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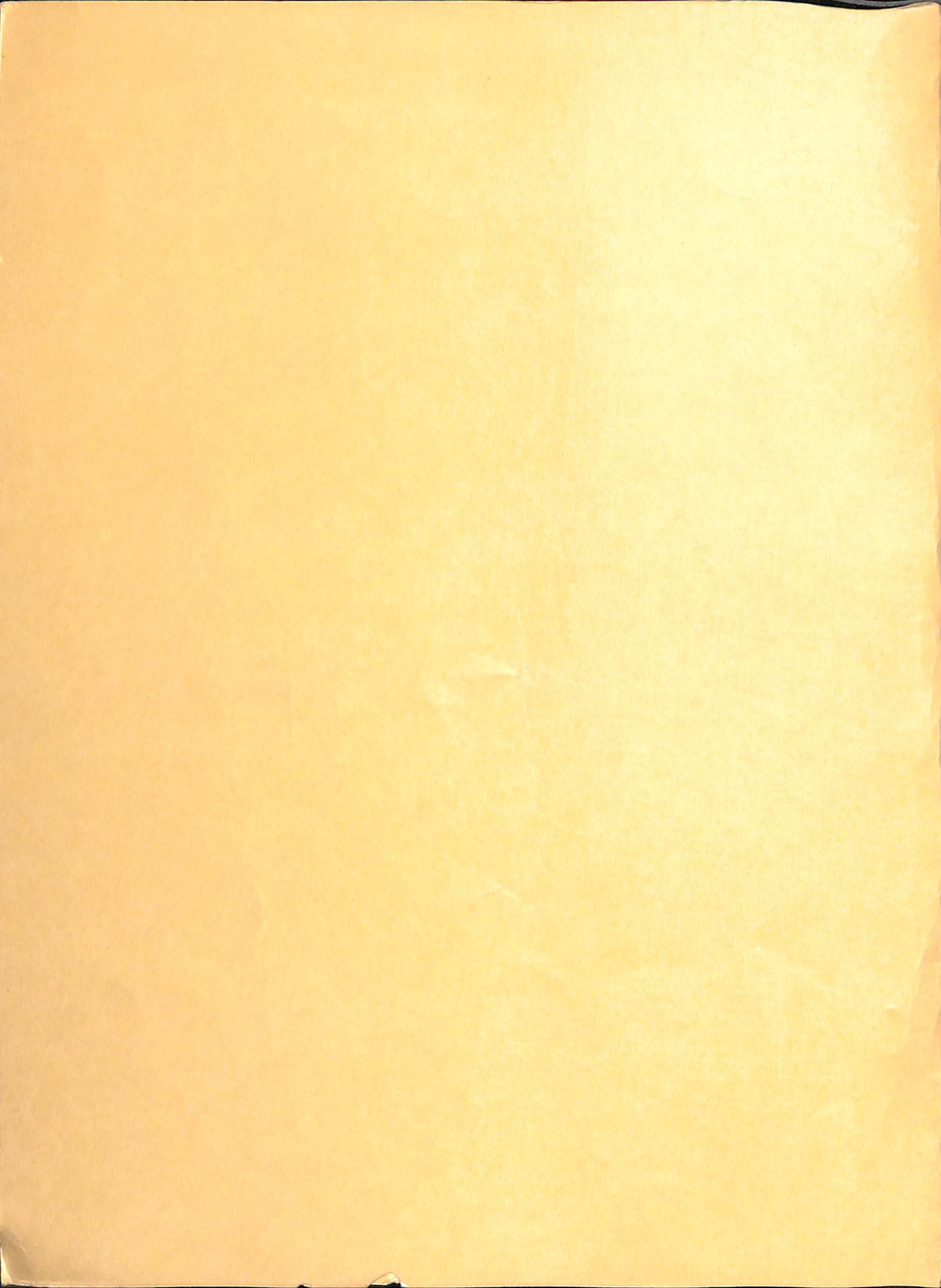
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SABRETACHE



THE JOURNAL OF
THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALIA

JULY, 1970



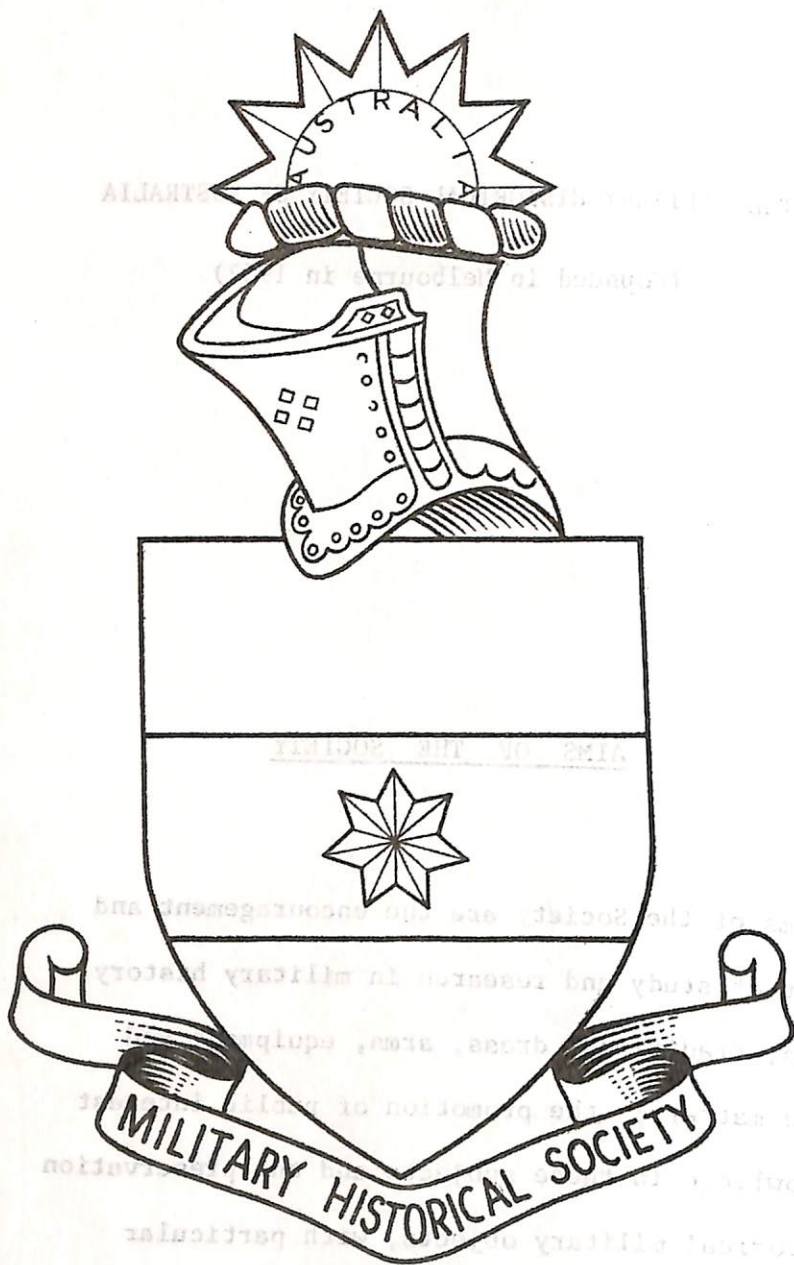
THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

(Founded in Melbourne in 1957)

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

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.

* * * * *



THE BADGE OF THE SOCIETY

- Features:
- A representation of the first "Rising Sun" badge, used as a heraldic crest to the helmet;
 - A wreath in the national colours of Blue and Gold;
 - A mediaeval helmet in Silver;
 - A 3 colour shield of Navy Blue, over Army Red, over Air Force Blue;
 - The Federation Star of Australia;
 - A scroll bearing the Title of the Society.

SABRETACHE

JOURNAL AND PROCEEDINGS OF
THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALIA

(FOUNDED IN MELBOURNE IN 1957)

EDITED BY

B. J. VIDEON, A.A.S.A.



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"SABRETACHE"

*The views expressed in the articles in this
Journal are those of the authors and not
necessarily those of the Society.*

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"SABRETACHE" TROPHY FOR BEST CONTRIBUTION

Federal Council apologises for the hiatus in the award of the trophy which it offered for the best article submitted to SABRETACHE in each year. This was due to several causes, including a suitable form of trophy to follow that initially made for us by Bob Powell, the Light-horseman of WWI in bronze.

