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# SABRETACHE

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

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

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

### **Constitution and Rules**

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

### ***Sabretache***

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### Editorial

Reading *The Economist* recently I came across an article on the appointment of Major General Laura Yeager of the US Army to the command of the 40th Infantry Division. This posting is the first time a woman has been given an operational combat command in US history. While this is an important and interesting achievement, it was a statement made by Yeager on pay that really caught my attention. 'As far as I'm aware', she said, 'there's no other occupation where you know you're going to make exactly the same amount of money as the male doing the work that you're doing. And I didn't need to negotiate that – it's just part of the plan'. What this demonstrates, to me, is the egalitarian nature of certain aspects of the military. Few other employers in the Western world offer such terms for senior staff. On salary terms, where many women encounter a 'glass ceiling' in the corporate world, women in the military do not. As more women take on the various roles available throughout the Australian Defence Force their stories and experiences will be told. For historians, this will bring in a new aspect to the historiography of the ADF and Australian history, one that will result in new interpretations of military history requiring different frames of reference. This will prove to be a fruitful and interesting expansion of Australian military history.

**Justin Chadwick**

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# The Lost New Zealand Medals of Doctor William Brown

Trevor Turner

## Introduction

In April 1900 Mr W Adam, of the New South Wales Railways, unearthed a silver war medal in an old tumbled-down building on the historic Windsor road, on the north-western edge of Sydney. Upon inspection the medal was found to bear the inscription: 'William Brown, Assistant Surgeon, East Coast, 1865'. It was further described as: 'On one side is an impression of the Queen's head; whilst on the other side are the words 'New Zealand Virtutis Honor.'

The medal was inspected by two respected long-time Windsor residents, the quaintly named twin brothers Smith Thomas and George Smith Greenwell, both veterans of the Maori war in New Zealand.<sup>1</sup> The medal was found to be identical to the medals possessed by the brothers Greenwell. Mr George Arnold, of Riverstone, then retained the medal in hope of discovering its owner.

This random event more than 118 years ago brings to light a further element to the story of William Brown, a much lauded and heroic figure of the New Zealand Wars. Assistant Surgeon William Brown was credited with having saved the life of Thomas Adamson, recipient of the coveted New Zealand Cross, after an ambush at Ahikereru in May 1869. He was also mentioned numerous times in despatches by Colonel (later Major-General, Sir) George Whitmore, for his zeal and devotion to duty.

In fact, William Brown had been prominent in offering his services as a colonial forces medical officer throughout the Maori wars from 1865 until 1869 - as a volunteer surgeon with the Poverty Bay Mounted Rifle Volunteers and later as an Assistant Surgeon with the Armed Constabulary.

## New Zealand

William Brown was born to John Bell Brown, a physician, and Charlotte Langford at Sussex, Brighton in 1842. In 1861 Dr Brown's sons, Edwin, 20, and William, 18, both stated their occupations as 'Surgeons assistant' and worked with their father.<sup>2</sup> The flaws in William Brown's character first appear when, aged 23 (he was

1 The Greenwell's served with Napier Rifle Volunteers at the Battle of Omarunui on 12 October 1866.

2 UK Census 1851 & 1861.

in fact 21) he married 21-year-old Eliza Locke at Hackney on 13 October 1863. Significantly, William now boldly declared his occupation as ‘surgeon’. However, William Brown, ‘surgeons assistant’, does not appear in the British Medical Register, nor any colonial medical register, at any time from 1861 to 1890.<sup>3</sup> Following his marriage ‘Doctor’ Brown and his new wife embarked from London aboard the immigrant ship *Strathallan* for New Zealand, volunteering his services as ship’s surgeon for the voyage. William Brown arrived at Napier on 24 November 1864.

At Napier Brown quickly established his ‘credentials’ when he wrote a medical report of the voyage to Donald Mclean, the superintendent of Hawke’s Bay, which was duly published in January 1865.<sup>4</sup> Establishing a local practice his doubtful qualifications soon raised suspicions and he departed Napier in May 1865.<sup>5</sup> By August he was practicing at North Cape on New Zealand’s north east coast at Waiapu.

It seems that his father may have set the example for Brown. No medical registration can be found for John Bell Brown in the United Kingdom Medical Registers. In 1843 he is noted as a bankrupt surgeon, chemist and druggist. In 1851 he was also described as the late hospital-sergeant and assistant-apothecary at The Honourable East India Company (HEIC) Depot at Warley, near Brentwood in Essex. In the 1851 Census his occupation is simply stated as Apothecary. He was again bankrupt in 1860, having conducted business at no less than five different locations as a surgeon, chemist, druggist, stationer and ‘dealer in fancy goods’, as well as keeping a boarding house for ‘nervous patients’. At no time, in any record, is he referred to as a doctor. On his death in London in 1864, aged 57, Mr John Bell Brown was described as a late ‘assistant-surgeon’ formerly in the service of the HEIC’s Depot at Warley.<sup>6</sup>

### **Militia Assistant Surgeon**

During the military actions near Waiapu against the rebel Maoris in 1865, Brown rendered service as a volunteer doctor to the militia. William Brown was present for the actions at Pukemaire<sup>7</sup> on 3 October and Waerenga-a-hika Pa in November 1865. When hostilities ceased, William remained at Waiapu where, in 1866, he was appointed medical attendant and government native surgeon. In November 1866 he went briefly to Auckland for ‘health reasons’<sup>8</sup> and resigned his government

3 UK Medical Registers 1860-1890.

4 *Hawke’s Bay Herald*, 14 January 1865, p. 4

5 *Hawke’s Bay Herald*, 27 May 1865, p. 2.

6 *Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser*, 26 May 1860, p. 1.

7 *Hawke’s Bay Herald*, 26 August 1865, p. 3; and Medal Application.

8 *Daily Southern Cross*, 19 December 1866, p. 5.

9 *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1867, Session I, D-03.

appointment on 11 January 1867. Brown returned to Waiapu in February 1867. He travelled regularly to Turanganui (modern day Gisborne) to minister his profession and it was here he achieved his first public recognition. Brown assisted in rescuing survivors of wreck of the *Star of The Evening* that struck a reef off Portland Island with a cargo of 1,300 sheep and three passengers on 13 February 1867. After some 52 hours the last survivors were finally hauled to shore and tended by Dr Brown.<sup>10</sup> Then, as could be expected, Brown moved again. In April 1867 he left Waiapu to reside at Turanganui. He and his wife Eliza made an incredible journey by horseback overland from Waiapu. Eliza Brown, it was reported, being the first white woman recorded to perform this journey.

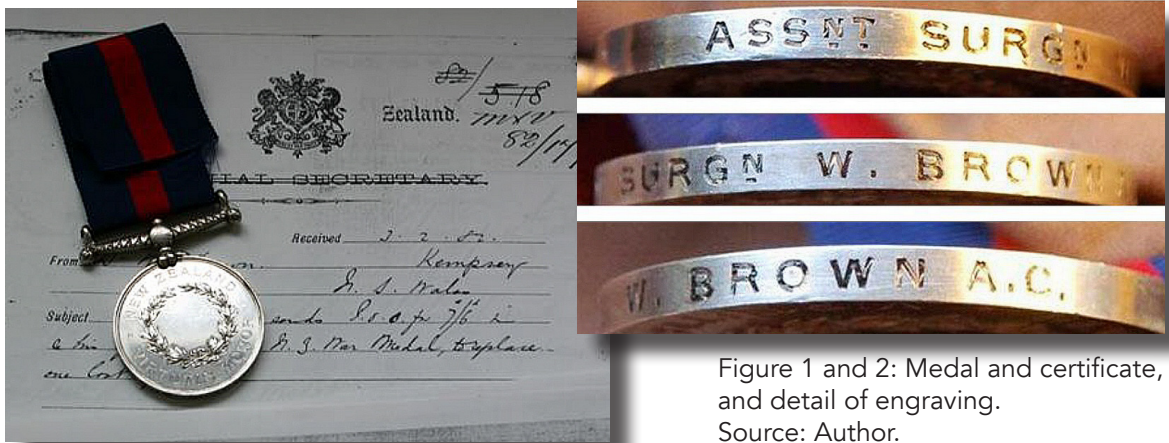


Figure 1 and 2: Medal and certificate, and detail of engraving.  
Source: Author.

### Public acceptance

It was at Turanganui that William Brown finally received the public acceptance he had so long craved. In the government Gazette, published on 31 August 1867, the Governor of New Zealand appointed Brown to be a coroner for the province of Hawke's Bay. He was also appointed honorary assistant surgeon in the Poverty Bay Mounted Rifle Volunteers on 4 July 1867,<sup>12</sup> and public vaccinator in 1868. There being no other candidates his qualifications were accepted on face value.

With the escape from the Chatham Islands of the Maori rebel Te Kooti and his arrival on the east coast of New Zealand, the locals and volunteers were hurriedly impressed for service, including Brown's Poverty Bay Mounted Rifle Volunteers. A disastrous fight occurred at Papatatu on 27 July 1868 with two dead and six wounded. The casualty list was signed by William Brown, Assistant Surgeon, Poverty Bay Mounted Rifle Volunteers.

This was followed quickly by an engagement on the Ruakiture River, on 8 August 1868, under the command of Colonel George Whitmore. Again, Brown

<sup>10</sup> *Evening Post*, 1 March 1867, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 13 April 1867, p. 2,

<sup>12</sup> *New Zealand Government Gazette*, 31 August 1867, upon the recommendation of Captain Charles Westrup.

distinguished himself. Colonel Whitmore, in his despatch of 9 August, stated:

Mr. Assistant-Surgeon Brown, the sole medical officer with my force, was most attentive to the wounded; and though the carrying of these poor fellows kept him and the bearers for the whole night long, and till 2 p.m. next day, continually moving slowly towards my camp, I am sure that in no respect could wounded men have been more attentively and kindly treated.<sup>13</sup>

So greatly had he impressed Colonel Whitmore that upon the outbreak of hostilities with Titokowaru on New Zealand's west coast, Whitmore took Brown with him as Principal Medical Officer to his small force of armed constabulary. On 15 September 1868 the Government Steamer *Sturt* arrived at Patea with Major Fraser, Captain Richardson, Dr Brown and 57 constables from Napier.<sup>14</sup>

Brown again proved invaluable at the desperate fight at Moturoa on 7 November 1868 and was again mentioned in Colonel Whitmore's despatches: 'Dr. Brown, medical officer in charge, who took so much pains with the wounded, and who carried out his duties gallantly and efficiently'.<sup>15</sup> As a result, on 10 December 1868, Brown was appointed assistant-surgeon and principal medical officer to No. 7 Division, Armed Constabulary. It was then reported:

Dr Brown is chief medical officer in the district, (Wanganui-Wairoa) and has almost daily to go from one post to another. He appears popular amongst the Constabulary, but he is determined to weed the force of all those whom he considers unfit, and there is little doubt that many more will be discharged.<sup>16</sup>

Brown returned briefly to Poverty Bay with the armed constabulary and was involved in medical support, at Turanganui, of the action against Te Kooti at his Ngatapa fortress in the first days of January 1869. He then returned to the west coast.

### **Greatest accolade**

However, Brown's greatest accolade as a military surgeon was to come at the engagement at Tauranga-ika pa, inland from Nukumarū, in January 1869. Henry Anderson, a newspaper editor and journalist from Wanganui, wrote:

I saw the wounded men brought in, and on introducing myself to that very courteous and painstaking surgeon Dr Brown, I was allowed to see later the wounds of one or two dressed. One poor fellow who seemed to be in a half state of stupor, had been hit

13 *AJHR*, 1868, Session I, A-15c, p. 2-6.

14 *Wanganui Herald*, 16 February 1869, p. 2.

15 *AJHR*, 1869, I, A-03[1] War 1868-69 - I, p. 3.

16 *Wanganui Herald*, 16 February 1869, p. 2.



in the back, about an inch to the right of the spine, the hole being about the diameter of a sixpence. I thought on looking at the wound, “well that chap has got his gruel,” because I supposed the bullet must have gone nearly through the body straight in. But I was entirely mistaken. He hadn’t got his “gruel,” and the surgeon had fair hopes of his recovery. The bullet had gone “slantindicularly” and came out at the shoulder. Poor fellow how pitiful the sight was as the surgeon, with the tenderness of a woman, dressed the wound. Then there was another, who, hit in the back, had the bullet extracted by a dexterous cut from near the groin. It was only a little flattened at the point.<sup>17</sup>

Brown then became the Armed Constabulary’s Principal Medical Officer for the Patea District. He remained with the 7th Division of that force until 25 January 1869 when he transferred to the 4th Division. Brown returned to the East Coast with Colonel Whitmore in April 1869 and took part in the Roathuna expedition against Te Kooti. It was at the ambush on the road from Ahikereru on 7 May 1869 that he tended the wounded guide Thomas Adamson, who, as a result of his actions during the ambush, was awarded the distinctive New Zealand Cross.<sup>18</sup>

Brown remained in the Armed Constabulary serving at Fort Galatea and Matata, under Colonel J.H.H. St. John, until he suddenly resigned his appointment on 29 November, 1869.<sup>19</sup> Brown then disappears until he is noticed in Auckland when he received his colonial issue New Zealand Medal on 10 April 1872.<sup>20</sup> He next appears in Fiji as surgeon at the Levuka Hospital and staff-surgeon to the Fiji Armed Constabulary.<sup>21</sup> However, his time in Fiji was also short-lived and he had returned to New Zealand by 1874. It seems his marriage was also failing as his wife, Eliza, remained in Fiji.

### Could not prove credentials

The truth is that Brown could not prove his credentials as a physician when asked to do so. It was the reason he was asked to ‘resign’ from the Armed Constabulary, to which he had been appointed by Colonel Whitmore. In Fiji he was also unable to provide proof of his qualifications when challenged. Brown now returned to Auckland but was unable to work as a doctor for, without proof, he could not be

17 *Wellington Independent*, 13 February 1869, p. 5.

18 *Hawke’s Bay Herald*, 2 July 1869, p. 3; Adamson’s NZC sold at auction in Sept 2011 for £138,000.

19 *Wellington Independent*, 14 December 1869, p. 2; On 1 September 1869 an inquest into the death of Constable John Caddy, 1 Division A.C., (late of 1st Waikato Regiment), was conducted at Tauranga, before *William Brown, Esq., M.D., Coroner*.

20 William Brown Medal Application, NZ Archives (NZA) AD32-2313; In 1870 and 1871 the New Zealand Government purchased a large number of blank medals from the Royal Mint for issue to its colonial forces. A machine to impress names on those medals was also purchased but proved faulty and the medals were engraved by local jewellers in Wellington.

21 *Bruce Herald*, 24 October 1873, p. 3.



registered as such. With his 'career', reputation and marriage in tatters, he turned to drink. In fact, so dependent on alcohol did he become that Brown ultimately resorted to stealing clothes, money and anything of value from room-mates in seedy Auckland boarding houses to pawn for drink. On 8 April 1874, when brought before the Auckland Police Court on a charge of obtaining goods by false representations, Brown asked the magistrate to dismiss the case. His defence was that 'he had done good service in the army, had fought in forty-two engagements, he had cured many persons as a medical man in his time, and in fact had done a good deal of good in the world. He had also given up drinking'.<sup>22</sup>

The magistrate stated he much regretted to see a man of Brown's education and abilities in such a position and sentenced him to three months imprisonment with hard labour. Upon his release Brown went to Thames in New Zealand's North Island gold fields to resume practice as a doctor where, in the 'rough and tumble' of such a place, he would be less open to scrutiny. He was, however, mistaken.

In August 1874 William Brown<sup>23</sup> was charged with a breach of the Medical Practitioner's Act by using the title of Doctor of Medicine without being registered. He appeared at the Resident Magistrate's Court before Captain William Fraser.<sup>24</sup> Brown entered a plea of not guilty and applied for an adjournment on account of his recent 'illness'.<sup>25</sup> This was denied. The magistrate stating Brown was either a registered medical practitioner or he was not. Brown confirmed he was not registered under the present Act. The police prosecutor said that it was his understanding that Mr Brown was not in any respect qualified to practice as a medical practitioner.

