into action an event occurred that shows something of the influence of having a famous father and the anxiety of that father in seeing his sons (other Renoir offspring also served) in uniform. Jean Renoir’s regiment was stationed in a small town in the eastern part of France, waiting to go to the front. Auguste Renoir managed to find his son’s regiment and the unit’s Commanding Officer, Colonel Meyer, gave a luncheon in honour of the famous artist, to which the yet to be famous son was invited. Jean Renoir wrote of the impact of this visit on his father in this way: ‘The sight of all those boys in battle dress eased Renoir’s anguish. He said to me: “we’re all caught in it now. It would be dishonest not to stay with the others.”’⁵

An early brush with the Germans had an element of farce, and even innocence, about it as Renoir recorded it. His regiment was in retreat near Arras when he was sent on patrol with about six other men. From a hilltop this patrol spotted about six German Uhlans who were also patrolling. Both groups of cavalryman deployed in battle formation and advanced to attack each other. He wrote that each was determined to spear the enemy in front of him. He went on to record:

The space between us narrowed. We could make out the expressions on the drawn faces of our adversaries under their chapskas, just as they could ours, under our helmets. In a few seconds the affair was over. In spite of our spurring them on and jerking the bridles, our horses showed little desire to be run through, and veered away, taking us out of the range of the opposing lances. The two patrols rushed past each other at a furious pace, treating a few grazing sheep to a brilliant if harmless display of horsemanship. Somewhat crestfallen we returned to our lines, and the Germans went back to theirs.⁶

¹ David Quinlan, *Quinlan’s Film Directors*, Batsford, London, 1999 (first published 1983), p.275

² Jean Renoir, *Renoir, My Father*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1962 (first published 1958), p.450

³ loc. cit.

⁴ Jean Renoir, *My Life and My Films*, Collins, London, 1974, pp.94, 40

⁵ *Renoir, My Father*, p.450

⁶ *ibid*, p.5

By early 1915 Renoir was serving in the *Chasseurs Alpains*.⁷ Perhaps this reflected the perceived need for more infantry reinforcements as the static nature of trench warfare had rendered the need for cavalry increasingly superfluous. Regardless of how this came about Renoir wrote that his ‘time in the trenches was cut short by a German bullet’, as he was wounded by a Bavarian sharpshooter in April 1915.⁸ He felt that this sharpshooter had done him a favour as it allowed him to be near his crippled father.⁹ However, this observation cannot hide the seriousness of his wound.

In June 1915 Renoir was visited by his mother in hospital in Gerardmer. His wound was in such a state that his leg was going to be amputated. Renoir wrote that due to gangrene his leg had ‘turned a curious shade of cobalt blue.’¹⁰ Owing to the strong protests of his mother a Paris specialist was called in who managed to save the leg. Professor Laroyenne, the specialist, told his mother that Renoir would not have survived that amputation.¹¹ Even though the leg was saved it never fully healed and Renoir limped for the rest of his life.¹²

Renoir stated that after ‘vicissitudes I found myself in a bomber squadron.’¹³ This was early in 1916. There seems to be some confusion on this point as elsewhere he referred to serving in a reconnaissance squadron.¹⁴ As we will see later the unit probably served both functions as he was posted to an all-purpose squadron. He initially served as an Observer, a position he did not much enjoy. He wanted to be a pilot and expressed his reasons for this as follows:

I was in love with machinery, and to be ferried about in the air by another man gave me a feeling of being shown a toy which I was not allowed to play with.¹⁵

He was granted his wish when, after leave, he was posted to a flying school at Amberieu to train as a pilot. Here again something of an element of farce enters his story. At the end of his course Renoir underwent his final pilot’s test – only to be turned down because he was five kilos too fat! His response was to diet:

I subjected myself to a week’s diet which was the more painful because I was naturally greedy: I enjoyed wine even more than good food. I shall never forget that wretched week; but I was rewarded by passing my test with honours. On the same evening I gorged myself with sauerkraut washed down with Alsatian wine.¹⁶

Renoir was posted to C64 Squadron. This was an Army all-purpose squadron that flew twin-engine Caudron biplanes. Renoir freely admitted that he was, ‘not a very good pilot’¹⁷ but he was very much in love with the machine he flew. Renoir wrote that he ‘adored my old Caudron’ and that he was intoxicated by the smell of castor oil, which was used to lubricate

⁷ *My Life and My Films*, p.149 The *Chasseurs Alpains* were the mountain infantry of the French Army and were often employed as shock troops. In 1915 they were heavily engaged in the Vosges area. They came to be known as the Blue Devils by the Germans.

⁸ *My Life and My Films*, p.41; *Renoir, My Father*, p.3

⁹ Renoir, *My Father*, p.3

¹⁰ *ibid*, p.451

¹¹ *loc. cit.* His mother died shortly after this incident.

¹² *My Life and My Films*, p.41

¹³ *loc. cit.*

¹⁴ *My Life and My Films*, p.42; *Renoir, My Father*, p.451

¹⁵ *My Life and My Films*, p.43

¹⁶ *ibid*, pp.42-43

¹⁷ *ibid*, p.43

the rotary engines of aircraft like the Caudron.¹⁸ In fact he went on to say that for him, ‘those rotary engines – Gnome-Rhone or Clerget-Blin – were a symbol of aviation.’¹⁹ However, this adoration did not extent to the areas in which the squadron was based at various times. He wrote that at one stage the squadron hangers were set up in a part of Champagne called Pouilleuse, so named after a dry grass that grew in this region. Elsewhere he wrote that the huts of the squadron looked out on a boring ‘interminable field of potatoes.’²⁰

Renoir’s squadron flew on a variety of missions. Among these were photo-reconnaissance flights. Also the squadron was ‘at the disposal of the gentlemen of the General Staff when they felt like enjoying the thrill of an incursion into enemy skies.’²¹ Renoir recounted that one morning he was tasked to fly a staff officer who was a Hussar captain, when his aircraft came under attack. He signalled to the captain that he was going to turn back. This officer was not the least bit interested in this suggestion. Renoir believed that the German was playing with them but the day was saved, along with their lives, when a Spad appeared and shot the German down. The man who saved Renoir and the captain was a Major Pinsard. Not surprisingly Renoir wrote that he admired him enormously. He went on to state (with an admiring glance to his old arm of service no doubt):

Apart from the fact that he had saved my life, he represented in my eyes the prefect type of pre-1914 ‘sou-off’ (NCO). Moreover, he remained faithful to the pre-war uniform. It was a pleasure to me to look at him in his tight black tunic and red breeches.²²

Major Pinsard was also described as a man who was destined to become the hero of his film *La Grande Illusion*.²³

In another reference to *La Grande Illusion* Renoir recorded that his German friend Karl Koch worked on the film to check the authenticity of the German scenes. In an account that stresses the shared experiences of combatants, even if on opposing sides, Renoir wrote that when he was flying with his reconnaissance squadron on the Rheims area they were often attacked by an anti-aircraft battery ‘which gave us a lot of trouble.’ Renoir and Koch concluded together that Koch was the commander of this battery. Koch had been an artillery captain at the time and had said to Renoir that nothing much happened in this sector except for the ‘incessant attacks of the French squadron opposite us.’ Renoir concluded that this was *his* squadron.²⁴ We will look a bit more at Renoir’s reflections on shared combat experience below.

A bad landing finished Renoir’s flying career towards the end of 1917. He stated that after several postings he was sent back to base. He was now based in Paris and had plenty of time on his hands. Here he fell in love with the films of Charlie Chaplin and then explored other films. These experiences turned him into, ‘a fanatical cinema fan.’²⁵ The Armistice in 1918 allowed him to return to Cagnes to live with his father who died the following year. His war service brought him the award of the *Croix de Guerre*.²⁶ Jean Renoir made his first film in

¹⁸ *ibid*, p.150

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.151

²⁰ *Renoir, My Father*, p.451; *My Life and My Films*, p.149

²¹ *My Life and My Films*, p.149

²² *My Life and My Films*, pp.151-152

²³ *ibid*, p.151

²⁴ *ibid*, p.161

²⁵ *ibid*, p.43

²⁶ In 1977 Renoir was further honoured by the French Government when he was made a *Chevalier* (Knight) of the Legion of Honour.