A suitable trophy has now been decided upon, and it will comprise a circular medallion bearing the Society's badge and title, mounted on an oblong teak base with a metal plate inscribed with the name of the trophy, the winner's name, and the year of award. The metal will be bronze, and the work will be done by Lega Pty. Ltd., the firm which has so ably made our commemorative medallions in recent years.

The award for the year ended June 1968 was a very difficult one to make with grand contributions from Lt. Col. P.V. Vernon (October 1967), Major Perry (January 1968), Ivan Bird, (April 1968), and W.M. Chamberlain, for his Asian Battle-Diary which was serialised in the year. There were several other valuable and worthy contributions, but for this year the award is made to Major E. W. O. Perry (.R.L.), M.A., B.Ec., for his article "LIEUTENANT GENERAL HENRY GORDON BENNETT, CB, CMG, DSO, VD. --- A Biographical Sketch of a Controversial Soldier (January 1968).

The award for 1969 could not be awarded to anyone else than Major T. C. Sargent, for his first-class supplement to the October 1968 edition--- "SOME PENINSULAR NAMES IN AUSTRALIA FELIX". Not only was this worthy work prepared by Clem, but he actually produced the books from start to finish, a labour of love that we know was performed with no thought of personal gain.

Our small token of appreciation will be mailed very soon to these winners with the hope that they will accept them in the spirit in which they are awarded---of thanks for much appreciated contributions.

Those members who did not gain awards are all mature enough to know that only one winner can come out of each year; also that we do not appreciate their contributions any the less because we have not given them a plaque.

As we have said so often before, the life of the Society is in its membership, and the thing that ties the membership together is the Journal. So please continue to give it your support, whether we award you a plaque or not.

* * *

ERRATA

We regret that there was an error in the volume number of the four issues of SABRETACHE dated July 1969, October 1969, January 1970 and April 1970.

These are shown as Volume XI, but should be Volume XII.

Will members please amend their own copies. Volume XIII commences with this issue.

THE EDITOR.

MEGIDDO AND AFTERTHE ANNIHILATION OF THE TURKISH ARMIES IN PALESTINE

A paper presented to the members of the Military Historical Society of Australia (Victorian Branch).

By John E. Price

On Friday 8th May,
1970.

When Turkey entered the war on Germany's side in October 1914. Britain's main task was to prevent the Turks advancing from Palestine and capturing, or cutting the Suez Canal. Once this was achieved, defence changed to attack - with indifferent success, until a new commander was sent out from the Western Front in June 1917 to revive the dispirited Army. That general was Sir Edmund Allenby.

Allenby came out under a slight cloud, mainly due to his handling of the battle of Arras. Although starting splendidly with the greatest success yet won, it had ended in bloody deadlock. Allenby had been criticised for not following up his infantry's stroke. Three of his generals had written formal letters of protest and so he was moved out of the way.

Allenby was a tall, heavily-built cavalryman with an explosive temper. He had a great personality and he inspired enthusiasm. He was a huge strong soldier with the typical choleric face of a general. The combination of these traits earned him the nickname of "The Bull". He had a subtle eye for beauty. In one moment he could notice the delicacy of tint in a song-bird's wing, and in the next he could be roaring with apoplectic fury when he saw Australians riding in shorts or Yeomanry without their chinstraps down. He often wrote to his wife in the following vein "of birds there are larks, wheateaters, shrikes, bee-eaters, hawks and vultures. There is a merry bird, the rufous warbler, who haunts the locality. He is pert and friendly, looks like a big nightingale, has the manners of a robin, and flirts like a red-start".

Allenby's skill was to be greater in this command than in any other he had previously held. Firstly he had an intense love for being boss and was delighted to have an independent command. His was the classic and proper aim of a great general: To destroy the Turkish Army.

Let us now look back on the scene, the actors, the crowding extras At the start of the battle in September 1918, the Turkish forces were distributed as follows. On a front of 65 miles: the 8th

Army (5 divisions and 3 German Battalions) in the coastal plain and the foothills, faced the British XXI corps: the 7th Army (4 divisions), in the Judean Hills astride the Nablus road, faced the British XX Corps; whilst the 4th Army (2 divisions, 1 cavalry division and 1 composite division), in the Jordan Valley and east of the Jordan, was opposed to the Desert Mounted Corps. The total fighting strength of the Turks amounted to 32,000 rifles, 3,500 sabres, 350 guns; and that of the British to 57,000 rifles, 12,000 sabres and 540 guns.

The German general, Liman von Sanders, whose flair for organisation had saved Gallipoli for the Turks in 1915, was in chief command of all the enemy forces, he was a man of skill but not genius, a man who would hold fast to what he had rather than manoeuvre, a man of determination. Allenby intended to use these very qualities against him.

The enemy were mainly Turks, with a small leavening of Germans. The Turk had up to this point, shown himself to be a formidable soldier, particularly in defence. Stubborn, brave, inured to the many diseases, the climate and the starvation rations, imbued with an obstinate self-respect, he was a hard man to beat. But some recent actions indicated that he had had enough of war. He had begun to see that it wasn't fought for any conceivable benefit to Turkey, and he was no longer willing to die for it.

The few Germans were invariably brave, skilful and well led. The Arabs conscripted into the Turkish Army were all waiting for an opportunity to desert. There were Arabs on the Allied side too - the formless, undisciplined Bedouin of Feisal and Lawrence. For the rest, Allenby commanded cavalymen from Australia and New Zealand, Yeomanry and Line Infantry from the United Kingdom, West Indians and Jews. The bulk of his force, both in infantry and cavalry was of the Indian Army. There were Sikhs and Mahrattas, Gurkhas, Pathans, Dogras and Punjabis. Some of this conglomeration of mankind were seasoned veterans, some were new to the theatre of war; but all were inspired with an enormous confidence. The Allies were winning the war, everyone knew this, and Allenby had already shown that he could win battles.

The terrain was harsh and barren, except on the extreme west, where oranges, cotton and grain crops grew on the coastal plain. Allenby's Army stood on an east-west front about fifty miles long. The left rested on the Mediterranean, the centre bestrode the Judean Hills north of Jerusalem, and the right, the east, scorched in the Jordan Valley. Topographically the line rose from sea level, up to 1500-2000 feet, then dropped to 1000 feet below sea level in the Jordan Valley stretch. Further over to the east, Lawrence's Arabs dominated the desert.

Allenby's eyes saw, his intelligence moulded, his will determined One evening he called in his subordinate generals and gave his orders. It was to burst the enemy's line by a hurricane infantry attack on the extreme coast flank, to throw nearly the whole of his cavalry force through the breach, and direct it at full speed towards Nazareth and the upper Jordan, in order to cut off the northern line of retreat of the Seventh and Eighth Turkish Armies about Nablus. This cavalry force was to make contact as soon as possible with the Arabs at

Deraa, thus closing the enemy's retreat by the eastern railway.

Allenby had long before decided that, in order to avoid the rains of November and December, he must delivery his great attack in September. The battle would resemble the opening of a door, its hinge to the right was the Jordan River. Just as one opens a door by grasping the handle, at the other end from the hinge, and pushing - so Allenby's infantry would push along the coastal plain. Once the door had been forced a little open, the cavalry would pass through, riding wide and deep, and at last wheel right to entrap all those, by now far behind, still trying to hold the door shut. Liman von Sanders was a man who would deliberately and obstinately try to hold the door long after it was too late.

Every branch of the Service had a part to play, and everything had to work with the precision of a watch. The Royal Air Force together with the Australian Flying Corps had to blind the enemy of Allenby's concentrations. The artillery had to blast a way open for the infantry, which in turn had, in one rush, to drive a way for the cavalry. Once through the gap, the mounted arm had to cover fifty miles and reach the Esdraelon Plain on the night of the first day. Finally the cavalry had to be fed and foraged. This would bring to bear an increased strain on the A.S.C., for they would have to move as fast as the cavalry. The scheme must move by time-table or not at all. One slip in the timing, one faltered moment could give the enemy time to redistribute his forces and Allenby would be robbed of his victory.

Allenby now had to convince the Turks of the opposite, i.e. that he intended to hold the coast and strike up the Jordan Valley. The back-room boys had a fine time. They commandeered a hotel in Jerusalem, summarily threw out the clients and urgently prepared the place for use as a military command post. They moved a Corps headquarters from one end of the front to the other, but left wireless stations behind in operation, with the usual stack of messages to send, so that the enemy monitors would detect no change. Dummy camps were bought into existence and lines of rough trestles were erected to give enemy observers the appearance of horse-lines. Mules driving sledges were employed to raise dust storms to suggest heavy traffic. New camps were pitched in the Jordan Valley and troops were detailed to march up openly by day and back secretly at night, up again the next day and so on. Liman and his staff assured themselves that no one would dare to keep troops, especially the proverbially 'difficult' Australians, in such a place without real and sound cause. They went as far as making elaborate plans for a race meeting, scheduled to take place on the great day.