Brown's counsel explained that his papers and diploma had been left in Fiji. He also reminded the Court that Mr Brown had previously occupied the position of assistant-surgeon to the government forces and Brown's discharge from the Armed Constabulary was produced. Captain Fraser, the magistrate, suggested that the resignation may have been compulsory, the defendant not being qualified to hold the position he occupied.

Brown then asked Captain Fraser to leave the Bench to give evidence in his favour. Captain Fraser refused, but replied he could only say that Brown had been surgeon in the force mentioned but he had always understood that Brown was not, and never had been, qualified to practice; and that wonder had been expressed that he had been allowed to occupy the position he did. Fraser imposed a penalty of £5.<sup>26</sup> Brown returned to Auckland and to drink. Sadly, his estranged wife, Eliza,

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<sup>22</sup> *Auckland Star*, 8 April 1874, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Another Dr William Brown was also in practice in the Otago District of New Zealand's South Island.

<sup>24</sup> Late captain, 1st Waikato Regiment of Militia and Lieutenant, Prince of Wales Victoria Volunteer Light Horse at Geelong.

<sup>25</sup> At Grahamstown on 29 July 1874 William was charged at the Resident Magistrate's Court with being of unsound mind. He had written to a friend that he was tired of this life and he had applied for a license to purchase a pistol. He was remanded for medical examination but was released (*Star*, 29 July 1874).

died on 21 January 1875 on Koro Island, Fiji. She was 32.<sup>27</sup> On 21 July 1876 at Auckland, 'Doctor' William Brown was charged with larceny of £6 and some articles of clothing belonging to a fellow lodger at a boarding house in West Queen Street. He was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment at Auckland's Mount Eden Prison.<sup>28</sup>

## Australia

By late 1876 Brown was out of gaol and now in Australia, practising as a doctor on the north coast of New South Wales. He was soon in trouble and being charged with stealing 5 shillings at Taree. By August 1879, at Wellington, in western New South Wales, Brown was again charged by a local publican for passing counterfeit coins, however, the coins were proved to be genuine.

Brown returned to the isolated rural towns of the Manning River near Taree and Kempsey on the north coast. Apparently sober, he appeared to acquit himself well in these rural districts. Noted as having reset the bones and sewn the foot of a boy whose entire foot was crushed beneath the wheel of a fully-laden dray, he also successfully tended several young men who had been poisoned by tinned fish. His greatest acclamation was for the surgical repair to a little girl who had suffered terrible burns when her dress had caught fire.<sup>29</sup>

By 1880 he had settled in the town of Kempsey and travelled widely in the district. However, rumours circulated that he was not qualified nor registered as a medical practitioner. On 25 August 1881 his stable was broken into and his horse removed and daubed in tar. A fortnight earlier his front door had similarly been attacked. The harassment continued. William eventually left Kempsey 'consequent upon frequent assaults on him during the last nine months'.<sup>30</sup> It was also at Kempsey, on 17 January 1882, that Brown applied to the New Zealand Defence Department for a replacement New Zealand Medal for his original he claimed to have lost in Fiji.

Brown returned to Wellington in western NSW where he was readily accepted and took an active part in local affairs. He even took the chair on several occasions for meetings of the Wellington Volunteers, where it was widely reported on 18 June 1884 that 'he was principal medical officer to the field force, and surgeon of militia and volunteers in New Zealand holding the rank of captain'.<sup>31</sup>

Brown would now have had his replacement New Zealand Medal to

26 *Thames Star*, 29 August 1874, p. 2.

27 *New Zealand Herald*, 15 February 1875, p. 2.

28 *Thames Advertiser*, 21 July 1876, p. 3.

29 *Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney), 29 May 1886, p. 17.

30 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* (NSW), 26 August 1882, p. 8.

31 *Australian Town and Country Journal* (NSW), 21 June 1884, p. 44.

substantiate his claims – but it may not have been enough. On 12 December 1885 William had again written to the Defence Authorities in New Zealand acknowledging receipt of his replacement New Zealand Medal and requesting a certificate of his services in the Poverty Bay Militia Rifles and Armed Constabulary. His hope being that such a certificate would verify his position as a military ‘physician’. Major Walter Gudgeon,<sup>32</sup> then Acting-Assistant Under-Secretary of Defence, confirmed William’s service on 24 December 1885, writing that ‘Mr Brown served with Colonel Whitmore in the Poverty Bay and West Coast Campaigns as P.M.O. of the force and was asst surgeon to the P.B. Mounted Rifles previously to this - issue certificate accordingly’.<sup>33</sup>

That Gudgeon states ‘Mr Brown’ clearly supports Captain Fraser’s understanding that William was indeed forced to resign from the Armed Constabulary for not being a qualified physician. It is probable Colonel Whitmore knew he was not formally qualified, as he also refers to him as ‘Mr Assistant Surgeon Brown’ in his despatch of 9 August 1868. Major Gudgeon, as a former sub-inspector of the Armed Constabulary, would have personally known William Brown.

Whilst at Wellington Brown enjoyed a continued social acceptance and was a committee member for the election of the local candidate for parliament. He even presented lectures on ‘The Drinking Customs of Society’, and ‘The Effects of Moderate Drinking’. Topics he was well qualified to speak on.

## Publicly exposed

However, as could be expected, his life again unravelled. In 1886 Dr Ludwig Bruck, an Australian medical practitioner and medical journalist, published his ‘List of Unregistered Practitioners’. Bruck had sent a circular to those non-registered individuals practising as medical officers in all colonies of Australia and New Zealand, asking them to provide details of their qualifications. William Brown’s response was published in Bruck’s book.

BROWN, William, Wellington. (NSW) Signs ‘M.D.’ after his name. States that he lost his diploma, and has been in practice since 1864, in New Zealand, Fiji, and New South Wales in the latter colony of Australia since 1876, on the Manning and Macleay Rivers, and at Wellington, and that he has held the following appointments in New Zealand. Surg. N.Z. Local Forces (1866); Govt Native Surg. (1866); Asst. Surg. Poverty Bay Mounted Rifles and Coroner (1867); Pub. Vacc.; (1868) Asst. Surg.

32 Walter Edward Gudgeon, CMG, was a farmer, soldier, historian, land court judge and colonial administrator.

33 NZA AD1885/3532.

34 Ludwig Bruck, *Australasian Medical Directory and Handbook*, Australasian Medical Gazette, Sydney (1886), p. 262.

Armed Constabulary (1869).<sup>34</sup>

Nowhere did he offer his qualifications. Humiliated, he was again forced to leave Wellington. William then returned a second time to the McLeay River area of the north coast of NSW, this time to the very small rural community of Clarence Town. Incredibly, in 1887, Brown, now aged 44, married 17-year-old Theresa Rosaline Bennett, of the McLeay River, at Surry Hills in Sydney.<sup>35</sup> He was then described as 'William Brown, M.D., late surgeon H.M.S.' Not surprisingly, the Clarence Town enterprise was also short lived and by 1888 William was resident at the small settlement of Gladstone, a short distance from Kempsey on the McLeay River. At Gladstone in January 1891, whilst waiting for the punt to cross the river, he was injured when his horse took fright at a passing steamer and bolted, his buggy being badly smashed up. This incident only compounded a severe depression.<sup>36</sup> Twelve months earlier Brown had obtained a deal of local notoriety when a man named Matthew Walker had brought a legal action against the borough council in the District Court, and Brown was required to give evidence. Incredibly, on this occasion William boldly claimed he was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, Doctor of Medicine at Kissengen University, Medical Officer to the Field Force in New Zealand, Government Medical Officer at Fiji, and had been on the McLeay River about nine months.<sup>37</sup> The barrister in the case then produced Brucks Register, and challenged William to produce his diplomas, which he failed to do.

Injured and depressed at his final ruination, he returned to long bouts of drinking.<sup>38</sup> William Brown was found dead in his house in Barnard Street, Gladstone, on 15 December 1891. A small bottle of poison was found in one of his pockets about one-third empty. An inquest determined that 'Dr. William Brown died from the effects of a dose of prussic acid self-administered whilst suffering from temporary insanity'.<sup>39</sup> William Brown was buried in an unmarked grave in the nearby village of Fredrickton on 16 December 1891.<sup>40</sup>

## New Zealand medals

What then of William Brown's three New Zealand medals? William Brown legitimately received a colonial issue engraved-named New Zealand Medal for his Armed Constabulary service. This medal was approved by the New Zealand Medal Commissioners Haultain and Edwards on 27 March 1871 and published in the

35 NSW Marriage Registration No. 906/1887.

36 *Australian Town and Country Journal* (NSW), 17 January 1891, p. 15.

37 *Macleay Argus* (Kempsey, NSW), 14 July 1891, p. 2.

38 *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW), 16 December 1891, p. 7.

39 *Australian Town and Country Journal* (NSW), 26 December 1891, p. 16.

New Zealand *Gazette*.<sup>41</sup> William received his medal at Auckland in April 1872.<sup>42</sup>

Brown states in his application, from Kempsey, NSW, for a replacement medal in January 1882 that he had lost his original medal in Fiji. This would seem to be a credible reason. However, a more likely scenario is that he pawned it upon his return from Fiji to support his alcoholic spiral. This replacement medal was approved at a cost of 7 shillings 6 pence.<sup>43</sup> It also appears to have met a similar fate to his first medal. The extant New Zealand medal to William Brown is correctly engraved: 'Asst. Surgn. W. BROWN A.C.' It is not known if this was his original issue or replacement medal.

The third medal found at Windsor in 1900 was in all probability a personally sourced replacement by Brown when enjoying community acceptance, probably at Wellington, perhaps when involved in meetings of the local volunteer movement. There is certainly no record of this medal being 'issued' to him. The naming stating 'East Coast, 1865' and the rank engraved in full are an indication of a self-awarded medal. It certainly does not fit the naming conventions of officially engraved colonial New Zealand medals of the time.

However, there are two known authorised and issued medals named to the 'East Coast Expeditionary Force'. One was to Acting Assistant-Surgeon Matthew Scott.<sup>44</sup> This medal was approved by the medal commissioners and gazetted. Scott served as a civilian and was not a qualified doctor, although, like Brown, he used that title and placed M.D. after his name. Scott was employed as a 'Dispenser' to local natives and was also appointed Native Vaccinator at Waiapu. Scott was also afflicted by drink. Confined to the Olds Men's Refuge at Napier, where, like Brown, he took his own life in October 1892.

Sadly, I suspect that all three of William Brown's medals – official issue 1872, official replacement 1882 and self-awarded - went to provide for his alcoholic depression. Brown, despite his bogus claims, never had a complaint made or charges brought against him for his medical practices – in fact quite the opposite. He was almost always referred to by his patients as being 'a most attentive, painstaking, and kind physician.' Certainly, his ability as a battlefield surgeon only exacted the highest praise from those who witnessed it.



Figure 3: Obverse of NZ Medal.  
Source: Author.

40 NSW Death Registration No. 7731/1891.

41 NZ *Gazette*, No 31, 31 May 1871 p. 241-244.

42 William Brown Medal Application, NZA AD32-2313.

43 Noted in the collection of the late Dr Brian Kieran, of Napier, New Zealand.

44 The other was to Robert Evans, a 'volunteer officer' – Richard Stowers, *The New Zealand Medal to Colonials* (9 ed.), self-published, Hamilton (2008), p. 35.

# Midnight the Warhorse

Neil Dearberg

In the upper reaches of the Hunter Valley in New South Wales, between Scone and Murrurundi, lies Bloomfield. Here is the Haydon Horse Stud, continuously controlled by the Haydon family since 1832. Today, this pristine stud breeds in natural condition the Waler horse under the care of Peter and Ali Haydon. Their most famous sire lifeline was Tester who produced generations of champions; polo, polocrosse (lacrosse), camp drafting, in the show ring, stock horses, short distance bridle spurt sprinters and lines of award winners.

This area was the centre for recruitment in the First World War for the 12th Light Horse Regiment. Men, and many women, rode before they walked. Many could shoot a rifle before they could do their times tables. All knew how to find their way around the splendid range country amidst the valleys, trees and rivers, by day and night.

It's 1905. Imagine, rolled into one; Phar Lap, Black Caviar and Winx. Throw in speed from Dawn Fraser, fight from Jeff Fenech, stamina from Ricky Ponting and determination from Kerry Packer.

Now you've got ... Midnight: Warhorse.

A horse is a horse, of course, of course...but no. Sometimes a mighty beast comes along and surprises, or astounds, even the most knowledgeable experts and what becomes an adoring band of fanatics. So it was with the filly Midnight. Born naturally, as was the family's breeding custom, on the banks of the Pages River that runs through the Haydon property, just after midnight on 31 October 1905, she was as black as the coal that runs through the local Hunter Valley. On her forehead was a unique, tiny white star with three little peaks like the petals of a tiara, pointing to the sky. On the front of a back hoof was a smaller star, matching that on her forehead. She was of the breed known as Waler with a bit of stock horse cleverness, sprinter and stamina.

Twelve years later, to the day, she would pass into horses' heaven having become a desert warrior and Australian hero in a foreign land in a foreign war. Doing so she had saved her life companion and soldier horseman, Lieutenant Guy Haydon. Guy went home, badly wounded during the action, to a loving wife but with a hole in his heart that only a man can have with a majestic 'best friend'.

In the early days Midnight ran wild with mother Moonlight. Moonlight had been joined to the Haydon's top sire Tester. From Midnight's birth, Guy, then aged 16, formed an inseparable bond with her; soul mates in a rugged developing land of outdoorsmen and horsemen in their pastoral land. Gifted with dad's speed and mum's stamina, Midnight became a legend at home before she and Guy headed to



the battlefields of Egypt, Sinai and Palestine as part of the 12th Australian Light Horse Regiment (ALHR).

Guy Haydon was born on 24 April 1889. He could ride before he could walk. He grew up around good horses and developed into a fine horseman like the rest of the family. He developed strong bush craft and was a crack shot with both a rifle and pistol. He was a strapping sixteen year old when Midnight was born. He took her as a foal and performed all her training. They were as one.

Off to boarding school, Guy excelled at the Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore), especially in sport. He won the 1906 Head of the River, played for two years in both the 1st XV rugby and 1st XI cricket, GPS Champions in 1906 and represented the school in GPS Athletics. Shore said: 'He has the unique claim of being the only boy ever to win Head of the River and GPS Athletics in the same year'.<sup>1</sup>

He spent many hours, days, months and years riding Midnight doing his work around the family properties, training her as he went. He taught her what to the family were basic work movements. To observers they may have been basic dressage movements. Backing up and side passing over to open gates and to cut burrs riding her with a hoe, cracking a stock whip to make a loud noise so the cattle would run out of the timbered country. Learning the speed to block and cut out cattle. Chasing the horses into the yard. On weekends they would compete in the local Bushman Carnivals and camp drafting competitions. In 1907 as an eighteen year old playing for the Scone Polo Team, Guy won the prestigious Northern Challenge Polo Cup at Quirindi, the youngest to do so.

After war broke out, along with this brother Barney, Guy enlisted on 15 February 1915 at Liverpool aged twenty-five. Although Barney was only nineteen at the time his parents relented since Guy promised to look after his younger brother. Cyril Regg, their future brother in-law, enlisted with them as did their neighbour and good friend Max Wright, aged thirty-two. As was often the custom, Guy enlisted with Midnight, Barney with Polo, Cyril with Hughie and Max with a bay gelding named Fred, all by Tester. Off they all went to Liverpool for enlistment and indoctrination. Into the 12th Light Horse they went, along with many of the lads from the Hunter Valley. All the boys would return, but without their beloved horses, for no horses were allowed to come home to Australia for quarantine and cost factors.

After a spectacular Sydney parade, the 12th ALHR boarded the steamship Suevic and departed on 12 June 1915 for Egypt. On arrival, troops and horses were separated and the men were off to Gallipoli as reinforcements while the horses were formed into Remount Units to be deployed where needed. With the evacuation

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1 Peter Haydon, *Midnight – Warhorse*, Self-published, Blandford (2017), p. 6, see [www.haydonhorsestud.com.au](http://www.haydonhorsestud.com.au)



from Gallipoli over and the troops returned to Egypt, horses were issued. But, Guy, Barney, Cyril and Max were not given their personal horses – devastation all round!