1924, coming 'to the cinema as a wealthy amateur.'²⁷

In 1939 Renoir was recalled to military service with the outbreak of the Second World War. Yet in some ways his service in this war reads as something of a footnote to his service in the Great War. He was called to serve in an Army film unit (*Service Cinematographique de L'Armee*) and 'regained my lieutenant stripes.'²⁸ He described his service during the period of the 'Phoney War' as photographing 'soldiers yawning in boredom.'²⁹ However, an element of farce once again enters his service history in the following incident. His film team consisted of himself, a cameraman and his assistant and an engineer and his assistant. His unit could not be mistaken for anything other than a film unit. His unit was ordered one day to film schoolchildren in a front-line village. He went on to write:

I went to the wrong village and found myself suddenly surrounded by Germans: the front was not clearly established in that sector, and without realizing it I had driven into the enemy lines. A German NCO came up to us, looking puzzled and amused. I saluted him and he returned the salute. The rest of the Germans, who seemed to be as bored in that village as we were in our own quarter, had that fatuous grin which people can never restrain at the sight of a film team. Some of them, carrying tradition even further, went through the motions of turning a handle. I again saluted the German officer, turned round and drove back to the French lines.³⁰

While he was still in uniform Renoir was sent by the French government, anxious to appease a still neutral Italy, to give a course on film direction in Rome. This followed a request for Renoir to come to Italy by Mussolini who had seen *La Grande Illusion*. In Rome Renoir suffered from agitation stirred up by the Germans, in which he was nearly beaten up in a restaurant, and was advised by the French ambassador to leave on the next train.³¹

The German attack on France in Mat 1940 saw Renoir in Paris. Here he attempted to join his son, Alain, who was in a cavalry regiment tasked with helping to stop the Germans before Paris. Renoir stated: 'Nothing less than that!'³² He found his son in a Paris suburb where Alain, an NCO, was attempting to feed 50 men who had come under his command in the absence of any officers. The meeting must have been brief as a staff officer appeared on the scene and ordered Alain's group to re-deploy further to the rear.³³

Thereafter, Renoir and a small group of people, including Jean-Pierre Cézanne, son of the artist, joined the exodus to the south. In this they were lucky in that they only suffered 'a few light bomb attacks by Italian Planes.'³⁴ Renoir and his future wife, Dido, reached Marseilles from which they travelled to Algeria, then Morocco and then to Lisbon. From Lisbon he eventually managed to travel to New York.³⁵ He did not return to Europe until the early 1950s after a varied career in Hollywood. Jean Renoir died in Los Angeles in 1979.

There are times in his autobiography *My Life and My Films* where Renoir reflects somewhat

²⁷ Roy Armes, *French Cinema*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1985, p.57

²⁸ *My Life and My Films*, p.174

²⁹ loc. cit.

³⁰ loc. cit.

³¹ *My Life and My Films*, pp.176-177

³² *ibid*, p.180

³³ loc. cit.

³⁴ *My Life and My Films*, p.181

³⁵ *ibid*, p.183. Interestingly the voyage was shared with the famous French writer of the air and flight Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1943) who wrote, among other things, the well-known works *Flight to Arras* and *The Little Prince*.

philosophically on his war experiences. We have already seen earlier that he described himself as a ‘man of 1914.’ In expanding on this comment Renoir came to espouse a type of internationalism that was to be seen in films such as *La Grande Illusion*. He wrote that he was typical of his generation of combat veterans in being attracted to what he called ‘the spirit of Germany’ and goes on to say that for him ‘Germany was, and still is, a fascinating enigma.’³⁶ He also felt that Germany had been corrupted by defeat but that France had also been corrupted by victory. Decadence was the result for both victor and vanquished because the war destroyed,

in a matter of months what a slowly evolving culture has taken centuries to create. ‘Thou shalt not kill’ is a moral law which in principle all men respect; but from the moment war is declared it becomes commendable to slaughter one’s fellow man on the grounds that he belongs to a different group of humanity from one’s own.³⁷

In fact Renoir seems to have felt that the combatants in this war had much more in common with each other than with the civilian populations of their own countries – theme which other writers and thinkers on the war also believed. An example of this distance was shown in his very own family. After his wounding Renoir was visited in hospital by his sister-in-law Vera Sergine who was a very well-known theatre star of the time.³⁸ Due to Vera’s fame the visit caused quite a stir, but it was her physical appearance which showed how wide the gap between the front line and the civilian world had already grown in the still fairly early months of the war. Renoir recounted that her hair was cut short and that her clothes seemed completely strange to the wounded men. He recorded his reactions like this:

I was so shocked by this new creature that it took me several seconds to grasp her terrible message. The girls my fellow soldiers and I had left behind had had long hair. Our idea of feminine charm was associated with hair worn like that: and here we were, suddenly confronted with the new Eve.³⁹

He went on to reflect that this new look symbolized a new equality of the sexes; that women were no longer subservient to men. He felt that this new realisation on the part of women, ‘had destroyed for good the social structure maintained by males for thousands of years.’⁴⁰ Here we see, from a different perspective, something of why he felt that the war had changed in months things that had not changed for centuries.

Another aspect of the separation of front line soldiers from non-combatant civilians is seen in his view that combat soldiers tended to reject the lofty reasons expressed to justify the war. For example, he noted that soldiers were not interested in patriotic songs enjoyed by civilians. Rather, the man in the trenches enjoyed ‘the sentimental ballads of the turn of the century.’⁴¹ Indeed, Renoir went on to state that he viewed the fighting soldiers of the Great War as ‘complete anarchists.’ He explained his reasons for this opinion thus:

They didn’t give a damn for anything, least of all for noble sentiments. The destruction of cathedrals left them cold, and they did not believe that they were fighting a war for liberty. They cared nothing for death either, thinking that their present life was not worth living. They had touched the lees of existence. What is strange is that, despite the complete skepticism, they

³⁶ *ibid*, p.94

³⁷ *ibid*, p.96

³⁸ Incidentally Vera’s husband, Renoir’s brother, Pierre, had been severely wounded and invalided out of the army (*Renoir, My Father*, p.4; *My Life and My Films*, p.41)

³⁹ *Renoir, My Father*, p.22

⁴⁰ *loc. cit.*

⁴¹ *My Life and My Films*, p.146

fought magnificently.⁴²

In fact, one of the reasons Renoir gave for making *La Grande Illusion* was his exasperation at the way he felt most war themes were treated in films. He believed that most films dealt in clichés. The only film he excluded from this castigation was the 1930 film *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Apart from this film he felt that, ‘I had not seen a single film giving a true picture of the men who did the fighting.’⁴³

Yet *La Grande Illusion*, a film about an escape from a POW camp,⁴⁴ is also removed from the experiences of most soldiers of the Great War. Renoir made no apologies for choosing such an exceptional situation, in many ways very similar to the life he had led as a pilot. He wrote:

I took my characters into a POW camp, and this, too, was a special kind of life – a life of luxury compared with that of the infantryman in the trenches. I had no wish to depict the latter’s sufferings. That was not the intention of the film. My chief aim was the one which I have pursued ever since I started making films – to express the common humanity of man.⁴⁵

Here again we encounter Renoir’s internationalism. It is not surprising that in the 1930s he made a film for the French Communist Party.⁴⁶ Film historian Roy Armes wrote that *La Grande Illusion* showed that class differences are more important than national differences and that national boundaries are things that separate people arbitrarily.⁴⁷ He goes on to state that ‘the great illusion is war and *La Grande Illusion* preaches solidarity and internationalism.’⁴⁸

It is impossible in an article like this to do justice to a filmmaker like Jean Renoir; indeed it has not been the purpose of this author to do so. Rather, this is simply an attempt to tell the interesting story of the war service of a remarkable man, son of a remarkable father. Also it is something of an attempt to pay tribute to the magnificent film *La Grande Illusion* and the impression it made upon this author when he first saw it many years ago.