So effective was the air-cover that the German & Austrian pilots were unable to get anywhere near the line, so they resorted to falsifying reports. Captured enemy documents read..... 'the total camp capacity of the enemy has remained as before'; 'no changes of importance have occurred'; 'traffic on roads and railways in the long-distant reconnaissance centre were small'; 'only unimportant re-grouping of troops without change of strength'.

Steadily, quietly, the preparations went on. The weight of infantry moved imperceptibly, by night, towards the western end of the

line. The rest spread themselves out so that there should be no visible gap or weak places. By D minus 1, Allenby's concentration was complete. He had on a 15 mile front in the coastal plain. 35,000 infantry and nearly 400 guns, against only 8,000 Turks with 130 guns. Behind the mass of infantry were 3 cavalry divisions - the 4th Indian, 5th Indian and the Australian Mounted. In the Indian divisions, roughly one man out of three was British. The British mounted regiments were all Yeomanry. On the remaining 45 miles of front, Allenby left only 22,000 infantry with 150 guns, facing 24,000 Turks with 270 guns. The turks were still unaware of his intentions or the distribution of his troops.

D-Day was set for September 19. Outwardly everyone was calm, from the commander-in-chief, out bird-watching, to the lithe little Gurkhas serenely playing cards under the orange trees. There was tension though. The Army waited, taut and ready. On September 17, an Indian havildar (sergeant) has deserted to the Turks. It is now known that he had told the enemy that the British attack would come along the coast. At the time no one knew what he had been told, or even how much he knew. In any case, would Liman believe him? How sure could the havildar, or Liman, be that the coastal attack was to be the main one?

British headquarters spent an agonizing thirty-six hours, wondering. Actually Liman decided that he had no time to act even if the havildar's information was correct. If he'd tried to move his troops at this last moment, in the poor condition of the roads and railways behind him, the battle would probably begin with half his men on the move and unable to take part at all. True to his character, Liman decided to stand and fight.

At 1.15 a.m. on September 19, Capt. Ross Smith set off in the only Handley-Page bomber in the Middle East. The giant plane carried sixteen 112lb bombs. With these the Australian crew smashed the central telephone exchange at El Afule and temporarily wrecked the railway junction. Later in the day D.H.9's were to wreak further havoc both at El Afule & Nablus, where another telephone exchange was damaged. As a result of the wrecking of these nerve-centres, the Turks east of Nablus remained in complete ignorance of Allenby's triumphant attack during at least the first two days of the battle.

At 4 a.m. on Sept. 19, the mass of cavalry began to move out of the orange groves. The columns advanced at a walk towards the hidden front. At 4.30, before the cavalry had reached their positions, 384 guns opened the artillery preparation. At once the rockets started flaring up, as the Turks signalled for help from their own guns. A quarter of an hour later, XXI Corps assaulted with five infantry divisions.

By 7.30 a.m. the two Indian cavalry divisions were advancing up the coast. By midday the 5th Cavalry Division was well across the Nahr Iskanderuneh, still going north. The Australian Mounted Division struck north-eastwards towards El Afule. The infantry has also pushed on north-eastwards to attack Tul Keram and other positions.

To start with there had been little resistance, because the

area had been cleared by the infantry. Any that occurred later on was trifling, because the sight of the plain alive with horsemen proved too much for the nerves of the small parties of Turks encountered. The leading regiment of the 4th Cavalry Division entered the Musmus Pass through Carmel chain in the darkness. The Pass is broad at first, a shallow, stony waste inclining towards a low crest line. At the top it narrows. When the Pharoah Thotmes III took his army through 3,377 years earlier, his foot soldiers had to go in single-file. On the north side the Pharoah defeated the Syrians at an earlier battle of Megiddo, on the edge of the Plain of Esdraelon; which has another name, a name that has come to signify all war and strife: Armageddon.

The Musmus Pass has been widened since Thotmes's time, but it was still a dangerously tight spot, not a place to linger in. The horsemen moved swiftly up the Pass, trotting twenty minutes, walking twenty minutes, and halting five in a hurry to make up for a hitch which had caused a delay. They emerged in the early hours of Sept. 20 in the Plain of Esdraelon. There the first fight occurred, a charge which routed a Turkish regiment of reserves who has arrived too late to block the Pass. Then the Division took El Afule, where many engines and trucks lay in the railway sidings. After a brief halt it moved down to the Jordan at Beisan. The force had covered over seventy miles in thirty-four hours and foundered only twenty-six horses.

The troops were delighted and inspired by the feat. The days of cavalry weren't over yet - anyway not quite. It is true that cavalry had always played a more striking role in Palestine than in any of the other theatres, but the Indian regiments, the largest elements, had seen no great success since their arrival and recalled the frustration of the mounted arm in France. Now all felt on top of the world. For the moment the 4th could rest their horses and wait for thousands of Turks, dazed with fatigue, to march into their arms, sometimes after a short struggle to get through.

The 5th Cavalry Division crossed the plain of Esdraelon, climbed up to Nazareth, and just missed capturing Liman von Sanders after fierce street fighting, but sent him off as a fugitive to Tiberias. The Australian Mounted Division acting in reserve had followed the more easterly cavalry division, the 4th, through the Carmel range, it despatched one brigade (the 3rd) south-east to Jenin, in order to catch in rear the main part of the retreating Turkish centre, which would there emerge from the hills. The Brigade captured the town, blocked the main Nablus-Nazareth road, and by the morning of the 21st, took 8,000 prisoners. As these were marched out, the highly disciplined Germans at the head of the column goose-stepped when the General's car passed.

The infantry had kept up the pressure, gradually disintegrating Mustapha Kemal's Seventh Army, capturing many thousands of prisoners and driving the rest into the cavalry's net. Mount Carmel and Haifa were captured, Carmel by an extraordinary cavalry chase along the crest. Liman von Sanders had now decided to defend Damascus by holding the Yarmuk Gorge, east of the southern end of Lake Tiberias, and the southern and western ends of the Lake. Samakh on the shore was stormed by the 4th Light Horse Brigade, and was taken only after bitter fighting with a handful of dogged German defenders.

Allenby had told Lawrence that one vital point he could not reach was Deraa, the junction of the Palestine railways with the Hejaz line. It was strongly defended so that Feisal and Lawrence did not take it until September 27, but they had already cut the line in several places and gravely interrupted the traffic.

An Australian Flying Corps plane on patrol saw the Turkish Seventh Army pouring into Wadi Fara, the pilot sent a message back to the aerodrome by wireless - specially fitted to his machine - reporting that all enemy transport was attempting to escape by way of the Balata-Ferweh-Shibleh-Jordan road. Within half an hour, British and Australian aircraft were strafing the valleys. All day the bombing and machine-gunning continued. The planes fired 45,000 rounds of machine-gun bullets and dropped nearly 10 tons of bombs. The carnage was terrible, the destruction tremendous. The Seventh Army as a fighting force was destroyed.

There was one blot on Allenby's scheme, his failure to block, fifteen miles south of Beisan, the Jordan fords towards which a great part of the demoralised Seventh Army was streaming in disorder. This was remedied by a single brigade of the 4th Cavalry Division. Moving down both banks, it went into the attack and by the end of a day of sweat and toil, captured twenty-five times its own strength in prisoners.

Further south, the Australian Mounted Division crossed the Jordan and captured Amman, so blocking the path of the Turkish Fourth Army's detachments along the Hejaz railway. The fleeing Turks were bombed and strafed by aircraft, who left it to the Mounted Division to round up the prisoners. In all it took 10,000.

Allenby wasn't given to opening his mind, even to his senior subordinates, before this became necessary. Not until September 22 did he mention the word 'Damascus' to the commander of the Desert Mounted Corps, Lt-Gen. Sir Harry Chauvel, but this warning gave the staff time to think out the problem. Chauvel's telegraphic orders of the 26th read 'Seventh and Eighth Armies are destroyed. Fourth Army is retreating on Damascus via Deraa. Desert Mounted Corps will move on Damascus.' The 4th Cavalry Division was to move east of Lake Tiberias, the other two west of it, the Australians in the lead. Simultaneously XXI Corps was to advance along the coast track, which in those days didn't deserve the name road, and seize Beirut.