Camped at Heliopolis near Cairo, Guy spread the word, ‘find my Midnight!’ The distinctive Haydon brand was soon discovered and Guy reunited with Midnight. Barney and Max were also soon reunited with Polo and Fred, to serve out the war together. The Light Horse was then involved in training for future desert operations. Patrols, drill, marksmanship, night and day exercises, heat, flies, pomp and pageantry designed by British tradition that was totally unfamiliar and abhorrent to Australian lifestyles, drove the men ballistic. Psychological trauma fell upon them as they realised their infantry mates were in a real war in France while they were ‘playing’ in the sands of Egypt.

During this period, intense rivalry occurred between the Australian and British cavalry about who had the best horses. To settle the score a competition day was arranged. Three events were to be contested, dubbed the ‘Desert Olympics’. Guy and Midnight were chosen to represent Australia against the best of the British.

The first event was a short distance sprint race over a quarter mile. Little did the British know that Midnight was by the champion sire Tester whose stock were rarely beaten in the short distance Bridle Spurts back in Australia. Guy and Midnight won the event at a canter, easing down at the finish after establishing a commanding lead. Australia 1, England 0.

The second contest was a utility Flags event involving obstacles and riders using their swords, completing tasks against the clock. Again, Guy and Midnight prevailed winning the event with a clear round in the quickest time. Australia 2, England 0.

The third event was an equitation test involving the dressage movements that the British thought they had cornered; this was their forte. They thought the casual Australian approach would be easily beaten in these more formal equine movements. Again, they underestimated Guy and Midnight. Guy, being a fine all-round horseman, had trained Midnight in her early education back on the farm. She would move off his legs while performing the bush tasks, quite similar to dressage as it turned out. To the astonishment of the British he won the point score event, but only by a narrow margin.

The ‘Desert Olympics’ went to Australia 3 England 0.

Midnight was the toast of the Light Horse and Australia while Guy was nominated for PM (not really, but he did enjoy hero status for a while). It also created a cultural shift in the respect the British cavalry had for the Australians and, as the desert campaigns evolved, they acknowledged the tougher bush-reared Australian horses had come into their own. In fact, they rated the Walers to be some of the finest

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2 Haydon, *Midnight*, p. 25.

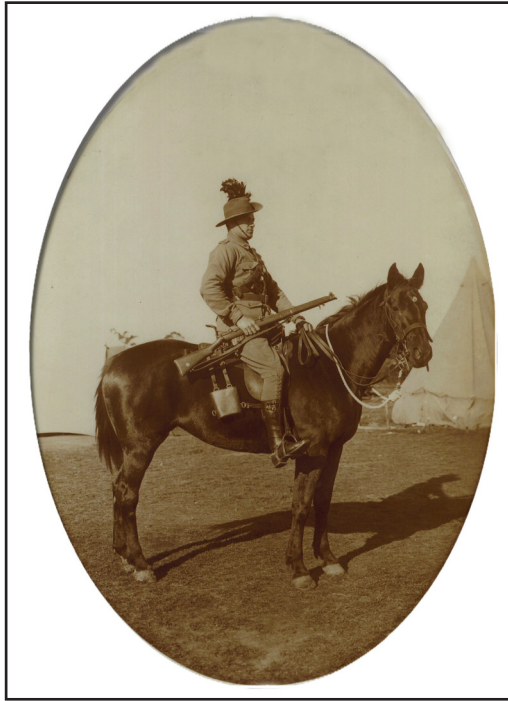


Figure 1: Guy Haydon on Midnight. Source: Author.

cavalry horses ever seen. They also recognised that the Australian outdoorsman and bushman became an extraordinary horse soldier, despite no previous wartime experience. In quick time the British commanders recognised these Australian horsemen were in a league beyond their own cavalry. These outdoorsmen had a natural ability in the open desert, compared with the farmers and shopkeepers of British cavalry and were soon at the forefront of operations.

The Australian Light Horse regiments were formed into brigades and, with the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade, became the Anzac Mounted Division (AMD). Major General (later Lieutenant General) Sir Harry Chauvel was given command of the new formation, as well as responsibility for the AIF troops in Egypt that eventually included the Imperial Camel Corps (ICC), Australian Flying Corps (AFC), medics, vets, supplies, transport and engineers. He later commanded the Desert Mounted Corps that included his Anzacs as well as British, Indian and French troops – he was the first non-British officer to command British troops, the first Australian to be promoted to lieutenant general and command a Corps. Chauvel was an inspired leader, largely responsible for the success of British forces in this campaign, he led the most potent mounted force in history to finish this campaign and was much adored by his soldiers.

After nearly four months of boredom from training, patrolling, drilling and heat suffering, the British commander, General Murray, despatched Chauvel and his AMD into the Sinai desert on 23 April 1916. The initial task was to save a wretchedly led British Yeomanry brigade, but too late to save it from destruction by a German led Turkish force, intent on breaching the Suez Canal. The Turks withdrew

short of the canal and in face of the Anzacs. Chauvel and his force maintained their positions, now around Romani, about 25 miles from the Suez Canal and near the shores of the Mediterranean. Their task was to protect the Suez Canal and its vital resupply link to Europe. Now they were soldiering, at long last, able to engage their horsemanship and shooting skills. Guy and Midnight, Barney and Polo, Max and Fred, and their mates were now able to do what they had enlisted for.

The troops revelled in the open space that was so different from the confines of the trenches, mud and wire of Gallipoli. They took great care in the welfare of their horses, making sure they were well groomed. They ensured their saddles were evenly balanced and that equipment was firmly secured so not to damage horse or rider. Horse grooming and food management were strictly disciplined by the men themselves, with little need of encouragement from 'the seniors'. Routine 'cleaning' of ticks, fleas, flies, mange and disease plus exemplary veterinary care ensured the best possible availability of the horses that were already loved and respected by the men who would be carried for two and a half years.

In early August the Turks were back. British infantry was entrenched in the sands around Romani. The AMD was deployed in a rectangular formation with one side open. Chauvel's plan was to draw the Turks in, strand them in the heated sands without water, then engulf and destroy them with his reserve horsemen. The plan was sound and the German commander of the Turkish force did exactly as Chauvel planned – few moments in military history show an enemy commander doing exactly as the plan called.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the British commander General Murray, actually two of their generals each with differing command responsibilities above Chauvel, interfered by holding back two of Chauvel's brigades and nearly lost the battle. Three days of pleading and Chauvel finally got his horsemen. The Turks were driven back, albeit without total destruction as he had intended.

Midnight, Polo, Hughie, Fred and the other horses went for 48 to 60 hours without water and feed – previously unheard of. Most of the horses went seven days without having saddles removed, the action so fast and furious. Soldiers went nights without sleep and ate scantily. At one stage a squadron of Australians was forced back to base camp. They were pursued into the rear kitchen area where the cooks fed them while shot and shell fell – things cooks should never imagine would be their lot. But results turned and the empty Turkish water bottle, the stamina of the Waler horses and the skill of the Anzac horsemen had the Turks on the run.

After nine days Chauvel's outstanding leadership, the Walers and dogged determination by the men, had won the Battle of Romani. This was the first British victory of the whole war, two and a half years after its fateful beginning – delivered by Chauvel and the Anzacs. The Suez Canal was never again threatened. The drive to push the Turks into Palestine and submission had started.

The regiments and brigades, with the aid of the ICC (mostly Australian soldiers) moved through the sucking sands of Sinai and defeated Turkish force after force. The AFC and the Royal Flying Corps provided forward reconnaissance,

photography for map making and advanced warning of enemy troop movement to enable faster movement of the horsemen. Victories at Rafa, Bir al Abd, Magdhaba and El Arish allowed the British force to get to the gates of Gaza near the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

General Murray made two frontal attacks to capture Gaza, the gateway to Palestine. Both failed. Murray was returned to England to be replaced by General Edmund Allenby. On the advice of his Staff, Allenby decided to attack inland, from Beersheba, then roll towards the coast and capture Gaza.<sup>4</sup>

Plans were set in motion. British infantry would perform a surround and attack approach on Beersheba township. The Anzacs would move to the east and when required, capture and hold that ground to prevent Turks there hindering the infantry. To provide security and secrecy of the plan, the horsemen moved at night – cooler for them and their dust could not be seen by observers or aircraft.



Figure 2: Bullet extracted from Haydon. Source: Author.

Water was critical. Horses could not survive for days without it. Beersheba had to be taken on the day of the attack and the water wells captured intact. The infantry had to fight over open ground with the aid of artillery cover and capture the town. Then the horsemen would come in and secure the area.

3 H.S. Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine 1914-1918*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney (1941), p. 190.

4 Neil Dearberg, *Desert Anzacs*, Glass House Books, Carindale (2017), p. 173.

But things did not go to plan. The infantry made little progress throughout the heat of the day. The horses and riders were laid up in wadis in this heat, hidden from Turkish observation and miles from the town, waiting for orders to ride. Wait and wait. Heat, flies, dust and restless horses. Late in the afternoon, it was apparent to Allenby that the infantry attack would not succeed. He then put it on Chauvel: Give me Beersheba! It was four in the afternoon and dark arrived around five. There was insufficient time to plan an attack with the normal Light Horse tactic of riding close to the vicinity, dismounting, and approaching to attack as infantry. Just as the British infantry had done, such an attack would fail.

Chauvel hastily gathered his brigade commanders. Anyone got any ideas? Brigadier Grant stepped forward. His 4th, 11th and 12th Regiments could charge the whole way and not dismount. They would catch the Turks by surprise, and it was the only way the troops could get to the town before dark. There was some discussion as this was 'not normal'. Chauvel's now famous order was given, 'Put Grant straight at it!'

Within ten minutes or so, the three regiments were lined up. The troopers were told they were to charge and, away they went, straight into direct fire from rifles, machine guns, artillery and the odd enemy aircraft. By now, Guy was a lieutenant, troop commander. Chauvel could now do nothing but watch and wait. Three miles or five kilometres across open plains. Many troopers wielded bayonets, others their rifles. All screamed obscenities that bushmen knew well, amid their growing anti-fear laughter. It was excitement unknown and fear had no place. The horses got the sniff of water, deprived them for 30 hours now, and nothing was stopping their sprint to drink.

The Turks were indeed caught by surprise. Recognising the light horsemen, the Turkish commander issued orders not to fire until they had dismounted and easy targets appeared. But the dismount did not happen. The Turks were so shocked they failed to lower their gun or rifle sights and fired over the head of horse and rider. The first wave of horsemen bounded right over the Turkish trenches and into Beersheba itself. Following waves of riders dismounted at the trenches and engaged in hand-to-hand fighting with the defenders. Dust, screaming, shooting, cries of the wounded and chaos abounded. Who was who?

The charge started with 800 horsemen; against several thousand entrenched Turks. Just on dusk 770 horsemen had captured Beersheba and near 1,200 prisoners. But in the night, it was not easy to count prisoners. Captain Jack Davies described his innovative counting technique as follows: 'I counted my little lot of prisoners and sent them away under escort; it was a beautiful moonlight night and I counted them like a lot of sheep with Marnie and Haft keeping tally. 647 and 38 officers was the number as well I remember the odd figures – the 4th got 350 odd more and we collected about 30 strays during the night'.<sup>5</sup> Just like counting sheep in the paddock!

Chauvel and the Anzacs had delivered Beersheba to General Allenby, now a most grateful commander. But it had come at a price. Thirty-two men perished,



including ‘Tibby’ Cotter, an Australian cricket test bowler who had terrorised English batsmen on green playing fields, far from the brown desert of southern Palestine. ‘Tibby’ had been a stretcher-bearer, himself collecting the dead and wounded before the shot that ended his life.

Midnight had been shot through the stomach by a Turk in the trench. The bullet went upwards, through Midnight’s body, through the saddle and into Guy’s back where it lodged about 2cm from his spine. Guy later told his brother Barney that after he was knocked off his horse she came back and stood over him. He was worried she would get shot again so he grabbed handful of dirt and threw it at her to get her to move out of the gunfire.<sup>6</sup>

Guy was left lying in agony in the pit with the bullet wound in his back. There was carnage all round him. Four of his mates died right next to him. By now, his beloved mare was lying dead just near the pit. It was a long freezing painful night. His squadron commander, Major Featherstonehaugh wrote to Guy’s family, ‘Guy would not allow them to take him in that night as there were others he considered worse cases than him, so he stayed out all night ... you will all be very proud of your gallant, self-sacrificing son. God bless him for staying out all night so that other cases could be attended to ... he deserves a decoration’.<sup>7</sup>

It took the evacuation system five agonising days to get Guy to hospital in Cairo where they finally operated to remove the bullet. They were surprised to find the point of the bullet was still sharp and intact. It had not hit anything hard to blunt the point. It was also fortunate that it was the early days of x-rays and the bullet could be located and removed. A fraction further and he would have died along with his gallant mare. She had miraculously saved his life, but Guy’s war was over. During recovery, Guy sent the bullet home to his family in a small tin, intended for use to bring Christmas cake to the troops.

Eight hundred horsemen had pulled off a feat of magnanimous proportion, previously unseen. General Allenby addressed the troops a few days later with these memorable words:

You did something that teachers of military history say could not be done. You galloped over strongly defended positions and demoralised the enemy. He’s finished. His cavalry will never face you again. You have put new life into my army and you rank with the finest cavalry the British Army has ever had.<sup>8</sup>

Guy went home to Australia, but life would never be the same. He needed a long period of convalescence to recover from the bullet wound and time off from working. He and wife Bonnie had another daughter Isabelle and son John, who went on to fight with distinction in the Second World War. He gradually recovered

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5 Letter from Captain Jack Davis to brother Reg, dated 29 January 1918, Haydon family archives.

6 Haydon family archives.

7 Letter from Major G. Featherstonehaugh to Guy’s parents, dated January 1918, Haydon family archives.

and continued life as a grazier, living at Warrah Ridge on the Liverpool plains. It's a magnificent piece of country with their house on the ridge with sweeping views out across the plain. Rated as some of the best farming country in the world it was also good for fattening stock. He was heavily involved in the community being a councillor on the Tamarang Shire, a director of the Tamworth Pasture Protection Board and a member of the local Land Board. He judged at many shows and bushmen's carnivals and passed on his horse knowledge as a strong supporter of the pony club.

Barney, Max and Cyril fared well and survived the war. Barney had a lot of close shaves, but luck seemed always on his side. One of the closest was when he was looking through a metal hole out from a trench. He turned away to speak to someone just as a bullet flew through the hole. His number was not up yet. To appease the censor, he often wrote on the top of his many letters home, from 'The Promised Land' or 'Dinkum Desert' or 'From the Desert' and always maintained the sense of humour he was known for.

Within a year, the Desert Mounted Corps, commanded by Chauvel, had spearheaded General Allenby's victory. By the end of October 1918, the war was over in the East. Allenby had brilliantly combined his horsemen with his infantry, airmen, artillery, logisticians, medics, vets and naval forces to annihilate those Turks that had won Gallipoli. Nevertheless, there are few winners in war. Death, physical and mental injury and the loss of mates take the shine off victory.

To compound the joy/grief, the horses could not be taken home. Loyal friends had carried many a horseman for two and a half years. The horses were to be given to the Indian Army or, left behind with Egyptian natives who were well known for animal mistreatment. Many a light horseman was torn between a life of mistreatment or humane action. Heavy-hearted soldiers took their mounts for a final gallop before leaving.

Barney went on to be one of Australia's leading horse judges officiating for many years at the Sydney Royal Easter Show and numerous other venues around the country. He lived at Greeneyes in Murrurundi working the country he had at Scotts Creek and Warrah Ridge. He married Ethel Cobb from Ellerston whose brother Hunter served with him during the war. They had no children. He had a great sense of humour and was always the life of the party. He stayed on in Egypt after the war in a peacekeeping force. His nephew Jim Haydon purchased his Scotts Creek property, which the family still owns. He died on 29 April 1978, aged 84. Today, the horses at Haydon Horse Stud have the unique direct line back to the horses at Romani, Beersheba, Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley, Damascus and the Light Horse. Midnight's family lives on through the stud's renowned Thora Family. Most of the horses today are descendants of Tester mares, Midnight's lineage. Ten

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8 Haydon, *Midnight*, p. 43.



generations later her family is going strong as ever, being one of the most sought after families in the studbook. They are still used to do the stock work around the property and compete in events around Australia and the world. They are playing polo overseas and stallions are standing at stud in America and England. In 2009 Peter Haydon rode a descendent, Haydon Celestial, leading the Scone Horse Festival Parade as the Festival VIP. Horses from the stud are still used by the modern day Light Horse for exhibitions and ceremonial parades, especially on the official Beersheba Day, 31 October each year.