By way of a concluding point, Roy Armes wrote that *La Grande Illusion* is a film that, on one level, is a ‘nostalgic look back at a now vanished world.’⁴⁹ This may very well be so. Perhaps Jean Renoir was mourning the passing of a world that still had a place for the finer qualities of the human spirit. David Quinlan writes that this great anti-war film is a ‘heart breaker in the way it shows war undercutting the finer qualities of life.’⁵⁰ Perhaps in the uneasy world in which we live we need to be reminded of this fact time and again.

-o0o-

⁴² *ibid*, p.147

⁴³ *ibid*, p.145

⁴⁴ The film was inspired, in part, by the escape attempts of Major Pinsard, the man who had saved Renoir’s life, as recounted earlier in this article. Renoir wrote that Pinsard had escaped from the Germans seven times (*My Life and My Films*, p. 153)

⁴⁵ *ibid*, p.148

⁴⁶ Armes, p.90

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p.105

⁴⁸ *loc. cit.*

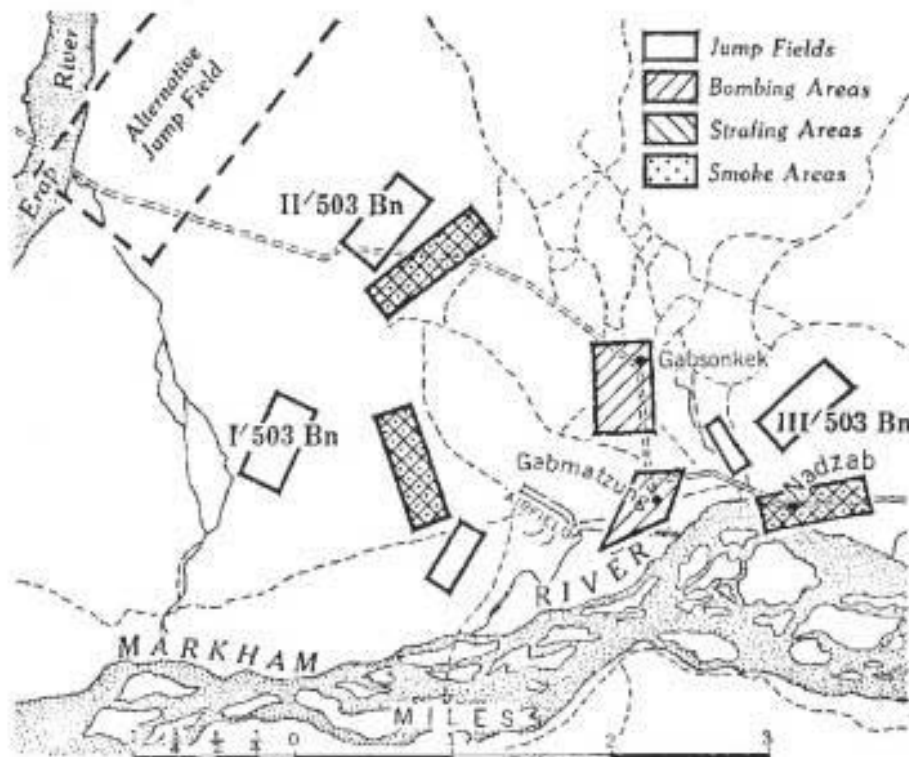
⁴⁹ *ibid*, p.106

⁵⁰ Quinlan, p.275

‘THE GREEN LIGHT IS ON’: JUMP AT NADZAB – AUSTRALIAN PARA-ARTILLERISTS IN ACTION

Rohan Goyne

This article will examine the role of Australian artillerists from 2/4 Field Regiment during the combined airborne operation to seize the airstrip at Nadzab, in the Marobe Province in New Guinea on 5 September 1943.



*Fig.1: Map showing the airborne operation to seize Nadzab airfield on 5 September 1943
(www.army.gov.au; accessed 30 March 2014)*

The seizure of Nadzab airstrip by the United States 503rd Parachute Regiment would enable the 25th Brigade of the 7th Division to be airlifted to Nadzab as part of the overall plan to capture Lae from the Japanese.

At 10.15am, on 5 September 1943, 31 para-artillerists (four officers and twenty seven other ranks) of the 2/4 jumped with two disassembled short 25-pounder field guns into Nadzab airstrip in support of the 503rd Regiment. The Australian gunners had been allocated to provide artillery support for the 503rd, as the US regiment had no artillery support of its own. This mission was the first of its kind for Australian artillerists in the Pacific War. It shows the adaptation and flexibility required by Australian forces during the Pacific War.

Prior to the jump into Nadzab, the Australian gunners had one practice jump from 1,200 feet at an airstrip near Port Moresby. In that training three of the gunners were injured. As Fig.3 demonstrates, the short 25-pounder could be effectively broken down for delivery via parachute.



Fig.2: The short 25-pounder of the type utilised in the jungle campaign in Papua New Guinea and dropped into Nadzab on 5 September 1943 (Australian War Memorial photo AWM 075609)

One of the 31 gunners who participated in the jump was Robbie Robertson. He described his experience of the jump in an interview in 1995:

Suddenly, he heard a loud crack and was wrenched upright and upwards. His 'chute snapped open and blossomed in the cool air. For only the second time in his life, this young soldier experienced the exhilaration of floating above the earth and for several minutes, it was difficult to believe that he was in the middle of a war. 'And this is my first time into action,' he mused.¹

Upon landing, the gunners of the 2/4th quickly located the parts for one of the short 25-pounders and it was assembled and readied for action. The troops then crowded around the gun position to sleep.

The parts to reassemble the second piece were gathered the next day as the drop had resulted in the various loads landing over 2.5 kilometers away.² The second gun was then reassembled and made ready for action, thus completing a special moment in Australian military history.

¹ www.anzacday.org.au

² www.anzacday.org.au



Fig.3: Members of the 2/4 Field Regiment with a short 25-pounder gun packed for the parachute drop (Australian War Memorial photo AWM 017500)

In conclusion, the 2/4th's actions at Nadzab showed the adaptability of Australian forces to the dynamic nature of the war in the Pacific and the role in theatre of Australian technology in the form of the short 25-pounder.

*

Addendum

With the author's permission, the editor offers the following additional information to the foregoing article.

There exists a small commemorative scroll to the 2/4th Australian Field Regiment on which are listed thirty names under the heading 'Commander-in-Chief's Card and US Parachute Wings & Combat Jump Star'. Presumably these are the members who jumped at Nadzab, although the name of one officer may be missing. Here is the list exactly as it appears on the scroll. It should be noted that it has not been checked or cross-referenced with any other sources, so no assurance can be made as to its accuracy or completeness.

Lt F.E.H. Ross (KIA)
Sgt W.C. Murnane
Gnr J.W. Stannard
L/Bdr V.M. Swaish
Gnr C.C. Kennedy
Gnr W.J. Ledgerwood
Gnr S.H.J. Sheil
L/Bdr W.C. Webb
Gnr K.G. Begbie
Gnr N.L. Anderson

Lt A.C. Clayton
Sgt A.J. Thompson
Gnr T.M. Mathison
L/Bdr W.E. Hobart
Gnr T.A. Kettle
Gnr H.O. Pepper
Gnr D.M. Wilson
Gnr R.T. Head
Gnr A.L. Donnelly
Gnr D.J. Braddock

Lt F.A. Faulkner
L/Bdr W.G. Indian
Gnr I.G. Robertson
Gnr W.R. Hooper
L/Bdr W.D. Laurie
Gnr H. Smith
Gnr H.A. Gribben
L/Bdr T.C. Dawson
Gnr J.W. Boal
Gnr C.H. Murray

COLLECTORS' CORNER

World War One Trench Periscope

Donald Lawie

The Mulgrave Settlers' Museum in Gordonvale, Queensland (south of Cairns) has a small section highlighting local residents' experiences of war. We are planning, like many others, a special display in 2015 to commemorate the centenary of Gallipoli and have called for the loan of appropriate artefacts.

An outstanding relic has been offered on loan: it is a trench periscope, made of brass with a dark surface patina and has a screw-on wooden handle. The black (Bakelite?) eyepiece can be



focused and projects 5cm from the circular mirror tube, which has a diameter of 2 cm. The mirror tube is 39cm long and the mirror piece at the top is attached to a movable slide. Length extended is 83 cm from eyepiece to mirror.