Both goals were reached, Damascus (by the Australians) on October 1, Beirut (by the 7th Indian Division) on the 2nd, after immense efforts, and, for the cavalry and Arabs, stiff fighting. In the process about half the remainder of the Turkish Fourth Army was killed or taken. Even this was not the end. Homs was reached by the 5th Cavalry Division on October 16. Then it was sent on to Aleppo alone, waves of malaria and influenza having put the 4th Cavalry Division virtually out of action. Aleppo was reached on the 25th and next day two Indian regiments were checked at Haritan by two new divisions formed by Mustapha Kemal. It was the last action before news of the Mudros armistice with Turkey brought a standstill, and the return home of the German troops in the country. The German combatants,

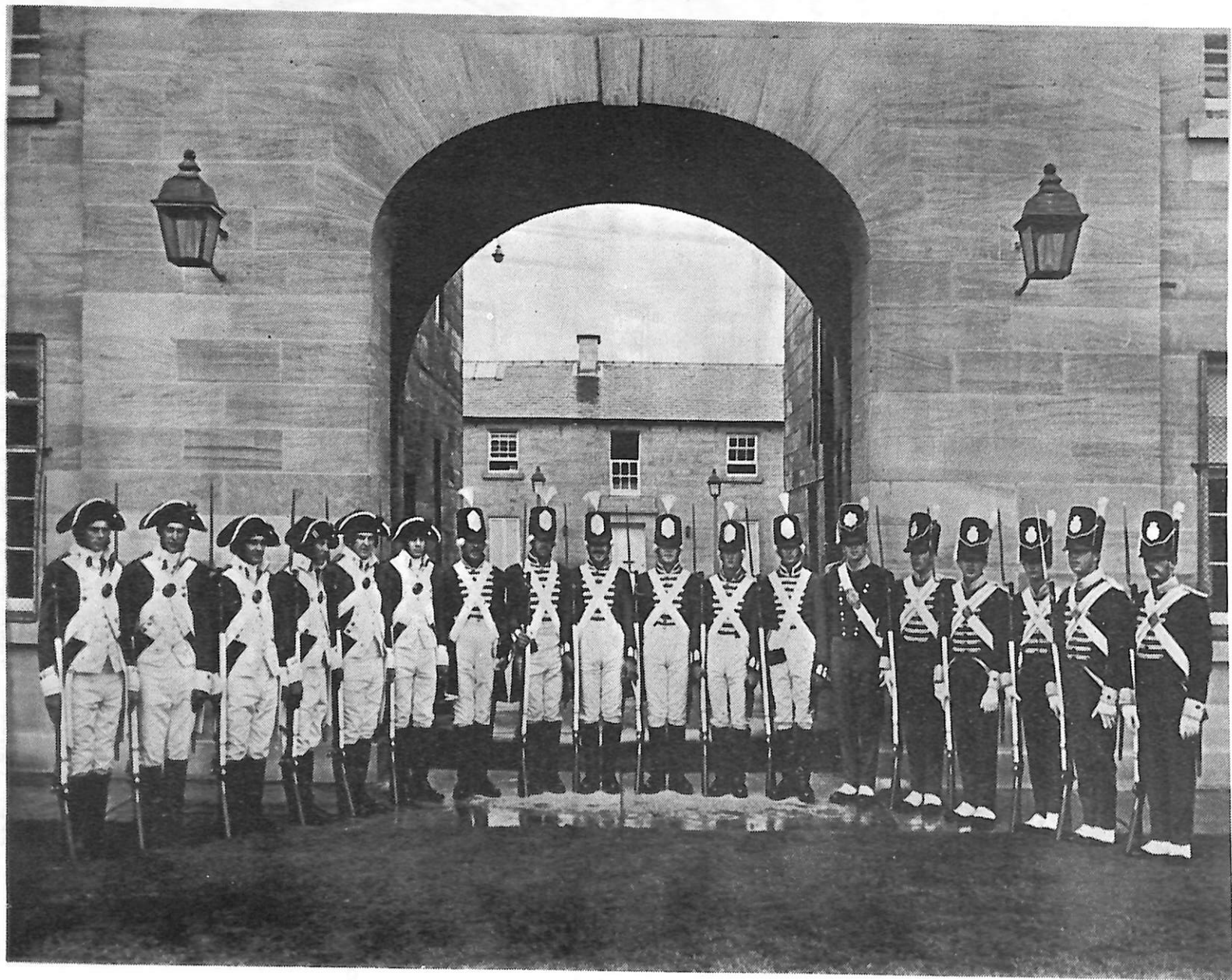
two regiments of all arms, had never broken and had won the respect of their foes. The 5th Cavalry Division had marched 550 miles in thirty-eight days. This took some beating, but much more when it is added that it lost only 21% of its horses from all causes and that these included four major actions.

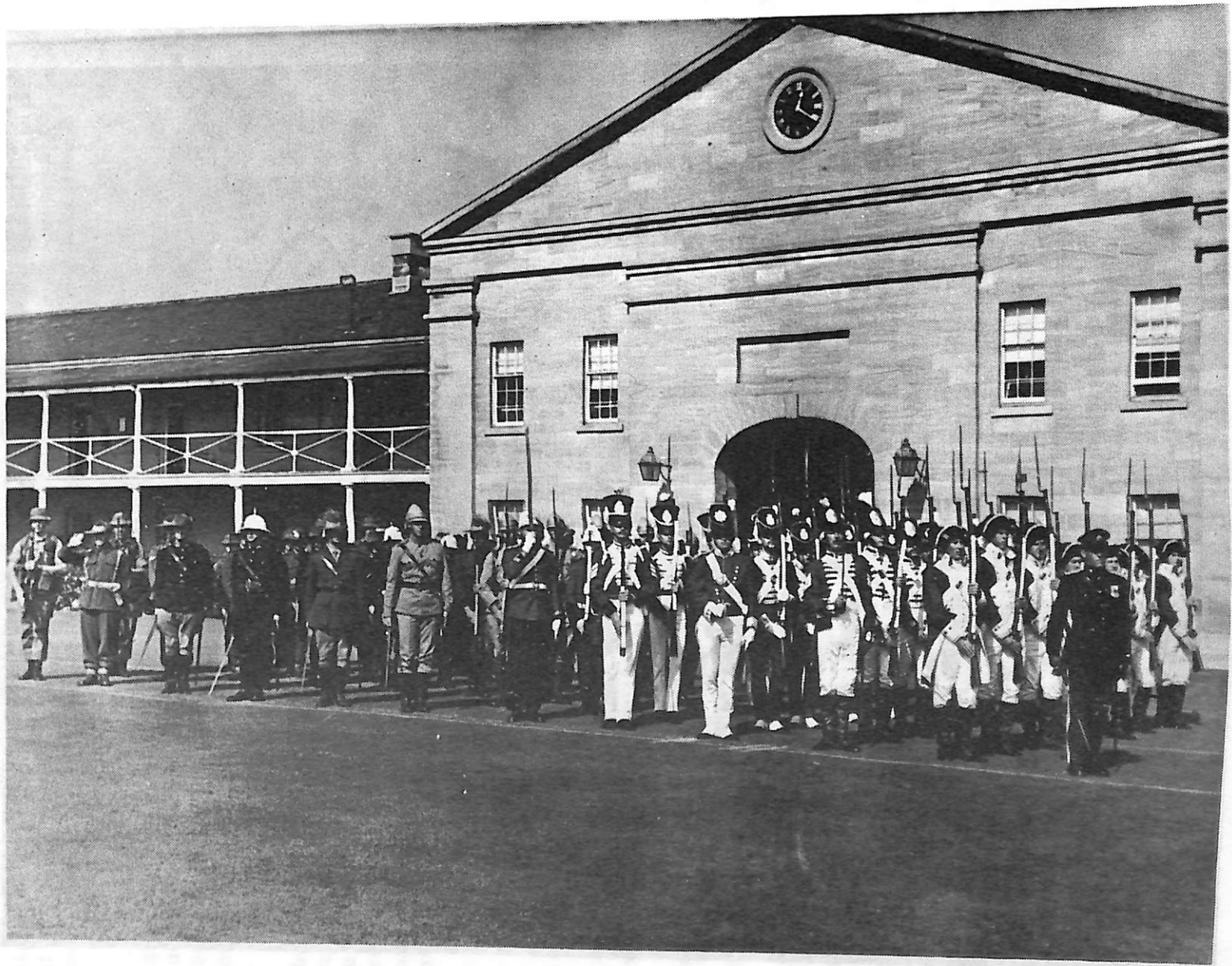
Cynics said that Allenby won fame in an easy task, 'a tiger against a tom-cat.' In truth no other British commander would have set such a goal. He took 75,000 prisoners (3,7000 of these Germans & Austrians), for a loss of 5,666, of which 650 of these came from the Desert Mounted Corps.