On 5 September 2014 Haydon Moonstruck from Midnight's Thora family foaled a colt that was born with the identical markings as Midnight. 'On her forehead is a small white star and she has a distinctive white triangular peak on the front of her near hind coronet, standing all alone'. A horse that has white markings on its feet normally has the white going all the way around, so it is very rare to have just this isolated triangle of white just above the coronet, standing alone in the front of the foot. When Haydon Warhorse was branded as a yearling he was given Midnight's Haydon brand on the near shoulder but, by a totally random twist of fate, he was branded 12/4 on the off shoulder. The 12 being for the 12th horse branded for those born in 2014, while the 4 represents the year he was born. This meant not only did he have the identical markings of Midnight he was branded 12/4 and it was the 12th and 4th Light Horse Regiments that charged Beersheba! So, he is now officially registered as Haydon Warhorse and will see out his days at Bloomfield being used for station work, polo and Light Horse parades.

In 2014, Mago Films produced the very successful documentary for the ABC called 'The Waler: Australia's Great War Horse,' which includes the Midnight story. It was a finalist in the 2014 Busselton Film Awards. ABC Landline has also done a documentary on the Haydon Horse Stud and makes the Midnight story. A children's picture book, called Midnight, by Frank Greenwood was published in 2014. These can be found at <https://www.haydonhorsestud.com.au/> along with the detailed story of Guy and Midnight.

The Australian Waler horse was recognised by General Chauvel as a major factor in the triumph of his Anzacs in the Desert Mounted Corps. Their stamina, ability to go long periods without water, devotion to their riders, their resistance to the flies, heat, dust and the welfare provided by the Veterinary Corps from mange, malnutrition and battle wounds, set them apart from horses of other nations. Walers, like those raised at the Haydon Horse Stud and other similar studs, were every bit a part of our Anzac legend like our servicemen and women and are a notable part of our national and military history.

## The Royal Australian Navy at Zeebrugge 1918

Greg Swindon<sup>1</sup>

A Navy exists to fight at sea in order to generate an effect on land – but in 1918 this role was reversed. On the night of 22-23 April 1918, the Royal Navy (RN) carried out an audacious raid on the German held ports of Zeebrugge and Ostend in occupied Belgium (Fig. 1). The purpose of the raids was to render the ports unusable as U-boat and destroyer bases and thus reduce the heavy losses inflicted on Allied shipping; caused particularly by the U-Boats.<sup>2</sup> While the fighting on the Western Front often gains the attention of most people, the reality was that in mid-1917 the U-Boat campaign against Allied shipping was close to succeeding in its goal of starving Britain out of the war.

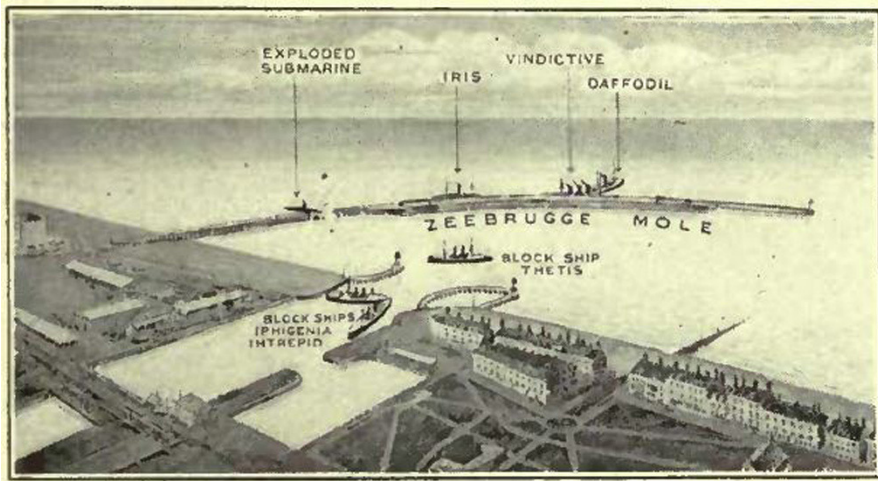


Figure 1: View of the entrance to the Zeebrugge Canal, and the Mole, showing the positions taken up by the attacking vessels and where the blockships were sunk.

Source: Royal Navy Historical Collection, Portsmouth.

<sup>1</sup> Greg Swindon joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1985, graduating from ADFA in 1987 with a BA and trained as a Supply Officer. He served in HMA Ships Swan, Melbourne and Kanimbla (twice) and ashore in Navy Office, HMAS Creswell, Naval Support Command, ADFA and the Defence National Storage & Distribution Centre. His operational service includes East Timor (2000), Solomon Islands (2001), Persian Gulf (2001-02), border protection patrols (2002) and the Middle East/Afghanistan (2011 & 2014). He was the RAN Liaison Officer in Singapore during 2003-04 and is a graduate of the Australian Command and Staff College. Greg is currently the Senior Naval Historical Officer in the Sea Power Centre, Australia. He is married to Kathy and they have three adult children.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Bennett, *Naval Battles of the First World War*, Pan Books, London (1974), p. 268-269.

The British plan to stop U-Boats getting to sea from the port of Zeebrugge was to steam three old cruisers through the harbour and sink them as block ships in the Zeebrugge Canal. To do this, however, also required a landing force to take over the breakwater, known as the mole, that protected the harbour and on which the Germans had mounted numerous artillery pieces and machine guns. Among the hundreds of RN and Royal Marine personnel involved in the Zeebrugge action were a small group of Royal Australian Navy (RAN) volunteers.

In February 1918 a call went out throughout the RN for volunteers to perform a 'hazardous service'. At this time the battle-cruiser HMAS *Australia* was serving with the RN in the North Sea and 12 men from her ship's company were selected from the dozens that volunteered. These men were: Artificer Engineer (Warrant Officer) William Edgar, RAN, Leading Stoker William Bourke, Leading Stoker Reginald Hopkins, Leading Stoker Godfrey Lockard, Leading Stoker James Strong, Stoker Norbert McCrory, Leading Seaman George Bush, Leading Seaman Dalmorton Rudd, Able Seaman George Staples, Able Seaman Henry Gillard, and Able Seaman Leopold Newland.<sup>3</sup> A 12th man, Stoker John Walter Carter,<sup>4</sup> was also selected for the raid but held in reserve during the actual attack, with other volunteers, in case the raiding forces needed to be reinforced.

Throughout February and March, a force of 82 officers and 1,698 men was raised and given specialist training at either Chatham dockyard or the Royal Marines Barracks at Deal. Many of the sailors were formed into 200 man 'storming parties' and given instruction in trench warfare, assault tactics, Mills bomb (grenade) throwing, bayonet drill, and the use of mortars and Lewis machine guns. Others were given training in demolition work. The use of sailors as naval infantry was a common activity in the early 20th century with the Royal Navy having over 200 years of experience in landing sailors to fight ashore. The RAN also had recent experience with its use of the Australian Naval & Military Expeditionary Force serving ashore in the capture of German New Guinea in 1914.

One hundred and sixty-five mainly obsolete vessels including cruisers, destroyers, monitors, submarines and motor launches were involved in the raid and many of the attacking ships were specially modified in the preceding weeks with additional armour and guns installed.<sup>6</sup> Artificer Edgar was allocated to the ferry boat HMS *Iris II*, the five seamen to the cruiser HMS *Vindictive* and the five stokers to one of the three block ships – HMS *Thetis*.

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3 A.W. Jose, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918: The Royal Australian Navy*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra (1928), p. 592-593.

4 Zeebrugge: Recording of part taken by RAN personnel in the attack, 1918, p. 4, NAA MP124/6/528/201/79.

5 Norbert McCrory, *Account of the Raid on Zeebrugge by Ships of the RN*, AWM 1DRL/0429.

6 Flame Thrower - Relic of Naval Raid on Zeebrugge, NAA 1/21/154463. (Note: This flame-thrower is now held at the Australian War Memorial).

The Germans always expected that they would be attacked and had heavily reinforced the Belgian coast with artillery, while in Zeebrugge, artillery emplacements ranging in size from 3.5-inch guns to 6-inch guns had been positioned within the port area. These were supported by 11-inch guns mounted further inland. All of these batteries were connected by an elaborate complex of observation, command and signalling stations.

The Zeebrugge mole was a seaward outpost of the German coastal defence system and consisted of three parts: a railway viaduct connecting the mole to the shore; the mole itself, constructed from a mass of masonry that curved to the north east; and a narrow extension projecting from the end of the mole with a lighthouse on its extremity. All of this had been converted by the Germans into a minor fortress supporting gun emplacements and housing garrison troops. At the south western end of the mole was a seaplane base with concrete sheds to store the aircraft and had its own garrison.<sup>7</sup>

Unsuitable weather conditions forced two attempts to launch the raid to be aborted but by 22 April conditions had improved. That afternoon the raiding force weighed anchor and began to assemble under thickening cloud cover. As they made their way to their target, drizzling rain began to fall but wind conditions remained favourable. By 10:00pm the force rendezvoused with patrolling destroyers and the additional men in the block ships were taken off by motor boats. The leading ships were now only 15 miles from the mole. At 11:10pm the British monitors began bombarding the German coastal defences with fire being directed at Zeebrugge some 20 minutes later. At the same time coastal motor boats moved off at high speed and laid a preliminary smoke screen across the entire line of advance. Other smoke laying craft followed and soon a murky line of smoke stretched for almost eight miles running parallel to the coast.<sup>8</sup>

Two groups of coastal motor boats then attacked the western end of the mole to distract the enemy's attention while *Vindictive* approached. Miraculously the entire expedition had reached its destination unreported and unobserved. Just before midnight *Vindictive* came through the last smoke screen, moving across the narrow strip of water that separated her from the mole. She continued her approach under a hail of enemy fire which inflicted heavy casualties on her crew and killed most of the officers in charge of her landing parties. The tidal stream was also causing problems for *Vindictive* as she struggled to lay alongside the mole. Fortunately, the officers in the ferry *Daffodil* saw her predicament and in what has been described as an extraordinary piece of seamanship the ferry was able to push, and hold, *Vindictive* alongside the mole. The first of the storming parties ('A' Company), which included

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7 Paul Kendall, *The Zeebrugge Raid 1918: The Finest Feat of Arms*, Spellmount, Staplehurst (2008), p. 47-50.

8 Kendall, *The Zeebrugge Raid 1918*, p. 89-90.

five Australian sailors, then made their way along the narrow swaying gangways to begin their assault. A few minutes later *Iris II* was brought alongside the mole ahead of *Vindictive*.

It was soon realised that there could be no thought of rushing the mole head battery as had originally been intended. The *Vindictive* had gone past her assigned position leaving German machine guns and barbed wire between the storming parties and the gun emplacements. Consequently, the mission changed to one of holding ground, as a diversionary measure, despite the attackers being the focus of nearly every German gun in the area.

By now *Vindictive's* upper works were being pounded by the gun battery on the mole and were soon reduced to a mass of twisted steel. Many of her guns had been knocked out and casualties were mounting as two German destroyers, berthed alongside the inner mole, added their gunfire to the fight. Twenty minutes after the *Vindictive* had been put alongside, the situation ashore was precarious. The Royal Marines had formed a bridge head opposite the ship's bows while the seamen had only partially secured *Vindictive* to the mole.

Meanwhile the obsolete British submarine HMS *C3*, packed with several tons of high explosives, had penetrated the harbour. Her mission was to come alongside the railway viaduct connecting the mole to the shore and set timed explosive charges before her crew abandoned the vessel. Her captain, Lieutenant Richard Sandford, RN, left nothing to chance and rammed the viaduct, wedging his submarine tightly between its steel girders, before the crew made good their escape in a small skiff under a hail of enemy fire.



Figure 2:  
The Mole at  
Zeebrugge after  
the raid showing  
the gap blown  
open by the  
submarine HMS  
*C3* being blown  
up. Source:  
Imperial War  
Museum  
Q 90053.



The resulting explosion blew away 100 feet of the viaduct and cut communications to the mole as the three block ships *Thetis*, *Intrepid* and *Iphigenia* were steaming into the harbour (Fig. 2). Australian-born Lieutenant John Howell-Price, DSC, RNR, was second in command of *C3* and was awarded a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his bravery.<sup>9</sup>

The block ships passed through the battery gun fire and steamed on towards the channel and canal beyond it. *Thetis* had by this time sustained heavy damage and was taking on tons of water causing her to list heavily. She was brought to a halt about 500 metres from her objective but had cleared the way through the anti-submarine nets and other obstructions, allowing *Intrepid* and *Iphigenia* to pass through unimpeded as they made their way up the canal. Stoker Norbert McCrory later wrote of this event:

The *Thetis* broke through the boomed defence at Zeebrugge but went aground in the channel owing to our starboard propeller fouling the boomed defence. We signalled the *Intrepid* – ‘we are aground proceed ahead carry out orders’. After 25 minutes we released ourselves but not before we had suffered from gunfire. Our foreward gun was blown overboard taking the crew with it. We also had a shot go right through from starboard to port side leaving a hole large enough for three men to walk through and just clearing the top of our engine room.<sup>10</sup>

*Thetis* moved to the entrance of the canal and was scuttled there (Figs. 3 and 4).

*Intrepid* entered the channel and once inside, her wheel was put hard over and the ship scuttled. Most of her crew got away in two cutters and a skiff. *Iphigenia* was not far behind and she made for a gap on the eastern side of the channel where she too was successfully scuttled. All three ships crews escaped in boats which they rowed out of the harbour, under heavy enemy fire, before being picked up by fast motor launches.

Back at the mole the *Vindictive* continued to draw fire. The recall was sounded, and the shore parties withdrew to their battered ships, carrying their wounded with them. Twenty-five minutes later *Vindictive* and *Iris II* withdrew and made for open water. As they left the scene *Iris II* came under direct fire from the German gun batteries and was riddled with shells, mortally wounding her commanding officer. On fire and with half of her bridge blown away she eventually steamed out of range.

The attack on Zeebrugge proved only a partial success. Although the harbour and canal were blocked for several weeks the Germans soon dredged a channel around the sunken block-ships allowing their destroyers and submarines to pass by;

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9 David Stevens, *In all Respects Ready: Australia's Navy in World War One*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne (2014), p. 341.

10 Norbert McCrory, *Account of the Raid on Zeebrugge by Ships of the RN*, AWM 1DRL/0429.

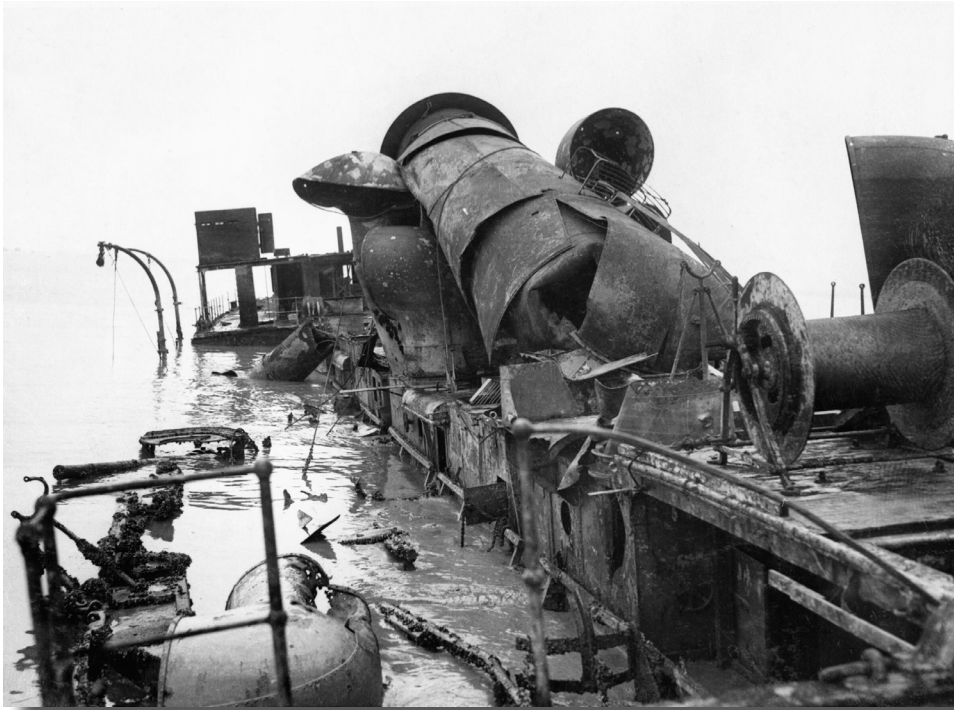


Figure 3: HMS Thetis after the raid showing the damage she received from German gunfire. Source: Imperial War Museum Q 2284.



