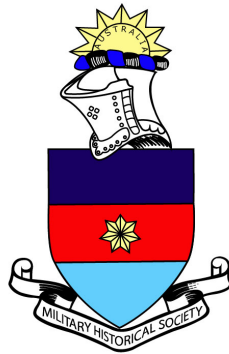


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Sabretache



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EDITORIAL

It's often strange how past activities can catch up with you. Last year an email turned up out of the blue inviting me to give a talk in Hull, UK, as part of its City of Culture 2017 celebrations. Someone had twigged that I had written some articles on the novels of Dan Billany, a native of Hull, who was one of those being singled out for commemoration this year. Not being one to look a gift horse in the mouth, I readily accepted and spent a brief but very enjoyable time there, thanks to the efforts and hospitality of two young academics at the University of Hull and some other contacts and friends in the UK.

Dan Billany was a talented and socially committed writer whose work deserves to be more widely known, particularly by anyone with an interest in the Second World War. Born in 1913 to working-class parents, he became a teacher and, after the war broke out, an officer in the 4th Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment. Sent to North Africa as part of the 50th Division, his unit was virtually wiped out in the disastrous Gazala Battles in May-June 1942, with Billany one of the many prisoners of war taken by Rommel's forces. He spent about fifteen months in three different POW camps before being released following the Italian surrender in September 1943, he and his comrades being left to make their own way to the Allied lines in Italy before the Germans could round them up again. Unfortunately Billany was never heard from again, and is listed now as one of the war's fatalities. A number of melodramatic theories arose as to the cause of his disappearance, but the most convincing research concluded that he and the group he was with died of exposure in the Apennines before reaching the Allies.

While languishing as a POW, Dan Billany managed to complete two full novels, one a solo effort and the other co-written with fellow POW David Dowie (who also disappeared with Billany). The absconders left the manuscripts with a friendly Italian farmer, with a request that they be posted home to Billany's family once the war had ended and if he had heard nothing further from the prisoners. Remarkably the farmer, Dino Meletti, did just that, and following Billany's father's lobbying to get the manuscripts read by commercial publishers, the co-written work was produced as *The Cage* in 1949 by Longmans, Green and Co, while the solo work appeared as *The Trap*, published by Faber in 1950. I was asked to speak on the latter to open a mini-festival of Billany's life and work, and was very happy to do so, as the book is a detailed and revealing insight into the lives of ordinary soldiers and civilians during WW2. Although outwardly a novel, *The Trap* is based closely on the experiences of Billany and his family before and during the war, and thus is as much a social document as it is a literary account. Given Billany's origins and political leanings, it also voices some very strong opinions about the conduct of war and society in Britain at the time. The other novel, *The Cage*, offers an equally fascinating view of life as a POW; most notable, I think, is the humour it employs of a type that a group of other British ex-servicemen would make famous after the war as *The Goon Show*. Read it and see if you agree – more information can be found on his niece's website, 'Dan Billany – Hull's Lost Hero', <http://www.danbillany.com/>.

On the topic of recommendations, may I ask that you look closely at the information and call for papers for the combined SA Branch and University of South Australia's military history conference in the Society Notices. It's an innovative and interesting idea, and is shaping up as an eventful and noteworthy occasion; I urge you to consider attending in November, and even better, to contributing a paper or presentation of some kind. Please feel free to contact me about your ideas, too, if that will help you decide.

Paul Skrebels

FILIPINO WORLD WAR 2 VOLUNTEERS FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: PART 1 RECORD OF SERVICE

Major Paul A. Rosenzweig (ret'd)¹

During the Great War, it is now known that eight Filipino-Australians from the Northern Territory volunteered for service with the AIF – the sons of three Filipino patriarchs. Of these, six served overseas – two were wounded, one was decorated for bravery, and two were killed.² During the Second World War, this tradition of service continued. Ongoing research has identified eighteen Filipino-Australians with a Northern Territory connection who volunteered during World War 2 – 16 volunteers in a total of 20 Australian military enlistments, plus one merchant seaman and one civilian guerrilla.³ This two-part series considers the origins and kinship of these WW2 Filipino-Australian veterans.

The Ga family

The Garr and See-Kee families of northern Australia are descended from the Filipino pearlshell diver Carlos Ga (1854-1931) from the Dinagat Islands northeast of Mindanao. Carlos came to Thursday Island in about 1870 at the age of 16, part of the first 'wave' of Filipino migration by individual seafarers and divers which began after commercial quantities of pearlshell began to be taken in Torres Strait from 1870.⁴ As the Japanese came to dominate the pearlshell industry, from 1878 onwards many Filipinos came west to join pearling operations out of Palmerston (as Darwin was then known), including Carlos Ga.

Carlos fathered a total of eleven children on Thursday Island and in Palmerston with his Welsh wife Mary Anne Bunyan (1864-1909). Mary Anne drowned in Darwin in 1909, so in 1915 Carlos alone saw his four sons who lived to adulthood all volunteer for the AIF. Two were killed in Europe, and one was wounded and decorated for bravery.⁵ Carlos himself died in 1931, aged 77. During World War 2, one son and two grandsons enlisted for military service.

Glamor Garr MM (1892-1973)⁶ was Carlos and Mary Anne's fifth child, and third son. He was born on 2 December 1892 in the 'Police Paddock' just outside of Darwin town (now Stuart Park), and christened 'Guillermo Gah'. Under the name of 'Glamor Garr' he served with the 26th Battalion AIF, was wounded at Pozières, and was awarded the Military Medal for bravery at Villers-Bretonneux on the night of 17 July 1918. He was probably present five days later during the recovery of the German A7V *Sturmpanzerwagen* 'Mephisto'. After the war he settled on Thursday Island and married Licowra 'Cissie' Boota (1898-1945) of the Mabuylgal people from Mabuig Island in Torres Strait. Glamor suffered some

CofA = Commonwealth of Australia
NAA = National Archives of Australia
NTG = *Northern Territory Gazette*

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² See *Sabretache LIV(4)*, December 2013; *LIV(1)*, March 2014; and *LIV(2)*, June 2014.

³ In addition, five Filipino-Australian wharf labourers were among the civilians killed during the first Japanese air raid on Darwin on 19 February 1942: see *Sabretache LIV(4)*, December 2014.

⁴ See Rivas (2003).

⁵ See *Sabretache LIV(4)*, December 2013.

⁶ South Australian Births Index, 511/282 (1892); *The Telegraph* (Brisbane) 30 April 1935, p.21; *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) 1 May 1935, p.11; NAA: B884, 'Q54723', item barcode 4456211.

embarrassment after Anzac Day 1935 when James Smith aged 65, recently released from jail, bailed him up and said, ‘Let me try your weight’, grabbing Garr and lifting him bodily into the air. Meanwhile an accomplice came up and stole Garr’s ribbon brooch and ‘Discharged Returned Soldier Badge’ from his pocket. Garr enlisted again in Cairns on 9 May 1942, at the age of 48. He saw full-time service with the 15th Garrison Bn at Rockhampton, until he was discharged as medically unfit on 3 April 1944.

Bennett See-Kee (1909-1957)⁷ was the son of Carlos and Mary-Anne’s second child Maria Spanias (the Filipino version of ‘Spanish’), who was variously known as Mary, Spanias or ‘Josephine’. Spanias Ga (1888-1947) married Tsang Lam Chiu (1878-1947), a Chinese merchant from Hong Kong who operated an import-export business on Thursday Island. There he was known as ‘Tsang See Kee’ – this was the Chinese form, with Tsang (pronounced ‘Chang’) as his surname, but in Australia ‘See-Kee’ was assumed to be his surname.

Spanias and Tsang See-Kee had six children, some of whom came to Darwin. Bennett was born on Thursday Island on 7 November 1909: although partly of Filipino and Welsh heritage, in appearance Benny and his brothers were quite distinctively Chinese. His parents later went to live in Shanghai, where his father ran a shipping firm. In September 1937, Benny See-Kee went to China to search for his parents after they were reported missing following a Japanese air raid near Shanghai: ‘He wandered hundreds of miles in China, and spent his days combing bomb-shattered-ruins, but he was unable to find any trace of his people’. Only wreckage marked the place where his parents had lived. Bennett returned to Darwin in December by the liner *Marella*. Fortunately his parents had survived the raids: they had disguised themselves as peasants and lived quietly in the remote hills.⁸ Spanias died in 1945, two months before the end of the war, and Tsang See-Kee died in Hong Kong in 1947.

Bennett was for many years a member of the Darwin Chinese Recreation Club. He enlisted in the Militia forces in Darwin on 28 July 1941, aged 31, together with fellow Filipino-Australians Basil and Bill Cesar, and served as a Gunner with the 18th Field Battery RAA (AMF). This was the relatively peaceful period before the Japanese air raids, later referred to by old Darwin residents as ‘BB’ – ‘Before Blitz’. Bennett survived the first Japanese raids and was evacuated out, bringing his military service to an end. On 3 February 1943, Bennett married Pearl Young from Thursday Island and they had four children. Bennett See-Kee, late of Sefton, died in January 1957.

Charles Tsang See-Kee (1913-2002)⁹ was born in Hong Kong on 21 January 1913, the fourth son of Spanias and Tsang See-Kee. He attended Nudgee College in Brisbane, Ling Nam University in Canton, St Steven’s College in Hong Kong and the University of St John in Shanghai. In the mid-1930s, he was working with his father on the staff of Messrs Jardine, Matheson and Co Ltd in Shanghai, one of the largest British firms operating in the Far East. When the Japanese Marines came, Charlie smuggled himself out and made his way to

⁷ NAA: B884, ‘D69’, item barcode 5896432; *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 7 October 1941, p.3; 23 May 1947, p.2; *Sydney Morning Herald* 8 January 1957.

⁸ *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 14 December 1937, p.10; *The Argus* (Melbourne) 14 December 1937, p.11.

⁹ NAA: B884, ‘SEE KEE CHARLES’, item barcode 6471767; Rosenzweig (1995) pp.9-10, 23; Rosenzweig (1996) pp. 47-48; *The Telegraph* (Brisbane) 22 April 1938, p.7; *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 7 October 1941, p.3; *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 23 May 1947, p.2; *Northern Territory News* 9 July 2002, 12 July 2002, 17 July 2002.

Darwin to join his brother Bennett, arriving on the *Nanking* in April 1938, aged 25. Their father remained in China, went into hiding in the hills, and was the spearhead of the local anti-Japanese movement.



Fig.1: Charles See-Kee OAM at Government House Darwin in 1993 (author's photograph).

Charles served briefly as an Army censor and Chinese interpreter at Headquarters 7th Military District in Darwin. He was not commissioned, however, because of his Chinese appearance and his presumed low standard of education (despite his academic qualifications). He too was a member of the Chinese Recreation Club (President in 1940-42), and in 1941 he established the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Charles later served as the Administrator's Secretary at Government House. Of interest, his aunt Nuselma Ga (1897-1957, also known as 'Zelma Garr') – Carlos and Mary Anne's seventh child – had earlier worked at Government House from 1914, as Dr and Mrs Gilruth's Governess.

During the first Japanese raid, Charles sought refuge with the Administrator and Mrs Abbott and their staff in a bomb shelter under the Administrator's office: a direct hit brought the office down on them but they scrambled for safety. As everyone was being evacuated out of Darwin, Charles stayed as a voluntary Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Warden. He rendered services of inestimable value in the course of a dozen further raids until this stay-behind party was itself evacuated on 5 April during Darwin's thirteenth bombing raid. See-Kee received a testimonial from Justice Wells of the Northern Territory Supreme Court. Wells, a Great War veteran, managed the evacuation of hundreds of survivors and ran the civil administration in Darwin for the next three years, including the ARP. Wells later said of Charles See-Kee: 'the community owes him a heavy debt of gratitude'.¹⁰

Charles enlisted in the RAAF in Alice Springs on 5 December 1942, aged 29. This time he stated his nationality as 'British' – although he had been born in Hong Kong to a Chinese father, his mother was of Filipino-Welsh descent and had been born on Thursday Island. The interviewing officer noted, 'Appears a full blooded chinaman'. Even today, some have simplistically referred to him as 'Charles See Kee, from Shanghai'.¹¹ Charles undertook a technical training course in Melbourne, and served as a wireless maintenance mechanic in Brisbane and Richmond until 7 December 1945. After the war, Charles was heavily involved in social and community work, and was President of the Darwin Civic Committee and a founding member of the Multilingual Broadcasting Association.

Charles had served in uniform within Australia during the war, although it was as a civilian that he had twice almost lost his life due to enemy action – during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, and then during the Japanese bombing of Darwin. Charles was described in a 1938 newspaper report as having a 'quiet, unaffected, courtly manner', and this description

¹⁰ Testimonial by T.A. Wells, Judge of the Northern Territory, dated 4 April 1942.

¹¹ Martínez (1999) p.175.

certainly still characterised him in his later life in Darwin. Charles See-Kee OAM died at the Salvation Army Nursing Home in Stuart Park, Darwin in July 2002, aged 89.

The Cesar family

The three brothers Basil, Paul and William who volunteered during WW2 were the sons of Elias Cesar (1872-1938), a seaman and pearl diver who was part of the second ‘wave’ of Filipino migration – he came to Port Darwin via Singapore in 1896 under the Indentured Labour Scheme to be employed as a diver and processor of pearl shells. Elias later sailed to Hong Kong to find a wife, and in Darwin on 22 November 1902 he married Elena Dos Anjos (1875-1941).¹² Elena was most likely of Portuguese descent from Macau, and had reputedly come from an orphanage run by Portuguese nuns; in Australia, her name was often given as ‘Helena’. Elias and Elena also lived in the ‘Police Paddock’, where they raised four sons and three daughters (another three sons died in infancy).

One daughter, Lorenza Agnes Cesar (1905-1978), married the Filipino-Australian Great War veteran Elias Conanan in Darwin on 27 April 1922 – of their ten children, Priscilla and Joey served in uniform during WW2 (see Part 2). Lorenza always believed that the original spelling of the family surname was ‘Cesar’ (and this form was used in the South Australian marriage index), although it was written as ‘Ceasar’ by most in Australia. Elias Cesar died at his home from a heart condition on 24 May 1938, and was buried in Darwin’s Pioneer Cemetery on Goyder Road.¹³ He was aged 66, and was one of the oldest residents of Darwin, having lived in Australia for 42 years.



On 12 December 1941, the Northern Territory Administrator received a cipher message from the Prime Minister’s Department informing him that Cabinet had approved the immediate evacuation of women and children from Darwin. Four days later, the Administrator ordered the evacuation. In the ensuing eight weeks, some 1,066 women and 900 children left by ship, aircraft, road and train, with the first group leaving Darwin on 19 December and the last ship sailing on 15 February. Digitised copies of these evacuation records now available online show that Mrs Lorenza Conanan took her ten children by aircraft to Brisbane on 7 January 1942.¹⁴ Elena meanwhile evacuated to Darlinghurst in NSW, while her youngest daughter Mary Magdalen ‘Maria’ Ceasar (Mrs Petersen), remained in Katherine. Their first son had died in 1931, aged 27 – all three of Elias and Elena’s sons alive at the time of World War 2 served in uniform.

Fig.2: Basil Caesar on Anzac Day 1998 in Auburn, NSW (photo provided by Mrs Isabel Lagas).

¹² South Australian Marriage Index, 213/1201 (1902).

¹³ *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 27 May 1938, p.4.

¹⁴ CofA 1941-42, part 1 A-D, p.8.

Cecilio Basil Ceasar (1917-2007)¹⁵ was born in the Police Paddock on 22 November 1917, Elias and Elena's second son. **William Paul Ceasar (1919-1995)**¹⁶ was their third son, born on 25 June 1919. Together with Bennett See-Kee, Basil and Bill enlisted on 28 July 1941 and received the consecutive Army numbers 'D54' and 'D55' – the rare 'D' prefix denoting enlistment in the Militia forces in Darwin. They joined the 18th Field Battery which, together with the Darwin Infantry Battalion, had been created on the disbanding of the mixed infantry-artillery Darwin Mobile Force on 20 August 1940. Also with them was Raymond Brooks, who had married Christina Liboria Spain in 1939, a grand-daughter of the Filipino diver Antonio Spain (1863-1926). They trained at Winnellie Camp, and then manned coastal guns at Lee Point, Casuarina Beach and Dripstone Caves – as part of HQ Darwin Fortress. After the raids, Basil and Bill joined their mother and eldest sister, Mrs Sylvester Ramsay, in Darlinghurst. Basil re-enlisted for Militia service at Liverpool on 1 February 1943, and then served as a driver with the 2/30th Transport Platoon AIF until 24 July 1946. Basil Ceasar, late of Auburn, NSW, died on 28 May 2007.

Paul Zachary Ceasar (1922-2011)¹⁷ was Elias and Elena's fourth son, born on 18 November 1922. On his 21st birthday he enlisted in the AIF in Northfield, SA, and served with the 121st Australian General Hospital in Katherine and in WA until 5 June 1946. Although he served under the name 'Ceasar' like his brothers, after the war Paul used the spelling 'Caesar' for the family surname. Paul Caesar, late of Hamilton died in May 2011. He was proud of his military service: at his funeral in Brisbane the Australian flag was lowered and folded and the Last Post was played, and Anzac poppies and rose petals were made available for the mourners to place on the coffin.