The periscope comes with a strong fitted leather case with all joints



stitched. The case is stamped with a Government arrow. The rear of the eyepiece has maker's details engraved as well as a Government arrow. Details: R. & J. Beck Ltd. 1918, with, in a circle above: 'Periscope No 25 (x 6 Φ 1°) No 4921'.

Both instrument and case are in excellent condition, though the mirror and eyepiece are clouded. The periscope was brought home by Sgt Arthur Pattinson, who enlisted in the 13th

Light Horse Regiment and sailed from Melbourne aboard A34 HMAT *Persic* on 28 May 1915. The periscope remains in the family as a cherished possession.



This 1918 model appears to be a precision instrument— a far cry from the crude box periscopes that were made on the spot in Gallipoli. It would have been difficult for the enemy to spot as it was elevated above the parapet by an observer. Our Museum is privileged to have the periscope as part of our display.

CANVAS, WOOD, WIRES AND TYRES: THE STORY OF No.1 SQN AFC IN PALESTINE 1916-1918 – PART 1

Neil Dearberg

... behold, there flits across the sky a puny, perky thing of canvas and stick – the aeroplane – that threatens to change the history of warfare ...

George Augustine Taylor, 1910, Australian flight pioneer

World War 1 was the test and confirmation of what would become three of the most frightful and frightening, not-seen-before, methods of warfare: poison gas; submarines; air war. The contribution of our aviators to the Sinai Palestine campaign was extraordinary relative to their numbers. Yet historians, authors and an unaware public have largely overlooked their service, as this entire theatre has been overlooked. Who were these fabulous men in their flying machines?

Australia provided the only Dominion air arm, the Australian Flying Corps (AFC), as part of our Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Our youth wildly sought adventure, excitement and romance, climbing the heavens high above the ground warriors. They enlisted directly, or transferred from a life in mud filled trenches or infested desert sands. But, more flyers than flying machines; many would-be flyers hastened to England to join the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) before all their planes were gone too. More than 3,700 men served in the AFC with hundreds more in the RFC and RNAS. No.1 Squadron was the first to be raised and deployed to Egypt from where it moved through the Sinai Peninsula, Palestine and Syria from April 1916 to October 1918. Their seldom-told story vaporised behind the exploits of the more famous Light Horsemen – who would not have been so without their *eyes in the sky*.

Air war had been thought about in Britain but little understood before the war. Australian ‘colonials’ recognized its potential in 1909 then, planned from 1912 and created early in 1914, its Central Flying School (CFS); but constructed no military aeroplanes. British aircraft production lagged French and German and their aircraft capability was even more disadvantaged. At the outbreak of war Britain had 113 aircraft in military service, the French Aviation Service 160 and the German Air Service 246.¹ Australia, none!

Pilot graduates from the CFS at Point Cook in Victoria were selected. Professional or higher-trade officers, without flying training, were selected. Ground crews with certain artisan skills were selected. On 16 March 1916, 28 flyer officers and 195 ground crew, under command Lieutenant Colonel E.H. Reynolds, were outfitted with uniforms, pistols and swords (the swords being of mysterious purpose), boarded the SS *Orsova* and sailed to Egypt to fly aeroplanes and win the war. None of the pilots had received any training in gunnery, photography or bombing, let alone combat. The observers had not fired their machine guns. Of the ground crew, some had scarcely swung a propeller and most had never even seen an aeroplane. Go win a war!

The AFC and RFC in the Eastern theatre were at a significant disadvantage in quantity and quality of aircraft, with priority going to their mates on the Western Front. However, the pilots proved significantly more industrious, adventurous and daring than their German counterparts and this made up for what they lacked in equipment, to some extent. It was only

¹ www.airwar1.org.uk *A Brief History of the RFC*

in the last nine months of the war that our airmen finally received superior aircraft that made the skies their own.

The AFC ‘borrowed’ aircraft from the RFC and returned them at war’s end. In addition, Australian family and corporate philanthropists would purchase and donate aircraft for use in the Eastern and Western theatres. In fact, at the start No.1 Sqn had only a few cars and motor cycles, but ‘no tools, no nothing, equipped as infantry with sword and pistol...’ said Capt Richard Williams,² one of the first graduates of the CFS, later to become Squadron Commander, then Commander of 5th Wing RFC (an Australian, extraordinary!), Chief of Air Staff in WW2 and eventually, Air Marshall Sir Richard Williams K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O.

On arrival on 16 March, the AIF in Egypt and their British HQ were as surprised as was No.1 Sqn that they had not been expected. This is hardly surprising given the standard of the British Army, its senior officers and (lack of) administration system at the time. Confusion arose; what to do with No. 1 Sqn AFC? The answer came one week later. The squadron would be attached to 5th Wing, RFC and the three Flights of No.1 Sqn split between the RFC squadrons. Although nominated as No.1 Sqn, AFC, the British administrative system couldn’t separate their No.1 Sqn from ours so called it No.67 Sqn RFC.³ British admin finally sorted, in January 1918 they were again recognised as No.1 Sqn AFC. (Nevertheless, throughout this article it will be referred to as No.1 Sqn AFC).

Over the next six weeks the squadron mechanics, riggers, instrument fitters, armourers, drivers and telegraphy specialists underwent further training with their British counterparts. All the observers and five of the least experienced pilots were dispatched to England for combat training while the remaining aviator officers worked with their British squadrons. That the Australians had been recruited for their specialist skills and experience became quickly apparent as they trained. Their aptitude and temperament, even in the harsh desert conditions, enabled them to learn quickly. Throughout the campaign their initiative and creativity became renowned as they consistently ‘invented’ new ways to combat the wear and tear on parts, the wind and sand storms that fouled equipment, and the different attitude and capabilities of their hosts.

The Australians stood out to the British senior officers; just as their ‘brothers’ in the Light Horse and Imperial Camel Corps were doing. The RFC Commander, Major General Geoffrey Salmond (he would deservedly hold this position throughout the campaign) officially recorded, ‘the rapid training and mobilization of the squadron reflected great credit on the industry, keenness and discipline of officers and all ranks.’⁴

Enemy air power was one German squadron, FA300. Their aircraft, some with Turkish markings and pilots, were Fokker scouts, the two-seater Aviatiks and soon the Rumpler multi-purpose; all often referred to as ‘Taubes’ and all superior to the BE2c biplane of the RFC and AFC in terms of speed, climb, ceiling, manoeuvrability and fighting capacity. Captain Williams recorded:

at that time we had no guns firing through the propeller, and could not fire straight ahead. Our observers were in front of the pilots. The Aviatik observer was in rear of the pilot and the pilot could fire straight ahead. We really had little chance with him.’⁵

² M. Molkentin, *Fire In The Sky*, Allen and Unwin, 2010, p.56

³ www.firstworldwar.com Feature Articles, *The Australian Flying Corps*, p.3

⁴ *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, vol.8 *Australian Flying Corps*, 11th ed, p.42

⁵ *ibid*, p.33

No.1 Sqn was initially given the worst of available aircraft by their RFC hosts; there weren't any good aircraft in theatre anyway, the Western Front always receiving priority. The under-powered BE2c had a bizarre structure where

the observer sat in front – a disadvantage as he could hardly have been in a worse position for gunnery and observation ... a rear facing Lewis Gun was mounted awkwardly between the pilot and the observer ... really quite useless as a defensive weapon, and put there perhaps to boost morale.⁶

This created two issues. First, the AFC crews became inventive and tireless to give some capability to these near useless machines. Lt L.J. Wackett mounted a Lewis Gun on the top wing so the observer could stand and fire above his pilot and preserve the well-being of that youngster. He would later devise an interrupter mechanism, similar to the German mechanism, so guns could fire through the propeller without separating the blades from the shaft.⁷ Wackett would become a prominent figure in Australia's post-war aviation industry. Second, the AFC roles became reconnaissance, photography, artillery and naval gunfire direction, bombing and strafing, rather than aerial combat with German aircraft. Strangely, although with superior aeroplanes, the German and Turkish pilots seemed reluctant to engage the slower BE2c with British and Australian pilots.