On October 30, the Sultan's representative signed the Armistice aboard the battleship "Agamemnon", the war against Turkey was over. The regiments passed from Armageddon, with a sigh, to the first bivouacs of peace - among the muscatel vineyards, beside the blue Mediterranean, under arches that had seen the passing of the Roman legions, Turkish janissaries and Napoleonic chasseurs. In the Middle East the war was over. The more dangerous, hate-laden years of a surface peace had begun.

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HISTORIC MILITARY UNIFORMS IN CAPTAIN COOK BI-CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

As part of its contribution to the Captain Cook Bi-Centenary celebrations Eastern Command of the Australian Army undertook a valuable and, for the Army, a most unusual project. It reproduced ten contingents of an officer or N.C.O. and six men, each contingent dressed and accoutred with the military uniform and equipment of one of the historic regiments that have served in Australia over the last two hundred years.

The troops, all drawn from the Australian Army, were allowed the luxury of being able to grow whatever hair growth was required to suit the uniform and the time represented, and must have enjoyed the occasion tremendously.

Uniforms were correctly tailored, the badges and buttons cast or made where necessary to give an authentic appearance, and the older weapons which could not be made available by other means were actually made at the small Arms Factory at Lithgow.

By courtesy of Eastern Command Public Relations, we were privileged to receive a series of photographs showing these uniforms, and four of them are reproduced in these pages. Unfortunately, not all were suitable for reproduction by the methods available to us, but it is hoped that an effort may be able to be made to have the complete series, with fully descriptive text, printed at a later date in a special booklet for sale to members and others who may be interested. Wait for an announcement of this event, if it should prove to be possible. Do NOT order now!

The plates illustrated show, in the following order:

1. Three contingents posed in the main archway at Victoria Barracks Paddington, N.S.W.---from left, Royal Marines 1770; New South Wales Corps 1800, and the 48th Regiment 1817.
2. A massed group beneath the clock in Victoria Barracks, Paddington---from right to left, Royal Marines 1770, New South Wales Corps 1800, 48th Regiment 1817, 11th Foot (North Devonshires) 1846, New South Wales Contingent to the Soudan War, Australian contingent to the Boer War 1900, Australian Light Horse 1914-1918, Royal Australian Artillery (Permanent Forces) 1935, Artillery (Militia) 1935, 2nd Australian Imperial Force 1939-1945, and Combat Infantry of 1970. They are under the command of the Pageant Commander, Captain G.F. Loadman, of 9 ST Column, Eastern Command, who may be seen at the right of the parade.
3. 11th Foot (North Devonshires) of 1846 marching past in review order, at Victoria Barracks, Paddington.
4. In Martin Place, Sydney, contingents presenting arms---from right to left, Royal Australian Artillery (Permanent Forces) 1935, Australian Light Horse 1914-1918, Contingent to the Boer War, behind them can be seen one or two of the 48th Regiment.

It is gratifying to hear that these uniforms and accoutrements are to be retained and preserved by the Army for use in future historical pageants of this type.

After years of disinterest engendered by the anti-military nature of Australians, there have been some sad and needless losses of old military uniforms in this country. About the time of the Second World War, there were said to be many old uniforms preserved at an Army establishment as the result of the efforts of one historically-minded GOC, only to be dissipated through the apathy of his disinterested successor.

Perhaps the present climate of interest in history, whether military or civil, may make up for the shortcomings of previous years, and we may yet see officialdom retrieving some of the ground that has been lost, perhaps even preserving some of the old uniforms that are known to exist in most capital cities, a task that until now has been left largely to the private collectors, who are all too few in number.

B.J. Videon

MEMBERS ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE - "REGIMENTAL BADGES OF NEW ZEALAND", by D. A. Corbett.

This is a concise unit history with over 600 clean-cut photographs of the badges worn by the New Zealand Army from its formation. This invaluable guide for the collector of New Zealand badges is a limited edition, available only from its author, D. A. Corbett, 2 Spencer Street, Remuera, Auckland 5, N.Z.

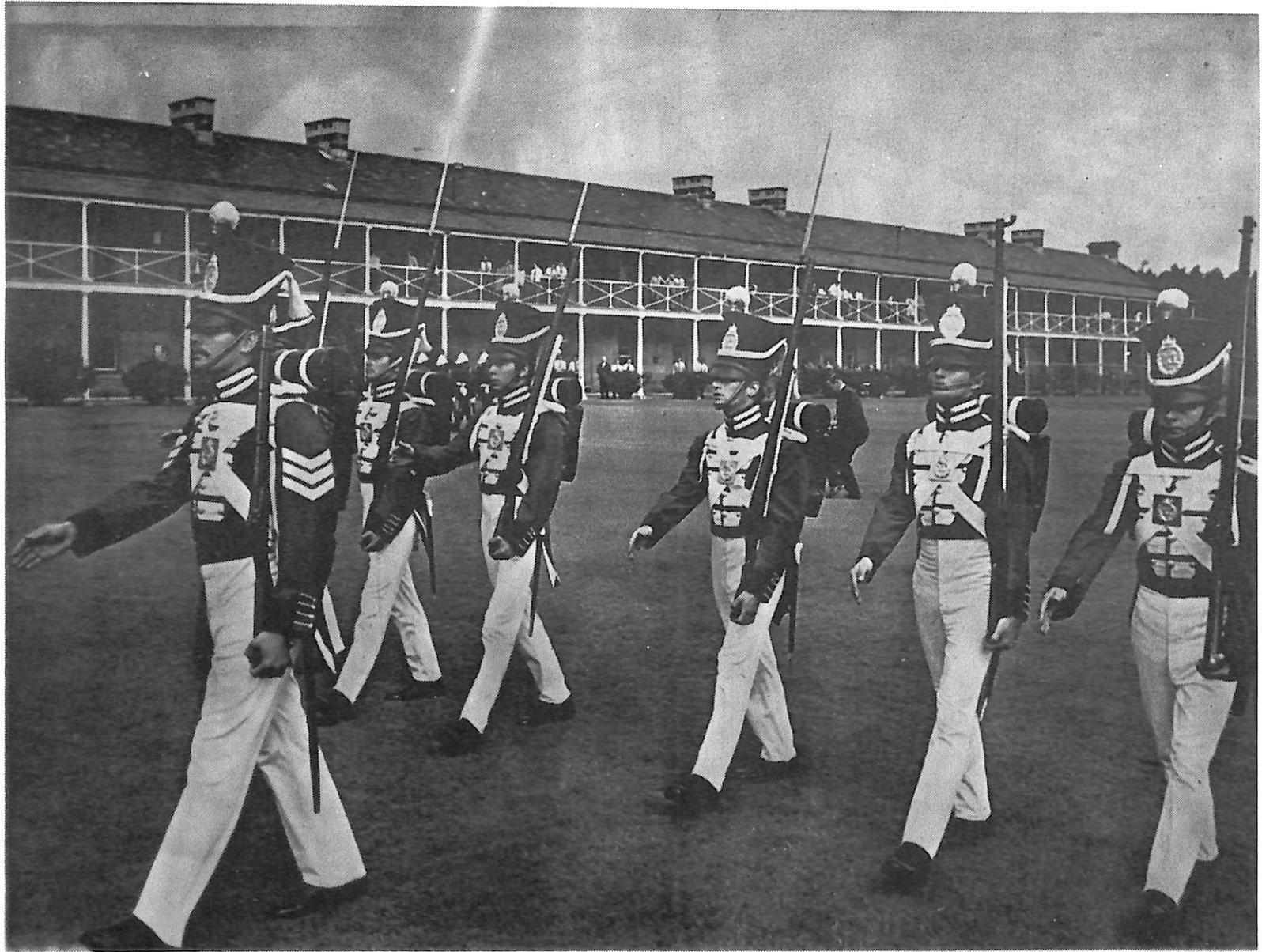
Price \$6.00 plus 20 cents postage.