The Cubillo family

Darwin's Cubillo family is descended from the Filipino pearl diver Antonio Pedro Cubillo (1875-1945) from Calape on Bohol Island in the Visayas group. He had left home in 1890 as a 15-year-old, travelling to Europe as a cabin boy on a Spanish ship and learning to dive for clam shell. Returning via Singapore, Antonio heard of the opportunities diving for pearls and abalone: he signed on under the Indentured Labour Scheme like Elias Cesar, and arrived in Palmerston on the SS *Darwin* on 19 January 1895. He gave his date of birth as 30 June 1875 and his nationality as 'Spanish'.

Antonio was indentured to a Scottish pearl lugger owner George McKeddie, who was married to a woman of the Larrakia people. George and Annie ('Duwun') lived with their two children Jack and Magdalena (known as 'Lily') near the intersection of Mitchell and Peel Streets in Darwin – family lore says that the large banyan tree found today at the modern Transit Centre grounds was planted by them. From 1899 onwards, Antonio and Lily produced five children during their long courtship.¹⁸ They married at Saint Mary's 'Star of the Sea' Cathedral on Smith Street on 8 September 1910,¹⁹ and produced several more children – a total of ten, all essentially Larrakia but with typically Filipino names: Christina, Alberta, Ponciano, Juan, Lorenzo, Martina, Eduardo, Delfin, Anna and Felipe.

¹⁵ NAA: B884, 'D54 CEASAR BASIL', item barcode 6663199; NAA: B883, 'NX145391 CEASAR BASIL', item barcode 5637802; *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 31 May 2007.

¹⁶ NAA: B884, 'D55 CEASAR WILLIAM', item barcode 6470646.

¹⁷ NAA: B883, 'DX987 CEASAR PAUL ZACHARY', item barcode 6251085; *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 4 May 2011.

¹⁸ Beginning with Christina – South Australian Births Index, 644/474 (1899).

¹⁹ South Australian Marriage Index, 244/739 (1910).

Antonio and Lily raised their family in the Police Paddock camp, and the sons were all involved with the sea and the wharf. A descendant Gary Lee recalled that, ‘Antonio was a good father and provider for his family and he was a spokesman for the small Filipino and Spanish community in Darwin’.²⁰ In 1919, after having lived in Darwin for 24 years, Antonio applied for naturalisation but had difficulties as the authorities considered he was of ‘Malay extraction – therefore Asiatic’. Yet, in a government census conducted in 1926 mixed-race people in the Northern Territory were classified with no regard for parentage other than indigenous – Lily’s children were recorded as quarter-caste (‘quadroons’): among them were Ponciano (aged 21), Juan (20) and Delphin (13).²¹ Members of the family today still recall Filipino family meals of dinaguan and chicken or pork adobo, and even into the 1960s their aunts wore Spanish-style mantillas and elaborate Filipino dresses. Gary Lee recalled of Antonio:

One of his lasting legacies was to bring the Rondalla music tradition to Australia. He hosted visiting Filipino and Spanish ship’s crews at his house and taught his sons to play the 14-string mandolin, octavina, the 8-stringed Spanish guitar, the ukulele, concertina and the bass. Before long the Cubillo Brothers ‘orchestra’ was entertaining official guests and visiting dignitaries at Government House and at numerous other social functions ... From the 1920s up to the outbreak of World War Two the Cubillo Rondalla was the first and only musical tradition in Darwin.²²

Antonio made a return visit to Bohol in 1921-25, and he went again in 1929 intending to stay for three years but instead deferred his return.²³ Lily was well looked after by her children in Darwin until her death in 1934; Antonio was ultimately unable to return to Darwin due to the Japanese occupation, and he died in Bohol in 1945. Meanwhile, their second son Juan Roque Cubillo (1906-1942) was killed on Darwin wharf on 19 February 1942 while unloading cargo from MV *Neptuna* (his wife Louisa had evacuated the family to Katherine and then to Balaklava in SA). Two other sons of Antonio and Lily served during the war, one in an Australian uniform and another with the Americans.

Ponciano Pedro Cubillo (1903-1988)²⁴ was born in the Police Paddock on 20 April 1903, Antonio and Lily’s third child and first son. Later known as ‘Ponce’ or ‘Ponto’, he attended St Joseph’s School in Cavenagh Street and played with Darwin’s ‘Filipino String Band’. He was also a strong ambidextrous boxer (winning championships in Darwin and the Philippines) and a champion footballer – while working for Vestey’s Meat Works as a sailmaker he played for Vestey’s Football Club; from 1928, he and his three brothers played for Wanderers Football Club.

Ponce took his family to Sydney for a holiday in December 1941, where he heard of the air attacks on Darwin and the death of his brother Juan. He volunteered for the American Merchant Service and was enlisted in November 1943, serving in the Coral Sea with the US Army transports SS *City of Dallas* and SS *Lake Ormoc* until being honourably discharged in 1945. At the age of 65, Ponciano retired from Garden Island Naval Depot where he had been

²⁰ Lee (2007).

²¹ NAA: Series A1/1 File 26/5350, ‘Half-castes and Quadroons in the Northern Territory, 1926’.

²² Lee (2007).

²³ NAA: <http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/media/images/family-journeys/p71.aspx>

²⁴ South Australian Births Index, 712/229 (1903); NAA: A1/1 File 26/5350 – ‘Half-castes and Quadroons in the Northern Territory, 1926’; *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 6 September 1988; *Western Suburbs Courier*, 5 May 1992; Cubillo-Carter (2000) pp.167-72.

working as a sailmaker. He died in Eastern Creek, NSW on 5 September 1988, aged 85. After ten years of perseverance, his youngest son Timmy Cubillo finally received his father's war medals – the Pacific War Zone Medal and the Merchant Service Victory Medal – and proudly wore them on Anzac Day in Sydney in 1992.

Delfin Antonio Cubillo (1914-1986)²⁵ was Antonio and Lily's eighth child and fifth son, born on 24 January 1914 in an area of Cavenagh Street known as 'Malaytown'. He also grew up in the Police Paddock and attended St Joseph's, and first worked as a messenger boy with the PMG Department. He played football with Wanderers, and was selected for the A-Grade team in 1928. After a short apprenticeship, Delfin became Darwin's first Dental Technician, and among his clients were members of the Darwin Garrison. He lived on the 2½-mile Road, and married Theresa Josephine Clarke, originally from Broome, on 28 March 1936, with his brother Juan as best man.

On 12 January 1942, Theresa Cubillo and her two children were evacuated by aircraft to Brisbane, and then to Sydney where they stayed with Ponciano's family.²⁶ Following the raids on Darwin, and the death of his older brother Juan, Delfin enlisted on 18 March 1942, aged 28. Even though his name is a relatively common Filipino name, spelt 'Delphin' in Australia, in 1942 it was mistakenly recorded by the Army as 'Dolphin'. Delphin Cubillo served as a dental mechanic with the Australian Army Medical Corps, and transferred to the Australian Army Dental Corps after it was formed on 23 April 1943. He served in the Northern Territory and South Australia as a dental mechanic with the 84th, 68th and 78th Dental Units until he was discharged in Adelaide on 11 February 1946, receiving two medals and a Returned From Active Service Badge.

After the war his family joined him in Darwin in 1948. Similarly, his sister-in-law Louisa Cubillo brought her children back to Darwin and re-established themselves in Sidney William huts within the old 'Parap 118' camp abandoned by the Army. Delphin worked with the Department of Health and Department of Civil Aviation. He had lived through the 1937 cyclone, and played a prominent role in the evacuation of people following Cyclone Tracy despite losing his own house and possessions. Following his death at home on 8 March 1986, aged 73, he was described as, 'a quiet unassuming man, immaculately groomed' who lived 'a gentle lifestyle'.²⁷

Delphin was survived by his wife Theresa, three children, twelve grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. One grandson served during the 1950s as a Gunner in the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery and one of his nephews, John Lawrence Cubillo (1934-2003), was probably the only Filipino-Australian to serve in the Korean War. In addition, another great-grandson of Antonio and Lily Cubillo, through their first child Cristina Mary (Mrs Oluf Odegaard, 1899-1957),²⁸ served in the Royal Australian Navy from the early 1960s as a submariner, attaining the rank of Warrant Officer. Today, Lieutenant-Commander

²⁵ NAA: B884, 'D544', item barcode 6612846; *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 31 March 1936, p.2; *Sunday Territorian*, 16 March 1986; Carment & James (1992) pp 43-44; Martínez (1999) p.193; Cubillo-Carter (2000) pp.204-12; Distor & Hunt (2006). The family gives a date of birth of '24 December 1913' (Cubillo-Carter, 2000) but the WW2 nominal roll and his service record both state '24 January 1914'.

²⁶ CofA 1941-42, part 1 A-D, p.7.

²⁷ Cubillo-Carter (2000) p.205.

²⁸ South Australian Births Index, 644/474 (1899); Cubillo-Carter, I C (2000). Odegaard Drive in Rosebery was registered on by Palmerston City Council in honour of Christina Mary Odegaard, née Cubillo (NTG 24, dated 18 June 2003; NTG 18 dated 4 May 2005).

Bertram Slape OAM RAN is a Marine Engineering Officer, a veteran of service in Afghanistan and Operation ‘Sumatra Assist’, and a recipient of the Defence Force Service Medal with five clasps.

The Spain family

Dionisio Antonio Puerte Spain (1863-1926) from Cebu was also a pearlshell diver on Thursday Island in the 1870s – after living a decade in the Colony of Queensland he was naturalised as a British subject on 4 April 1889.²⁹ Antonio and his English wife Elizabeth Massey (1866-1951) had eleven sons and a daughter on Thursday Island and in Palmerston, although several of the sons died in infancy. Their fourth son Felix was wounded on the Somme in 1918. Antonio died of bowel cancer on 21 July 1926, aged 64, after having lived in Australia for about 50 years.

Elizabeth Spain, known as the ‘Queen of Darwin’ for her extensive work for charitable organisations, was in Brisbane at the onset of World War 2. She saw three grandsons enlist for military service, yet it was her second son Catalino who she lost due to enemy action, on Darwin wharf on 19 February 1942.³⁰ In addition, a great-grandson was killed while fighting as a guerrilla in the Philippines (see Part 2). When she moved to Brisbane in 1932 at the age of 66, after having lived in Darwin for 38 years, ‘Granny Spain’ was considered to be one of Darwin’s oldest inhabitants.³¹ On her death on 3 April 1951 at the age of 85 she was described as ‘a grand old lady’, survived by three sons and a daughter, and more than 20 grandchildren and about 35 great-grandchildren.³²

Felix Richard William Spain (1923-2001)³³ was born in Darwin on 23 February 1923, the third child and first son of Great War veteran Felix Beato Puerte Spain (1893-1966) and his English wife Edith (1899-1984). Felix (senior) had been born on Thursday Island on 21 February 1893 but was brought to Palmerston when he was just one year old. Before 1915, he worked as a railway fireman with the Public Works Department, was an active shooter in the Darwin Rifle Club, and was a member of the Darwin Cable Guard. Miss Edith Edetta Edmonds had been born in Birmingham on 23 April 1899, and met her future husband 3496 Pte Felix Spain, 49th Bn AIF, when she was working with a Voluntary Aid Detachment and he was recuperating from gunshot wounds to the shoulder.

Felix and Edith married on 9 March 1918, and he brought her to Australia in 1920 with their young daughter Queenie Edetta Spain. They lived first at Pine Creek, and then later moved to Darwin where Felix took over his father’s hairdressing saloon in Cavenagh Street and Edith ran the Bluebird Cafe for many years. They lived in Wood Street, and ultimately had seven children. Their first son 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. In early 1937, Felix was employed at the Botanic Gardens cutting limbs from trees the recent cyclone had brought down.

²⁹ See *Sabretache LV(2)*, June 2014.

³⁰ Lockwood (1984); *Sabretache LV(2)*, June 2014 and *LV(4)*, December 2014.

³¹ *The Brisbane Courier*, 22 October 1932, p.22; *The Queenslander* (Brisbane) 27 October 1932, p.34.

³² *Townsville Daily Bulletin* (Queensland) 4 February 1936, p. 10; *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) 5 April 1951, p.12; *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 6 April 1951, p.5.

³³ NAA: B883, ‘DX605’, item barcode 6663209; *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 19 March 1937, p.11; 29 November 1940, p.4; *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 10 July 2001; Central Coast Express Advocate 11 July 2001; Hansard (NT) 30 August 1984, p.1171.

When Felix enlisted in the AIF in Darwin on 25 June 1940 (see Fig.3), he stated his age to be 20, but he was actually just 17 ('23 February 1920' is given as his date of birth on the online nominal roll). His parents held an open house to enable friends and former school-mates to bid Felix good-bye before he left for Sydney. He is believed to be the youngest Territorian to have enlisted for active service in World War 2.³⁴ His brother Dennis, the youngest of the family, was born in 1934 and was still at school during the war. Felix served until 25 September 1945 with the 2/101st General Transport Company, AASC in Port Moresby, Queensland and on Morotai. Felix and his wife June had two sons (Francisco and Terry) and a daughter (Lorraine). Their first son was generally known as Francis or according to the Filipino custom as 'Chico'.

During the exodus of women and children from Darwin in December 1941, Edith took her children Rosie, Sheila, Lily and Dennis on the SS *Zealandia* to Glebe, NSW.³⁵ Following the bombing raids on Darwin, in which his elder brother Catalino was killed, Felix senior left Darwin on 26 February, aged 50.³⁶ He worked for the Allied Works Council in Sydney, and brought his family back to Darwin after the war on the back of a semi-trailer from Alice Springs.



Fig.3: DX605 Private Felix Spain in 1940 (photo provided by Mrs Leanne Wood).

Felix (senior) died in Darwin on 17 December 1966, aged 74.³⁷ Edith died on 7 May 1984, aged 85, survived by Dennis, Sheila, Lily, Mona and Felix, along with numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. One great-grandson of Antonio and Elizabeth Spain, and a grandson of Felix Spain through his daughter Rosalina (1928-1964), served in the RAN during Confrontation and the Vietnam War – Radio Operator Special Laurence Charles 'Spike' Jones. WW2 veteran Felix Spain passed away in Tumbi Umbi, NSW on 8 July 2001, aged 78.

Ernest Herbert Spain (1913-1996)³⁸ was born in Darwin on 3 June 1913, the youngest child of Antonio and Elizabeth's first son Anastasio Puerte Spain (1886-1942), who was known as 'Pedro'. Anastasio married Miss Fanny Louisa Chapman (1889-1960) in Darwin on 19 July 1909. They had three children, but their first (William Anstao Spain, 1910-1911) died in infancy.

³⁴ *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 29 November 1940, p.4.

³⁵ CofA 1941-42, part 1 R-W, p.3.

³⁶ CofA 1942, part 2 P-S, p.10.

³⁷ *Northern Territory News*, 19 December 1966; Palmerston Cemetery, Plot 185; buried 20 December 1966.

³⁸ NAA: B884, 'Q268434', item barcode 4875847; *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*: 30 June 1923, p.6; *Northern Standard* 9 September 1938, p.4.

Anastasio and Fanny's children Louisa and Ernie attended Darwin Public School, and were both active participants in community activities such as the 'juvenile fancy dress ball' held each year at the Town Hall. 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 sister Louisa at Christ Church Cathedral on 1 July 1931 when she married Dick Butler, born in Katherine in 1908 to a Wugularri/Jawoyn Aboriginal and a European father, and later a Gunner in the Darwin Mobile Force.³⁹ Later that year Ernie went to Queensland and changed codes: he played as a winger in the Toowoomba first grade rugby team, where he was described as 'short of body, but long limbed and well shouldered'.⁴⁰ He married Miss Elena Hennessy and they had one son. 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. Meanwhile in Darwin, Ernie's mother Fanny Spain, together with his sister Louisa (Mrs Dick Butler) and her four children, were evacuated on the SS *Montoro* on 10 January 1942. They lived with Ernie and Elena in Brisbane for the duration of the war.⁴¹ Anastasio died in Brisbane on 6 August 1942.

Dick Butler, a boxing trainer and strong footballer with the Buffalos, remained in Darwin and served in a coast-watcher detachment at Peewee Camp, East Point. He was on duty at the Naval Oil Fuel Installation on 19 February 1942, and narrowly escaped death at the time of the first Japanese raid. His family returned to the Top End in June 1948, living in a 'Sidney Williams' house at Salonika. Butler served with the Regular Army in Darwin and was the first soldier to earn the Long Service & Good Conduct Medal for service completely in the 7th Military District. From 1961 to 1978 he was Head Gardener at Government House. Several of Dick and Louisa's children served in the post-war CMF, and one served in the Regular Army – Arthur 'Darky' Butler (1944-2008) served with 3RAR in Borneo during Confrontation, and was one of four Filipino-Australians to serve in South Vietnam, in 1967-68 with Support Company 7RAR.