But aerial warfare was unknown. What strategies, what tactics were to be adopted? Generals who had fought only natives had no idea. Some openly opposed the concept. Others, curious, opened some thought. Nobody knew exactly what to do. And as the official historian Cutlack states, 'a pilot ... may be sent out on no special commission at all except to "see what is happening"'.⁸

In early 1916 the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) was still defending the western section of Egypt against the Senussi Arab uprising. 'A' Flight, commanded by Capt William Sheldon, one of the few pre-war professional officers now in the AFC, was tasked to locate and engage these Arabs and conduct reconnaissance in an area over 100 miles west of the Nile. On 8 October Capt Murray Jones' notoriety commenced within 'C' Flight. Sent out to locate a 'missing' British Camel Corps patrol he spent eight hours in the desert: 'he flew through the heat of the day, a considerable performance for both man and machine, and one hitherto not attempted in the desert. Engine failure would almost certainly have meant death.'⁹ Months later it was learnt the patrol had been captured and killed by the Senussi.

Jones thereafter performed numerous seemingly Herculean desert feats, including the rescuing of downed mates. He would fly on to a Military Cross, a Distinguished Flying Cross and bar and command of a Squadron on the Western Front. Four days later Capt Williams temporarily joined 'A' Flight. He, Jones and observers Lts Wackett and V.P. Turner flew into the desert seeking the Senussi. Flights lasted five-and-a-half and six hours respectively, which in those days was extraordinary for man and machine. Such flying became synonymous with the AFC as other pilots intuitively flew to new limits.

'B' and 'C' Flights were attached to 14 Sqn RFC based near Port Said at the northern end of the Suez Canal. From here it was approx 90 flight miles to the end of the Sinai around the

⁶ Molkenstin. p.60

⁷ C. Schaedel, *Men and Machines of the Australian Flying Corps 1914-19*, Kookaburra Technical Publications, 1972, p.14

⁸ *ibid*, Intro, p.xvi

⁹ *Official History* vol.8, p.37

coastal palms of El Arish on the Mediterranean; the (thought) edge of Turkish presence in numbers and the beginning of Palestine. But the Turks had eyes on Suez. 'B' Flight commander was Capt Oswald Watt who had flown his own plane in France before the war. He and his machine motored off immediately war was declared and joined the French Air Service where he earned their Legion d'Honneur and Croix de Guerre in those heady days when aviators almost sportingly fired rifles and pistols at one another and even dropped Mills bombs over the side whenever they could get above an enemy. With the arrival of the AFC in Egypt he transferred.

Tasking of the Flight included bombing and photography, although this latter was initially difficult due to external mounting of cameras, their bulk and poor quality plates. Things improved quickly that greatly assisted mounted and gunnery troops. 'C' Flight was commanded by the aforementioned Capt Williams. The Flight gained valuable experience in photography, reconnaissance and support to the Light Horse and British infantry, artillery and naval gunfire direction.

As the AFC was arriving in mid-April, a Turkish force had decimated a British Yeomanry Brigade around the water wells of Katia and Romani, about 25 miles east of the Canal. The EEF Commander, Lt Gen Sir Archibald Murray, immediately appointed Australia's Maj Gen Harry Chauvel and the Anzac Mounted Division with Light Horse Brigades, NZ Mounted Rifles and Camel Corps companies, to take over the Romani area. Another attack was expected. The Yeomanry commander, Brig Wiggins, with the complicity of the Sector Commander, Maj Gen The Hon H.A. Lawrence, had scattered his force through the sands of the desert like papers in a wind. Chauvel concentrated his force at Romani utilising aggressive mounted and aerial patrolling.

During July a force of 18,000 Turks moved from El Arish towards the wells and Romani. This was first noticed on 19 July when Brig Chaytor, commander of the NZMR, was on a 'look and see' flight with a British pilot. They spotted around 8,000 Turks heading towards Romani. A few days later German aircraft began making extra flights and started bombing from 31 July. In return, RFC and AFC airmen bombed German airfields while 'C' Flight aircraft with Lts Wackett and Ellis attacked Turkish troop concentrations. Capt Williams directed naval gunfire onto advancing ground troops; a new tactic developed with Morse code then wireless telegraphy. Prior to the Turks main attack on the night of 3 August, the AFC and RFC pilots were able to provide Chauvel and his staff with details of Turkish movements, assisting the making of tactical plans.

The mounted troops and infantry fought hot and thirsty engagements over two days in the sands around Romani with the tide of battle swaying. The pilots of No.14 Sqn and the AFC 'C' Flight provided artillery and naval fire direction, bombing, strafing and intelligence support. The former horsemen, now aviators, were able to provide useful information based on their mounted experiences. Gen Lawrence had positioned himself at Kantara, some 35 miles safely east of the action. Probably of some good fortune his telephone lines to the front were cut and he had little influence on the battle. Instead, Chauvel directed the successful proceedings, albeit it with dissent from subordinate British infantry commanders objecting to directions from other than a British officer.

Notwithstanding and despite, Romani was won on the integrated use of air support. It showed for the first time, what would become warfare of the future; integrating aerial support with mounted troops and infantry plus fire direction of artillery and naval forces. Yet historians

and authors seldom mention the conception of joint warfare developed at Romani. The success at Romani was the first major British victory after two years of war, providing a much needed morale boost to British troops and a home public devastated by the slaughter of the Western Front. Also for the first time, aircraft bombing and strafing terrified ground troops. This new shock was dawning on the ground soldiers of both sides.

Life as an early aviator had new risks in one of the most inhospitable places on earth. Heated air and midday thermals made flight difficult. Wind, sand and dust made equipment and lubricants unreliable and required constant and vigilant service. Guns would jam. Engines would stall. Aircraft crashed. Some landed in the desert through engine failure or enemy anti-aircraft fire. Downed crews would be killed by treasure-seeking Arabs; or captured by the Turks; or had a very long walk home; some were rescued by Light Horse patrols. Aircrew died. Ground crews worked long into nights. Mates were lost. *Esprit d'corps* and mateship accelerated faster than a grass fire in high wind. 'Little wonder that daring and dangerous rescues were attempted wherever possible ...'.¹⁰ Many were the instances of a landing on unprepared desert surfaces by one pilot to pick up a downed mate. Many were the instances where the pilot and his observer dangerously overloaded their aeroplane with the weight of the picked up airmen. Sadly though, some rescues just couldn't be made and death or capture resulted.

In March 1917, a busy month for the flyers, Lt Tunbridge went down. Lt Snell landed nearby and recovered him just in time to deprive looting Arabs. A few days later, however, the same Lt Snell attempted to pick up the downed Lt Heathcote but no suitable landing ground was found; Heathcote saw out the war as a captive of the Turks, a somewhat more pleasant fate than having his throat cut. That same month Lt Frank McNamara, himself shot in the thigh and bleeding profusely, landed beside the downed Capt Rutherford, with Turkish cavalry descending and none too happy. The two pilots attempted takeoff in McNamara's plane but without full use of his leg for control over the rough surface the plane tipped and crashed beyond use. They struggled back to Rutherford's plane and somehow managed to get it off the ground to fly 70 miles home, at which stage McNamara collapsed through loss of blood. This action won McNamara the only Australian VC of the theatre and the only VC to be awarded the AFC.

At day's end, clean sheets and a mattress, after table-set dinner in the mess, made life perhaps more bearable than the flies, sand, dust, heat, snakes, scorpions, water deprivation and Bedouin infiltration that mates of the Light Horse, Camel Companies, infantry and artillery would endure.

General Sir Archibald Murray, the EEF Commander, requested vast quantities of replacement everything, especially combat efficient aeroplanes and anti-aircraft guns, there being just five in the whole theatre. But the British War Office denied him. Aerial combat was avoided and ground troops were largely unprotected when attacked from the air. This would become horribly apparent in battles of Gaza soon to come. The dribble of replacement aircraft saw but minor improvement in design and capability. But there was never sufficient to equip all Flights of the RFC and AFC until early 1918, the Western Front always having priority.