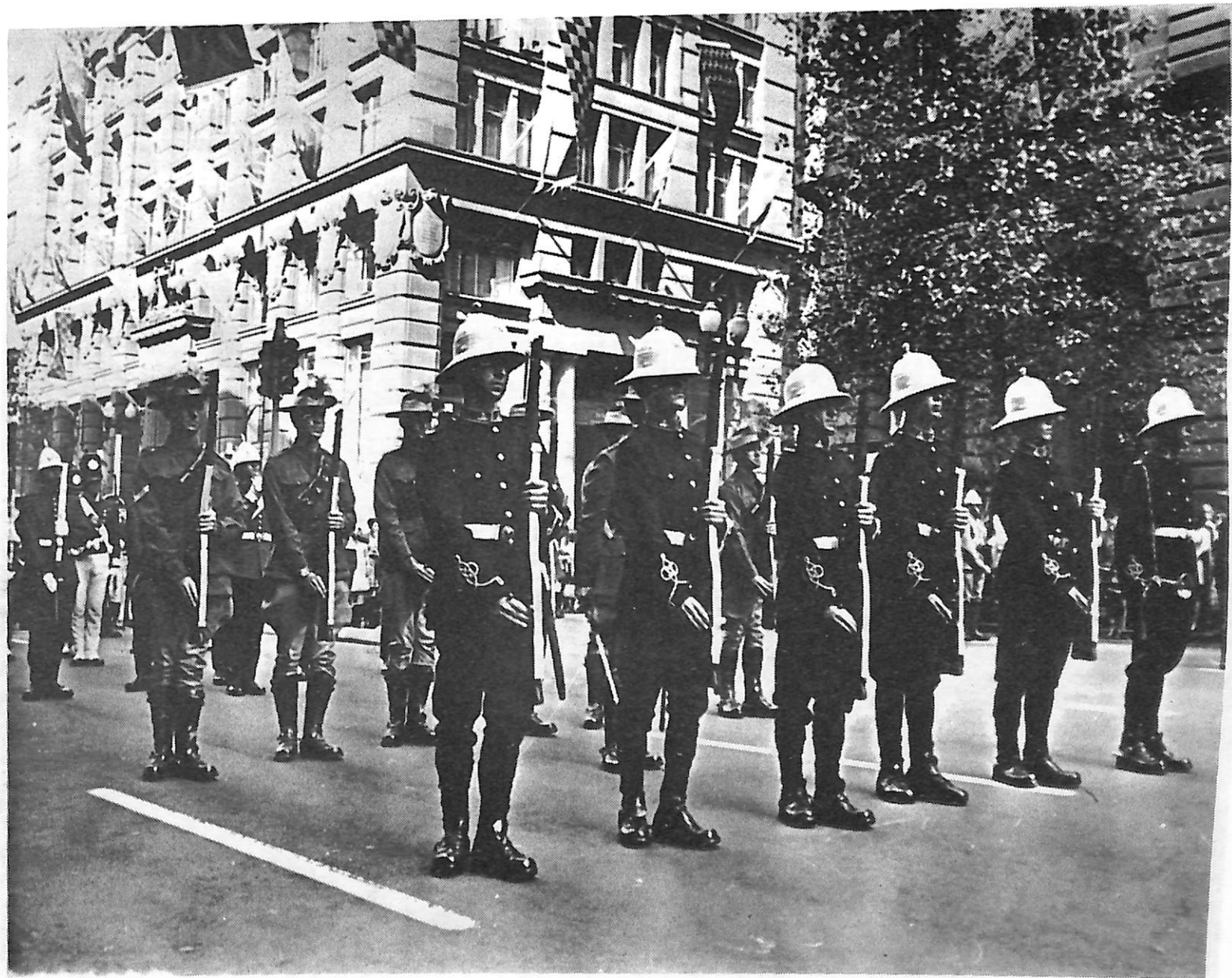
WANTED TO BUY - R.A.A.F. Nursing Service Uniform of WWII --- this was a distinctive pattern uniform, not at all like that of the W.A.A.A.F., and it may be readily identified by the "Norfolk-jacket" appearance of the jacket, which had very low-cut lapels. Hat not essential but would be nice to keep it complete. Would like shirt also with this uniform if possible.

W.A.A.A.F. WWII khaki skirt, W.A.A.A.F. summer khaki shorts and shirt.

No, chaps, I'm not "queer" --- these are required to try to complete my wardrobe of Australian Air Force clothing!

B.J. Videon, 20 Thomasina Street, EAST BENTLEIGH, Victoria, 3165.





THE SIEGE OF CHITRAL 1895

By W. J. Shaw

In the year 1892, Aman-ul-Mulk, Mehtar or ruler of the Northern Indian state of Chitral died. He left seventeen sons, two of whom by the virtue of their mother's rank were considered most likely to succeed him. They were Nizam-ul-Mulk and Afzul-ul-Mulk.

The youngest, Afzul, was in the capital also called Chitral at the time of his Father's death, seized power, killed off those brothers who posed a threat to him and lead an army against his older brother Nizam who after a brief clash fled to British India. Afzul looked certain of remaining Mehtar for a considerable time; he was popular and the British recognised him as Chitral's ruler; but an exiled Uncle, Sher Afzul, crossed the border from Afghanistan and in the following weeks Afzul-ul-Mulk was shot down and died. Nizam now returned, rallied his countrymen, and Sher-Afzul fled back to Afghanistan.

Two years of peace followed and then Nizam was murdered by another half-brother Amir-ul-Mulk who seized the Throne. During the delay in receiving British recognition, Umra Khan, ruler of a neighbouring state, Jandu, crossed the border, ostensibly in support of Amir's claim but with an eye towards extending his own territory. He was joined by Sher Afzul and a list of demands were sent to the British, who rejected them and in turn appointed Shuja-ul-Mulk, a nine year old boy Mehtar, Amir being deposed and held prisoner by the British Agent and his escort.

The Capital of Chitral was not a city in the true sense, but a stone fort which served as the Mehtar's residence, treasury and armoury. There were also a number of small hamlets and detached dwellings scattered along the floor of the valley.

On the third of March, news was received that Sher-Afzul was advancing on the Capital, and at 4.30 p.m. Captain Colin Campbell decided on a reconnaissance in force. He advanced about a quarter of a mile from the fort, when he decided to divide his force into three. One party he left to form a strong point. The second under the command of Captain Baird was ordered to take the hills on his right and thus secure his right flank. The third party under Captain Townshend's command was to advance a further quarter of a mile to a house where it was believed that Sher Afzul was. The house was empty and Townshend continued to move down the valley.

The flanking party now came under heavy fire from the Chitralis on the hill and Townshend observing movement about 500 yards further down the valley and taking it that these were the enemy ordered his men to open fire. The fire was instantly returned The Village in fact being occupied by several hundred of Umra-Khan's men. Townshend by the use of cover and fire and movement, brought his force within two hundred yards of the enemy. This last two hundred yards was clear and offered no cover. Townshend was told to hold his position until Baird was in position and then attack. By 6.30 p.m. the enemy had started to overlap his flank and darkness was falling and Baird has not yet arrived. Campbell then arrived and ordered him to attack. The reserve force was to move forward and support him,

but repeated attempts to bring them forward failed and Townshend decided to launch his attack without them. As his men moved from cover they were met with heavy fire and amongst the casualties were two of their native officers. This completely demoralised the sepoys, most of whom were only recruits, and they refused to advance. Captain Campbell was also wounded.

Townshend now had to withdraw his men in the darkness. This was done by fire and movement, one party falling back and the second giving covering fire. Townshend remaining with each covering party to make sure they did not break and run. The retreat was later covered by a party of fifty Sikhs brought out of the fort by Surgeon-Major Robertson, the Chief political officer.

Captain Baird's party as mentioned also came under heavy fire and Baird was badly wounded. Lieutenant Gurdon, a political Officer, assumed command, and organised the withdrawal of the survivors. Surgeon Captain Whitechurch and a small number of Sepoys were left to help Baird back. The route they took had to be a round-about one, and time and time again Whitechurch, who was carrying Baird, led his party in a charge to clear the way. Several of his men were killed and Baird was wounded twice more before they reached the safety of the fort. Captain Baird was to die next morning. Captain Whitechurch was to receive the Victoria Cross for his actions.

The Garrison's casualties were twenty-three killed and thirty-three wounded.

The fort in which the British now found themselves besieged was some eighty yards square and the walls twenty-five feet high and eight feet thick. No cement or mortar has been used in its construction, the stones being held in position by a frame-work of wood which made it highly inflammable.

Townshend, who had now assumed command of the garrison, had three main worries -- his water supply, the enfilading fire from the surrounding hills and a number of out-buildings which offered good observation and firing positions for the enemy.