Fig.4: 135069 Leading Aircraftman Dan Spain in 1943 (photo provided by Mrs Leanne Wood).

Daniel Cathalino Spain (1914-2010)⁴² was born in Darwin on 5 September 1914, the only son of Catalino Puerte Spain (1887-1942), Antonio and Elizabeth's second child and second son. In the Roman Catholic chapel in Darwin on 9 February 1909 he married Gertrude Maria Da Souza Conanan (1891-1955), the older sister of the Great War volunteers Ricardo and Elias Conanan. Catalino and Gertrude lived in McMinn

³⁹ NAA: Series A1/1 File 26/5350, 'Half-castes and Quadroons in the Northern Territory, 1926'; NAA: Series E72, DL244, 'Office of the Administrator - Butler Richard'; *The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 15 July 1931; Carment & Wilson (1996) pp.42-44.

⁴⁰ *Northern Standard* (Darwin) 9 September 1938, p.4.

⁴¹ CofA 1941-42, part 1 A-D, p.8.

⁴² NAA: A9301, '135069', item barcode 5352045; *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* 12 February 1909, p.3; *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 12 May 2010; *Northern Territory News* 15 May 2010.

Street and had just two children – Christina Liboria Spain and Daniel Cathalino Spain. Christina married early and lived in the Philippines from 1924 until she returned to Darwin at the beginning of 1937; her eldest child remained in the Philippines and later fought as a guerrilla in defence of his homeland (see Part 2).

For the evacuation of Darwin, the SS *Zealandia* departed on 20 December 1941: Gertrude Spain went to Brisbane, while Daniel and his sister Christina and her children continued on to Marrickville, NSW.⁴³ Having returned to Darwin harbour, the *Zealandia* was sunk during the first bombing raid, with three crew members killed. In that same raid, Christina and Dan lost both their uncle Ricardo Conanan and their father.

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. Dan and Bess were living in Surrey Hills when he enlisted in the RAAF on 15 June 1943, aged 28 (see Fig.4). Dan Spain served as a Leading Aircraftman until 15 April 1946. He was a cook, but apparently made a reasonable amount of money darning other men's socks because he could sew and they couldn't – his mother had taught him to sew and cook from a young age. Dan proudly marched or rode with the RAAF contingent in Matraville each Anzac Day (see Fig.5) until he passed away at Camelot Nursing Home in Maroubra, NSW on 8 May 2010, aged 95. He was buried at Botany Cemetery with his mother Gertrude.



Fig.5: Dan Spain on Anzac Day in Matraville, NSW in 2000 (photo provided by Mrs Leanne Wood).

Commemoration

Garr.⁴⁴ Guillermo ('Glamor') Garr MM, a veteran of service in two wars, died in Cairns on 30 April 1973, aged 79, and was buried in the Cairns War Cemetery under a marble headstone bearing an engraved Rising Sun badge. His brothers Matthew and William, both killed during WW1, had been honoured on the Darwin Cenotaph and by the naming of 'Garr Street' in Darwin in 1968. In 2000 their father Carlos Ga (1854-1931) was honoured when Darwin City Council named 'Carlos Road' at East Arm in his memory.

See-Kee.⁴⁵ Carlos Ga's grandson Charles See-Kee played several significant roles during WW2, however it was for his post-war community work that he was honoured, culminating in 1988 with the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). Though it took over four decades, the debt of gratitude of which Judge Wells had spoken was finally repaid. The NT

⁴³ CofA 1941-42, part 1 A-D', p.3; CofA 1941-42, part 1 R-W, p.3.

⁴⁴ Martyn Street Cemetery – Division SR, Section LP, Row P11: Plot number 29475, Site 38; NTG 42, dated 25 September 1968; NTG 37, dated 20 September 2000.

⁴⁵ Rosenzweig (1995) pp.9-10, 23; Rosenzweig (1996) pp.47-48; *Northern Territory News* 9 July 2002, 12 July 2002, 17 July 2002.

Government today offers a ‘Charles See Kee Leadership Scholarship’ to assist students who have been resettled in Australia as a humanitarian or refugee entrant to undertake study which furthers employment and leadership outcomes.

Cubillo.⁴⁶ On 7 April 1971, ‘Cubillo Street’ in Wanguri was named in honour of Mrs Louisa Cubillo who had died in Darwin on 29 August 1967, the widow of Juan Roque Cubillo killed in the Bombing of Darwin, and sister-in-law of veterans Ponciano Pedro Cubillo and Delfin Antonio Cubillo. More recently, Duwun Road in Rosebery was registered by Palmerston City Council on 12 December 2006 in commemoration of Annie Duwun, the Larrakia grandmother of Ponce, Juan and Delfin.

The Cubillo family has become prominent in Northern Territory affairs, particularly sport, with Antonio and Lily’s descendants numbering around 400. ‘Keep Him my Heart’ was a play written by Gary Lee in 1993 based on the life of his great-grandparents Antonio and Lily Cubillo – described as ‘a Larrakia-Filipino love story spanning 100 years of a family’s history in Darwin’. Delphin Antonio Cubillo, with a middle name recalling his Filipino father, became known as the ‘Keeper of Stories’ for the Cubillo family. On 8 September 1984, he received the Larrakia honorific name ‘Belyuen’ from the Senior Larrakia Ceremony Man George Mungaloo, to formally tie him to his mother’s traditional land across Darwin Harbour.

Spain.⁴⁷ On 3 October 1962, Darwin City Council registered ‘Spain Place’ in Darwin city in memory of the Filipino diver and hairdresser Antonio Puerte Spain (1863-1926). The street also recalls Antonio’s son Felix Beato Puerte Spain (1893-1966), the Great War veteran who carried on the hairdressing business and was father of WW2 veteran Felix Richard William Spain (1923-2001). During the first raid on Darwin Catalino Spain, aged 54, was machine-gunned by carrier fighters while unloading cargo from the MV *Neptuna* and was then hurled into the water by a bomb explosion. His memory was perpetuated when his only daughter Christina named one of her daughters ‘Catalina Victoria Brooks’, using the female version of his name.

Butler.⁴⁸ Mrs Louisa Butler of Fannie Bay, a granddaughter of Antonio and Elizabeth Spain and only sister of war veteran Ernie Spain, was among the 49 killed during Cyclone Tracy in 1974. Her name was commemorated on a memorial plaque outside the Darwin City Council offices which was unveiled by The Queen on 26 March 1977. Her husband Dick Butler died on 24 August 1987 and was buried with her in Darwin General Cemetery in Jingili. In his honour, ‘Butler Place’ was registered by Litchfield Council on 11 October 1995.

Conclusion

These Top End Australian families were all connected through their shared Filipino ancestry, and also through many of the men being footballers and members of the North Australia Workers’ Union. By way of example, at the 1932 funeral of Ernie Lee, the son of a Chinese merchant and a notable financial supporter of Wanderers Football Club, the pall-bearers included Elias Conanan, Catalino and Felix Spain, Antonio and Johnny Cubillo, and

⁴⁶ CofA 1942, part 2 C-D, p.6; NTG 14, dated 7 April 1971; NTG 51, dated 20 December 2006; Cubillo-Carter (2000) p.205.

⁴⁷ NTG 46, dated 3 October 1962.

⁴⁸ *Northern Territory News*, 31 December 1974, p.3; *Centralian Advocate* (Alice Springs) 22 May 1975; NTG 41, dated 11 October 1995.

Francisco Chavez – Filipinos standing shoulder-to-shoulder with fellow Aboriginal sportsmen and waterside workers at a Chinese funeral.⁴⁹ At this time there was no ‘colour-barrier’ and football was open to all – as the journalist Ernestine Hill described, there were ‘barrackers in 25 languages’ at every game: ‘in Darwin it is more an Oriental ballet than a football match’.⁵⁰

Like so many Darwin families, they recovered from the 1937 cyclone only to face a wartime experience which generally comprised the unique intermingling of three circumstances – the service and sacrifice of sons and daughters in uniform, the evacuation of families from their homes, and then the bombing raids on Darwin from 19 February 1942 onwards. Great War veteran Felix Spain for example, saw his young son enlist as he himself had done 25 years earlier, he evacuated his wife and children before himself leaving Darwin, and in the bombings he lost a brother, his home and his Great War service medals.

Over the last century these Filipino-Australian families (with varying degrees of Welsh, English, Portuguese, Chinese and Larrakia influence) have maintained their customs and traditions with a common bond established through food, music and sport, and they have continued such practices as holding novenas when people died. Families have held commemorations on *Todos los Santos* (‘All Saints Day’), today known in Tagalog as *Áraw ng mga Patáy* (‘Day of the Dead’), and practiced the old customs of *Pagmamano* (‘an act of showing respect to the elders’) and *Pagalala sa yumao* (‘commemorating/ remembering the dead’). The novena for Delfin Cubillo in 1986, for example, saw hundreds of people assemble at the family home and was followed by the traditional Filipino feast.

*

For the first time, a preliminary record of service of these Filipino-Australian World War 2 veterans has been documented. The contributions and sacrifice of additional Filipino-Australian families, and a complete list of references, will be given in Part 2. The wartime service of these eighteen ‘Fil-Anzacs’ represents a significant contribution by the then very small Northern Territory Filipino community to the military history of Australia.

*

THE FILIPINO-AUSTRALIAN RECORD OF SERVICE 1939-1945

Second AIF

NX145391 Private Basil Ceasar (1917-2007)	2/30 th Transport Platoon AIF
DX987 Private Paul Zachary Ceasar (1922-2011)	121 st Australian General Hospital AIF
† QX61563 Sapper Joseph Conanan (1926-1946)	12 th Water Transport Operating Coy, RAE
DX755 Corporal John Perez (1921-2017)	Katherine Area Staff
NX134749 Sergeant Joseph Perez (1922-2002) [Post-war Army number 245194]	34 th Australian Infantry Brigade
NX181128 Private Frank Perez (1927-1999)	31 st /51 st Australian Infantry Bn AIF
DX605 Pte Felix Richard William Spain (1923-2001)	2/101 st General Transport Company, AASC

⁴⁹ *Northern Standard* 28 October 1932, p.2; 1 November 1932, p.8.

⁵⁰ Quoted in: Ministerial Statement Mr Vatskalis, Debates - Ninth Assembly, First Session - 08/02/2005 - Parliamentary Record No. 24, 10 February 2005.

Australian Military Forces

D54 Gunner Basil Ceasar (1917-2007) <i>and</i>	18 th Field Battery RAA
N216012 Private Basil Ceasar (1917-2007)	Militia service in NSW
D55 Gunner William Paul Ceasar (1919-1995)	18 th Field Battery RAA
D544 Corporal Delphin Antonio Cubillo (1914-1986)	Australian Army Dental Corps
Q54723 Private Glamor Garr MM (1892-1973)	15 th Garrison Bn, Northern Command
D69 Gunner Bennett See-Kee (1909-1957)	18 th Field Battery RAA
Charles See-Kee (1913-2002)	HQ 7 th Military District, Darwin
Q268434 Private Ernest Herbert Spain (1913-1996)	18 th Line of Communication Signals

Australian Women's Auxiliary Service

QF269602 Private Priscilla Silva (1921-)

Royal Australian Air Force

443093 Leading Aircraftman John Perez (1921-2017)
 † 432010 F/Officer Michael Louis Perez (1924-1945) No.207 Sqn RAF (Bomber Command)
 121799 Leading Aircraftman Charles See-Kee (1913-2002)
 135069 Leading Aircraftman Daniel Cathalino Spain (1914-2010)

US Merchant Service

Ponciano Pedro Cubillo (1903-1988)

Local Guerrilla Forces, Philippine Islands

† Florenco Francisco (1925-c1942/43)

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WARRANT OFFICER ALEX CHEW MBE

Kevin Smith

Alexander Chew of Bendigo enlisted in the AIF in 1940 at the age of 26. His father had come from Canton, while his mother was Australian-Chinese. From the gold rush days of the 1850s there had been a significant Chinese presence in Bendigo. Alex grew up in a little old house surrounded by Chinese market gardens where he worked when he left school at fourteen. Sometimes in his spare time he would pan for gold in the Bendigo Creek or go rabbiting with his ferrets. As he grew older he enjoyed a flutter on the horses, or two-up in empty coal trucks on a nearby railway siding. He could not read or write Chinese, although he spoke the language quite well.

After basic training at Bonegilla he was posted with the pioneer platoon of his unit, 2/21st Bn of the Eighth Division AIF, to Winnellie near Darwin for eight months. There the platoon worked on building the permanent wartime army camp. Chew had already agreed to be

batman for his platoon commander, Lieutenant Bill Jinkins, whom he soon taught the finer points of two-up and other games of chance. Jinkins later described his batman as one of the cagiest gamblers in the battalion.

The 2/21st was the central core of Gull Force sent to the island of Ambon, 1500km north of Darwin, on 3 December 1941. This beautiful tropical island with its pleasant, friendly people was within two months to be engulfed by southward-sweeping Japanese forces. The enemy invasion of Ambon was supported by aircraft from the same carrier fleet that had attacked Pearl Harbor. Chew was with his platoon guarding the plateau of Mount Nona, when at dusk on 1 February 1942 about 300 Japanese troops were sighted moving up the steep eastern face of the mountain. The platoon's field telephone line to the rest of the battalion was cut during the enemy advance. Close-quarter fighting ensued during the night, the Japanese bloodily driven back with hand grenades. After further concerted enemy attacks, the platoon clambered down a western cliff face to occupy a native village and establish contact with the rest of their battalion whose commanding officer had decided there was no alternative but to surrender. The following morning the platoon marched into Ambon town and into captivity.

Chew was very soon singled out by his captors and accused of being Chinese. They gave him an extremely rough time and it was only his officer's intervention which saved him from death at the point of Japanese bayonets. The pioneer platoon was given the job of putting barbed wire around the Tan Toey prison compound. They ensured that there were cunningly wired, built-in exits. Shortly afterwards, Jinkins asked Chew about going through the wire eventually to escape. Neither man had any intention of remaining in captivity and both were willing to gamble their lives for the chance of freedom.

Chew and Jinkins subsequently went outside the POW camp three times under Japanese escort on working parties. Another ten times during the first six weeks of captivity they went out at night together. On one of these occasions they were away for forty-eight hours, their absence undetected. During these dangerous sorties, reconnoitring the lie of the land, they planned their escape and arranged with friendly natives for the storage of food and clothing that would aid their getaway. Jinkins managed to trace maps of the Banda and Arafura seas and their main islands from a school atlas.

In their escape on the night of 17 March 1942 Jinkins and Chew were accompanied by five others: Lieuts Rudder and Gordon Jack plus Harry Coe, Cliff Warn and Arthur Young. In heavy rain and darkness, after retrieving a sub-machine gun, ammunition and other supplies previously hidden, they had to cross a slippery razorback ridge on their way to the coast. Assisted by their new and courageous Ambonese friends, they left the shore in three small outrigger *prahus*. Next morning, delayed by a torrential overnight storm, they were still within sight of the Japanese-held shoreline. Making some headway at last they sailed south and east for Haruku Island, where they were made welcome by the Rani of Haruku, who arranged for a sailing boat to take them farther east to Amahai.

At Amahai they were given by friendly locals a leaking motor launch in which to continue their escape, with two more AIF escapers aboard, and Alex Chew acting as cook. In stormy seas their lives came to depend upon the boat-handling skills of Warn, a young fisherman pre-war, and Coe who was a dairy farmer familiar with engines. On they went, island by island, to Geser Island, a coral cay about five kilometres off the east coast of Ceram. Here they were billeted at the island's hospital. In various towns on the islands they visited during their travels they made whatever purchases of food were possible from the dwindling local

supplies, but fish and rice were to become their staple diet. After several days endeavouring to repair their unseaworthy launch they were able to exchange it for two not especially seaworthy *prahus*.

They frequently sighted enemy aircraft high above as they then progressed through the chain of islands – the renowned Spice Islands – south towards Saumlaki in the Tanimbar Islands. The escape group experienced a sense of exotic adventure as they cruised amid warm and perfumed breezes. At Toeal en route the seven original escapers purchased a better *prahu* from the harbour master and took on four natives as skipper and crew. Soon they found themselves way off course and at Larat Island dismissed this crew, setting sail again via Arama with just one native guide.

At Saumlaki with its wide bay and blue-green coral seas, the very hospitable Dutch official still in charge provided accommodation at the Government guesthouse and offered them his diesel-powered schooner. The news was that the Japanese were progressively taking total control of the islands, not far behind the escaping Australians. Their constant hope was that the advancing enemy would not leap-frog to the islands yet ahead of them. Japanese aircraft were flying over the area daily. Soon after leaving harbour at Saumlaki on 22 April they were again hit by heavy stormy seas and ran aground on a reef. Back ashore the determined, salt-encrusted band of seafarers learned that a forty-ton schooner, the *Griffioen*, carrying Dutch refugees had sailed into Saumlaki but was short of fuel.