As time went by, the aircrews suffered casualties and sickness. Reinforcements were required. Men transferred from the Light Horse and Camels that proved a blessing. Capt

¹⁰ Schaedel, p.15

Williams, soon to become the squadron commander, 'believed ex-light horsemen were far superior to the temporary British observers the squadron had been making do with as they had a first hand knowledge of the terrain and light horse tactics.'¹¹ Of course, an airfield and an air force is more than the derring-do pilots and observers upon whom the glory and honours are most often cast. 'The best pilot, the Prince of observers, would not have been worth a burial service unless he had the right kind of backing on the ground.'¹² When the squadron's warning klaxon went off, there was a rigger and a fitter to spin the propeller and start the engine so the pilot and observer could blaze into clouds and the heavens and whatever awaited them.

The squadron had three large Bessenau tent hangars. Each would house six aircraft per Flight. Flimsy, flapped around by wind, they needed care. These floppy tents were an Aladdin's Cave that housed:

- an *Armourer* responsible for the 80 guns of the squadron, eight types of ammunition depending on the choice of the pilot, various bombs and their fusing. The Vickers machine gun would spew up to 520 rounds a minute, the Lewis up to 460. Once they got the technology of shooting through the propeller, the rate of fire was dependent on engine speed, that dependent on climbing, flying straight or diving – only one chance to get it right!
- a *Photographic Section*. Existing maps of the area were horribly old and inaccurate. New photos provided cartographers with up to date information to produce much needed maps. They could also identify enemy dispositions and pass the information, relatively quickly, to troops on the ground. Some of the pilots would even draw sketches by hand and drop to the ground troops when it was urgent. As reported by Lt Sutherland, 'that photographic formation, in 14 days, carried out 39 patrols and exposed 1,616 plates, which supplied a complete map, accurate to the smallest detail, of 624 square miles of Turkish country'¹³
- a *workshop* containing trucks with various tools, generators, lights, quite self-contained and able to do mobile operations should they be called out to a downed aircraft
- an *instrument fitter* workshop. Clocks, watches, speed indicators, altimeters, tachos, cameras, bomb sights – all to be kept serviceable
- a *Wireless Telegraphy* Section kept up to date with friendly and enemy signals. It provided air-to-air, air-to-ground and air-to-ship services. Personnel of this Section would often work remote with the artillery and anti-aircraft units they were supporting
- the *Stores Section* kept everything from bully-beef to spare trucks and uniforms to aeroplane wings. The planes were made of canvas, wood, wires and tyres and all needed supply.

Refueling was a separate area, just for safety. Perimeter security was needed against Turkish infiltration as much as local Bedouin who believed that left about stores and equipment were a gift of providence. Theft was a problem throughout the campaign that often resulted in violence and cultural squabbles by unsympathetic AFC custodians.

But this new air war created a new psychology; a detachment from killing. Capt Ross Smith, an early observer then pilot of later fame and honour, was reported to have stated, 'I saw them only as living targets ... with an exalted determined-to-kill-and-not-be-killed sort of feeling ... the sight of them scattering under my guns made me nearly fall out of my plane

¹¹ Molкетин. p.68

¹² Lt L. Sutherland MC, DCM, *Aces and Kings*, John Hamilton, London, p.1

¹³ *ibid*, pp.7-8

from laughing once or twice.¹⁴ Was this a coping strategy or detachment by distance or psychomania? The horror of mass slaughter would torment many an AFC pilot at Wadi Fara in September 1918 when their bombing and strafing annihilated the exhausted Turkish 7th Army.

To return to the time; with that first British victory at Romani, General Murray understood the urgency to press the Turks eastwards and the requirement for logistical support. He continued to seek additional support from a Western Front-fixated War Office, gaining nothing but mediocre response to what was a sideshow to the main event. Eastward movement had to be supported by ‘eyes in the sky’ so forward airfields had to be constructed. The EEF and Anzac Mounted Division would be shadowed by rail, water pipeline, telegraph and roads (wire meshing) on which the infantry could march, the artillery pull their guns, the engineers tow their equipment and the flying corps move their trucks with ground stores; towards Palestine, towards Syria, towards the Turkish army, towards the German air force and towards destiny.

Part 2 will follow the men and their machines to that destiny, continuation of the Anzac spirit and the development to modern warfare from these provocative and pioneering beginnings.

-o0o-

A WORLD WAR TWO NOMINAL ROLL OF THE 27TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION (AIF) – PART 2

Pablo Muslera, Claire Woods and Paul Skrebels

Here is the second instalment in the project to publish as complete a nominal roll as possible of the 27th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF), a unit derived from the pre-World War Two 27th South Australian Scottish Regiment. The origins of the project and sources of the roll were explained in the introduction to the first instalment, which appeared in the March 2014 issue. The roll will be added to in subsequent issues of the journal whenever space is available. In addition to names, ranks are provided as they appear in the sources in which they were found, together with service numbers – often both AIF and original enlistment numbers. Certain discrepancies in service numbers are also noted. The final column provides extra information such as the diary entry date in which the name was found, and casualty details. These are mostly self-explanatory, although ‘BI’ stands for Bougainville Island, ‘in u.d.’ for ‘in the 27th Bn unit diary’ and ‘in n.d.’ for ‘in the *WW2 Nominal Roll*’. An asterisk (*) is a general alert to an anomaly or annotation.

Name	Rank	Service number	Status/ unit diary date
Duratti, Ronald	Private	S21574	
Eagle, John Clifford Claude	Sergeant	SX39606 (S62031)	22-Jan-1943
Earl(e), C.O.*could be Clifford Oliver*	Private*	S21303*4550/SX27590 in n.r.*	
Easton, Ronald Vivian* R.E. in diary	Corporal	SX28235 (S20799)	

¹⁴ E. Woodfin, *Camp and Combat on the Sinai and Palestine Front*. Palgrave Macmillan, NY, 2012. p.55

Edwards, Frederick George	Private	S20155*S21169 in diary	
Ellbourn, Lloyd Mervyn	Private	SX28532 (S9754)	6-Mar-1943
Elliot, William Albert	Private	SX39790 (S21629)	
Elliott, John Edward	Private	NX201867	KIA, BI 25-Apr-1945
Elliott, John Thomas	Private	S21130	
Elliott, William James David	Corporal	QX60299 (Q33564)	20-Feb-1945
Ellis, Colin James	Corporal	SX27796 (S21513)	
Ellis, Francis Stanley	Private	S21018	
Ellis, Lloyd Leon	Private	S33305	23-Feb-1943
Ellis, Rufus James	Private	SX39411 (S26313)	
Elson, William John	Private	SX26855 (S21428)	16-Dec-1942
Emblen, Harold George	Private	S19979	
Embrey, Ernest John Alfred	Private	NX89889	13-Jan-1945
Emes, Walter	Private	SX31415 (S26312)	1-Dec-1942
England, Stephen Charles	Private	V34189	30-Oct-1943
Engleson, William	Private	SX39776 (S21204)	
Euhus, Ronald John	Lance Corporal	QX56808 (Q270125)	5-May-1944
Eustice, John Garfield	Private	S20976	
Evans, David John	Private	S21304	
Evans, Laurence Jeffrey*L.J. in diary	Private	S17818*in diary/S115181 in n.r.	
Ewart, Ross Lovell	Lieutenant	SX23938 (S19814)	
Ewer, Lloyd John	Private	S21379	
Ey, Mervyn Lloyd	Private	SX39984 (S21205)	11-Aug-1943
Faehrmann, Jack	Private	S17545	KIA, BI 15-Jul-1945
Faggotter, Darrel Ernest	Private	SX23988 (S21251)	
Fallon, Edgar Alfred	Private	VX93309	22-Jul-1944
Farquhar, Lindsay Keith Felstead*(Felstead in dry), Boyd Norman	Corporal	S20497	
Feltus, Rofe Bower Rowan	Private	SX23973 (S21124)	
Ferguson, Donald Duncan	Private	S55168	6-Mar-1943
Ferguson, Ivor Eric	Lieutenant	WX26030 (W572)	25-Feb-1944
Ferguson, James Angus	Private	S21326	
Fisher, Charles	Private	SX39913 (S62721)	7-Jun-1943
Fisher, Elvan Ray	Lance Corporal	NX107149 (N296840)	26-Oct-1944
Fisher, Gordon Napier	Sergeant/Warr Off C2	SX26439 (S19794)	
Fitts, William James	Private	SX39126 (S20673)	
Flaherty, Howard Norman	Captain	SX25132 (S19785)	
Fleetwood, Alexander George	Lance Corporal	S19850	
Flynn, Allan	Private	NX176320 (N451018)	8-Apr-1944
Fogg, Wilfred Harlan	Corporal	QX59313 (Q271167)	1-Jul-1945
Forbes, Keith Vernon	Corporal	S21055*/S19802 in diary	
Ford, Frederick Thomas George	Private	SX40000 (S21484)	