Although the fort was placed near the river for its water supply, during the "Dry" it was some forty or fifty yards away, and to maintain his supply Townshend constructed a covered water-way. To counter the enfilading fire from the hills, he arranged overhead cover for the troops manning the walls, and hung a screen of blankets and canvas to prevent observation of movement inside the fort. Thus the defenders were at least safe from aimed shots.

Although the garrison could do little about the out-buildings due to heavy fire, small parties equipped with long poles would sally out, knock down a wall and return, each time drawing heavy fire, but no casualties were caused. To prevent a surprise night attack, fires were lit and kept burning all night.

The strength of the garrison was six officers, ninety-nine men of the 14th. Sikhs, three hundred and one men of the Kashmir Infantry, native servants and fifty-two Chitralis who had to be closely guarded through-out the siege, the total being five hundred and forty-three. On half-rations the garrison could hold out for two and a half months. The Sikhs had 300 rounds

apiece for their Martini-Henry Rifles and the Kashmir Infantry 280 rounds each for their Snider Rifles.

The enemy launched his first attack on the water-way on 7th March during the night, and managed to force their way into the Tower which guarded the water-way and set fire to it. The garrison counter-attacked and drove them out and extinguished the fire. On 13th and 14th March the enemy launched an attack on the eastern wall but were driven off. Each of these attacks were accompanied by yelling, beating of drums, and the blowing of bugles and whistles.

To strengthen his water-way from these attacks Townshend fortified a stable by the water-way gate. Each day the garrison fired thirty rounds into a house they believed was occupied by Sher Afzul. The officers killed and salted down their horses on 22nd March. During the next few days heavy rain caused the west wall to subside and the garrison had more work building it up again. On the 29th March a home made Union Jack was hoisted and was to continue to fly until the siege was lifted. There was still some rum and tea left and the Sikhs were given a dram of rum every four days, and the Kashmir Infantry a tea ration every three days.

The enemy had not been idle since their last attack but had constructed sangars, one about 175 yards from the water-way and the second 40 yards from the main gate. They had also occupied a summer house near the fort.

On the 7th April, the enemy launched a diversionary attack on the western wall. A few managed to set fire to the south-east tower. The inlying picket was dispatched with their great-coats filled with earth, and as much water as they as they could carry, to fight the fire, but they had to expose themselves to the enemy and suffered a number of casualties, including Surgeon-Major Robertson, who was wounded while supervising the firefighting. A water chute was finally rigged and the garrison finally put out the fire by pouring water down on it from inside the fort.

On the 8th, red hot embers were seen near the same tower. Apparently, the enemy had tried to fire it during the changing of the sentries, and after this, sentries were changed at different times from day to day.

The enemy launched another attack on the waterway on the 10th and 11th of April, but once again the garrison drove them off.

On the 17th April, the garrison's fears that the enemy was mining towards their position were confirmed when a native officer heard the sound of picks being used. The work had commenced on the 12th, the initial noise of work being drowned out by the beating of tom-toms and other noises from the enemy's camp. There being no time for cover counter-mining, a party of Sikhs under Lieutenant Harley were to capture the summer house where the mine began, destroy it and return with prisoners if possible. The party left by a gate in the eastern wall at 4 p.m. on 17th April.

They were ordered to use only bayonets in the initial assault. They captured the summer house and killed the miners. Harley then placed the 110 pounds of powder which they carried to destroy the mine and returned to the fort. The operation had taken one hour and he had lost five dead and thirteen wounded.

The following night a messenger from Colonel Kelly arrived with the information that Colonel Kelly's relief force was only two marches away and that Sher Afzul and his men had fled.

The Siege of forty-seven days had ended.

Source "The Relief of Chitral" By G. Y. and F. E. Younghusband.

IN THE NEWS

By B. J. Videon

A.A.T.T.V. GETS CITATION.

A recent Press Release by Army says that the A.A.T.T.V. has been awarded the American Meritorious Unit Citation. This is a fine indication of the value of the work of these Australian advisers and trainers in the South Vietnam conflict.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY EMBLEM.

An Australian Army Emblem has been approved for use when the use of the General Service Badge would not be appropriate.

The design of the emblem is a bounding Kangaroo superimposed on crossed swords, points uppermost, over which is the St. Edward's Crown. This is a similar in design to a vehicle marking sign at present in use.

The Emblem is NOT for wear on uniform or as an item of dress embellishment, but is for use on certain types of military publications and may also be used on sporting uniforms, army plaques, cuff-links and the like.

CIGARETTE CARDS BECOMING MORE POPULAR.

Melbourne dealer, Mr. J.B. Hirsh, seems to be importing some very interesting military and para-military cigarette cards these days. The hobby of cartophily is not new, and ranks a close second to philately and numismatics in its interest and historic value.

Cigarette cards have depicted military and kindred subjects from the earliest times, and some of the Old Boer War issues are now very valuable.

Sets now being brought into Melbourne seem to be mainly those of the pre-WW2

years, and they are proving to be quite an attraction.

RHODESIAN AIR FORCE.

New badges have been announced by the Rhodesian Air Force following that country's partition from the crown. In the fortnightly paper "Rhodesian Commentary", three badges are illustrated on the front page of the edition Vol.4, No. 10 of May, 1970.

They are:

Cap badge for officer of Air Rank--similar to old British equivalent, except that the lion-and-crown have been replaced by a Zimbabwe Bird over the lion-and-tusk of Rhodesia, and the eagle is now a re-designed version of the bateleur eagle employed on the previous badge. Presumably the badge for other officers is similar but with the spray of leaves in place of the full wreath.

Cap badge for airmen--much like the South African cap badge in appearance, it comprises the lion-and-tusk emblem standing on the back of a bateleur eagle with outstretched wings, under which is a scroll with the word "RHODESIA".

Pilot badge--this flying badge has adopted a wing shape similar to the American, but the central shield device is similar to the previous one, with the lion-and-tusk replacing the crown.

The same article states that the ranks of Pilot Officer and Flying Officer have been re-named Air-Sub-lieutenant and Air Lieutenant respectively. These titles are more suitable than the old ones, which in many cases were quite incorrect descriptions of the rank held by certain officers. (R.A.A.F. please take note!)

Issue No. 8 of the same paper (April 1970) showed the new Rhodesian Air Force Ensign. It comprises the Rhodesian Flag in the top left corner, the main flag is pale blue, and the roundel of the R.A.F. is replaced by the Rhodesian roundel, which is an outer ring of green encircling a white area on which the lion-and-tusk device appears in gold.

R.A.A.F. 50th ANNIVERSARY.

March 1971 will see the end of the first fifty years of the R.A.A.F.

To mark the occasion, the Society is striking a commemorative medallion which will be available for sale by subscription initially, then later by open sale following public advertising. The copies sold to subscribers will be numbered serially, whereas those sold later will not be numbered. A register of subscribers will be kept and copies may be obtained later at cost.

Full details of the issue will be in next issue of SABRETACHE.

DESPATCHES

(Comments, queries and letters from our readers.)

THE NEW SOUTH WALES BORDER SCOUTS

From Lt. Col. P. V. Vernon

When the Commonwealth took over the Military Forces the scheme of organisation was promulgated in General Order No. 169, 27 July, 1903. Extracts from the Order were given in SABRETACHE, Vol. IV, Page 10, including : "New South Wales The Border Scouts to be disbanded."

A member subsequently asked for information on The Border Scouts. Not having read nor heard any answer, nor having found any facts, I recently examined the Government Gazettes, and found, in N.S.W. Defence Forces Gazette, 24 January, 1901 (published in N.S.W. Government Gazette), authority for "the formation of a Volunteer Corps of Scouts, to be designated 'The New South Wales Border Scouts', to be under the Volunteer Defence System", to take effect from 1 December, 1900.

The Peace Establishment and Distribution were given - 1 lieutenant, 3 sergeants (one being troop sergeant major), 1 trumpeter, 2 corporals, 18 troopers ; total, 25.

No record of any appointment as lieutenant in the corps, nor any clue as to the corps' location was traced. One suspects that the unit was never raised, but some member may, by now, have come across some information about The New South Wales Border Scouts.

TRIPLE DIAMOND COLOUR PATCH

From Mr. L. G. Ryan

Prompted by Mr. John Price's article in SABRETACHE of April 1970, in which he mentioned the double-diamond colour patches, used by the Independent Companies, I would like to direct a query to readers.

Which units wore a triple-diamond colour patch?

Some of these are displayed at the Australian War Memorial, but all enquiries regarding the wearers have proved fruitless. Perhaps a reader can help?

BOOK REVIEWS

Thanks to photolithography and some enterprising publishers it is now possible to obtain rare and long out of print books at more or less reasonable prices. I do not regard reprints offered to the public at more than \$30 as reasonable.