The escapers were making constant efforts to contact Darwin by radio but with no success. They decided therefore to take over the refugee ship. By this time two more AIF escapers and nineteen Dutch servicemen had been included in the party. The Dutch official ordered villagers in the vicinity to bring in supplies of coconut oil inside wide bamboo stems. With the existing limited supplies of diesel fuel and a little aviation gasoline mixed with the coconut oil the ship's engines functioned well. They were started up on diesel and then switched to the coconut oil mix. In the face of the reluctance of the *Griffioen's* crew, Jinkins declared martial law. With the tacit concurrence of the Dutch official he commandeered the schooner and her crew at gunpoint. On 29 April a Lockheed Hudson aircraft appeared and bombed the schooner at the end of the jetty, but caused only slight damage. Late afternoon on 1 May the escapers sailed for Darwin. They had been three weeks in Saumlaki.

Jinkins, armed, stayed at the side of the *Griffioen's* skipper throughout the voyage south across the Arafura Sea. Reaching Darwin on 4 May, all were amazed to see the wrecks of ships and the ruined buildings of the 19 February and later air raids. Nevertheless Darwin was still a wonderfully welcome sight to these escaped prisoners of war. Theirs had been an epic sea journey and a great escape.

A month later Alex Chew was transferred to Plover Force, eventually to go north again from Darwin on a marauding, intelligence-gathering operation led by Jinkins to the Tanimbar and Aru groups of islands. However, the enemy were already in occupation in considerable strength, and after a head-on confrontation with some casualties, the mission was aborted. In December 1942 Chew, by now promoted to sergeant, became a member of the secret Z Special Unit, established for covert operations in enemy-occupied territory.

Chew's destiny seemed to be tied to that of Bill Jinkins. By mid-1943 both were instructors at the newly set up Z training camp on Fraser Island, Chew having already been attached for some months as an instructor to the special commando training school at Foster in Victoria.

In December 1943 Chew was promoted Warrant Officer 2 and, with Jinkins promoted to Major, left Fraser Island for Perth. They had been selected to go to Borneo with four others to join a small group of six members Z Special who had already been on that enemy-occupied island for three months on Operation Python. This operation's mission was to secure intelligence regarding enemy installations, activities and movements, especially shipping movements, and to prepare groups of natives for later intelligence-gathering and sabotage activities. The six men of Phase I of this mission had been inserted by submarine on 6 October 1943 near the Little Tenagian River at Labian Point on the north-east coast of Borneo. Their leader was Major 'Gort' Chester, an Englishman who had lived in Borneo for twenty years before the war.

Chester had been in contact with the US guerrilla forces in the Philippines and with Lim Keng Fatt who was second-in-command to Lieut Kwok on the west coast of Borneo. Kwok was planning an uprising against the Japanese at Jesselton. Arrangements were in hand for some members of Python to accompany Lim back to Jesselton in January. Arms, ammunition and medicines intended for Kwok were scheduled to be carried with Phase II of Python, but had to be left in Australia because of overloading on the submarine. In the meantime, information had been received that Kwok's planned rebellion had begun prematurely, had failed and that Kwok himself had been killed.

On 20 January 1944 Phase II members of the operation, led by Major Jinkins, landed successfully from an American submarine near Labian Point and made immediate contact with the operatives of Phase I. One day later one of the new arrivals disappeared in the dense jungle between the beach and the Python base camp. He was never again seen by his comrades. After the war it was learned that he had been found by natives staggering along the beach far to the north of Labian Point. He was handed over to civilian police on offshore Tambisan Island and was eventually taken by *Kempei Tai* personnel by lugger to Sandakan where he was subjected to severe interrogation.

Without any doubt the presence of an Australian commando team in Borneo was a cause for consternation among the Japanese. It confirmed rumours among native fishermen that there had been strangers in the Labian Point area in recent months. On 16 February a large force of almost one hundred Japanese marines was landed near Labian Point, one mile south of the Nyamok River, to search for signs of possible Australian incursions. Evacuation to the west coast became a serious consideration but did not eventuate.

At this same time three of the Python operatives, including Jinkins, were taken back to Australia by submarine. In the following weeks there were further enemy landings as evidence accumulated that there were infiltrators on this stretch of the Borneo coast. During March 1944 twelve enemy patrols came ashore over a period of two days. Locating a commando observation post high in a tree just inland from the beach, they followed a blazed trail back to the Python base camp farther inland and seized the Australians' stores. Alex Chew and his companions were now well and truly on the run as they moved deeper into the jungle, their senses sharpened by their dire circumstances. Eyes looking everywhere, ears alert, they crept along dark indistinct trails. The food supplies they could carry were low and they were drinking directly from the numerous creeks. Their radios were still their link with Australia, and they carried them at all costs. It was at this time in early March 1944 that two more of Chew's Phase II mates were captured.

Chew and three others were concealed in foreshore scrub watching a Japanese launch cruise

slowly pass while searching planes flew overhead. In order to cover more ground on this reconnaissance it was decided that two of the Australians would move some distance east, checking for evidence of further landings, while Chew and Stan Neil would go west. The two who went east were ambushed by a Japanese patrol. Later that day Chew and Neil saw them distantly on the beach in enemy custody. After the war it was discovered that the two captured Australians were taken back to *Kempei Tai* headquarters in Sandakan to join their comrade captured in January. These three were later transferred to Japanese headquarters at Jesselton on Borneo's west coast. There they were found guilty of espionage and executed on 30 December 1944.

Sgt. Stan Neil, trained as a signaller, had been with the Australian Parachute Battalion when transferred to Z Special Unit. Remaining now in the Labian Point hinterland with Gort Chester, Chew and Neil were Lieut Lloyd Woods, Sgt Lindsay Cottee and Sgt Fred Olsen. These latter three were Phase I operatives who had been with Chester since October 1943. There were no more supplies left of the quinine tablets previously taken, and at least one of the party was increasingly under the weather with disabling attacks of malaria. In the Labian Point area during their evasive treks to avoid the Japanese search patrols, the six tired and hungry commandoes were followed at times by orangutans swinging along high in the trees. Crocodiles were an ever-present hazard along the coastal swamps and waterways. Snakes and leeches were virtually routine. Civet cats prowled their overnight camping spots. Always there were mosquitoes along the edges of the many green unhealthy marshy areas, and there was an occasional chattering of families of monkeys.

The Japanese patrols penetrated no more than about five kilometres inland. Fleeting, savage encounters continued from time to time as the fugitives sought to retain access to their lifeline of the beaches. On one occasion, hugging the jungle shadows bordering the beach about three days walk south of their original base camp, in bright moonlight, they came upon a pile of sandbags with a dark figure standing nearby. Chew recalled later: 'He must have seen us, as we heard a shout and a few random bursts were fired from a light machine gun as we moved into the jungle.' The enemy fire was returned, but Olsen and Neil had disappeared. A couple of days later they turned up at their mates' temporary, well-hidden camp.

Over a period of three months there were to be about five hundred enemy troops and twenty launches continually searching for the infiltrators. There were ever the evasive tactics, the stealthy silence of their tread, making use of the dappled shade, trying to keep the sun in the eyes of possible observers morning and afternoon. They carried three radios with them on these endless, twisting wanderings. One was discarded along with a stack of heavy gold sovereigns during an unexpected brush with their pursuers.

During April there were several attempts to extract Python, but reefs and shallow water prevented the submarines from coming close inshore. There were communication problems with timings and map co-ordinates. During a third effort north of Labian Point, courageous American sailors paddled a large raft ashore only to find themselves in a fierce engagement with waiting Japanese troops. Another pick-up point had to be found. Neil and Chew went off for three or four days at a time looking for suitable locations, but without success. A fourth rescue mission set off from Fremantle with Major Jinkins and Sgt Stan Dodds aboard USS *Harder*, skippered by the legendary American submariner Sam Dealy. The pick-up was to be at the southernmost point of Tanguisu Bay on 5-6 June, which would involve a trek of about fifty kilometres by the six fugitives.

It was Neil and Chew, both notably competent operatives who, from their maps, suggested Tangusu Bay without having seen the area. Travelling by compass, keeping fairly close to the coast, the Python fugitives bashed their way through elephant grass and spiky undergrowth, tall jungle and twisting mangrove swamps. Throughout this whole period they were able to maintain intermittent radio contact with Australia. They persisted for almost two weeks through country where no white man had previously set foot, desperately short of food and barely surviving on dehydrated rations. All were heavily bearded, their jungle greens torn and rotting, red with their own blood from cuts and scratches and from the dozens of leeches clinging to their bodies.

Waiting at last at their rendezvous hidden in a depressing swamp of nipa palms and black mud, they were assailed by swarms of mosquitoes and sandflies. More leeches became globular with their blood. The only water they could find at first in this area was too brackish to drink. Neil and Chew went off again and found a little that was drinkable, sufficient to ration out two mugs per day. The submarine was overdue and the waiting stretched their nerves to the limit. All joined in the Lord's Prayer. It was worse than being on the run. Neil and Chew were ready to strike out on their own if the rescue attempt was aborted yet again. In such an eventuality it seemed that the group, at the end of its tether, would have to split up, each man for himself. Neil and Chew would go east towards nearby Tambisan Island to steal a native boat. Then they would seek some sort of refuge among the Sibutu Islands.

Harder reached its RV point on 8 June, two days late. At about midnight Jinkins and Dodds left the submarine, well-armed, and proceeded towards the shore in two folboats. There was a full moon above an overcast, cloudy sky, only a very slight wind and the tide was setting slightly westward. Approaching the rendezvous, they recognised Alex Chew by his voice calling quietly to them in the dark. He in turn recognised even at 150 metres the voice of his old friend Dodds, who had been his platoon sergeant in the 2/21st Bn, and called out, 'Doddsie, you old bastard!' The folboats grounded in the mud at that 150 metres from the shore. The Python men crawled out to the boats, up to their thighs in the stinking mud, elated at their extraction. Warrant Officer Chew, however, was missing. He turned up soon afterwards, having remained to bury his weapons in the mud. They had been four months on the run behind enemy lines, constantly pursued. Without delay they were paddled back to *Harder*.

Showers, shaves and medical care were first priorities, followed by food, fresh clothes and then sleep for the gaunt, hollow-eyed, exhausted survivors. Their recovery was rapid, but the voyage back to Darwin was far from peaceful. At times under the constant slam of Japanese depth charges, the submarine bottomed at 120 metres. It was tossed about, damaged and leaking. With engines shut down for silence the chilling thought was, 'Will we get under way again?' Without its air-conditioning there was an increased accumulation of exhaled carbon dioxide. Perspiration poured. The hull creaked and strained fearsomely. The darkness was relieved only by a minimal red emergency lighting. *Harder* reached Darwin on 21 June 1944, everyone smelling rankly of sweat and diesel fumes.

Again Alex Chew had been involved in an epic of escape and evasion. Again Darwin was the city of his homecoming. Stan Neil commented 58 years later: 'I suppose I had more to do with Alex than anyone else during these trips, and I found him to be a good friend and a brave and reliable partner in such circumstances.' Lindsay Cottee, who was with Python for the full eight months in Borneo, remembers Alex Chew for his friendliness, compatibility and courage. Bill Jinkins said at Chew's funeral in 1988: 'Alex was the bravest, most

conscientious, honest, shrewd tactician I served with in my seven years of service, as well as being a polite imperturbable gentleman and my closest friend and mate from the time I first met him.’

USS *Harder* was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for the patrol on which it sank five Japanese destroyers and rescued the men of Python. The US Navy applied for each of the six rescued commandoes plus Jinkins and Dodds to be permitted to wear this citation, but permission was refused by the Australian Government.

In November 1944 Chew was promoted Warrant Officer 1st Class. He continued his army service as an instructor with Z Special Unit, but was still not finished with clandestine operations in enemy-held territory. Operation Politician involved twelve AIF men in pairs accompanying US submarine patrols to carry out tasks, usually in folboats, such as attaching limpet mines to targets otherwise inaccessible for submarines, beach demolitions and shore reconnaissance. During these missions the submarines were nevertheless involved in their usual hazardous actions and engagements against enemy surface craft. Politician I had been the Jinkins and Dodds mission on *Harder* for the Python extraction.

Politician V involved Chew, once more in action with Jinkins, embarking on USS *Flounder* for the South China Sea. US aircraft had earlier noticed a French tricolour flag on a building on Woody Island in the Paracel Group. Chew and Jinkins were ordered to investigate whether there might be French patriots on the island. At sea they transferred with their equipment to USS *Pargo* to go in on their reconnaissance, landing on the island on the night of 5-6 February 1945. It was not long before they noticed an imprint in the sand of a Japanese split-toed sandal. Advancing even more cautiously, they observed a Japanese marine tending fishing lines farther along the beach. Further reconnoitring convinced the two men of Z that the building and the island were occupied by the enemy. They paddled back out to *Pargo* which then destroyed the building. Having transferred again at sea onto *Flounder*, it was three days later while it cruised at periscope depth that their vessel was accidentally rammed by another submarine. This required that *Flounder* put into Subic Bay for repairs before the two Australians could return home.

In April 1945 it was announced that Warrant Officer Alexander Chew was awarded the MBE Military Division, a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. The citation relating to Operation Python stated that:

W.O. Chew was a member of a party which carried out a successful and valuable mission into enemy occupied territory under arduous and hazardous conditions. Throughout the expedition W.O. Chew displayed cheerfulness, courage and devotion to duty of the highest order.

It is especially difficult to obtain anecdotes and personal details of those who served with Z Special Unit. Those who survive know very little about the individual histories of those they served with in wartime. As Jack Tredrea, a veteran of Operation Semut, explains, ‘When I joined “Z” it was made very clear to us that we did not ask questions of anyone, and on operations we only knew the names of our immediate mates.’ The less one knew the less one could divulge if captured and tortured.

Semut operations were conducted mainly in Sarawak, western Borneo. Several of the operations were notably dangerous and bloody. Semut IV was conducted between Baram Point and Tanjong Sirik, a three-hundred-kilometre stretch of coastline, focused on Mukah,

Bintulu and Semilajau north of Kuching. While Semut missions generally were tasked with seeking intelligence and harassing the enemy, by the time Semut IV was in the field almost all enemy movement by land had ceased along that stretch of coast. Most Semut operations were farther inland. All told seventeen personnel served on Semut IV, operating on six separate sorties.

On 1 August 1945 the 1st Sortie of Semut IV was inserted at Mukah by Catalina aircraft. Those on this sortie were Major Jenkins, Warrant Officer Chew and three others. Their task was to make initial contacts in the district and to assist in the recovery of a downed airman. The mission confirmed that there were no Japanese in the immediate vicinity, and successfully effected the rescue of a Kittyhawk pilot.

A fortnight later Chew was back again in Australia, destined for No.19 Officer Cadet Training Unit at Seymour in Victoria. He had scarcely settled into his new quarters when the war ended. The officer school offered him immediate discharge or finish the course to gain a commission. He decided to take the discharge, saying, 'I've had my share.' After the war Alex Chew worked in Bendigo as a carpenter and builder. In 1949 at Parliament House in Melbourne he was presented with his MBE by the Governor General. He married in 1956.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P11933.001

Informal group portrait of Operation Python survivors aboard USS Harder. Identified, left to right, back row: Lindsay Cottee; Frederick Gordon (Fred) Olson; Stan Dodds; Stan Neil. Front row: Bill Jenkins; Alexander (Alec) Chew; Lt Col Francis George Leach 'Gort' Chester DSO, OBE; Lloyd Woods. (AWM photo P11933.001)

He became to some extent a loner post-war and would rarely speak about those years, certainly never about the details of his own remarkable involvement and exploits. When pressed by family regarding why he had received the MBE, he always replied that it was from saving Bushell's Tea coupons. In his later years, after early retirement from the building trade, he was an exceptionally keen grower of fuchsias, and he always had a batch of home brew going. Alex Chew, the formidable warrior and quiet citizen, died aged 73 in 1988, one of the very few Australians to escape successfully from Japanese captivity, and one of the very few to have served on so many secret missions in Japanese-occupied territory

Sources:

Interviews: Betty Chew (1998), Stan Neil (2002)

Correspondence (2002): Lindsay Cottee, Stan Neil, Myrtle Patterson, Tom Pledger, Jack Tredrea

DEAD RECKONING: BOMBING KISKA THROUGH THE CLOUDS

Dirk H.R. Spennemann

The moment US forces became aware of the fact that the Japanese had invaded Kiska in the Western Aleutian Islands on 6 June 1942 they commenced a sustained bombing campaign to prevent they invaders from consolidating their foothold. The generally foggy weather over Kiska provided adverse conditions for the successful bombing of targets. In response, US aircrew developed a blind-bombing technique using Kiska Volcano as a navigational landmark. Recent research on Kiska has uncovered evidence of this in the cultural landscape of Kiska battlefield.