Ford, James John	Private	SX31425 (S43467)	29-Jul-1943
Ford, Patrick Cletus * (C.P. in unit diary)	Private	SX27661 (S20985)	
Forrest, Thomas Allan	Private	S21095	
Foster, Horace Charles Christopher	Private	S21400	
Foster, John Shirley	Lieutenant	SX23927 (S20960)	
Foster, Robert Flinders	Private	S21486*/(S21468 in dry)	
Fountain, Kenneth Gordon	Private	SX23993 (S20889)	
Fowler, Kenneth Raymond	Sergeant	SX27658 (S21199)	
Fox, Raymond Leslie	Private	S21206	
Francis, Douglas Ray	Private	SX39796 (S45725)	16-Jun-1943
Francis, Geoffrey Owen	Private	SX23983 (S20357)	
Franklin, Reginald Henry Francis	Private	SX28818 (S29186)	20-Jan-1943
Fraser, James	Corporal	SX26871 (S20459)	
Fraser, Kevin John	Private	S61327	27-Mar-1943
Freer, Harold James	Private	SX28239 (S21485)	18-Feb-1943
Fuller, Jack Charles Squires	Private	S26698	
Furner, George Russell	Lance Sergeant	D459 (S22770)	20-Nov-1942
Furze, Douglas Roy	Sergeant	SX27593 (S20394)	
Fuss, Harry Roy	Sergeant	SX23944 (S19786)	
Fry, John de Lacey	Sergeant	SX39731 (S20998)	23-Nov-1942
Gabb, William Rex	Lance Corporal	SX5614	14-May-1945
Galley, Jake	Gunner	S18070	
Galliford, Alfred George	Corporal	SX26869 (S26286, S34300)	
Gallman, Herbert Raymond	Private	S21207/SX39775*(dup.r.)	
Galvin, Michael Francis	Sergeant	SX39579 (S26388)	
Game, Stewart Burrell Hall	Captain	SX26415 (S25805)	21-Jun-1943
Ganley, Carney Francis	Private	S21632	
Gant, Alfred Stanley	Corporal	S20051	9-Nov-1942
Gardner, Alec Richard	Lance Corporal	SX23971 (S19890)	
Gardner, Francis Michael	Warrant Off. Class 2	SX28583 (S20809)	
Gardner, Kevin Lawrence	Sergeant	SX28584 (S19817)	7-Nov-1942
Gardner, Ronald Charles	Private	NX192449 (N442469)	5-Sep-1944
Gardner, Thomas Pringle	Lance Sergeant	SX23941 (S20933)	
Gartrell, Ronald Edward	Lance Sergeant	SX39618 (S20886)	30-Jan-1943
Gates, Colin Washington	Private	SX28029 (S21178)	
Gay, Claude Stanley	Private	SX39367 (S59440)	19-Aug-1943
Gay, Dudley Ernest	Private	SX27419 (S21579)	
Gear, Ronald Alexander	Sergeant	SX35455 (S21098)	
Gepp, Ross Keith	Private	SX28021 (S9507)	
Geraghty, William Kenneth	Private	S16414	
Gerethy, James Lawrence	Sapper	NX174320 (N447381)	22-Jan-1945
Gerrard, Alan	Lance Corporal	SX32801 (S19818)	

Gers, Melven Leonard	Craftsman	SX27604 (S20992)	
Geue, Norman Osmand	Private	SX39242 (S20896)	7-Jun-1943
Gilding, Jack	Sergeant	SX25261 (S21578)	
Gillespie, John Cameron	Signalman	S21208	
Gillies, Edwin Victor	Private	NX171273 (N452154)	1-Sep-1944
Gilligan, Lawrence William* Just L. in diary	Private	S20782	
Gilligan, Donald Malcolm Reginald	Sergeant	SX26863	
Gillman, Lawrence Victor	Private	S21306	25-May-1943
Glanville, Leonard James	Private	S18071	
Gleeson, Allan McEllister	Lieutenant	SX2673	
Gliddon, Jack Victor	Corporal	SX32583 (S21179) 4812 (SX31418)*S42961 in diary	7-Jun-1943
Gloyn, Alan Roy	Sergeant		7-Jun-1943
Glynn, Joseph McMahon	Lieutenant	SX7332	16-Feb-1944
Gobbie*/Cobbie in diary	Private	SX16089	1-Dec-1942
Gobell, William Lewis Charles	Private	S20977	
Godfrey, Noal Douglas	Staff Sergeant	SX23912 (S20506)	
Golding, Francis Henry	Lance Sergeant	SX23933 (S41928)	
Goodman, Stephen Alfred	Private	SX38726	KIA, BI 01-May-1945
Goodwin, John Howard Linton	Lance Corporal	NX86076	1-Aug-1944
Gordon, Duncan Murray	Sergeant	SX32907 (S20684)	
Gordon, Harvey Ronald	Private	QX56062	7-Nov-1945
Gordon, Henry Bruce	Major	SX21594 (S213291)	23-Jan-1943
Gormly, George Angus	Lieutenant	S19762/SX25128	
Gosden, Frank Victor	Private	SX23932 (S20150)	
Gould, Ralph Leslie	Private	SX28815 (S20529)	20-Mar-1943
Gowers, Noel William	Lance Corporal	VX149705	DOW, BI 11-Aug-1945
Graetz, Carl Rudolph Sigfried	Private	S17776	
Graham, Christopher	Private	S20815	
Graham, Harold Fulham	Corporal	S17108	
Graham, John	Corporal	NX101180	DOW, BI 01-Aug-1945
Graham, Ross Douglas	Private	SX28242 (S26525)	
Granfelt, George Edward	Private	SX28674 (S18201)	
Grantham, Norman Douglas	Private	S60093	9-Jan-1943
Gray, Douglas	Private	S20651	
Gray, Herbert Nelson	Private	VX143628 SX28661 (S26373, S42095, S64238)	20-Dec-1945
Gray, Samuel Geoffrey	Corporal		26-Oct-1944
Greening, Claude Howard Gilbert	Lance Corporal	SX39882 (S21209)	22-Dec-1942
Gregson, Alexander Wallace	Private	Q271725	9-Nov-1945
Griffiths, Gavin Melvern Wilson	Private	SX39759 (S20726)	
Grima, Frank	Private	S21052	