Figure 4: The morning after the raid - blockships sunk at Zeebrugge. Source: Imperial War Museum Q 49164.



albeit with extreme difficulty and only at high tide. During the attack 214 British personnel were killed, 383 wounded and 16 taken prisoner.<sup>11</sup> The Australians were extremely lucky, with all emerging unscathed despite being in the thick of the action. Australia was also the only nation to provide its own personnel for the action; while several New Zealanders, Canadians and South Africans served, and were decorated for gallantry or killed at Zeebrugge they did so as members of the Royal Navy and not their own national forces. A number of Australians serving in the Royal Navy were also involved such as the previously mentioned John Howell-Price.

The exceptional bravery shown by those who took part in the raid was recognised through the award of 11 Victoria Crosses (VC), 31 Distinguished Service Orders (DSO), 40 Distinguished Service Crosses (DSC), 16 Conspicuous Gallantry Medals (CGM), 143 Distinguished Service Medals (DSM) and 283 Mentions in Despatches (MID).<sup>12</sup> The Belgian Government also later made a number of awards for bravery. Of the eleven Australians who took part in the raid on Zeebrugge seven were decorated for bravery and their citations are detailed in their biographies listed at the end of this article.

The Zeebrugge raid was a high risk-high return action and the number of awards indicates it was on par with other group actions such as Rorkes Drift (Anglo-Zulu War) 22-23 January 1879 where 11 VC's were awarded, the landing of the 1st Lancashire Battalion at 'W' Beach, Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 with six VC's awarded 'before breakfast' and the Battle of Lone Pine, Gallipoli (6-10 August 1915) where seven Victoria Crosses were won. While the Zeebrugge raid failed to completely obtain its objective it had shown that the amphibious raid was still a viable action (Fig. 5).

On 28 March 1942 the Royal Navy conducted a similar high risk-high return action at St Nazaire, in occupied France, when small craft landed commandos at the port and also escorted the explosives packed destroyer HMS *Campbelltown* to the Normandie Dry Dock. *Campbelltown* rammed the dock caisson and when later detonated destroyed the dry dock, thus preventing its future use by larger German warships. Six hundred and eleven British and Commonwealth sailors (including at least two Australians) and soldiers took part in the St Nazaire raid of which 169 were killed and 215 taken prisoner; five Victoria Crosses were won.

But why was the St Nazaire raid important? The answer is that by destroying the dry-dock the larger German warships would, on their return from forays in the Atlantic hunting Allied merchant ships, be forced to sail through the English Channel to reach suitable dock facilities in Germany. This would bring them within range of Allied aircraft and ships which could then attempt to sink these ships and reduce Allied shipping losses, thus enabling the troops and the vital cargoes of

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11 Kendall, *The Zeebrugge Raid 1918*, p. 164.

12 Kendall, *The Zeebrugge Raid 1918*, p. 173.

13 Lionel Wigmore, *They Dared Mightily*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra (1986), p. 30-131.

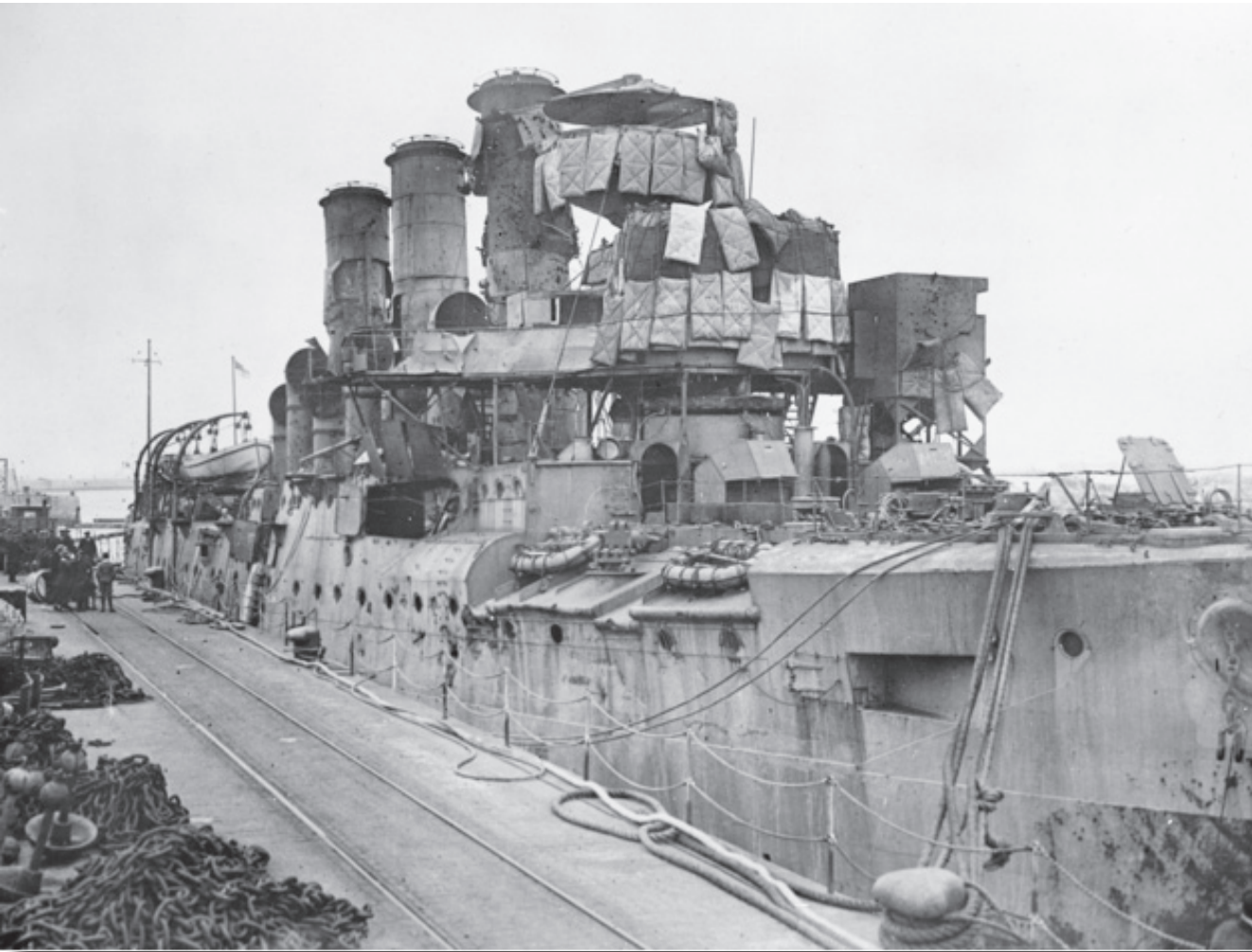


Figure 5: HMS Vindictive alongside in England after the Zeebrugge Raid. Source: AWM H12203.

food, fuel, ammunition and weapons of war to reach Britain and it was this which ultimately won the war in Europe in 1945.

In 1918 stopping the German U-Boats was the vital aspect of the Allied war effort and by November 1918 it was Imperial Germany that was starved into submission by an effective Allied blockade. This, along with the land campaign, created revolution in Germany and ultimately the end of four long years of war.

The following RAN personnel served at Zeebrugge:

### **Artificer Engineer William Henry Vaughan EDGAR, RAN**

Awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for bravery at Zeebrugge (*London Gazette*, 23 July 1918), Edgar's citation read:

In recognition of distinguished services during the operations against Zeebrugge and Ostend on the night of 22-23 April 1918. It was due to this officer that HMS *Iris* kept going during the action under very heavy fire and, though holed several times, succeeded in returning to base under her own steam. He did valuable work in the engine room and boiler room throughout the operation for a period of 17 hours without rest. He showed great bravery when the ship was under very heavy fire, by coming onto the upper deck and with the help of an engine room artificer, turned on the smoke apparatus.<sup>14</sup>

Born in Dunedin, New Zealand on 20 April 1884, his family migrated to Australia when he was an infant. He joined the Australasian Naval Forces (ANF) as an Engine Room Artificer 4th Class (Service Number 693) on 10 July 1906. The ANF was part of the Royal Navy consisting of Australian and New Zealand born ratings to augment the Royal Navy personnel serving on the Australia Station. Edgar transferred to the RAN in January 1913, as a Chief Engine Room Artificer, and was part of the commissioning crew of HMAS *Australia*. He was promoted Engineer Lieutenant on 23 April 1918 and Engineer Lieutenant Commander on 23 April 1926.

In 1928 he was serving as the Engineer Officer in the Destroyer HMAS *Anzac*. His wife was quite ill at this time and Edgar spent all his pay on medical bills. While awaiting money to be transferred from his wife's bank account in Victoria, he borrowed money from *Anzac*'s wardroom funds to pay for his wife's medical treatment. When this was discovered, even though the money had been repaid, he was court-martialled and found guilty of 'conduct unbecoming to the character of an officer and the prejudice of good order and naval discipline'.<sup>15</sup> On 2 November 1928 Edgar was dismissed from his ship, lost two years seniority in rank and placed on the RAN Retired List; the latter noting his age off 44 was not unexpected as the normal retiring age for officers of his rank was 42.<sup>16</sup>

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14 James Atkinson, *By Skill and Valour: Honours and Awards to the Royal Australian Navy for the First and Second World Wars*, Spink & Son, Sydney (1986), p. 13-14.

15 William Henry Vaughan Edgar HMAS *Anzac* (RAN), Court Martial 1 November 1928, NAA A471/441621.

16 RAN Officer's Service records, NAA A6769/5404952.



Figure 6: Medal group for Artificer Engineer William Edgar, DSC, RAN. Source: AWM REL22384.

William Henry Vaughan Edgar died at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital on 11 December 1962 from colon cancer and was cremated at Fawkner Crematorium.<sup>17</sup> His medals are now on display at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT (Fig. 6).

### **Leading Seaman George John BUSH (7018 / RN 225750)**

Awarded a Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) for bravery at Zeebrugge (*London Gazette*, 23 July 1918) and took part in the Victoria Cross ballot. The citation for his DSM reads: 'For services as a member of A Company Seaman Storming Party, HMS *Vindictive*, during the operations against Zeebrugge on the night of 22nd and 23rd April 1918'. Leading Seaman Bush was also described in another report as 'Did act most gallantly all through and was most conspicuous, cheery and was an example to all. Led all the rushes along the parapet and is most strongly recommended (for an award)'.

Born in Islington, London on 19 October 1887 he joined the Royal Navy in the early 1900s. He was loaned to the RAN on 14 October 1912 and served in the light cruiser HMAS *Melbourne* until transferring to HMAS *Australia* on 13

<sup>17</sup> RAN service records, NAA A6770/544952; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/8316075.



November 1915. Bush was demobilised in London on 20 April 1919. He became a tram conductor and married 24-year old Florrie Whiteley at St Luke's, Weaste, Manchester on 19 June 1920 and in 1921 they were living in Seedley Salford in Manchester.<sup>18</sup> No more is known of his life after 1921 or the location of his medals.

### **Leading Seaman Dalmorton Joseph Owendale RUDD (3389)**

Awarded a Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) for bravery at Zeebrugge (*London Gazette*, 23 July 1918) and took part in the Victoria Cross ballot (Fig. 7). The citation for his DSM reads 'For services as a member of A Company Seaman Storming Party, HMS *Vindictive*, during the operations against Zeebrugge on the night of 22nd and 23rd April 1918'. Rudd was also noted as 'going onto the mole and killing several of the enemy'.



Figure 7: Leading Seaman Dalmorton Rudd after receiving his Distinguished Service Medal.

Source: Sea Power Centre - Australia.

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18 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4404267; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4404267.

Born at Campsie, Sydney, New South Wales on 14 June 1896 he joined the RAN on 30 October 1913. He was posted to Australia on 11 June 1914 and following the raid returned to Australia and served in her for the remainder of the war. When the battle-cruiser returned to Australia, in late May 1919, her first port was Fremantle. On 1 June 1919, Rudd was involved in a mutiny on board when he and four other ratings, including his younger brother Leonard Rudd, convinced the stokers to abandon the boiler room in a vain attempt to keep the ship in port where the crew had been shown exceptional hospitality. Rudd and the others were court martialled on 19 June 1919 and found guilty. Dalmorton Rudd was dismissed from the RAN and sentenced to 18 months hard labour at Goulburn Gaol.<sup>19</sup> Contrary to popular belief his DSM was not stripped from him as he is shown wearing it on release from prison.

Following his release from Goulburn Gaol in late December 1919 he married Irene Weston in November 1920, and they later had three children. Rudd eventually became estranged from his wife and divorced. During World War II he worked at a stevedore on the docks in Sydney and married Mary Hanley in 1945. Following retirement, he and Mary lived at the small seaside village of Patonga on the NSW Central Coast where Rudd was a keen fisherman. He died while fishing in Broken Bay on 7 February 1969 when he suffered a stroke and his fishing boat ran aground on Lion Island and sank. Dalmorton Rudd was buried at Point Clare Cemetery, NSW and it is believed his DSM was buried with him.<sup>20</sup>

### **Leading Stoker William John BOURKE (2237)**

Born in Perth, Western Australia on 7 December 1891 William Bourke joined the RAN on 27 September 1912. He served in HMAS *Melbourne* from 10 April 1914 until transferring to HMAS *Australia* on 23 July 1917. Bourke was 'Discharged Engagement Expired' on 4 April 1919 and returned to Perth, Western Australia, where he was employed by the Western Australian Government Railways as a train shunter and later as a train guard. William John Bourke died in Leederville, WA on 14 March 1955 and was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery, WA.<sup>21</sup> The location of his medals is not known.

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19 Tom Frame and Kevin Baker, *Mutiny: Naval Insurrections in Australia and New Zealand*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney (2000), p. 103-109; Dalmorton Court Martial, 20 June 1919, NAA A471/697339.

20 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4505771; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4505771.

21 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4403446; War Gratuity records, NAA CP979/2/4403446.

### **Leading Stoker Reginald HOPKINS (3135)**

Born in Wyong, New South Wales on 5 October 1893 he joined the RAN 31 May 1913 and was posted to HMAS *Australia* on 20 November 1913. Following the raid he returned to HMAS *Australia* in late 1918 and was 'Discharged Engagement Expired' on 31 May 1920. He married Ada Constance Stanley in Victoria in 1919 and was residing in South Yarra at the time of his discharge but nothing more is known of his later life.<sup>22</sup> The location of his medals is not known.

### **Leading Stoker Godfrey James LOCKARD (3123)**

Born in Sydney, New South Wales on 25 February 1893 he joined the RAN on 10 June 1913. He was posted to Australia on 20 November 1913 and served in her until returning to Australia for leave in mid-1918. He then served in the cruiser HMAS *Psyche* until re-joining *Australia* in September 1919. He was 'Discharged Engagement Expired' on 16 June 1920 and moved to Tasmania; where he had grown up with an aunt following the death of his mother in 1900. He married and had three sons Terrance, Brian and Mervyn.