Background

A brief description of the historic context can suffice here as the history of the Aleutian Campaign of World War 2 has been described in detail by a range of authors (e.g. Chandonnet 1995, Cloe 1990; Cohen 1981, Garfield 1969; Hailey 1944, Morison 1949, Naval Historical Center 2010, Perras 2003, Rearden 2005). As part of the overall Battle of Midway operation, Japanese forces occupied Kiska on 6 June 1942 and nearby Attu the following day. While the main objective, to establish a patrol plane base on Midway, failed, the Aleutian component was a success (for more detail see Parshall & Tully 2005; Spennemann 2011, 2013). To launch seaplane and submarine operations in the Northern Pacific the Japanese turned Kiska into a formidable base with over 5,000 Japanese Navy and Army troops stationed there. Over the following 14 months the US attempted, in vain, to dislodge the Japanese by long-range aerial bombardment (Cloe 1990). As the 1944 US Intelligence Assessment noted in its review: '[t]he fourteen-month battle for Kiska was largely an engagement between the Eleventh Air Force and Japanese AA fire' (Headquarters Anti-Aircraft Artillery Command 1944, p.7). Once US forces had successfully recaptured Attu on May 30, 1943, the Japanese garrison on Kiska became cut off from supplies by Japan and was no longer sustainable. As an American and Canadian force of more than 34,000 men prepared to invade Kiska, a Japanese fleet managed to slip through the fog undetected and evacuate over 5,100 troops (Spennemann 2011). When the US/Canadian assault occurred three weeks later, they found the island deserted. To deny the Japanese the future use of Kiska, the US established their own garrison which operated, in increasingly scaled-down size, until the end of the Pacific War (Spennemann 2011).

Today Kiska forms a unique cultural landscape because, with the exception of a few prehistoric indigenous Aleut sites, the island represents a WW2-era battlefield pure and simple. When the Japanese evacuated the island they had to leave all their major equipment behind. All of this, as well as their personnel shelters and revetments for barracks, is still *in situ* except where the US and Canadian garrison forces cleared the debris for competing land use or where US intelligence removed some equipment for analysis and testing. In addition to the Japanese component, the battlefield encompasses evidence of the US bombing, wrecks of US aircraft shot down, as well as evidence of the US base development, including an airfield (which had been started by the Japanese), piers, collapsed Quonset huts and the like (Mobley 1996; Spennemann 2008a, 2011; Spennemann *et al* 2011).

A survey of the Japanese anti-aircraft gun (AA) positions in 2007 and of the cultural landscape of the Kiska Battlefield as a whole in 2009 (Spennemann 2008a, 2011) allowed to carry out to a critical analysis of the Japanese defense systems on the island, facilitated by 3D modelling (Spennemann 2013, in press; Spennemann & Poynter in press). This article builds

on this work and examines the history and evidence for a unique blind bombing technique developed to overcome with the adverse weather conditions that are prevalent in the Western Aleutian Islands.

Bombing Kiska

Once a PBY mission had ascertained the presence of the Japanese, the US response to the Japanese landings on Kiska was swift. Long-range Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boats, serviced by the seaplane tender USS *Gillis* (AVD-12), then stationed at Nazan Bay, Atka, carried out a continuous, 48-hour run of shuttle bombing on Kiska, starting on 10 June 1942. These attacks concluded on 12 June, when US forces withdrew and burnt the village and all installations in Atka to prevent them from potentially falling in Japanese hands (BUAER 1943; Naval Historical Center 1993). Also on 11 June 1942 the first long-range bombing runs commenced, when five B-24s and five B-17s took off from Cold Bay and, having refuelled and loaded bombs at Umnak Island, attacked installations and shipping targets in Kiska Harbor, with the Japanese destroyer *Hibiki* sustaining medium-level damage. Japanese, ship-based anti-aircraft fire downed the Consolidated B-24D serial 41-1088, piloted by Captain Jack F. Todd (Cloe 1990, p.158), mortally damaged one of the PBY and also damaged other US bombers. A Japanese news camera crew captured this event, as well as the attack by a PBY (News in Japan 1942; *AsahiGraph* 22 July 1942 p.3). In consequence of the losses, subsequent US attacks avoided flying in too low.

Systematic aerial bombing on Kiska consisted of high-level level bombing by heavy bombers. The bombing accuracy was affected in a large part by the ability to accurately measure an aircraft's speed above ground (as opposed to apparent air speed). Any miscalculation would result in the bombs being dropped too early or too late, thus resulting in near misses. The greater the height from which the bombs were dropped, the greater was the inaccuracy in bombing. In addition, bombardiers had to take into account any deflection of the dropped bombs due to local winds, which became a factor for bombs falling from greater altitudes. While the impact of that effect was minor it may have been sufficient to cause near misses. Under normal circumstances near misses will cause ancillary damage from bomb-casing shrapnel and dislodged ground matter (Chief of Ordnance 1944, p. 54ff; 1945, pp.4ff). On Kiska, bombs dropped on the ground were far less destructive as the tundra (or muskeg), coupled with the underlying sandy volcanic ash deposits, proved a soft surface absorbing much of the bomb impact (Hailey 1944, p.387). Essentially, to be destructive, the bomb had to score a direct hit.

The Japanese quickly established a protective umbrella of AA over Kiska Harbor. First supplied by ship-borne AA of the invasion fleet, it was soon provided by fixed AA positions of varied caliber (13.2mm, 25mm, 75mm and 120mm) emplaced by both the Imperial Japanese Navy and the Army (Spennemann 2011; in press). Even though the AA positions were soon known to the US pilots and could to some extent be avoided, they still posed serious threat. The common solution was to fly at higher altitudes, even though that meant reduced accuracy. The situation changed with the construction of US bases closer to Kiska, which meant that medium bombers could be brought to bear under the protection of fighters which strafed the positions to subdue the AA.

In 1941, despite bomb sights, a heavy bomber flying at 20,000 feet had only a 1.2% probability of accurately hitting a target of 30x30m (i.e. 100ft square) (Correll 2008). At the time of the Japanese occupation of Kiska not much had changed. The ability of an aerially dropped bomb to hit a target accurately was subject to a number of forces (see Table 1)

(Chief of Ordnance (1944). To compensate for these factors and to accurately predict the exact drop off point of the bombs, computational devices were built such as the Norden bombsight and later the Sperry bombsight (Torrey 1945, Searle 1989). Small errors in instrumentation or data input would have disproportionate effects on the bombing accuracy. Until bombing by radar became available, the bombsights relied on a clear sight of the target at the time of computation, a correct input on the influencing factors and the plane flying on autopilot until the point of release. If the target was obscured between computation and acquisition, the bombs could be dropped by estimating the elapsed time, but accuracy of course suffered dramatically. Moreover, even with non-obscured targets, the computations assumed that the influencing factors were constant at least for the duration between computation and arrival of the bomb on the ground. In the conditions of the Aleutians that assumption was rarely fulfilled.

The Weather: Friend or Foe?

The Aleutians have received a reputation as having one of the world's worst climates. The weather is defined by low-lying fog/clouds driven by winds of variable speed. The fog density influences visibility, which ranges from very low (less than 30 feet) to high (2-3 miles). Regarded as one of the cloudiest regions of the Northern Hemisphere, the Aleutian Chain experiences broken to overcast conditions for more than 90% of the time. It has been estimated that there are only two to four clear days per month (Fett *et al* 1993).

Not surprisingly, the Aleutian weather affected both the Japanese defenders, the US forces carrying out air attacks (Tatom 1943; Chief of Naval Operations 1944, 1945). The impact of the weather on the US operations can be gleaned by the fact that missions of some kind were mounted on 349 of the 435 days (= 80%) of Japanese occupation of Kiska. In total, 7,318 missions were flown (USSBS 1946). Yet, the actual number of days on which bombing or strafing missions could be mounted successfully, even if merely bombing through the overcast on dead reckoning runs, was limited to 162 days (37%). On some of the successful missions planes were circling over Kiska for up to two hours, looking for a break in the clouds. In all instances where no missions were sent, or where missions had to be aborted, the weather precluded operations. Likewise, for the Japanese the weather was a both a blessing and a bane. While the fog cover meant that their assets were more difficult to target, it also meant that their own AA, which was solely optically controlled, could not acquire the incoming bombers early enough to provide effective AA protection.

Overcoming the Fog: Bombing by Dead Reckoning

Since the early serious US counter attacks were long distance flights out of Cold Bay via Umnak, time over the target was limited. The planes could not hang around hoping for the clouds to clear over a suitable target. Dropping through the clouds was desirable as it certainly made sense not to take the bombs all the way back home; even ammunition was limited in the initial period. In addition, every effort had to be made to prevent the Japanese from achieving a firm foothold on the island. The initial days were critical in that regard.

The high frequency of fog and clouds obscuring the vital target areas during the Kiska Blitz led pilot Lt William Thies of the US Navy PBY squadron (PATWING 4) to develop a blind bombing technique based on dead reckoning. Given that Kiska Volcano, with an elevation of 1,220m (~4,000ft, Lou *et al.* 2002), was mainly above the clouds, it was possible to take the peak of the volcano as the starting point of the bombing run, and then, using a compass and a stop watch, to fly a set bearing at a set air speed, dropping the bombs on the target when the

time was up (Engel 1944; Garfield 1969, p. 122-123). This was a relatively safe technique, as the fog/clouds also obscured the US aircraft from the Japanese AA, which had to fire in the direction of the engine sounds or aim at a gap in the clouds and hope for the best that a plane might itself there.

This dead-reckoning bombing technique was then adopted by Col William O. Eareckson, in charge of bomber command in the theatre, as an option if the target was obscured. When the bombing technique was employed against the high concentration of structures in the Main Camp area, it resulted in a number of direct hits and also, more generally, in a psychological harassment value – or so it was claimed by the US forces at the time. The Japanese, however, soon learnt that the US bombers arrived only early in the morning, that the raids were of short duration, and on the whole were rather ineffective.¹ According to Garfield (1969, p.124) that technique was ordered to be discontinued in late June 1942 by the overarching theatre commander, Admiral Theobald, due the excessive drain on ammunition resources.

Evidence on the Ground

The Kiska landscape carries evidence of this bombing technique. Then, as now, the bomb craters show up on aerial images. Aerial imagery by V690-2017 AF on 16 March 1943, for example, shows several rows of bomb craters in the marshland at the western shore of Salmon Lagoon (see Fig.1). The image shows two strings of bombs dropped very close to each other, as well as another string of bombs further to the east on uplands area of North Head (at the bottom right). When these linear arrangements are extended on the air-photo (see Fig.2) the intended target, the 75mm AA position just inland from Main Camp becomes obvious (see Fig.3). When we extend the flight lines into the other direction, we note that they pass very close to the eastern rim of the crater of Kiska volcano.

The bombs fell about 1,100-1,200 yards short of the target, indicating that they were dropped slightly too early. If we assume an average airspeed of about 160mph during the actual bombing runs,² flying at the height of 10,000 feet, then the 1,100-1,200 yard shortfall correlates with dropping the bombs about 1.5 seconds too early. Clearly, high-precision bombing of specific, small-scale targets, such as the 75mm AA position, was not feasible unless dive-bombers were employed, which did not occur until July 1943. So, why was the 75mm AA battery targeted at all if it was so difficult to hit it?

Rationale

We do know that the 75mm battery in question, together with a battery of 13.2mm AA and a battery of four 4.7-inch coastal defence guns was included in the armament of the Japanese occupation force (Spennemann 2008b, 2011) and that construction of the battery was underway a good week after the landings (Photographic Interpretation School 1942). From the available evidence it appears that the 75mm AA battery was not operational until well after a fortnight after the landings (Operational Intelligence Division 1942), even though the barracks and other support buildings probably still were under construction at an even later date.

The 75mm Type 88 AA gun entered service in 1928 and during the Second Sino-Japanese

¹ Pers. Comm. Uzami Toshiharu, Commander 4th Company of Independent Infantry Battalion 301, on Kiska 18 September 1942-29 July 1943. Interview 6 March 2010 at Kami-Furano (Furano Prefecture, Hokkaido, Japan).

² In the absence of accurate data for the Aleutians known to the author, the value of 160mph has been culled from various sources discussing B-24 bombing runs over Europe.

War and World War II found widespread use by the Imperial Japanese Army as protection against medium level aircraft attacks. The Imperial Japanese Navy used it to protect its land bases. The Type 88 75mm AA gun had a single piece gun barrel with sliding breech, mounted on a central pedestal (see Fig.4). The gun had an effective rate of fire of 17-20 rounds per minute (at 6.5lbs each), with an effective ceiling of 16,400 feet (maximum 35,800ft) (CinCPaC 1945; OPNAV 1945). When emplaced, the unit was based on five outriggers that could be folded to form a carriage. One of the guns encountered on South Head of Kiska was still on its tyres, *prima facie* evidence that these guns could be moved around if the tactical situation so required.

The disposition of the Japanese AA soon after landing saw the establishment of the 75mm battery in question, as well as a 13.2mm AA position near the main beach of the seaplane base. Until the arrival of additional AA, originally destined for Midway (Spennemann 2013), this was the only battery that posed a serious threat by virtue of its calibre and range (see Fig.6). Removing the 75mm battery from the equation would have exposed the Japanese base development to serious, and much more effective, bombardment. Yet, targeting an AA position through direct bombing, be it low, medium or high-level bombing is extremely hazardous, as the attacking aircraft has to fly in a straight line essentially into the AA fire and thereby becoming an easy target for the AA gunners. Evasive action cannot not be taken until the bombs have been released.

In this instance, however, the dead reckoning bombing through fog or overcast sky is the ideal technique. While the fog and cloud cover obscures the target, it also obscures and thus protects the incoming aircraft. The dating of the observed bomb run is more difficult as the available archival data for bombing runs on Kiska targets are very patchy (Spennemann 2012) and silent on the matter at hand. Garfield (1969, p.125) asserts that the blind bombing of Japanese installations using the dead reckoning technique was ordered terminated around the end of June 1942 as it expended too much ammunition for too few positive results.

There is also another reason that led to its termination. The arrival of the Midway materiel on 6 July 1942 brought a full complement of military might: two six-inch coastal defence batteries, four heavy anti-aircraft guns (120mm DP), several medium AA (25mm and 75mm), as well as smaller weapons. Once these AA were installed, the protective umbrella not only reached both further and higher, but also was much deeper structured. We can surmise that all of these AA guns were emplaced as soon as feasible, with the smaller calibre operational within two weeks and the 120mm within 4-5 weeks. The deployment of Nakajima A6M2-N floatplane fighters from 5 July 1942 added to the Japanese mix, posing additional hazards to US crews (Spennemann 2009). Essentially, it made little sense to single out that 75mm battery after mid to late 1942.

Conclusions

The cultural landscape of the Kiska battlefield is unique inasmuch as it is the only World War 2-era battlefield that retains all of its features unchanged and in place. A prime example is the evidence for specific, short-lived bombing technique that had been developed as a tactic in response to adverse weather conditions encountered in the Aleutian theatre. A combination of historical analysis and aerial photo interpretation, coupled with 3D modelling of the range and intensity of fire emanating from Japanese AA positions, provides an insight into the bombing technique and the rationale why a difficult to hit gun position was targeted by the comparably imprecise dead-reckoning technique.

Acknowledgements

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*

Table 1: Factors influencing the path and final accuracy of a bomb

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Effect on bomb</i>
<i>Aircraft</i>	
instrument accuracy	influences all input values (altitude, forward speed, etc)
altitude at drop	determines time a bomb takes to reach the ground
flight path	angle of plane influences actual altitude between calculation and actual drop
forward velocity	determines above ground speed of bomb at time of release and thus forward movement ('range') of bomb in flight through air
crosswinds	drift of airplane (deviation from heading during approach to drop point) influences direction bomb will travel
<i>Bomb</i>	
mass ('weight')	affects time to reach terminal velocity, thus influences time the bomb takes to reach the ground
air resistance	causes drag which influences forward range the bomb will travel
head-/tailwind	influences forward range the bomb will travel
crosswind	drift of bomb during drop phase
aerodynamic qualities of bomb	influences air resistance and susceptibility to drift and drag
<i>Target</i>	
altitude	elevated targets (e.g. AA positions on hill tops) will be reached quicker than targets at sea-level (e.g. ships). target altitude also affects air density and thus drag of the falling bomb.

*



Fig.1 (left): A number of bomb craters in alignment. Section of an aerial image taken on 16 March 1943, showing the southwestern shore of Salmon Lagoon (section of aerial image: NARA 80-CF-7825-69034F).