Grimm, Charles Frederick	Private	S17829	
Grivell, Eric Norman	Private	S17173	
Grose, Stanley Clarence	Private	SX39833 (S17832)	
Grose, John William Herbert	Lance Corporal	SX39961 (S20997)	
Groth, Colin Maxwell	Corporal	NX107638 (N163066)	20-Feb-1945
Groves, Colin Arthur	Private	S20975	
Gulin, Louis William*	Private	SX25240*S21252 in diary	
Gunn, Verdun Keith	Private	SX39742 (S17445)	
Gurney, Thomas Theodore	Private	S57187	19-Aug-1943
Guttridge, Robert Featherstone	Lance Corporal	SX39723 (S26935)	5-Feb-1943
Haggie, Raymond James	Lance Sergeant	SX28585 (S20049)	6-Nov-1942
Haigh, Raymond Howard	Private	S21434	
Hale, Eric Richard	Private	S20028	
Hales, Edward Karl	Captain	6905004 (TX15023)	30-Mar-1945
Hall, Aneurin	Private	SX23937 (S23556)	
Hall, Eric Charles	Private	SX25284 (S21241)	
Hall, Keith Cornelius	Private	S20005	
Hall, Reginald Ralph	Private	SX29151 (S21210)	6-Mar-1943
Halliday, Ronald James	Private	S21356	
Halliday, Thomas Keith	Private	S18073	
Hamilton, Eric Albert	Lance Corporal	SX23915 (S21634)	
Hamlyn, Harold	Private	SX27607 (S20850)	9-Jan-1943
Hannan, Raymond Patrick	Trooper	NX77721	11-Dec-1945
Hanretty, Ronald James	Private	S30285	
Hansen, Norman Arthur	Private	S17287	28-Apr-1944
Harding, Albert Abraham	Private	S26323	
Harding, David Lincoln	Private	SX26856 (S21123)	
Harman, John Leighton Harman, John Lynton David	Lieutenant Corporal	S19761 SX25262 (S21213)	
Harris, Leslie Hope	Private	SX28662 (S20209)	1-May-1945
Harris, Massey Gerard	Lance Corporal	NX193799 (N451099)	26-Oct-1944
Harris, Raymond James Henry	Private	SX25263 (S21497)	
Harris, Stanley Norman	Private	S21412	
Harrison, Arthur Raymond	Private	SX39773 (S21315)	26-Jan-1943
Harte, Donald Jeffrey	Lieutenant	SX25282 (S19780)	
Hastings, Harry Albert	Lance Corporal	S21397*S21379 in diary	
Hatcher, Arthur Thomas	Private	NX111472 (N235877)	17-Jun-1944
Hawthorne, Geoffrey Melrose	Sergeant	SX39764 (S21440)	
Hayes, Charles Allan	Corporal	SX27343 (S19787)	
Haynes, Gordon Ignatius	Private	S20905	
Haythorpe, Steven Raymond	Private	SX38828 (S20885)	
Heading, Eric Lloyd	Warrant Off. Class 2	SX23970 (S19781)	

Hearfield, Reginald Charles Venters	Captain	SX27623 (S19688)	
Heaslip, James Wyatt	Private	S26472	
Heath, John Madden	Corporal	SX31400 (S21310)	13-Mar-1943
Heaver, Maurice James	Private	SX38646 (S21635)	
Hector, Duncan	Private	NX8790	28-Dec-1943
Hefford, Gordon Howard	Corporal	S16890*S18890 in diary	
Heffron, Reginald Mervyn	Private	SX27608 (S21214)	
Hein, Douglas Haig	Private	S17729	
Heinrich, Paul Neil	Private	SX25264 (S20068)	
Hendy, Ronald	Lance Corporal	SX39756 (S20914)	
Henningsen, Colin Charles	Private	SX39351 (S20904)	
Herbert, Philip John	Staff Sergeant	SX23966 (S19756)	
Herman, Maxwell William	Private	SX39622 (S43480)	27-Jun-1943
Hewitt, Arthur Irving	Private	SX39587 (S20688)	
Hewson, Maurice Malcolm	Lieutenant	WX29763	16-Feb-1944
Heylen, Norman John	Private	SX23947 (S19964)	
Hicks, Cleaver Francis	Corporal	NX193687 (N204450)	26-Oct-1944
Hicks, Sydney Albert	Private	S17839	
Higgins, Leslie Harry	Private	SX27591 (S26390)	
Higgs, Robert Norman	Private	SX31424 (S43483)	29-Jul-1943
Hilder, John Thomas	Private	SX19105	5-Jan-1945
Hill, Colin Gilbert	Private	SX28022 (S21308)	
Hill, Keith Harvey	Sergeant	SX23945 (S20641)	
Hil, Maurice Richard	Lance Corporal	SX28030 (S21636)	
Hill, Roy	Private	SX27420 (S48940)	1-Dec-1942
Hillard, Keith	Lance-Corporal	NX106528	KIA, BI 29-Jul-1945
Hobbs, Fredrick Charles	Private	S21180	
Hobbs, I.B. *	Private	S21549* doesn't match nr SX28315 (S51370) *see above*	
Hobbs, Phillip Byron*	Private*		
Hobby, Cecil Thomas	Private	SX28031 (S21637)	
Hobson, Maurice Leslie	Private	VX140849	11-Apr-1945
Hocking, Oliver Reginald	Private	SX24608 (S20259)	
Hodge, Charles John	Private	SX23992 (S20129)	
Hodgson, Maxwell Kenneth	Sergeant	SX26878 (S21494)	
Hodgson, Oswald John* (Just J. in diary)	Private	S21433	
Hogan, James Francis	Staff Sergeant	SX22085 (S30513)	
Holmes, Arthur Maxwell	Sergeant	SX26997 (S20141)	
Hooper, Norman Hamilton	Private	SX28024*S21309 in diary	
Hopcraft, Douglas Reginald	Private	SX31550 (S21354)	
Hopkins, Barton Feltham	Lieutenant	S20206/*S20266 in diary	
Horan, Brian Vincent	Private	SX28995 (S21367)	

Howden, William Balleny	Captain	VX93572	4-Apr-1945
Howie, Leonard Charles	Corporal	SX27602 (S21495)	9-Jan-1943
Howland, Frank Noel	Warrant Off. Class 2	SX25289 (S20172)	
Huddy, Morris Arthur	Private	SX27630 (S21658)	
Hughes, Daniel Patrick	Private	NX192981 (N452145)	16-Aug-1944
Huish, Alan Albert	Private	SX28687	KIA, BI 01-Jul-1945
Hunt, Andrew Fisher	Corporal	SX23911 (S20851)	*Military medal*
Hunt, James Albert	Corporal	VX77086	1-Dec-1942
Hunt, Wilfred Ross	Private	SX25278 (S20817)	13-Mar-1943
Hunter, Thomas Millar	Sapper	SX28501 (S50185)	
Hunter, William Malcolm			
Roy	Private	S18074	
Hurley, Clifford Rowan	Corporal	S19993	
Husson, Joseph John	Private	SX27928 (S21580)	
Hutchins, Henry Herbert	Private	NX132330 (N40348)	10-Feb-1945
Hutchison, Magnus James	Private	SX26857 (S21277)	
Hutson, Stanley George	Corporal	SX39798 (S20900)	
Huxtable, James Hedley	Private	NX171985 (N452437)	28-Apr-1944
Hyde, Arthur William	Private	NX28379	28-Dec-1943
Hynes, Terence Joseph	Sergeant	SX25252 (S20915)	
Ivey, Albert Colin	Lance Corporal	SX2350	7-Jun-1943
Jacka, Claude William	Private	SX28933 (S21499)	10-Dec-1942
Jackson, Keith Arthur	Sergeant	SX37251 (S20376)	
Jackson, Robert	Corporal	S21584	12-Dec-1942
Jackson, Ronald Alexander	Private	S21046	
Jacobs, Maxwell Joseph	Private	SX25280	13-Nov-1943
Jaeger, John Irwin	Private	NX173767 (N31112)	27-Jul-1944
Jaensch, Ross Albert	Private	SX39768 (S20901)	
James, Haddon Powell	Private	S21317	
James, Percival John Joseph	Private	SX26629 (S21182)	
James, Reginald Earl	Sergeant	VX147101	11-Dec-1945
Jarrett, Milton Harvey	Corporal	SX25265 (S20575)	
Jarrett, Robert Hector Ross	Private	S17984	
Jeisman, Ernest William	Corporal	S17058	
Jenkins, Richard Hendry	Private	S17858	
Jennings, George Herbert	Private	SX39817 (S26109)	25-Feb-1944
Jennings, Ronald Ernest	Private	SX31419 (S41599)	
Jocumsen, Walter Colin	Corporal	QX60722 (Q143727)	28-Apr-1944
Johnson, Cyril David Beatty	Sergeant	SX23996 (S19820)	
Johnson, Harold Charles	Lieutenant	SX23990 (S20166)	
Johnson, Jack Frederick Arthur	Private	S17860	
Johnson, William Courtenay Sanders	Chaplain Class 4	SX13215	15-May-1944