Nevertheless, publishers like Charles Tuttle, David and Charles Frederick Muller and Arms and Armour are to be congratulated, for without them these books would only be available in libraries.

REGIMENTAL BADGES WORN IN THE BRITISH ARMY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO:

By Edward Almack

A facsimile edition published by Frederick Muller Ltd. London, 92 pp, \$9.60.

This volume was published in 1900 and was, in the words of the author, "reproduced in fac-simile from the pen and ink drawings in the note book of a silversmith of that time."

Seventy-four badges are illustrated against the background of either cross-belt plates, gorgets, or beltbuckles, together with explanatory text. A further five pages deal with silver epaulettes.

Two types of collectors will welcome this book: firstly the badge collectors and historians and secondly the collectors of military literature.

Let us hop that this publisher will issue more reasonably priced books dealing with uniforms as well as insignia.

A.N. Festberg.

RED ARMY UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA, 1944:

Arms and Armour Press,
London, 41pp, \$2.75.

In 1944, the War Office published this little volume which in latter years became a collectors item.

Now it is available to every collector at a very low price.

Let us hope that Arms and Armour will give us many more useful reproductions.

A.N. Festberg.

DRESS REGULATIONS FOR THE ARMY 1900: 126 pp. text and 79 pp. of illustrations.

David & Charles reprints, \$10.00, also
Arms and Armour Press, \$10.30.

Sure this must be the first time that two firms published the same book and released it on the same day.

Having compared both books with the original 1900 edition, I can only highly recommend either edition. The extra 30 cents are apparently for the introduction by W. Carman.

A.N. Festberg

THE STANDARD CATALOGUE OF BRITISH ORDERS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS:

By E. C. Joslyn.

Spink & Son Ltd., 114 pp. \$5.95 in
bookshops, \$4.50 in coinshops.

This valuable little book is in fact the SPINK catalogue for 1969 with variations. Most medals are illustrated and priced. It should be a useful guide for medal collectors and don't forget the exchange rate.

FLAGS: By I.O. Evans, published by Hamlyn, London and Sun Books, Melbourne. All-colour paperback, 156 pp. price \$0.99.

Here is a concise reference book to the world's flags. It is divided into regional sections each beautifully illustrated and clearly described.

Unfortunately, like most books on this subject, it will be out of date sooner than it deserves.

This book is a must and can be afforded by everybody.

A.N. Festberg.

BLUNDERBUSSES: By D.R. Baxter, published by Arms and Armour Press, London, U.K. Hard-backed, 78 pp., illustrated. Price in U.K. 30/- net. Obtainable at all good bookshops.

In this book, the Arms and Armour Press has continued to offer great pleasure and enjoyment at a reasonable price to the enthusiast in the speciality of blunderbusses.

Based on the examples of this antique weapon with which the author has come into contact, this book obviously does not cover the whole field of blunderbusses, but it is nevertheless quite a comprehensive work, and one which is so well illustrated and described, that it can not fail to be as informative as it is enjoyable.

In it, the author discusses the reasons for belling the mouths of firearms to give the 'blunderbus' effect, and traces the weapon from its early origins in sixteenth century Germany until June 1958, when a man in London was injured when an antique blunderbus which he was heating with a blowlamp went off, firing a 1½" rusty iron ball into his stomach!

Like all of the Arms and Armour "Illustrated Monographs", this one is beautifully printed on excellent paper, the photographs and other illustrations are clear and relevant, and altogether, this is another "must" for the firearms enthusiast.

B.J. Videon

NAVAL SWORDS: By P.G.W. Annis, published by Arms and Armour Press, London, U.K. Hard-backed, 80 pp., illustrated. Price in U.K. 30/- net. Obtainable at all good bookshops.

Like the above, this is another in the series "Illustrated Monographs", and, like it, the same excellence of production prevails throughout.

The title is a little disappointing, unless you look for the small secondary title, which qualifies it....."British and American Naval Edged Weapons 1660-1815". The publishers are careful to point out, however, that this was the period in which the great naval deeds were performed, the era in which the Royal Navy came to the front, and in which the United States Navy came into being. During these years, naval swords were actually carried to be used, not merely as an addition to the naval dress.

With the aid of sketches, reproductions of paintings, and photographs of actual swords or parts thereof, the author has set out to tell the story of the naval edged weapon in this period of time, and in his work he has dealt with swords, cutlasses and dirks of naval and non-naval designs, used by naval officers and ratings. These are variously ornate or strictly utilitarian, but all are old and all are interesting.

To the student or collector who will never be able to acquire such a weapon, this book will probably be something of a 'tease', but he, like the more fortunate collector who has the odd specimen, will find it full of interest and enjoyment, and, despite the fact that only black and white illustrations can be used at this low price, of artistic merit.

The reviewer can only hope that the story of the naval edged weapon from 1815 to the present day may be produced in the same form to bring the tale right up to date.

Other interesting subjects in the series are:

Flintlock Pistols, by F. Wilkinson,
Rapiers, by E. Valentine,
Japanese Armour, by L. J. Anderson, and

French Army Regiments and Uniforms, by W.A. Thorburn, previously reviewed in this journal. A great little library of high class reference books.

B.J. Videon

WANTED TO PURCHASE - Double and triple diamond flashes worn by Australian Commando Companies in WWII; also flashes or wings worn by Australian paratroops of the same period.

John Price, Flat 7, 16 Barrett Street, CHELTENHAM, Victoria, 3192.

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DIRECTORY AMENDMENTS

JULY, 1970

NEW MEMBERS:

- (358) Lt. Col. D. R. STROBAUGH, 2549 Edgemont Drive, SAN BERNARDO, Calif., U.S.A. 92404. (Collects Military Parachutist Wings of the World).
- (359) Mr. A. B. REYNOLDS, "The Musket & Pike", WILLIAMSBURG, Virginia, U.S.A. 23185. (Subscriber to the Journal).
- (360) Mr. G. REIMANN-BASCH, J.P., 445 Victoria Street, MELBOURNE, Vic. 3000. (General interest in matters military).
- (361) Mr. R. GREEN, Flat 4, 15 Wheatland Rd., MALVERN, Vic. 3144. (Dealer in Militaria).
- (362) SSG. G. S. O'BRIEN, 65 West St., HYDE PARK, MASS. U.S.A. 02136. (Collects cloth shoulder patches).
- (363) Capt. M.G. LANGLEY, M.C., 108 Field Bty. RAA, SELARANG, C/o G.P.O. SINGAPORE. (General interests esp. Uniforms).
- (364) Mrs. N.K. PHILLIPS, C/o Dept. of History, R.S.S.S., Australian National University, CANBERRA. A.C.T. 2600. (Interests unknown).
- (365) Mr. J. G. P. HUNT, 38 Charnwood Road, ST. KILDA, VIC. 3182. (British military cap badges (past - 1881), esp. of cavalry regiments).
- (367) Mr. M. J. VOYZEY, 101 Crown Street, WEST TAMWORTH, N.S.W. 2340. (Collects Medals & Badges).
- (369) Mr. W. C. BARNARD, 12 Moonga Rd., TOORAK, Vic. 3142. (Decorations & Insignia etc. of Aust.).
- (370) Mr. G. R. TROOD, Central Army Records Office, Albert Park Barracks, MELBOURNE, Vic. 3206. (Medals, Shoulder Insignia, etc.).
- (371) Mr. M. VON BROMSSEN, C/o ASEA Electrics, Beresford Road, LILYDALE, Vic. 3140. (Interests unknown).

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

- (159) Mr. W. HALM, to C/o 15 Doris St., PANORAMA, S.A. 5041.
- (263) Pte. P. AITKEN to 60 Victoria Street, DONCASTER, Vic. 3108.
- (297) Mr. P. LANG to 92 Tannock Street, NORTH BALWYN, Vic. 3104.

DIRECTORY AMENDMENTS (CONT'D)

- (306) AIC. P. A. McMULLEN to 631 Combat Support Group, A.P.O.,
SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., U.S.A. 96303.
- (347) Mr. B. B. GOLDING to R.A.A.C. Centre, PUCKAPUNYAL, Vic. 3662.
- (366) Mr. R. J. TAYLOR to 41 Robertson Street, MORWELL, Vic. 3840.
- (298) Mr. R. A. HALE to 12 Reichelt Avenue, MONTMORENCY, Vic. 3094.
- (6) Sgt. R.V.M. DUX to 61 Ringrose Street, STAFFORD, QLD. 4063.