Lockard joined the RAN Reserve on 29 March 1941 as a Stoker and served ashore in Tasmania and locally based ships. His son Terrance Godfrey Lockard, born in Hobart on 16 March 1922, joined the RAN on 8 May 1939 and served in the Mediterranean as a Signaller in HMAS *Sydney* and was present when she sank the Italian light cruiser Bartolomeo Colleoni on 19 July 1940. Terrance Lockard was killed in action when *Sydney* was sunk on 19 November 1941 in the action with the German raider *Kormoran*.<sup>23</sup>

Godfrey Lockard died on 15 October 1949, in Hobart, and was buried at Cornelian Bay Cemetery, Hobart, Tasmania.<sup>24</sup> The location of his medals is not known.

### **Leading Stoker James STRONG (2536)**

Born on 10 November 1893 at Gallymont, New South Wales (a now abandoned mining town near Carcoar, NSW) and joined the RAN on 15 January 1913. He was posted to HMAS *Australia* on 5 August 1914 and served in her throughout the war. James married Elizabeth Carpenter, at Edmonton in the United Kingdom, and

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22 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4544782; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4544782.

23 Lockard family history.

24 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4518577; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4518577.



they later had three children, Everlyn, Florence and James. He was demobilised on 20 August 1919 and became a tram driver in Sydney.

James Strong died on 8 June 1972 at Annandale (Sydney), from cardiac failure, and was cremated at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium in Sydney.<sup>25</sup> The location of his medals is not known.

### **Able Seaman Henry John GILLARD (8517 / RN 235741)**

Awarded a Mention in Dispatches (*London Gazette*, 23 July 1918) and a Belgian Croix de Guerre (*London Gazette*, 2 September 1921) for bravery at Zeebrugge. The citation for his mention in dispatches reads: 'For services as a member of A Company Seaman Storming Party, HMS *Vindictive*, during the operations against Zeebrugge on the night of 22nd and 23rd April 1918'. There was no citation for the award of the Belgian Croix de Guerre other than 'in recognition of their services during the war'.

Born in New Brighton, Cheshire, England on 29 January 1890 he joined the Royal Navy in the early 1900s as a Boy Seaman. He served in the armoured cruiser HMS *Warrior* at the Battle of Jutland during 31 May/1 June 1916. HMS *Warrior* was badly damaged in this action and later sank while under tow to England. Over 700 of her ships company survived the sinking and on 28 November 1917 Gillard was loaned to the RAN to serve in Australia. He reverted to Royal Navy service on 13 January 1921; despite a request to extend his loan service in the RAN by another two years.

Gillard served for 22 years in the Royal Navy and was recalled for service in 1939, as an Able Seaman, following the outbreak of World War II. Tragically he was killed during an air raid on Plymouth, on 21 April 1941, while serving in the stoker's training ship HMS *Drake*. He was buried at Plymouth (Weston Mill) Cemetery.<sup>26</sup> The location of his medals is not known.

### **Able Seaman Leopold Thomas NEWLAND (1937)**

Awarded a Mention in Dispatches for bravery at Zeebrugge (*London Gazette*, 23 July 1918) and also took part in the Victoria Cross ballot. The citation for his mention in dispatches reads 'For services as a member of A Company Seaman Storming Party, HMS *Vindictive*, during the operations against Zeebrugge on the night of 22nd and

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25 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4524325; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/45424325.

26 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4423766; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4423766.

23rd April 1918'.

Born in Ballarat, Victoria on 16 August 1889 he joined the RAN on 16 July 1912. He was posted to Australia on 22 June 1913 and after the raid returned to Australia in mid-1918 and was posted to HMAS *Cerberus*. Newland was Discharged Engagement Expired on 19 November 1919 and returned to Ballarat where he was employed in the train yards making and maintaining the canvas canopies used on train carriages; using sailmaker skills he had learned in the RAN. Leopold Newland died from the effects of a stroke in Footscray, Victoria on 14 September 1973 and was cremated at Fawkner Crematorium.<sup>27</sup>

In 2018 his grandchildren Ray Newland and Rosemary Gay attended the Zeebrugge 100th Anniversary ceremony in Belgium. Newland's medals are held by his family.

### **Able Seaman George Edward STAPLES (2858)**

Awarded a Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) for bravery at Zeebrugge (*London Gazette*, 23 July 1918) and also took part in the Victoria Cross ballot. The citation for his DSM reads: 'For services as a member of A Company Seaman Storming Party, HMS *Vindictive*, during the operations against Zeebrugge on the night of 22nd and 23rd April 1918'. Additionally, Staples was mentioned in another report as 'helping the wounded back on board *Vindictive* and then manning one of the ships guns during the departure from the port'.

He was born in Parkside, South Australia on 20 April 1896 and joined the RAN on 18 April 1913. He served in the light cruiser HMAS *Encounter* before joining HMAS *Australia* on 20 November 1913. Staples was posted back to Australia in late 1918 and demobilised from the RAN, at HMAS *Cerberus*, on 4 April 1919. He returned to Adelaide and resided with his parents in Semaphore and found work as a labourer at the Poole and Steele Shipyard at Osborne. On 6 August his left hand was crushed in a pile driving accident and died from tetanus at Adelaide Hospital on 13 August 1920. George Staples was buried in Cheltenham Cemetery, Adelaide.<sup>28</sup> The location of his medals is not known.

### **Stoker Norbert Joseph McCrory (1183)**

Awarded a Mention in Dispatches (*London Gazette*, 23 July 1918) and a Belgian Croix de Guerre (*London Gazette*, 2 September 1921) for bravery at Zeebrugge.

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27 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4552556; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4552556.

28 RAN service records, NAA A6770/4537022; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4537022.

The citation for his mention in dispatches reads: 'For service as a member of HMS *Thetis* during the operations against Zeebrugge on the night of 22nd and 23rd April 1918'. There was no citation for the award of the Belgian Croix de Guerre other than 'in recognition of their services during the war'.

Born in Paddington, Sydney, NSW on 24 January 1892 he joined the Commonwealth Navy Forces (CNF) on 29 May 1911 as an Officer's Steward 2nd Class, serving in the elderly gunboat HMAS *Protector*. On 10 July 1911 the CNF became the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and McCrory purchased his discharge from the RAN on 8 January 1912. When war broke out he was a railway gantry operator at Darling Islands (now Darling Harbour). He enlisted in the RAN Bridging Train on 9 July 1915 as an Able Seaman Driver and saw active service at Suvla Bay (Gallipoli Peninsula) in late 1915 and also in the Sinai during 1916-17. When the Bridging Train was disbanded in late March 1917, he transferred to the AIF and served as a Bombardier in the 6th Field Artillery Brigade in England and France. On 13 September 1917 he transferred to the RAN with the rank of Stoker and joined Australia on 18 September 1917.

McCrory remained in the RAN until 'Discharged Engagement Expired', as a Leading Stoker on 12 September 1922. In 1927 McCrory wrote an account of the raid on Zeebrugge and donated this to the Australian War Memorial (Item 1DRL/0429). McCrory never married and was employed as a bank caretaker after leaving the RAN. He died in Randwick on 23 December 1944 from chronic myocarditis and arteria sclerosis and was buried in the Roman Catholic section at Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney, NSW.<sup>29</sup> The location of his medals is not known.

### **Stoker John Walter Clare CARTER (4627)**

Born in Fitzroy, Victoria on 26 April 1895 he joined the RAN on 4 February 1915. He served in Australia from June 1916 and is believed to be one of the excess men taken off the blockship *Thetis* before commencement of the Zeebrugge attack. Carter deserted from the RAN on 12 November 1918, the day after the Armistice, in the United Kingdom. Nothing more was heard of him until 1941 when, living in Mentone, Victoria, applied for his World War I war gratuity. Initially he was deemed ineligible due to his desertion, but the Department of Navy eventually paid him £50.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> RAN service records, NAA A6770/4500017; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4500017.

<sup>30</sup> RAN service records, NAA A6770/4406501; War Gratuity records, NAA CP 979/2/4406501.

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The author is also appreciative of information supplied by the Rudd and Newland families.

## The Outlaws Return to East Timor: The Old & Bold Motorcycle Tour from 19 May to 3 June 2019

**Jim Truscott**

Everywhere we rode we were greeted by cries of *Malae! Malae!* Foreigner! Foreigner! by groups of young children. There have been many Portuguese, Indonesian, Chinese and Australian foreigners in East Timor over the last 400 years, but apart from nine days between 28 November and 7 December 1975, it is only in the last 18 years that the population has experienced true independence from colonisers, occupiers and invaders. Yes, even Australia invaded Portuguese Timor, a neutral country, when the 2/2nd Independent Company landed in Dili on 19 December 1941. These days we call it pre-emptive defence.

Following the decimation of 60,000 Timorese people by the Japanese Army in WWII and the annihilation of 200,000 Timorese people by the Indonesian Army in the 24-year East Timorese Independence War, now 40% of the population are under 14 years of age and 60% of the population are under 24. It is a young country filled with young people, and foreigners are an entertaining concept for them.



Figure 1: The Old & Bold outside Australia House at Balibo: Barry Hughes, Marc Preston, Keith Hughes, Dick Pelling, Bruce Parker and Jim Truscott. All photographs by author.



Our motorcycle tour had its genesis in December 2018 when I telephoned Bruce Parker to see if he wanted to walk the Commando Track from Dili in the north to Betano Bay in the south. It was approaching 20 years since we had established the Timor Roofing & Training factory in Baucau to aid the demobilisation of the Falintil guerrillas in late 1999 and the factory had just been handed over to the Trade Training Wing of the Don Bosco College for the enduring benefit of the people of East Timor. I wanted to walk across the island in the footsteps of the 2/2nd Independent Company, the predecessors of our old unit that had spent a longer period in actual contact with the enemy than any other unit of the Australian Army.

However, Bruce Parker reluctantly advised that his marching days were over and he cunningly suggested that with motor bikes we could cover more ground. I had not ridden a motorbike for 38 years and without thinking any further I said yes. It was to be a crash and bash course for me as our band of brothers came together, because with the exception of me, they were all bikers and regularly rode Harleys to coffee shops in Melbourne!

And so it was, that six 'old and bold' former Commandos from Melbourne, myself and my Patrol Medic qualified wife from Perth got together as the Outlaws Motorcycle Gang. Our average age was 71½ years old and our average length of service was 18 years in Special Forces. On 13 March 1942 the Japanese had declared the Commandos to be outlaws and they had warned that if they did not surrender, they would not be given prisoner of war privileges, and if captured they would be executed. The men of the 2/2nd Independent Company, who were not officially known as Commandos until 1943, simply replied 'surrender be fucked!'

The modern day 2 Commando Company in Melbourne has an identical approach to soldiering. When new operators have qualified to wear their green berets and are awarded them in a public ceremony, it is tradition that the older members of the company yell out 'ah fuck him' to each and every one. It can leave parents and friends a little bewildered when they do not have an appreciation of its origins.

Likewise, when Ali Alatas, the former Foreign Minister in Indonesia, launched his book *The Pebble in the Shoe: The Diplomatic Struggle for East Timor* in 2006, he explained that the title had come in response to questioning from a journalist about the international stigma over East Timor, to which he replied that it was only as bothersome as a pebble in a shoe. But he went on to say that in retrospect it had become a veritable boulder, dragging down Indonesia's reputation to one of its lowest points.

And so, it was that that the people of East Timor gained their freedom after a colossal struggle against the 24-year Indonesian occupation. I, in turn, became the first Australian soldier from the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) to step out of the front door of a RAAF C-130 onto the tarmac at Dili airport

soon after dawn on 20 September 1999 and to have my photograph taken by an international journalist in a blinding flash of light. It was a bizarre arrival as I simply commandeered an Indonesian Army truck and ordered the Indonesian Army driver to drive me into the almost totally deserted city which was burning like Dante's Inferno.



Figure 2: Drawing by Captain Callinan and Lieutenant Turton after their reconnaissance on 24 March 1942. From 2/2nd Independent Company war diary. Source: Ed Willis.

Within a few days I had walked into a bamboo hut below the Mundo Perdido (Lost World) massif in the mountainous spine of the island to meet a man who had been fighting a guerrilla war for 24 years of his life. At the very moment that I first met Taur Matan Ruak at his Uaimori cantonment, I saw a 2 Commando Company plaque nailed to the centre pole of an otherwise bare bones hut. As I had commanded the company in 1990 and 1991 it immediately provided us with a common bond, and it set the tone for the months that followed. The guerrilla Commander of Falintil and I were to spend the next three months working closely together.

Almost 20 years later I stepped onto the tarmac again on Sunday 19 May 2019. Australia has historically landed troops in foreign countries on Sundays. This time I was greeted by Dave and Shirley Carlos, Australian guides from Timor Adventures, an East Timorese travel company with whom our group of old and bold commandos were about to ride their Indonesian 150cc Honda motorbikes around the country. Last time I had flown just about everywhere in a Blackhawk helicopter and this tour was the opportunity to sniff the ground and gain an understanding of the complexity of conducting Special Operations and Special Intelligence activities



Figure 3: The 17th anniversary of the Restoration of Independence Day Parade on 20 May 2019.

in denied areas.

We arrived at the current airport built after WWII to the west of the Comoro River. It had been operated by the Indonesian Army as the commercial airport from 1975 onwards when they restricted Baucau to military aircraft. The original muddy north to south airport that had been defended by the 2/2nd Independent Company on 19-20 February 1942 is now half built over by the Presidential Palace. It was interesting to learn that the Chinese had constructed the palace in 2009. The less muddy east to west cross runway that had been constructed by the Japanese Army in 1942 is astride the Australian Embassy on the south side of the road and now totally built over.

On our very first day in Dili we were delighted to view the parade to mark the 17th anniversary of the Restoration of Independence Day and presentation of medals, and to attend the function at the Presidential Palace. The Portuguese style of marching brought back vivid memories of when Tim McOwan and I were called to the dais by Xanana Gusmao at the Falintil Victory Parade at Remixio just after the last Indonesian soldier had left East Timor in late October 1999. There are now only about 100 surviving original Falintil guerrillas; all old men and scattered across East Timor with only a few other local people having direct linkages to WWII.

That night we shared an equally memorable dinner with Taur Matan Ruak, who is now the Prime Minister of his country and his wife Isabel in their home in the hills overlooking Dili. It was with pleasure that we presented him with a Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife from his Australian Commando friends. I asked him if he preferred to be a soldier or a politician. He said politician, but I could tell

that he also hankered to be free of the shackles of his long government service as a guerrilla, Chief of the Defence Force, President and now Prime Minister facing the challenges of getting his country out of financial recession. He saw the need for private investment and business to generate prosperity. We are the same age and it was pleasurable to talk about his vision for his country and to also meet his children. I encouraged him to telephone and congratulate Scott Morrison which he



Figure 4: Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak and his wife Isabel, on the occasion of their 18th wedding anniversary on 20 May 2019 along with Colette and Jim Truscott.



Figure 5: The Commando memorial at the WWII observation post at Dare overlooking Dili. Barry Hughes, Jim Truscott, Dick Pelling and Keith Hughes.

subsequently did as a way of further bonding our two countries.

It was very pleasing for Bruce Parker and myself to once again meet Eduardo Belo Soares at the dinner. His *clandestino* code names were Camaleao Lahafodak and Lahakfodak Gattot. Camaleao is the Portuguese name for the lizard that changes its colours and Lahakfodak means 'not surprised'. Gatot is the original name in Indonesian and Eduardo's is Gattot as he escaped from Colonel Gatot Purwanto! Now Eduardo is a successful businessman in East Timor; an absolute necessity to get a vibrant and stable economy going. Our very close relationship dated back to late 1999 when Eduardo called Bruce Parker in Melbourne to report on militia who were about to attack an Australian Army patrol at Same with this action being successfully thwarted.