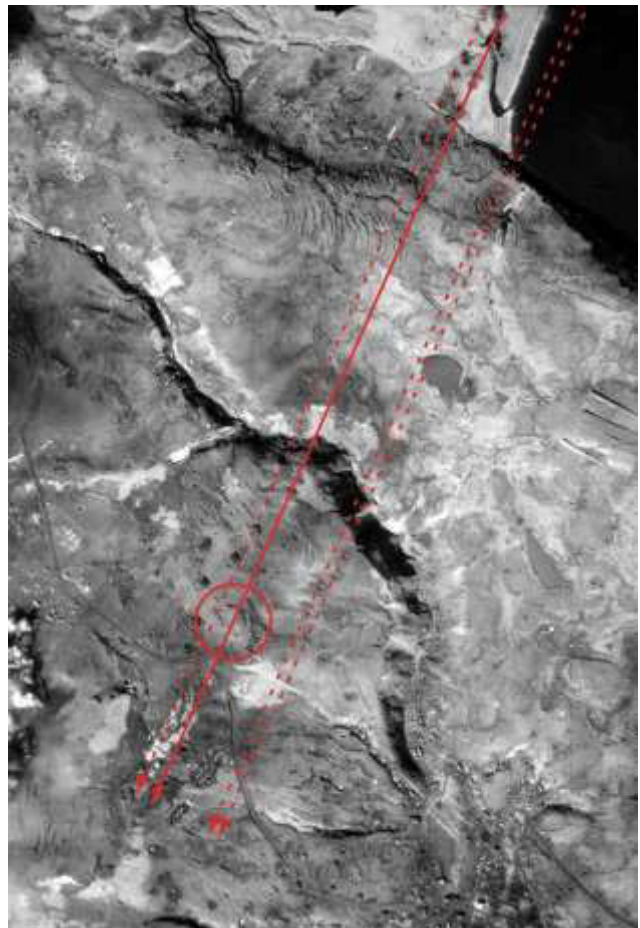


Fig.2 (right): A number of bomb craters are in alignment. Reconstruction of the intended target (compare with Fig.1) (Aerial Image: NARA 80-CF-7825-69034F).

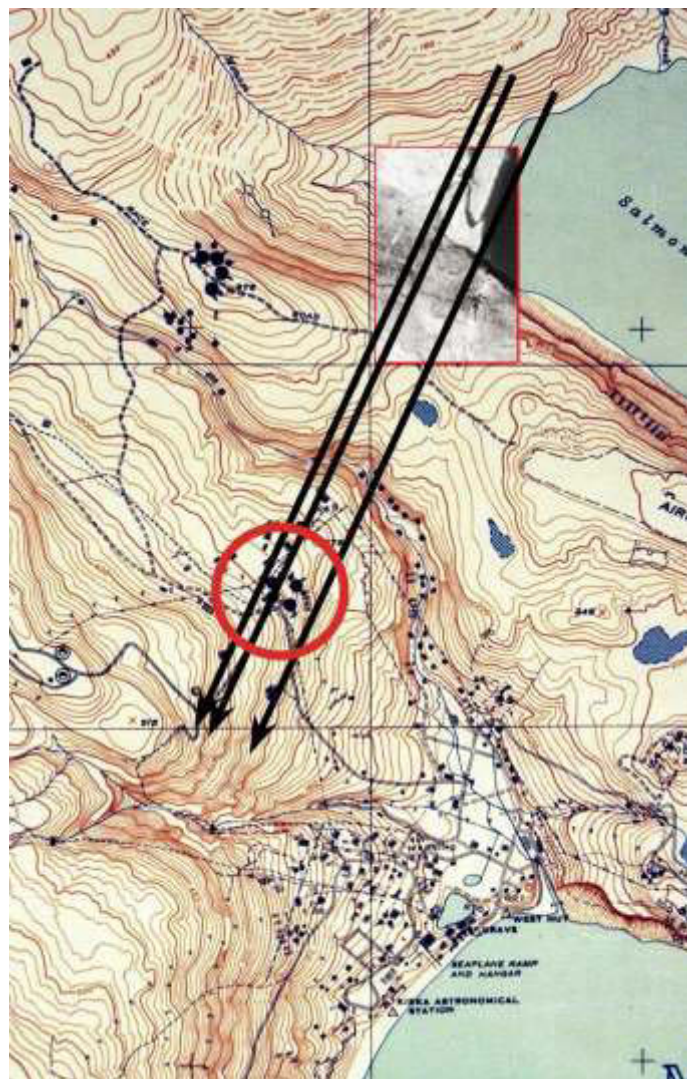
Fig.3 (right): The intended target, the 75mm AA battery just inland from Main Camp (compare with Fig.2; section of aerial image: NARA 80-CF-7825-69034F).





Fig.4 (left): Example of a 75mm Type 88 Anti-aircraft gun, northeastern gun, Main Camp Battery, Kiska (author's photo).

Fig.5 (right): Superimposition the aerial photo and flight paths over a base map of Japanese installations on Kiska.



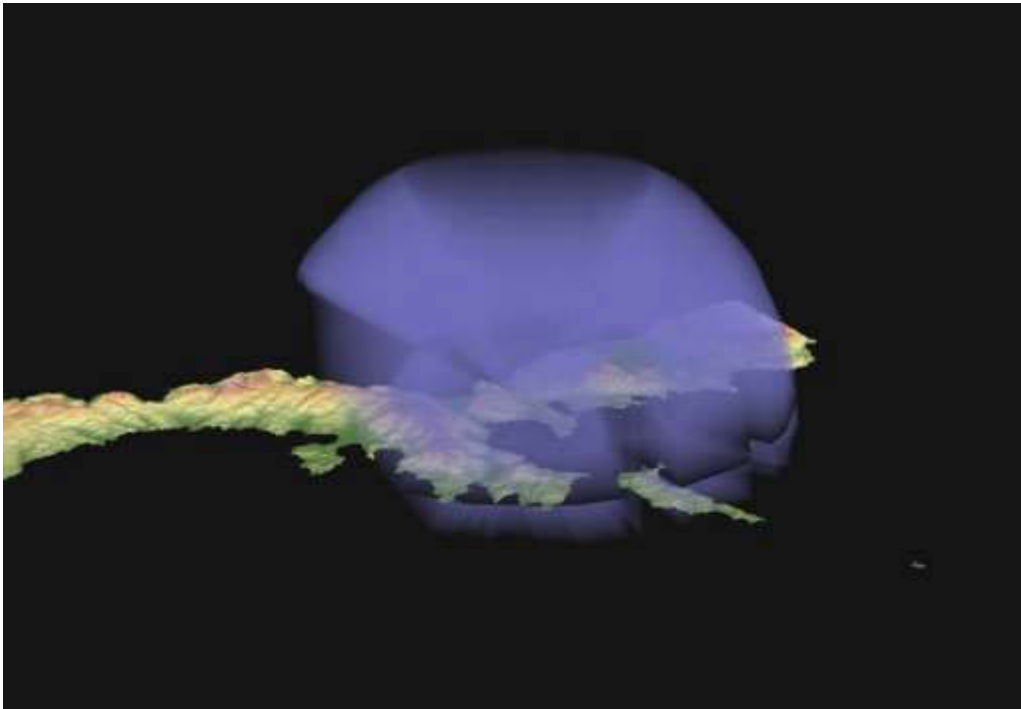


Fig.6 (above): Extent of Japanese AA cover over Kiska soon after occupation, showing the extent to which at least 1 ton of shell/minute could be brought to bear. Note the central inverted cone caused by the fact that the AA had a maximum elevation of 85° (view from Southeast) (image Craig Poynter)

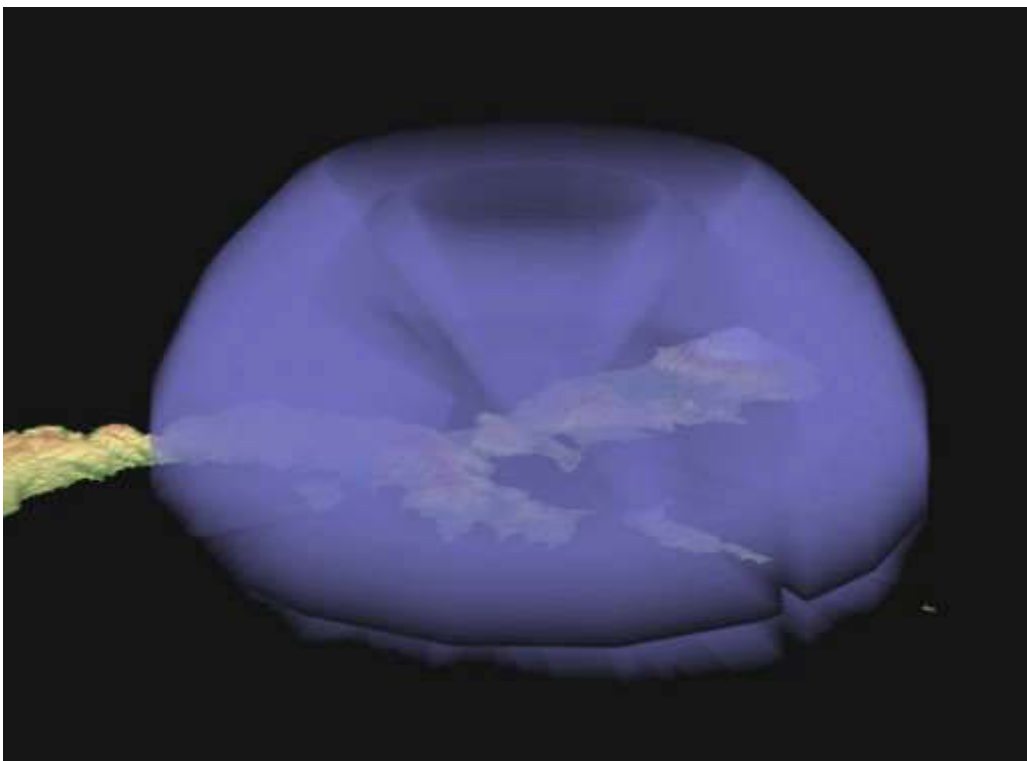


Fig.7 (above): Extent of Japanese AA cover over Kiska after the arrival of the Midway materiel, showing the extent to which at least 1 ton of shell / minute could be brought to bear. Note the central inverted cone caused by the fact that the AA had a maximum elevation of 85° (view from Southeast) (image Craig Poynter)

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THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA: 60TH ANNIVERSARY

John Meyers, Bob Hubball and John Mager

With the forthcoming 60th anniversary of the forming of The Military Historical Society of Australia, it is an appropriate time to give members a brief outline of its history. It was formed in Melbourne on 17 May 1957 and was initially known as *The Military Collectors Society*. In those days, the primary role of the Society surrounded a number of collectors who were interested in the hobby of making and exhibiting model soldiers, weapons and military vehicles. The original title for the Society lasted until July 1959 when it was changed to *The Military Research & Collectors Society of Australia*. In April 1964 it became *The Military Historical Society of Australia* and still holds that title today.

The original committee consisted of Robert Powell as President, Alfred Festberg as Secretary and Barry Videon as Treasurer and Editor of the journal *Sabretache*, which was first produced in June 1958 and has given continuous service until today. The first edition listed 39 members, primarily from Victoria and also included Bob Gray of Adelaide, who many current members will remember as having possessed the most comprehensive known collection of Australian and New Zealand Army badges.

Perusal of early copies of *Sabretache* reveal that some early members of the Society are still members today and include Mike Downey of Sydney (1959); Brian Ellis of Wagga Wagga (1962); Peter Shaw of Winthrop WA (1965); and Leigh Ryan of Lower Plenty, Victoria (1966). The Directory of Members dated 1 April 1966 also includes Max Chamberlain of Blackburn, Victoria; Peter Burness (junior member) of Canberra and Tan Roberts of Canberra. Another long-term member is Don Wright of Brisbane (1967.) Our apologies to any current member who joined during the early years and whose name has not been included above.

The first Branch to join the Society was New South Wales. This followed a meeting held at the residence of Barry Videon at Punchbowl NSW, on Saturday afternoon, 30 September 1961, attended by 13 prospective members. Unfortunately, due to an acrimonious relationship with the Federal Council at Melbourne in 1968, there was a breakaway by this branch and they formed the *Military Historical Society of New South Wales*, which still exists today. As a result of a ballot conducted to decide the future of the NSW Branch, the majority was in favour of closure and the Branch was closed, as from 30 August 1968.

The next branch to join was the Australian Capital Territory and this occurred in May 1963 with Major Clem Sargent as the President and Ken White as Secretary/Treasurer. By September 1963, its membership had risen to twelve. In July 1965 a Victorian Branch was formed, as separate from the Headquarters of the Society which was still resident in Melbourne. They advised that meetings would be held on the second Friday of each month, at the G.F.S. Building, corner of Spring Street and Flinders Lane, commencing at 8.00pm, with Alfred Festberg as President and Ben Hirsh as Secretary.

For many years the Victorian Branch has given out certificates in recognition of long service in executive positions and for other exemplary roles, in lieu of Life Memberships and names of the recipients are, in no particular order: Stephen Gray, John Lyons, Ron Kirk, John Price, Alfred Festberg, George Hellyer, George Ward, Bill Black and Robbie Dalton.

Victoria was followed by a meeting held at the 13th Field Regt RAA Barracks in Adelaide on 14 January 1966, where nine prospective members were addressed by Barry Videon (Vice President of the MHSA) who advised them of the objectives of the Society and that there was a current membership of 150. It was agreed at the meeting to form the South Australian Branch and this was ratified shortly afterwards by Federal Council. The original President was John Frewen with A. Howlin as Secretary.

Two years later, on 21 March 1968, it was agreed to form a branch in Western Australia after a meeting was held at the United Services Institute, which was located at Swan Barracks in Perth. This meeting was addressed by Major Clem Sargent, who was a serving officer in the Survey Corps and many years later was on the Federal Council in Canberra and had a particular interest in the Peninsular Wars of the early 1800s. The initial executive of the Branch were John Le Tessier as President and Peter Shaw as Secretary/Treasurer. Peter has held positions on the executive for many years and is the current WA Secretary and MHSA webmaster, as well as being a Fellow of the Society.

In 2003, a majority of members of the then Western Australian Branch voted to discontinue member subscriptions to the Federal Council and to *Sabretache*, culminating in the formation and eventual incorporation of a separate group known as the Military Historical Society of Western Australia. However, a small number of members who disagreed with this split reconvened in the following year under the leadership of long-time Society member Pat Hall, to reestablish a Branch to continue as part of the national body.

Geelong in Victoria was the next one to form a Branch and this was as a result of a meeting held at the residence of Ian Barnes, on Monday 4 November 1968. Ian is another long-term member of the Society and has been recognised as a Fellow for his services over many years at both Branch and Federal level. Federal Council gave formal approval to the formation of this Branch on 1 April 1969, with Ian Barnes as President, Jock Morton as Secretary and Brian Farquharson as Treasurer. Unfortunately, due to lack of members, this branch closed in 2016. A legacy left by them was the formation and financial assistance to the Geelong Military Reenactment Group, which is still active today with 40 to 50 members.

On 8 September 1970, a meeting was held at the home of Rod Dux in Brisbane to discuss the formation of a Queensland Branch. It was attended by ten prospective members and eight potential apologies were received. The Executive positions were filled by Roy Beak as President, Rod Dux as Secretary and Stan Robinson as Treasurer. Formal approval to open the Branch was given in October 1970. Due to lack of active members, this Branch closed on 22 August 2005, after its 370th meeting, but was reformed in July 2008.

At a special meeting of the Executive Committee of Federal Council held on 5 February 1973, it was proposed that the Federal Council be transferred from Melbourne to Canberra, where it might be more suitably located. The transfer was approved by all the Branches and took effect from 1 June 1973. The first Executive for the Federal Council at Canberra consisted of Major John Frewen, President, Brigadier Maurice Austin DSO OBE, Vice President, Ken White, Secretary and WO1 (later Lieutenant) Harold Gordon, Treasurer. All the nominees resided in Canberra and were able to effectively conduct the business of the Society.

The Albury-Wodonga Branch was formed in July 1977 and the original President was Don Campbell. In 1980 the first Secretary was R.B. Wiltshire. It also met its demise in 2012, due

to lack of participating members. In more recent times, a Branch was formed at Tasmania in early 2011 with James Ayers as the inaugural President, John Presser as Secretary and Gerald Breen as Treasurer. The year 2011 would also have to be recognised as the pinnacle of strength in the Society throughout Australia with eight active Branches.

Current memberships of the Society are: Queensland 78, Western Australia 38, Victoria 35, Australian Capital Territory 29, South Australia 22, Tasmania 13 and Corresponding 62, giving a total of 277 plus 34 associate members.

Since July 1969, there have only been four Patrons: Major Warren Perry MBE ED, General Sir John Wilton KBE CB DSO, Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot KBE AO and Air Marshal Barry Gration AO AFC.

The various office-holders within the Federal Council have been:

Presidents: Robert Powell, Barry Videon, Alfred Festberg, Major Warren Perry, John Lyons, Neville Foldi, Major John Frewen, Major Ian Barnes ED, Lt Col Ian Teague, Major Hans Zwillenberg, Brigadier Tan Roberts, Roger Lee, Major Rob Morrison and Rohan Goyne.

Secretaries: Alfred Festberg, John Lyons, Ben Hirsh, John Price, Lt-Col Clem Sargent, Ken White, Lt Col Richard Haines, Bronwyn Self, Anthony Staunton, Lt Cdr Peter Sinfield, Barry Clissold, Graham Wilson, Colonel Jim Underwood and Kristen Alexander.

Treasurers: Barry Videon, Major James Gale, Capt Paul Lober, Sqn-Ldr Ron Webster, Martin Kennedy, Lieut Harold Gordon, Neville Foldi, Kristen Alexander, Colonel Jim Underwood, Tom Babington, Bill Cheeseman and Tim Lyon.