Taur Matan Ruak now has to read with glasses, having once been hit on the side of his head by an Indonesian rocket propelled grenade. The Indonesian Army



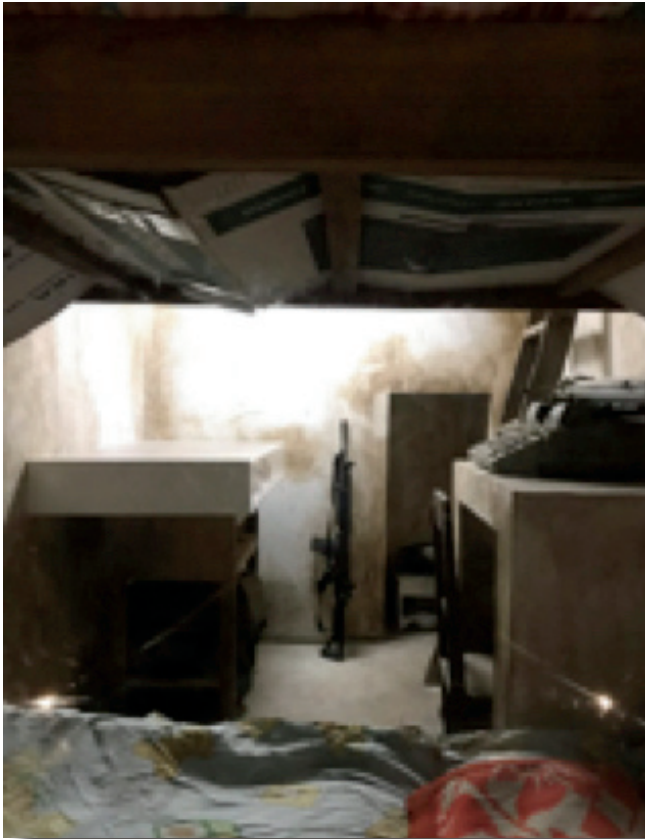


Figure 6: Reproduction of the underground guerrilla shelter in the Timorese Resistance Archive & Museum in Mirtuto, Ermera where Konis Santa lived.



Figure 8: Reproduction of the torture of a member of the Resistance in the real dark cells used by the Indonesian Army. Chega, meaning 'stop' or 'no more' in Portuguese, is now housed in the former Portuguese gaol. It contains the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) documents which record the multiple human rights abuses from 1974 to 1999.



Figure 7: Jim Truscott and Hugo Fernandes, the Executive Director of the Chega Exhibition discuss the Battlefield Guide to East Timor project.



could not believe that he had survived the blast and they spoke of him as a ghost. Taur Matan Ruak meaning 'two sharp eyes' is his guerrilla code name as very few people know him by his real birth name of José Maria Vasconcelos. Taur Matan Ruak was a veritable combat commander. I recall from 1999 when I had asked him to provide us with a United Nations radio so that we could insert Lafu, a 15-year-old boy guerrilla back into the Oecussi enclave to report on the militia. He said to me, if he dies, he dies a hero for his country.

In early October 1999 we flew Major General Peter Cosgrove to meet Taur Matan Ruak at Uaimori. It was a very formal occasion and Taur Matan Ruak put him to the test. He asked in Portuguese, 'I have sat with 19 Generals like you and they all lie, rob and kill. Why should I believe you?' To his credit Cosgrove asked to be taken on face value for the man he was. He presented Taur Matan Ruak with a pen with which to sign the commission of the first officer in the new East Timor Defence Force and most importantly he allowed Falintil to keep their weapons if they stayed in their four cantonments across the country.

As we were walking back to the Blackhawk helicopters and wading a small stream, I vividly remember seeing Taur Matan Ruak jump in excitement on the back of Lieutenant Colonel Tim McOwan, the SAS commander. General Cosgrove did not see this gymnastic event but his approval for Falintil to keep their weapons was an act of exquisite victory in guerrilla warfare. It was laurels to the victor, highly symbolic of Falintil having won their independence and I was privileged to witness it.

Before we got on our motorcycles, we had two more eventful days visiting significant sites around Dili. Sadly, the Commando memorial at the WWII observation post at Dare overlooking Dili is now in disarray and something must be urgently done.

It was most informative to meet the director and to tour the well-presented Timor Resistance Archive & Museum containing many artefacts from the Independence War including the impressive Order of the Guerrilla medal display. It is on par with the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

It was equally informative to meet the Executive Director of the Chega Exhibition housed in the former Portuguese gaol which was used as dark cells by the Indonesian Army to torture and kill East Timorese people. It was a chilling tour. The gaol now also contains their all-important national archives and Chega are charged with mapping historical sites and recording their war, village, family and individual history.

I had longed to see the separate underground torture chamber used by Lieutenant Colonel Yayat Sudrajat (aka 'bloody bastard') in another part of Dili but the Indonesian Embassy has covered it over and turned it into a cultural centre as if to bury their war crimes from view.<sup>1</sup>

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1 See <https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/yayat-sudrajat/>



Figure 9: Falur Rate Laek, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force (F-FDTL), Jim Truscott and a Portuguese interpreter discuss black flights from Australia by old Commandos!



Figure 10: Max Stahl enthraling Bruce Parker and Barry Hughes.

It was very pleasing to once again meet Falur Rate Laek, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force who had been a Falintil Regional Commander with the code name of the ‘dove with no grave’. We were later to stay in his private lodge below Ossu on the south coast where a huge effort has been made by veterans to build memorial tracks.

It was also pleasing to visit Max Stahl’s film studio and view some of the footage that this brave journalist has captured over a long period of time including the two massacres at the Santa Cruz cemetery on 12 November 1991.

On our first day on the road we initially rode east along the northern coast on variable roads and tracks. Most of the road was woeful but some intermittent Chinese black tops were brilliant at 70 km/hour. We stopped at the Garden of Heroes at Metinaro where many Falintil fighters are buried and we paused at several other places where Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD) operatives had parachuted in, landed on beaches and worked with the local people as partisans in

WWII from 1943 to 1945. Most of the operatives were either captured or killed in action due to headquarters incompetence. I shake my head. It was a long first day's bike ride as we got used to the Hondas which mostly bounced well on incredibly pot-holed roads, much worse than they were in WWII.

The Indonesian Government actually built a lot of roads and bridges during their 24 years of occupation. This gave ground mobility to their military to kill the Falintil guerrillas and it also enabled their military to extract commercial products, like coffee, to fund their fiefdom. Many steel bridges also have plaques displaying that they were donated by Australian aid. But over the last 20 years the East Timorese Government has had competing priorities for their meagre budgets coming from declining oil and gas royalties in the Timor Sea and this will soon stop. Hence the roads and bridges have fallen into chronic disrepair and the people just seem to accept their fate when it comes to horrendous road travel.



Figure 11: A day in the life of a motorcyclist in East Timor. Don't look at the oncoming truck. Simply accelerate through the narrow gap and don't even think of looking at the hole!



Figure 13: The motor cross track to Bagaia. Take the Hudson River option every time!



Figure 12: Bruce Parker and Father Lochtelli, master clandestino, at Dom Bosco College at Fatu Maca.

The long first day's ride was to set a pattern for each of the enduro days to follow. Jonias Exposto, our lead rider, was a former boy guerrilla who had served as an *estafeta* or courier and he was now a petroleum engineer. His code name had been Lulus meaning 'sacred', or Majic. His father's code name was Odamatan Usluli Loke-Taka, meaning 'the door' or 'open and close the door'. As the secretary for the Falintil commander in Region 3, he had been responsible for recruiting guerrillas from a secret political headquarters location at Aileu that we were to later visit along with Jonias' family who still live close-by.

In the afternoon we toured the Don Bosco training college at Fatu Maca just south of Baucau to dine on fresh deer meat, fresh milk, fresh bread, all made at the technical school as well as cold Bintangs. It was pleasurable to meet the Italian Father Eligio Lochtelli who had run rings around the Indonesian Army as a *clandestino*. I did not ask him if he had been given the Order of the Guerrilla, but he was certainly deserving of such recognition; known to God.



It was interesting talking to Brother Andriano about the massacre of the religious people on 25 September 1999 as I did not know that Falintil had killed some militia in reprisal. His older brother had been in Falintil and he was killed in the early 1980s. His father was also a Falintil commander. While the country is 90% Catholic, he said that 'spirits' are still used to identify names from the recovered bones of Falintil fighters. We also passed an Indonesian Army cemetery just outside Bacau and apparently there are similar cemeteries in every one of the 13 districts of East Timor. The Indonesian Government does not want to move the 3,804 bodies back home as they are still embarrassed by the large body count. That night we stayed in the former Portuguese Pousada (aka luxury) in Baucau with white table clothes for dinner. Yahoo!

Before leaving Baucau on our second day on the road we visited the Timor Roofing factory. Built through the gigantic efforts of Rotary in Melbourne over 20 years in the face of many naysayers, it is now the most successful NGO project in East Timor. It has had a huge impact on the rebuilding of infrastructure, especially compared with lower quality Chinese roofing iron. It has enabled the mental and physical transition of the population to the use of safely stored water in tanks and of mini grain silos for no loss of produce.

Then it was an incredible ride, standing mostly on the foot rests, on a veritable muddy motor cross track for several hours up to the old Portuguese Fort at Baguia on the eastern side of Matebean, the (Mountain of the Dead) massif in the middle of the island. There I made arrangements with a former Falintil guide for a predawn start the next day.

At O dark hundred hours on our third day we ascended steeply in continuous warm rain at guerrilla speed for several hours to the old Falintil headquarters, the site of encirclement and annihilation operations by the Indonesian Army in 1978. But cloud negated going any further to the summit. Several tens of thousands of East Timorese people perished here at the hands of the Indonesian Army. Defeated by Commando weather, I was nonetheless satisfied in being able to bear witness to the many graves of fallen Falintil fighters en route and to have a narcotic breakfast coffee with Aquelino De Oliveira, the village head of Uai Boro, who was also a former Falintil fighter.

My guide, Manuel Menezes, and I descended via what felt like a black ski route with my nonchalant companion clad only in thongs and machete; shades of Kokoda! Somehow or another we discussed route and weather options in my now dated and colloquial Indonesian language. Taur Matan Ruak's family village is near Baguia, but I was shattered from the gruelling descent and I could not endure any more motor cross that day. Our retreat by bike downhill from Baguia to the north coast was thwarted by heavy rain and so we gladly handed our bikes over to local riders so we could descend in our supporting troop carrier. Our driver, Edu Driker, was very safe at the helm. Interestingly, he is a dual East Timorese and Portuguese



citizen, as his father had served in the Portuguese Force from 1965 to 1970, the Portuguese Navy between 1970 and 1975 and then in Falintil. His code name was Siak meaning 'brutal, excited or aggressive'.

On our bouncy Day 4 drive back down to the north coast we passed a large and emotionally charged funeral procession for an old Falintil fighter and we got out of our jeep to pay our respects for this fallen soldier. Back on the motor bikes that afternoon we headed for the eastern tip of the island through very different terrain for my 63rd birthday and two spills. In the first one I had to put my motor bike down on its side when a truck pulled out in front of me, going uphill on a narrow and rutted dirt road. Luckily it was low speed. The second time I went arse over tit and did a forward parachute roll going downhill in fading light on a road full of rocks like marbles. I sustained a very bruised shoulder from the roll and I had to stay off my motor bike the next day. I wish I had taken a kidney belt as well.

The next day we motored across to the nearby Jaco Island by local fishing boat. After a refreshing salt water swim amongst tropical coral bommies, which did wonders for my bruised shoulder, we rode west back through Los Palos and on to the idyllic fishing port of Com. The SAS had raided the town on 27 September 1999 to prevent the forced deportation of hundreds of people and to detain the Militia Team Alpha following their execution of nine religious people at Vera-Kotxo and the feeding of their bodies to crocodiles in the Malailea River on 25 September 1999. The entire town of Com turned out that night with the young women putting on a professionally choreographed show of traditional and modern dancing. How



Figure 14: The idyllic Port of Com raided by the SAS on 27 September 1999 to capture Militia Team Alpha. Ugly Keith Hughes, Jim Truscott, Marc Preston (obscured), Barry Hughes and Dick Pelling's bike.



Figure 15: The dancing girls at the town of Com put on a show for the Old & Bold, and the rest of the town turned up to watch! Wouldn't you?

good is that!

On our sixth day on the road we rode south and uphill on our motor bikes to cross the mountains again between the massifs of Matebean and Mundo Perdido before descending past the town of Ossu on the south coast to a mountainous jungle camp used by SRD operatives in WWII and also by the Falintil guerrillas in the Independence War. It is still called *Compartimento Criado*! All of the Criados who supported the Australians could say ‘bloody bastard’ in English.

Once again, I made arrangements with Leopollo Augusto, a former *clandestino* to guide me to the top of the Foho Watulawa peak early the next morning. In the half-light, within a sweaty limestone strewn jungle, we passed a deep cave used as a guerrilla hideout, several defensive rock sangars and well-sited lookouts watching over the southern coast. At the peak was a very large golden bullet tip memorial to the Commando guerrilla actions and SRD partisan actions in WWII and the Independence War by Falintil. It was simply the best to share a meagre breakfast with my guide and talk about his involvement in the Independence War in my now improving Indonesian language.



Figures 17 & 18: The Golden Bullet Memorial was opened by the President and the Prime Minister in 2018 on an isolated peak known as Foho Watulawa about one hour's walk from Loihuno, a small village near Ossu. The Ossu/Baucau Area was known as the Naroman region meaning 'lit up' or 'bright' as it was always active and intense. It is a naturally well-protected area with steep sides and excellent views of the surrounding countryside. The Australian names of the memorial are SRD operatives and from H Detachment of the 2/2nd Independent Company; Alfred Allen, Frank Bennett, John Carey, John Cashman, James Clouett, Colin Doig, Jim Ellwood, J Grimson, Frank Holland, Alfred Jones, Eric Liversidge, Charles McKenzie, Harold Newton, Keith Richards, William Rowan-Robinson, Arthur Stevenson, George Timms and Albert Walton.

Our original plan was to ride west across the southern coast along a newly Chinese constructed oil and gas super highway to the town of Same. However, this was not possible due to two fallen bridges. So, we rode back north to Baucau and a long dusty ride back to and through peak hour traffic in Dili at which time dog eats dog and it is every biker for himself in the melee.

On our eighth day on the road we once again rode due south from Dili and uphill past the commando memorial at Dare and onto Alieu where we had concentrated about 1,500 Falintil guerrillas in November 1999. It was a great day's ride as we headed up into the cool clouds of the Ramelau mountain range at 1,800 metres, stopping briefly at the misty saddle at Fleica and then down on through the historically significant town of Maubisse for the 2/2nd Independent Company where many to and fro combat actions took place with the Japanese Army and their Timorese black columns.

On the steep descent on the relatively good road to Same we passed an old French AMX tank that had been used by the Indonesian Army. It is interesting that we saw few remnants of war on our tour apart from the many graves to fallen Falintil fighters and Indonesian soldiers in each district. It is the same at Gallipoli and the Western Front. That night we stayed in a hotel run by an Australian agriculturist just south of Same and we also inspected the Bofors gun lying in a garden which may have come from the scuttled HMAS *Voyager* or Sparrow Force in West Timor.



Figure 19: The Old & Bold on a French AMX tank, built in 1944 and used by the Indonesia Army, on the road just above the town of Same. It was knocked out by Raoul Isaac, brother of Leandro Isaac and some other Fretilin fighters in December 1975. He was killed shortly after. It is classic ambush country used by the Commandos and Falintil!





Figure 20: The Falintil memorial at Dare commemorating their six-hour raid on 10-11 June 1980 on the Indonesian Army depot in Becora, the radio station at Marabia and Army checkpoints at Fatunaba and Daren.

Motorcycling is good fun, but it takes all of your concentration to hang in there on steep winding roads. You whiz past the few signs and it does not allow much time to take in the vista. So I rode in the troop carrier on the return to Dili so I could take photographs of the Same Saddle where two Commando platoons had killed 50 Japanese enemy in rolling contacts over several days around 29 September 1942; the Pousada and other parts of Maubisse that had been bombed by the RAAF; the secret CNRT political headquarters in Aileu where civilian reinforcements were screened before being sent into the mountains to become guerrillas; and the Falintil memorial at Dare overlooking the raid that they had conducted on the radio station in Dili on 10-11 June 1980. The 2/2nd Independent Company had also raided the Japanese barracks in Dili on 15 May 1942 in an attempt to rescue two commandos and they killed some 20 to 30 Japanese troops. They had also unintentionally shot up the adjacent brothel which really upset the Japanese garrison troops!

Late on our ninth day we rode further west along the north coast past the new sea port being built by the Chinese at Tibar, just west of Dili, and onto an almost empty tourist resort at the coastal town of Liquica and a cautious swim in the ocean. The crocodiles, who are the people's ancestors in Timorese mythology, have been getting more numerous and noticeably bigger in recent years with some saying that they are swimming up from Australia.