Editors of *Sabretache*: Barry Videon, John Lyons, James Courtney, Chris Coulthard-Clark, Peter Kelly, Peter Stanley, Barry Clissold (twice), Alan Fraser, Stephen Allen, Elisabeth Topperwien, Anthony Staunton and Paul Skrebels.

During the Biennial Conference at Melbourne in 2010, it was recommended that the status of *Life Member* in the Society be changed to *Fellow of the MHSa* and that the title of all current Life Members be changed to Fellows of the Society. The draft amendment was approved at the May 2010 Federal Council meeting and submitted to all members, who had three months in which to object to the Constitution being changed accordingly. Past and present Fellows of the Society are, in no particular order: Peter Shaw (WA), Rhonda Grande (WA), Peter Epps (WA), Pat Hall (WA), Ian Barnes OAM ED (Geelong), Brigadier Tan Roberts (ACT), Tony Harris (SA), Major Paul Rosenzweig, Lt-Col Clem Sargent (ACT), Major Warren Perry (Vic), Don Campbell (Albury-Wodonga), Barry Videon (Vic), Jim Gardener (Geelong) and Don Wright (Qld) who is the only member to become a Fellow since the change in 2010. Don Pedler was made a *Life Member of the South Australian Branch* in 2010.

As we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Society, we can look back and reflect upon the many changes and objectives that have occurred during that time and like any other organisation, these changes and objectives have been made to meet the continual needs of the members. Many of the early members have now passed on but laid the foundations for the current members to build upon. Lastly, it is important for us to pay tribute to Air Marshal Barry Gration, AO AFC (Retd), who has been Patron since 27 March 1996. He has been an excellent supporter to our Society and a friend to many.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RAAF's AERODROME DEFENCE SCHEME 1929-1939

Sean S. Carwardine¹

Historian Charles Bean stated 'one of my objects in writing is to correct the opinions which have gone forth, and which are greatly at variance with facts'.² In keeping with Bean's sentiment, current written histories of Aerodrome/Airfield Defence³ in Australia require significant correction. As a result of erroneous accounts, some authors state that prior to 1942 a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) airfield defence capability did not exist and that the Army held sole responsibility for the defence of airfields.⁴ Alternatively, in the vacuum of a documented aerodrome defence history, other authors either ignore or overlook the evaluation of ground defence as an integral facet of RAAF operations. Baker⁵ compiled a booklet *RAAF Ground Defence Australia-New Guinea-South West Pacific Areas 1939-1940-1945-Korea*, and while not actually referenced it does attempt to provide a broad history of RAAF Airfield Defence and its evolution from 1942.⁶ Baker asserts that in 1942 no airfield defence had previously existed, that the RAAF was in 'panic stations', and it was unable to provide for its own aerodrome defence, before Army staff were brought in to provide specialised training for RAAF personnel.⁷ Key myths and uncorroborated assertions set out by Baker have then permeated the historical writings that followed.⁸ In addition, the official history of the RAAF commissioned by the Australian Government has no details at all about the earlier development and implementation of the Aerodrome Defence Scheme (ADS).⁹

From conception of the RAAF in 1921, there is ample evidence that supports the view that some senior officers within the RAAF understood the clear necessity for a RAAF airfield to be secured from as early as 1923.¹⁰ In that year, Flight Lieutenant Wrigley, then Director of Training at RAAF Headquarters, stated, 'They [aircraft] are very vulnerable when on the ground ... [T]o enable air power operations there needs to be sound organisation of the air force, the ability to be mobile, to have good communications and secure aerodromes from

¹ The author joined the RAAF in 1986 as an Airfield Defence Guard serving 21 years, including operational tours in East Timor 1999-2000, Afghanistan 2002 and Iraq 2003-2004. He holds a B.Ed and a Master of History (focusing on history of aerodrome defence in the RAAF), and is currently a PhD candidate at UNE, researching Australian airfield defence history.

² Ross Coulthart, *Charles Bean*, 2014, HarperCollins, Australia, p.13.

³ The terms 'ground defence', 'airfield defence' and 'aerodrome defence' are used interchangeably, and are of the era in which they were used; however, all refer to the same concept of the ground defence capability of airfields and air bases. Throughout the Air Force documents studied, the description 'aerodrome defence' included both Anti-Aircraft and Ground Defence; there is no separation of these two elements within Air Force policies.

⁴ Dr Tom Lewis and Peter Ingman, *Carrier Attack*, Avonmore Books, Australia, p.134; J.J. Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence Australia-New Guinea-South West Pacific Areas 1939-1940-1945-Korea*, Geelong, 1971; S.D. Kerr, 'The History of Ground Defence in the RAAF', *Journal of the Australian Profession of Arms*, 51, 1985, p.28.

⁵ J.J. Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence Australia-New Guinea-South West Pacific Areas 1939-1940-1945-Korea*, Geelong, 1971 is the only attempt at the history of airfield defence within Australian military.

⁶ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, 1971.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.2-4.

⁸ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, p. 2; Kerr, 'The History of Ground Defence', p. 28. Kerr's is unreferenced.

⁹ Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, The Griffin Press, Adelaide, 1962.

¹⁰ NAA: A664, 449/401/350; NAA: A664, 449/401/2A; NAA: A5954, 1718/1; NAA: SP112/1, 352/6/26; Alan Stephens and Brendan O'Loghlin, *The Decisive Factor*, Australia, p.47.

which to operate'.¹¹ Then in 1929 the ADS was created and established for the first time in RAAF history as a local defence capability for RAAF units and stations, the tactical employment of RAAF personnel in ground defence.¹² It is apparent from archival data that the RAAF was utilising personnel of Aircrafthands trade as aerodrome defence staff at that time.¹³

The Father of RAAF Airfield Defence

On 23 August 1929, Squadron Leader J.P.J. McCauley,¹⁴ then Deputy Director of Training, conceived the basis of a doctrine that progressively guided the RAAF's development of an aerodrome defence capability for the next 30 years. McCauley's career began with his graduation from the Royal Military College Duntroon on 10 December 1919.¹⁵ He then served in England as an Army Staff Officer and on returning to Australia in 1921 served in the Army Staff Corps as Adjutant Militia Battalion at West Maitland before being seconded as a potential pilot to the RAAF on 29 January 1924.¹⁶ In 1926, as a RAAF officer, McCauley went back to England and attended the RAF Staff College, the Naval College and the RAF Armament and Gunnery School.¹⁷

During this time many changes in RAF policies were taking place. In 1922 the RAF had drafted the first operations manual which became the primary manual for RAF operations until 1928; thus coinciding with McCauley's time in England.¹⁸ There is strong evidence to support the theory that McCauley relied on the *RAF Operations Manual* to guide the development of the RAAF ADS, as the wording and numbers of gun positions can be directly found in both this manual and the RAAF ADS documents. The parts of the *RAF Operations Manual* that interlink with the ADS is section 47 part 7, which indicates that when a RAF commander sets a camp on an aerodrome, the tents and huts will be protected against low flying aircraft attacks by Lewis machine guns mounted in four selected parts of the aerodrome.¹⁹ Furthermore, in section 48 part 6, the RAF commander of the aerodrome must allocate protection for his unit against all attacks by means of machine-guns mounted on posts in sunken pits.²⁰ The manual notes 'the overall protection of the RAF aerodromes falls to the Army'; however, the RAF is required to provide its own internal or local defence.²¹ In addition, from 1922 the RAF had taken over an air-policing role in the Middle East and had employed ground forces such as the Iraq Levies, as it assumed responsibility for the security of areas recently acquired by League of Nations mandate.²² Under the command of Air Vice-Marshal Sir John Salmond, the RAF took command not only of ground forces but acquired

¹¹ Alan Stephens and Brendan O'Loughlin, *The Decisive Factor*, Australia, p.47.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ NAA, A9301, 205527; NAA, A9301, 205515.

¹⁴ Air Marshal Sir John Patrick Joseph McCauley, KBE, CB, Chief of Air Staff.

¹⁵ Chris Clark, Biography McCauley, retrieved from <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mccauley-sir-john-patrick-joseph-15056> on 19 January 2014.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Alan Stephens and Jeff Isaacs, *High Fliers*, 1996, AGPS Press Publication, Canberra, p.119.

¹⁸ National Archives, Operations Manual Air Force C.D. 22, 1922.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Defence Academy of United Kingdom, retrieved on 20 June 2015 from <http://www.da.mod.uk/WWI/From-our-Archives/Manuals>.

²¹ National Archives, Operations Manual Air Force C.D. 22, 1922.

²² D.A. Pocock, 'The Royal Air Force Regiment: The Formative Years to 1946', *The Journal of the Royal Air Force Historical Society*, 1995, 15, p.8.

river gunboats and armoured trains.²³ These forces formed the basis of ground defence for the RAF aerodromes in the Middle East. The RAF Armoured Car Companies in particular provided ground defence of airfields and participated in combat operations during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁴

On 23 August 1929, McCauley sent a minute titled ‘Aerodrome Defence Training’ to the Director of Operations and Intelligence, Sqn Ldr T. Thompson, outlining his proposal of the ADS.²⁵ Thompson’s handwritten note to McCauley states ‘if Director of Training approves, I can see no objection’.²⁶ Subsequently, on 20 September 1929, McCauley sent his plans for a complete ‘RAAF Aerodrome Defence Scheme’ to the Director of Training, Wing Commander H. Smart.²⁷ The policy covered the establishment of the ADS for three Aerodrome Defence Flights at Nos.1 and 3 Squadrons at Laverton and Richmond respectively, and No.1 Flying Training School (FTS) at Point Cook in Victoria.²⁸ The policy also set out the organisation and structure of the ADS and the Aerodrome Defence Flights, the training to be followed for an anti-aircraft Lewis gun section, a Vickers machine gun section and the table for the issue of equipment.²⁹ Three days later, Wing Cdr Smart sought advice from Group Captain S. Goble, the Air Member of Personnel, to determine if enough personnel on RAAF establishments at the time could be utilised for this scheme.³⁰ Importantly, at the bottom of the document sent by Smart is a handwritten note from Goble to the Chief of Air Staff (CAS) Air Commodore R. Williams, which states, ‘the scheme should start at the earliest time’.³¹ Within the file is also a handwritten note by the CAS dated 27 September 1929, indicating his full support for the scheme and a notation that those permanent airmen not directly concerned with aircraft, or where necessary Citizen Air Force (CAF) members, should man the scheme.³²

Difficulties, however, then arose within RAAF in implementing the scheme. Commanding Officers were unable to release airmen from their primary or daily tasking into secondary roles such as the ADS.³³ On 2 October 1929, in recognition of the resourcing problems, McCauley suggested that personnel for aerodrome defence training were to be drawn from the Headquarters Flight of a station or squadron, and selected by the Commanding Officer.³⁴ Five days later, Sqn Ldr Thompson penned a response addressed to the Director of Training stating, ‘Aircrafthands and Batmen should be used for Aerodrome Defence Flights and perhaps one Armourer in each team’.³⁵ On 19 October 1929, Flight Lieutenant F. Bladin, Deputy Director of Staff Duties, indicated his support for McCauley’s ADS and also stated, ‘Commanding Officers are responsible for their unit’s defence’.³⁶

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*; Clark, Biography McCauley 19 January 2014; Nigel W.M. Warwick, *In Every Place, Forces & Corporate*, Great Britain, 2014.

²⁵ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

³⁰ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Despite the ADS being underway, for the whole of 1930 the RAAF faced resourcing problems, including a lack of funding and a high turnover of airmen through stations and units and as a consequence a lack of personnel allocated for this task.³⁷ On 15 April 1930 McCauley signalled that the scheme should not commence until the necessary equipment was issued to RAAF Armament Sections from the Army, but both services were experiencing shortages of equipment and funding at that time.³⁸ Three days later, McCauley suspended the formation of the ADS, stating to all units, ‘the training of Aerodrome Defence Flights will take place from 1931’.³⁹ A handwritten note at the bottom of this document details the Director of Training Sqn Ldr W. Bostock’s agreement with this decision of suspending the ADS, and Bostock added that this was due to a lack of funding and equipment.⁴⁰

Now is the Time

On 16 January 1931, McCauley sent a proposal to Bostock recommending that the RAAF now commence aerodrome defence training as most of the equipment had arrived, but that the flights should only be manned by Permanent Air Force (PAF) members.⁴¹ Bostock supported the recommendations, outlining the full structure of the Aerodrome Defence Flights, the division between both PAF and Citizen Air Force (CAF) members, and the training requirements to be followed.⁴² Despite continued lack of some resources, Nos.1 and 3 Sqns and No.1 FTS implemented the ADS and had established Aerodrome Defence Flights in the PAF and CAF from late 1931.⁴³

On 20 March 1931, two years after the discussion on manning of the ADS by Smart and Thompson, the Director of Staff Duties, Wing Cdr A. Swinbourne, indicated a state of ‘strain’ in the details of the establishment and training aspects of the ADS and questioned the suitability of the scheme.⁴⁴ Swinbourne claimed that commanders were facing problems in implementing an ADS, saying ‘there is no need for Aerodrome Defence Flights at home’ and ‘it would put additional strain on the training activities of the units, extra equipment and extra returns each month’.⁴⁵ However, Director of Operations and Intelligence Sqn Ldr H. Wrigley supported the ADS if it did not conflict with RAAF operations, stating that ‘only if suitable for Air Force operations’.⁴⁶ Within the files there are no formal correspondences from any of the Station Commanders suggesting confusion or strain; in fact the opposite is noted.⁴⁷

On 30 March 1931, Wrigley wrote to Swinbourne, commenting, ‘I do not think we should tie down COs of stations however it is advisable to get the defence scheme started’, thus indicating the scheme would go ahead using airmen that the Commanding Officers of Stations could spare.⁴⁸ Even though the alleged internal strain and reluctance to release

³⁷ Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force*, p.31: During the 1930s the RAAF had a poor public image and the argument continued between the three services about the separate Air Force or air arms of Navy and Army.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 16 May 1931.

⁴⁴ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

⁴⁵ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

airmen into what were considered ‘secondary duties’, the units that were directed to form Aerodrome Defence Flights were well advanced in the establishment of the ADS by early 1931. As a consequence of this debate, the CAS, Air Commodore Williams, replied to all Commanders in a very short statement that the ADS will be arranged and manned, and added that fixed establishments and service units will also have aerodrome defence sections. Yet, he then goes on to state that Nos.1 and 3 Sqns might not necessarily utilise CAF personnel within these sections.⁴⁹ It is apparent from archival data that the RAAF, even after years of debate on ‘who’ within the RAAF should man the ADS, were using the Aircrafthands mustering as aerodrome defence staff.⁵⁰ This is supported by service records in recently opened archives that show airmen such as Aircraftmen Yuille and Semmel, who joined the RAAF in 1933, were part of the Aerodrome Defence Sections at Laverton.⁵¹ This could be said to be a reflection of the reality of manning in Nos.1 Sqn and 3 Sqns at the time.

Resourcing issues continued to plague the ADS implementation throughout 1931. On 12 July of that year, Sqn Ldr H. Cobby, Commanding Officer No.3 Sqn at Richmond Station, recommended to the Air Board a new design of anti-aircraft gun sights to be fitted to the Lewis or Vickers machine guns, currently used by Army.⁵² Cobby suggested that for better targeting of aircraft these sights should be used by the Aerodrome Defence Sections and recommended the removal of the standard sights.⁵³ The Air Board referred the recommendation to Sqn Ldr McCauley, who replied to Cobby and agreed that the sights would be of use, yet regrettably the anti-aircraft sights were in limited supply and held by the Army, and therefore the RAAF will ‘make do’ with what it has.⁵⁴ By this time, training had begun for both PAF and CAF Aerodrome Defence Sections with these units relying on what minimal resources they had. The issue of manning had been solved and the extension of the ADS proposed by the CAS had been concluded. The ADS and airfield defence was now clearly a RAAF responsibility.

The Training

On 20 September 1929, Air Force Orders (AFOs) covering the ADS, Aerodrome Defence Sections and training were issued to the nominated units, directing that Commanding Officers of stations or operational units are responsible for the training of the Aerodrome Defence Sections for local defence and anti-aircraft capabilities.⁵⁵ The directive outlined that ‘initial training’ for the Lewis gun would comprise instruction on the mechanism, stoppages and maintenance for effective operations.⁵⁶ Anti-aircraft sighting, fire control by day and night, use of ammunition against aircraft, and all the drills, handling of the Lewis gun, preliminary training, and anti-aircraft elementary handling would all be covered in the Small Arms Training Publication.⁵⁷ On the range, the Lewis gun teams would qualify in gun practices and then each month they would cover theory, drill and range practices.⁵⁸ For the Vickers gun teams training included a thorough grounding in stoppages, maintenance of the gun ‘so that

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ NAA: A9301, 205527; NAA: A9301, 205515.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

the pupil can operate the gun efficiently', sighting with aiming instructions, and drills following the machine gun training manuals and Air Force Publication.⁵⁹ Range practices would come after the gunner had passed the elementary gun drill test, and range practices would cover 25 yards and open ranges including traversing targets.⁶⁰ In addition, training from 1931 until 1939 included exercises with the Army; the Aerodrome Defence Sections in defence of an area being attacked by Australian Army and RAAF aircraft.⁶¹

On 27 June 1932, the first training return was sent from Sqn Ldr Bostock, Commanding Officer No.3 Sqn, at Richmond to the Secretary of Air Board indicating the training over 1931/32, both in anti-aircraft and ground defence, had been completed for two Aerodrome Defence Sections, one PAF and one CAF.⁶² Three days after Bostock's annual report, Flt Lieut A. Charlesworth, Temporary Commanding Officer of No.1 Sqn⁶³ and Flying Officer P. Heffernan, Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of No.1 FTS Aerodrome Defence Section, both compiled training reports that were sent to the Air Board.⁶⁴ Following the advice of the CAS, Air Commodore Williams, that service depots should have an ADS, No.1 Aircraft Depot (AD) had established an Officer In Command of Aerodrome Defence Sections, Sqn Ldr R. Christie, who advised the Secretary of the Air Board on 30 June 1932 that all training of the Aerodrome Defence Sections had been carried out.⁶⁵ These returns continued every month from Nos.1 and 3 Sqns, No.1 FTS and No.1 AD throughout 1932/33.⁶⁶ Training continued over the next four years and then in 1937 No.23 (City of Perth) Squadron also commenced training of a CAF Aerodrome Defence Section.⁶⁷ As a result of the introduction of the ADS, Commanders at Stations had also implemented the scheme as McCauley had envisioned.

Throughout 1938/39 aerodrome defence training continued, then on 14 February 1939 Director of Training Sqn Ldr F Scherger⁶⁸ directed that all Motor Transport (MT) trucks held in the RAAF will be fitted with anti-aircraft gun mounts and that the training of aerodrome defence airmen in the defence of these vehicles would commence.⁶⁹ Scherger stated that 'the maximum number of anti-aircraft defence section personnel who will be permitted to travel in the cabin is two. It will be necessary for No.1 on the gun of the anti-aircraft Lewis gun section to be trained to operate the gun when mounted in vehicles and the number two on the gun should be used for observation and magazine loading duties only'.⁷⁰ On 4 July 1939, Wing Cdr J. Waters, Director of Staff Duties, indicated that a new AFO would be raised and 'AFO 11/B/1 Anti-Aircraft Defence of MT Convoys' was issued, thus allowing RAAF mobile operations.⁷¹ Therefore by 1939, the RAAF already had established Aerodrome Defence Sections to protect aerodromes at home and away, but could now provide additional protection for MT when in support of mobile Army operations.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p.212.

⁶² NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

⁶⁷ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

⁶⁸ Later Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Rudolph William Scherger KBE CB DSO AFC, 1904 – 1984.

⁶⁹ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Within all these units and stations, specialised aerodrome defence training of airmen was also being carried out, yet the debate continued among some senior officers as to whether responsibility should remain with the Army and the Air Force should be concerned only with aircraft and aircrew.

The First Aerodrome Defence Sections

The ADS draft by McCauley in 1929 stated that the established manning of each Aerodrome Defence Section will be a group of 15 personnel per section, that were to come from those trades the Commanding Officer could spare.⁷² These Aerodrome Defence Flights were each to consist of one officer, one non-commissioned officer (NCO) and 12 other ranks.⁷³ The AFOs directed that one section was to be fully trained and maintained at each station and unit, and that these sections were to comprise eight machine gun teams, each of three men.⁷⁴ McCauley's Directive indicated that a defensive position within RAAF stations should comprise an Aerodrome Defence Section in fixed low level anti-aircraft positions and a ground defence position.⁷⁵ In addition, once a unit moved away from the station a Squadron Aerodrome Defence Section should provide protection for the squadron.⁷⁶ McCauley envisaged a fighter squadron deploying from the station with its own anti-aircraft and ground defence sections with the home station commander also retaining ground defence and anti-aircraft defence sections.⁷⁷ This shows that McCauley understood that the RAAF needed stations and squadrons to be capable of defending themselves from ground and air attack, which in turn supported his concept of a *mobile Air Force*.

In 1931, commanders charged with the implementation of the ADS were provided with comprehensive information for the protection of vehicles, including all road or rail transport, from ground and air attack.⁷⁸ The ADS thus allowed RAAF members to train with the Army on ground defence.⁷⁹ During July 1931, No.1 Sqn Aerodrome Defence Section carried out a training manoeuvre involving a simulated attack on the 8th Field Artillery Brigade RAA in a defensive near Laverton Victoria.⁸⁰ Similar manoeuvres occurred with the Aerodrome Defence Section of No.3 Sqn at Richmond NSW.⁸¹ Under the AFOs, the anti-aircraft section was to be stationed around the airfield in pits to provide low-level air defence, with the ground defence section in complementary fixed defensive positions, with Vickers machine guns and a crew of three with one NCO.^{82, 83} Aerodrome Defence in the 1930s was therefore largely confined to defending the airfield and its assets through gun emplacements.⁸⁴

On 13 July 1933, the CO of No.1 FTS, Wing Cdr H. De La Rue suggested to the Air Board that all members of Aerodrome Defence Sections should be issued a metal badge upon

⁷² NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

⁷⁹ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p.467; NAA: A9186, 8, Sheet 8.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*; NAA: A9186, 1.

⁸¹ NAA: A9186, 8; NAA: A9186, 1.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Baker, *RAAF Ground Defence*, p.2.

qualifying, similar to the type issued to RAAF Air Gunners.⁸⁵ In response, the Director of Training Sqn Ldr G. Jones stated that this was ‘considered undesirable’ and ‘that to increase the number of badges issued to airmen, especially where the qualification is not directly linked to the principal aims of service training of aircrew and aircraft is not needed’.⁸⁶ On 16 February 1934, a clash of ideologies on the value of a RAAF aerodrome defence capability again occurred and despite the fact the CAS had issued AFOs directing station and squadron defence sections to have specific individual organisational requirements, Jones restricted the scope of the ADS.⁸⁷ He then amended the AFOs signed by the CAS, stating, ‘CAF Aerodrome Defence Sections had been drawn almost exclusively from Aircrafthands, it is no longer possible to provide personnel for this purpose’, and that ‘CAF will be fully employed on more essential training, wholly mess duties’.⁸⁸ Jones then removed the ability to move forward and support Army operations, stating ‘one Aerodrome Defence Section per Station is all that is required’.⁸⁹ The Squadron Sections, according to Jones, were ‘superfluous’ and ‘No.1 Sqn Aerodrome Defence Section should be discontinued’.⁹⁰ It can be argued that Jones, in his influential position as Directorate of Training, took a more narrow view of the purpose of the ADS and during his time in this position either amended or ignored the orders from CAS on the ADS.⁹¹

Despite Jones’ view, records show senior officers at units and stations were implementing the ADS and understood the benefits of a broad airfield defence in forward areas, and in turn ignored Jones’ directions, either intentionally or otherwise. In early 1935, Deputy Director of Training (Armament) McCauley issued instructions for RAAF Officers to produce Local Defence Schemes (LDS) for their stations.⁹² These LDS would focus on individual Commanding Officers understanding how their airfield could be defended with whatever resources they had and was based on the earlier ADS. On 1 October 1935, McCauley, after reviewing McNamara’s mobilisation scheme, requested this be implemented by all stations and units in conjunction with the ADS.⁹³

The creation of an LDS for the defence of RAAF Station Richmond was drafted on 14 October 1935. Wing Cdr W. Bostock, CO of No.3 Sqn required that four Lewis machine gun posts would be the minimum protection for operations. He stated that the posts should be bullet and fragmentation proof and that they also should have enough storage within the posts for more guns, ammunition, water and food.⁹⁴ Bostock saw that RAAF Station Richmond was a valued target in any form of war or civilian strife. McCauley directed that, based on the planning for RAAF Station Richmond, extra funding would be provided for anti-gas respirators for every member of the station. He then outlined that Bostock’s LDS was at a standard that provided protection, however the full extent of the manning of machine gun

⁸⁵ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

⁸⁶ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

⁸⁷ NAA: A705, 208/1/770.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; a calculation based on Amendment to AFO 2/A/18, 10 October 1938 would indicate a RAAF Station having an Aerodrome Defence Section of 29 airmen and each Squadron on that station would have 24 airmen. Therefore at RAAF Station Richmond in 1937, under command of Group Captain De La Rue, the Aerodrome Defence Section (both PAF and CAF) would have 58 airmen and with five different units on the station would indicate a total of 120 airmen (both PAF and CAF).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p.446.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ NAA: A705, 56/1/214.

post and guards could not be finalised until unit establishment tables and mobilisation orders were issued.⁹⁵ Then, on 30 October 1935, Wing Cdr McNamara, CO of No.1 AD, forwarded his planning for an LDS to the Secretary of Air Board.⁹⁶ This scheme included the ADS using Aircrafthands as Gunners in both the PAF and CAF.⁹⁷ This planning required home stations and independent units to employ their own Aerodrome Defence Sections, allowing them to move forward and support Army operations.⁹⁸

The development of a more operational Air Force that could defend itself from air and ground attacks was also being considered by senior airmen. The Air Board and the Directorate of Training also received the Imperial Defence Committee memorandum on defence against low flying aircraft. This memorandum outlined the use of twin anti-aircraft machine guns and twin-barrelled 2-pdr pom-pom guns.⁹⁹ At this time, however, the RAAF could only provide machine guns. On 30 July 1936, Group Capt De La Rue sent a recommendation to the Air Board, requesting that all airmen at recruit training schools or depots be trained in ground defence using Lewis and Vickers guns, as this would ‘benefit the RAAF in its defence’.¹⁰⁰ This recommendation was redirected to the Director of Training, J McCauley. For eight months, De La Rue sent minutes to him requesting an answer to his recommendation, asking directly, ‘has consideration been given to my recommendations, please?’¹⁰¹ There were no replies in the file until 4 March 1937 when De La Rue received a message from McCauley stating, ‘it is considered inadvisable, in view of the fact that all units are at present under establishment, to take further time in the training of personnel at recruit training squadrons with a view to the possible appointment of a very limited number of Aerodrome Defence Sections’.¹⁰² This recommendation of defence training for all airmen would not arise again until July 1942 when Sqn Ldr G. Mocatta directed recruit training units to train all airmen in ground defence/military training.¹⁰³

On 25 October 1937, thirteen vehicles and a number of aircraft, with 65 airmen of No.3 Sqn, deployed from RAAF Station Richmond to Scone Aerodrome for a month-long field exercise. Within this exercise was the setup and defence of the aerodrome by No.3 Sqn Aerodrome Defence Section.¹⁰⁴ Then on 18 November 1937 CAS Air Vice-Marshal Williams arrived at Scone for an inspection of the exercise and to determine its operational efficiency.¹⁰⁵ It can be seen under the direction of CAS Williams, a detailed establishment table for each unit was issued, including the numbers of personnel for each trade allocated to the defence units.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, by 10 October 1938, the establishment size of McCauley’s original vision had been expanded. Wing Cdr J. Waters, Director of Staff Duties, recommended that stations should now be protected by a full defence section consisting of an Officer Commanding Aerodrome Defence Section with two NCOs, one for the anti-aircraft

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ NAA: A1196, 15/501/45.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p.446.

⁹⁹ NAA: A5954, 1713/11.

¹⁰⁰ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

¹⁰¹ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ NAA: A705, 208/1/1957.

¹⁰⁴ NAA: A9186, 8.

¹⁰⁵ NAA: A9186, 8.

¹⁰⁶ NAA: A705, 208/1/1957.

gun section, and one for the ground defence section.¹⁰⁷ Within the anti-aircraft gun section, six gun teams of three men would be positioned around the aerodrome and vital points for close protection of parked aircraft, while the ground defence section would have two gun teams of three men each.¹⁰⁸

Additionally, from the 10 October 1938, the Squadron Aerodrome Defence Section was now a fully separate entity from Station Aerodrome Defence Sections, and comprised one officer, two NCOs, four anti-aircraft gun teams of three gunners each, and two ground defence gun teams of three gunners.¹⁰⁹ Waters stated that ‘Whilst a squadron remains at its peace station, the Station Commander may utilise the Squadron Aerodrome Defence Section to provide extra aerodrome defence for the Station’.¹¹⁰ On 8 November 1938, as Commanding Officer of RAAF Station Laverton, Group Capt Wrigley forwarded Wing Cdr McNamara’s proposal on a further expansion of the ADS and Aerodrome Defence Sections. In a sixty-page document he compiled the ‘Aerodrome Defence – Policy RAAF Station-Laverton’, covering all aspects of individual positions and responsibilities of all members of a station for the defence of the station.¹¹¹ This one document, according to McNamara, was a collection of schemes he had drawn up during his time in the RAF, and clearly consolidated with McCauley’s ADS.¹¹² Drawing on McNamara’s policy, No.1 FTS and RAAF Stations Laverton and Richmond then included in their establishment anti-aircraft defence posts, defence against ground attack, and passive defence.¹¹³

On 18 January 1939, Sqn Ldr Scherger, Director of Training, requested the Air Board obtain RAF or Army Standing Orders for anti-aircraft machine guns in ground to air firing as there was an unsatisfactory manning of Aerodrome Defence Sections as well as a lack of suitable ranges.¹¹⁴ Then on 17 March 1939, Secretary of the Air Board Mr F. Mulrooney stated that ‘the ADS and Aerodrome Defence Sections need to be expanded to all units and any future units in the RAAF’.¹¹⁵ On 22 March 1939, he approved Waters’ proposal¹¹⁶ and then 26 June 1939, Mulrooney signed the new ‘Air Board Memoranda Issue No.5 Station Defence’.¹¹⁷ The original ADS had been incorporated into this, forming a stronger foundation of airfield defence capability in the RAAF for all station and unit commanders. The scheme was now RAAF wide, every station and squadron commander was required to establish an airfield defence capability. Subsequent to the Station Defence Memoranda being established, Swinbourne submitted a new amendment for the ADS which would be used well into the 1940’s.¹¹⁸ These amendments form the last AFO of the ADS dated 11 September 1939, and established local defence at stations by both PAF and CAF personnel, while the PAF would man mobile squadron Aerodrome Defence Sections.¹¹⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² NA: AIR 5/394.

¹¹³ NAA: A1196, 15/501/45.

¹¹⁴ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254.

¹¹⁵ NAA: A705, 208/1/1254

¹¹⁶ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

¹¹⁷ NAA: A1196, 25/501/3.

¹¹⁸ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

¹¹⁹ NAA, A705, 208/1/1254.

By mid 1940, the airmen who had been trained in airfield defence under the ADS, would be putting their training into practice in the deserts of North Africa and the Far East, and would form an integral part of the airfield defence during the air war over Darwin. Most importantly, airfield defence within the RAAF can now be acknowledged as having a rich and long history, from conception, with the first tentative steps of implementation as early as 1929, and recognition of the service of Aircrafthands airmen who took up the defence of RAAF airfields from that time; only eight years after the birth of the RAAF, and significantly, 13 years prior to currently held beliefs. Myths that there was no RAAF airfield defence capability prior to 1942 can now be categorically rejected and it is clear that a proud Air Force history of Airfield Defence spans 86 years.

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AS YOU WERE ...

Feedback from Readers and Contributors

- **Greg Ivey** writes:

I much appreciated the timely, detailed article, ‘Conscription, Conscience and Conflict’ by Prof Tom Frame in the December 2016 issue, pp.4-12. In the interests of accuracy, I feel the need to raise a couple of Prof Frame’s points where no footnote (evidence) is indicated. On page 7 of the article, Frame observes about the 1916 vote that ‘Notably, the vast majority of serving soldiers voted against conscription.’ According to one authoritative source (*The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, 2008 edition, p.156), ‘Within the AIF, a narrow majority supported it (the 1916 referendum) 72,399 to 58,894.’ On page 8, Frame underlines an ‘important’ point that National Service was not re-introduced ‘as part of an escalating commitment to South Vietnam’. The Australian Official History (*To Long Tan* by Ian McNeill, pp.26-27) provides the paper trail which subtly discounts the ‘Indonesia alone’ explanation supported by Frame. On page 9, Frame states that ‘Notably, early in their training many national servicemen were quietly “invited” to express their interest in serving in South Vietnam or some other destination.’ By not showing his evidence, Frame can reasonably be considered as drawing a long bow here. He appears to have misunderstood the limited choices given to these Army ‘Nashos’. They were allowed during recruit training to submit their preference (or preferences) for an Army Corps to take effect after completion of recruit training (e.g. see *The Chalkies* by Darryl Dymock, 2016). In relation to ‘many’ Nashos having the experience described by Frame, the evidence is not – yet – available. I have learnt a great deal from Prof Frame’s comprehensive article and I humbly support his argument for ‘a new consensus’ on Conscription. In mentioning a few debatable points from the article, I hope I am not guilty of the hubris about which he cautions us.

- Also in the December 2016 issue, the article ‘The A7V “Mephisto” One Hundred Years On’ (p.30), makes frequent references to the tank as the ‘AV7’; for these please read ‘A7V’. The Editor apologises for the oversight.

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