Figure 21: The memorial to the eleven Australian infantry battalions that were headquartered in the fort at Balibo from 1999 to 2004. The F-FDTL now have a Forward Operating Base on the western border close by at Moelana.

It was a pleasant ride through the border town of Batugarde where my mobile phone piped welcome to Indonesia and then a short uphill piste to the old Portuguese Fort at Balibo which was built in 1750. It is now a hotel managed by the Balibo Trust. When Tim McOwan and I had landed here in a Blackhawk helicopter in September 1999 the town was completely deserted, and it was soon to become the battalion headquarters for eleven successive Australian infantry battalions over the next five years. The underground workings have been all but filled in with modern accommodation units built on top.

Eleven days and 1,200 kilometres later we were back in Dili, crashed and bashed, battered and bruised, but totally appreciative of the hardships of fighting an enemy in this ravished country. We paused momentarily at the new Comoro Bridge where the ration truck massacre of four Commandos had occurred in the hands of Japanese Marines and again at the southern end of the original north-south runway close by where 12 Commandos were brutally executed by Japanese Marines on 20/21 February 1942 for a minute's silence. Lest we forget.

Last but not least we managed to find the site of the old Dili power station from WWII which at one time had been used by the Kempetei to imprison four





Figure 22: The INTERFET Hotel! The hangar where Force Headquarters, Major General Cosgrove and 3 SAS Squadron slept on 20 September 1999, the day that INTERFET landed in Dili. This location is close by the original aircraft dispersal area on the southern end of the north-south airfield defended by the 2/2nd Independent Company. Dick Pelling, Bruce 'Never Better' Parker, Barry Hughes, Jim Truscott, Marc Preston and Keith Hughes.

Australian SRD operatives from operations RIMAU, LAGARTO and COBRA and of whom only Jim Ellwood at 97 years of age is still alive in Melbourne. Jack Hanson who is also 97 years old is the last surviving member of the 2/2nd Independent Company and he lives in Toogum, Hervey Bay. For those who are about to die, we salute you.

The last word goes to Bernard Callinan, the initial 2IC of the 2/2nd Independent Company in December 1941, who in 1953 wrote in his book, *Independent Company: The 2/2 and 2/4 Australian Independent Companies in Portuguese Timor, 1941-1943*, that Timor has today the same strategical importance to Australia, and it is vital that the island should not be occupied by an enemy power.

What we, the old and bold, now know is true, is that the wheel will turn and in some future time Australia will need to be able to re-apply this knowledge especially in the Special Forces realm. 'Surrender be fucked!'

### OLD AND BOLD MOTORCYCLE TOUR

23rd May - 2nd June 2019



## Reviews

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*D-Day New Guinea*

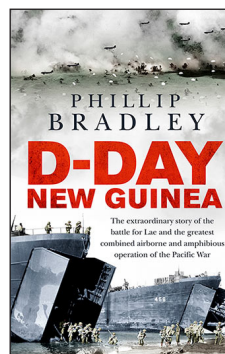
Phillip Bradley

A\$32.99

Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2019

Paperback, 322 pp

ISBN 9781760632588



The development of the successful combined operation, involving close cooperation between land, sea and air forces, was a crucial contribution by the Western Allies to the conduct of the Second World War. Phillip Bradley's *D-Day New Guinea* reminds us that one such pivotal operation took place not far from Australia's shores, with Australian personnel providing the bulk of the participants. Following the defeat of their offensive in Papua, the Japanese revised their plans by placing Lae and Salamaua at the centre of their defence of New Guinea. General MacArthur's headquarters therefore devised Operation Postern, using combined forces to capture Lae. Taking place in September 1943, well in advance of the much-vaunted Operation Overlord in France on 6 June 1944, Postern's methods for taking Lae proved to be influential on the more famous landing in Europe, as Bradley clearly demonstrates.

Rather than simply retracing ground already covered in David Dexter's splendid volume of the official histories, *The New Guinea Offensives*, Bradley's *D-Day New Guinea* devotes space to examining factors that contributed to the success of Operation Postern. Thus an early chapter describes the all-important fighting patrols and reconnaissance carried out by the Independent Companies and Papua-New Guinea units leading up to the assault. A fascinating chapter on 'MacArthur's navy' deals primarily with the structure and role of the US 2nd Engineer Special Brigade, whose Boat and Shore Regiments not only helped with the amphibious landings, but also maintained supply and protection of the beaches, often under trying circumstances. The chapter 'Airborne infantry' looks at the preparations for dropping the US 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment to secure Nadzab as an air base, and which included the formation of a troop of the 2/4th Field Regiment AIF as airborne gunners to support the drop.

Once the operation gets underway there is a lively narrative of the actual fighting and the conditions endured by both Australian and Japanese units battling it out for Lae. In fact, one of the strengths of *D-Day New Guinea* is the view it offers of the Japanese side of the campaign, including a harrowing account of the retreat through a hazardous and unforgiving landscape, as the garrison of Lae makes its way over scarcely accessible mountain tracks towards the north coast. As Bradley reveals, the 'precarious retreat' cost the Japanese force some 25% of its numbers without any Allied intervention, but he offers this as no excuse for allowing the garrison to break out in the first place and escape through a gap between the 7th

Division – operating overland from Nadzab – and the 9th Division – which landed on the beaches. He lays the responsibility for a lack of coordination between the various land forces – as well as an assumption that the Japanese would defend Lae to the death – at the feet of the I Corps commander, Lt Gen Edmund Herring.

Nevertheless, the job was done, and efficiently, too. The fall of Lae represented a turning point in the South West Pacific theatre, leading to the collapse of Japanese ambitions in New Guinea and the gradual rolling up of their conquests in the area. Of equal significance, according to Bradley, is the new lease of life Operation Postern gave to the Allied concept of combined operations generally. After the disastrous airborne landings in Sicily, Postern restored confidence in Allied planners regarding the value of well-coordinated assaults of this type, and paved the way for the successful deployment of airborne troops as part of the Normandy invasion. *D-Day New Guinea* makes an excellent case for the importance we should attach to the capture of Lae as a landmark in WW2 operations; it is also a fine study of the achievement itself.

**Paul Skrebels**

*Indonesia, 1947: Australia and the First United Nations Cease-fire Order*

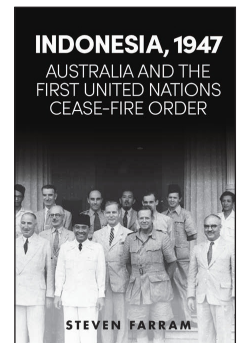
Steven Farram

\$44.00

Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2019

Paperback, 254 pp

ISBN 9781925801668



For most combatants, the end of the Second World War was the conclusion of fighting. But for the inhabitants of many countries that comprised European colonial empires the cessation of hostilities meant the beginning of another struggle. Nationalist sentiment had grown, aided by anti-Japanese feeling reinforced by Allied propaganda. At the same time Australia, reducing some of its foreign policy ties with Britain, sought to assert its own interests in the region. Steven Farram's *Indonesia, 1947: Australia and the First United Nations Cease-fire Order* explores this change in position by Australia and the struggle for independence by Indonesians.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council's first cease fire order was given on 1 August 1947. The two belligerents, the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia, ignored the order resulting in two resolutions passed later in the month. One resolution established the UN Consular Commission at Batavia to report on the cease-fire order and the second a three-member Committee of Good Offices (CGO). The former, after a very busy six-week period, concluded its work by October 1947. The latter was to make a major contribution to the settlement of 'the Indonesian question'. For Farram the Consular Commission deserves greater

recognition, completing its reports ready for the arrival of the CGO.

Australia's role in the negotiations was through the work of Charles Eaton. Eaton had sound knowledge of the region and players, having been consul to Portuguese Timor since January 1946. He had military experience as a pilot with the RFC in the First World War and with the RAAF in the second when he commanded Dutch and Indonesian air forces. On his arrival Eaton insisted on getting into the field so that his team could accurately report on the cease-fire. This ensured that the Security Council would receive information on the actions of the Dutch and the Indonesians. This acted as a throttle on Dutch movements, who attempted to downplay the violence by calling it a 'police action'. The Consular Commission, argues Farram, also ensured closer contact between the parties and influenced home government decisions. The Commission ceased to officially exist once its final report had been completed, being replaced by the CGO.

The Australian proposal for arbitration between Dutch and nationalists proved valuable for the Indonesians. Eaton's work, and the Australian government's negotiations, resulted in good relations between Australia and the new country. This, though, could also be seen as purely pragmatic as the Australian government desired to increase its regional role. These were reinforced by Dr Evatt's strong views in the UN.

While Farram's overarching analysis is with Australia's involvement, it explores in detail the involvement of China, the US, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Of particular interest is his exploration of the role of the US and the expansion of its intelligence gathering in the region. A precursor of what was to come during the Cold War.

Steven Farram's *Indonesia, 1947* is a well written, excellently researched and thoroughly detailed investigation of events that led to Indonesia's independence from the Netherlands. He argues that the contributions made by the Consular Commission, and Eaton in particular, to UN peacekeeping should be better recognised and have been of ongoing importance to the Australian-Indonesian relationship.

**Justin Chadwick**

*The Great Escape from Stalag Luft III: Memoirs of Bram Vanderstok*

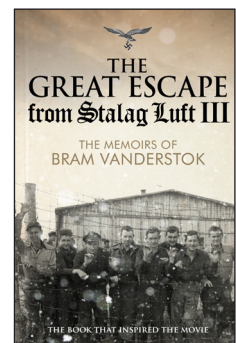
Bram van der Stok

A\$29.99

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The great escape has been written, shown in films and had several documentaries produced over the years. Thinking this was just another story about the Great Escape it took me several

weeks to read, but once I got started I was pleasantly surprised. I found it hard to put down, I wanted to know what the next chapter would bring and so I was able to understand the story of the Great Escape through the memoirs of Bram van der Stok. Each chapter takes the reader through the author's life, beginning with his first introduction to flying. He completed his pilot training in Poland just before World War II and after the Germans attacked Poland he realized that his chance of contributing to Poland's war effort was limited. He fled to England and became a fighter pilot with the RAF. The preface of the book provides an insight to the great escape itself and the author. The German reaction to the escape was savage to say the least, with 76 men escaping but almost all recaptured and at least 50 killed or murdered by the Germans. Only a few managed to escape and return to England, Bram van der Stok was one of those.

The detail and his recounting of the escape, and his own experiences are almost worthy of a film in itself. This story and detail, and I have no doubt the accuracy, is worth the reading. The film was heavily American in its content and does not accurately show the true extent that men such as Bram van der Stok experienced in escaping and making his way through German-held Europe and his eventual return to England and his return to flying duties. He was fully aware that his family was suffering under the Germans but continued to fight the war as a fighter pilot.

When he was shot down, he describes in detail his emotions and how he felt when he was captured by the Germans. Arriving in the German camp he immediately began to see if there was a means of escape. The senior man in the camp had a plan and Bram was included in the plans. His task was to forge German documents so the escapees could produce leave passes good enough to fool the Germans. This they did well but the Germans were alerted to the mass escape and were on the lookout for any person who did not necessarily fit in. The ultimate plan was for at least 200 men to escape and so tie down as many Germans to look for them. They realized that their chances of escaping to a neutral country was poor even though several did make it.

When he returned to England Bram was able to join a fighter squadron and continue the fight. Many of the pilots in his squadron were Dutch so they had a shared contempt for the Germans. After the war was over, he returned to his medical studies which he had begun prior to the war. He graduated from medical school in 1951 and later emigrated to America with his family. He later moved to Hawaii and practiced medicine for many years. As an active sailor he volunteered for the US Coast Guard Auxiliary and participated in 162 rescues. He died in February 1993.

For anyone who is interested in a truly great story I would highly recommend this book. I guarantee that you will find it hard to put down.

**Mike English**



*The Battle of the Lys: April 1918*

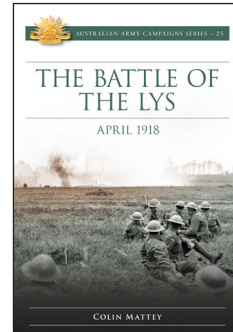
Colin Matthey

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The launching of Operation Michael by the Germans in March 1918 was to be the last major offensive to break through Allied lines in an attempt to bring a conclusion to the war. As German shock troops sent Allied troops reeling backward, British commanders quickly attempted to slow the advance, particularly when important transport hubs, such as Amiens, were threatened. The 1st Australian Division was ordered to prevent the Germans from extending their advances near one such town, Hazebrouck.

Colin Matthey's *The Battle of the Lys: April 1918*, the latest in the Army History Unit's campaign series, explores this little-known battle and is a worthy addition to that fine range of Australian military writing. The book is divided into five chapters that investigate the circumstances that led to the battle, the Allied reaction to the German attacks and specifically the role of the 1st Australian Division. Of great importance, and the underlying value of this book, is Matthey's focus on logistics. By 1918 this war was one that was fought on an industrial scale that relied on all aspects of the belligerents' economies. Furthermore, is the author's accurate placement of the Australians within the overall effort. Rather than the common perception presented by certain writers that Australian troops were pivotal in the final year of the war, Matthey argues that while the Division fought well it was one of many parts that worked together to halt the German Spring Offensive.

Like all the publications in the campaign series, this book is printed in full colour making the images and maps considerably better and easier to understand. However, also like all in this series, it lacks references throughout the text. This, certainly, is done to make it more appealing to a general readership. By doing so, though, it removes a level of scholarship to the production resulting in a book that resembles a well-produced magazine article. This criticism is certainly overwhelmed by the detail of the work and extent of the scholarship. Primary sources are used extensively throughout, drawing from both sides of the conflict and Matthey's analysis is excellent.

Holding true to the mandate of this series, Matthey explores the reasoning behind the Australian success, or German failure, during April 1918. Admittedly the action at Lys was obscure and did not necessarily demonstrate outstanding Australian abilities. Rather it showed that the BEF, and Australian forces as part of that larger organisation, had evolved into a superior military machine that could co-ordinate logistics, train and adapt better than its enemy.

## Technology

# Scaneagle: Australia's Eye in the Sky Over Afghanistan

Rohan Goyne

The Boeing Insitu ScanEagle was Australia's first aerial drone (unmanned aerial vehicle, UAV) to be used in the war in Afghanistan. Introduced in April 2002, it was an offshoot of the Insitu SeaScan for weather data collection and for use by the commercial fishing industry.<sup>1</sup> At 1.2m long, with a wingspan of 3m, the ScanEagle weighs 18kg, has an operational ceiling of 4,875m, can remain aloft for almost 24 hours and cost approximately US\$3.2 million.<sup>2</sup> The ScanEagle could be fitted with either an infrared or electro-optical camera designed to easily follow moving targets. Being small, the ScanEagle does not require an airfield for take off or landing, rather it is launched autonomously by a catapult launcher and is retrieved by a hook on a 15-metre pole. This allows the ScanEagle to operate from forward fields, ships or vehicles.<sup>3</sup> The US military first deployed the system during the Iraq War in 2004.

Initially, ScanEagles were operated by Boeing employees, as was the case for Australian operational use in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2006. It provided over 32,000 hours operational flying including vital intelligence footage in support of the Australian efforts on the ground.

A ScanEagle was displayed at the Australian War Memorial coinciding with the opening of the War in Afghanistan gallery in 2013. Unfortunately, from October 2016, it is no longer on display in the gallery.



Figure 1: ScanEagle on display at AWM. Source: Author.

1 Boeing website. [www.boeing.com](http://www.boeing.com). Accessed 3 October 2016.

2 'Scan Eagle', US Air Force Factsheet, <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/104532/scan-eagle/>. Accessed 29 March 2019.

3 'Boeing Begins ScanEagle Training at site in New Mexico', *Defense Daily*, 231 (2006), p. 1.

## Society Matters

It is with great pleasure to announce the appointment of Dr Paul Skrebels (SA Branch) as a Fellow of the Society. Paul, as editor of *Sabretache* for the past eight years, has made a significant contribution to the Society. His military knowledge is vast and his helmsmanship of the journal has been outstanding. We all congratulate him on this well-deserved acknowledgement.

## MHSA BRANCH OFFICE BEARERS

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