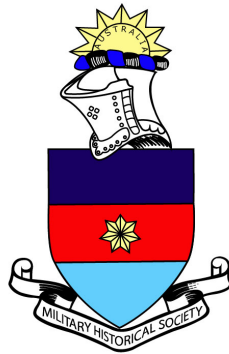


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALIA



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JANUARY, 1978

No. 1

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"SABRETACHE"

JOURNAL AND PROCEEDINGS OF
THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALIA
(FOUNDED IN MELBOURNE IN 1957)



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Featured on Cover:

*Victorian Volunteer Light Horse, c. 1860. This is the oldest
known Australian uniform in existence and is in the collection of
Rex Clark*

Published by authority of the Federal Council of the Military Historical Society of Australia. The views expressed in the articles in this Journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Society.

ISSN 0048-8933

THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

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The aims of the Society are the encouragement 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.

Membership is open to all, subject to payment of \$10.00 annual subscription (due 1st July each year). Overseas applicants are advised that airmail delivery of Sabretache is available for an additional sum of \$4.00 (all rates in Australian currency).

All members will receive Sabretache, the journal of the Society, which is published quarterly. Contributions are welcomed from members and non-members but must further the Society's aims.

Correspondence and contributions should be addressed to the Federal Secretary, P.O. Box 67, Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602.

BRANCH SECRETARIES

A.C.T. — Mr. K. R. WHITE, P.O. Box 67, Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602.

VICTORIA — Mr. R. J. KIRK, 18 Osborne Court, Hawthorn, Vic. 3122.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA — Mr. A. F. HARRIS, 29 Jervois Avenue, Magill, S.A. 5072

WESTERN AUSTRALIA — Branch President: Mr. P. A. SHAW, Unit 2, 9 Streckland Street, South Perth, W.A. 6151.

FORMER CGS DIES IN VICTORIA

Lieutenant-General Sir Alwyn Ragnar Garrett, KBE, CB, aged 77, died in Mornington Hospital on 4 November 1977. He was Chief of the General Staff from 23 March 1958 until 30 June 1960.

FORMER RAF CHIEF DIES IN W.A.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Basil Edward Embry, GCB, KBE, DSO, DFC, AFC, died at Boyup Brook, near Albany in Western Australia, on 8 December 1977, aged 75. He was Commander-in-Chief of RAF Fighter Command 1949-53, Commander Allied Air Force Central Europe 1953-55, and during World War II earned three bars to his DSO won in Waziristan 1937-38. Sir Basil came to Australia to farm after retiring from the RAF and was elected general president of the WA Farmers Union in 1971. He retired after suffering a stroke in 1975. He is survived by his widow, three sons and a daughter. Sir Basil's uniforms are in the possession of MHSa for display purposes.

Sir Basil's autobiography, "Mission Completed", was published in London in 1956, and his escape from occupied France in the summer of 1940 was the subject of Anthony Richardson's 1950 book, "Wingless Victory".

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

The Federal Council made the following decisions at its last meeting:

1. Annual subscriptions are to be increased to \$15 as from 1 July 1978.
2. Costs for advertising are to be increased to \$20 per full page as from 1 April 1978 (pro-rata rates for smaller areas of a page).
3. A Society Fellowship is to be initiated and is to be for award to deserving members in recognition of their outstanding efforts and contributions to the Society and/or in recording Australia's proud military heritage.

1 and 2 above have become necessary to keep pace with current financial trends. They are due to rising costs and inflation. When it is kept in mind that \$10 has been the subscription for many years without any increase I think you might agree that both increases are necessary and justified.

Another means of helping our overall financial problem is recruitment. If each of us made a concerted effort and recruited one new member for the Society this would alleviate all of our immediate financial worries as well as putting our membership over the 1000 mark. Please see what you can do to enlarge our numbers.

I think you will agree that our journal is definitely going forward. This improvement in the main, is due to the efforts of our new editor. To assist him with further improvement your constructive comments and suggestions would be welcomed.

Currently we are negotiating with the three Services within the Defence Force for a situation whereby biographical type information on past members of the Australian Forces may be sought or verified for those of you who wish to preface articles, etc.

Federal Council wishes to acknowledge the donations to Society funds of Mr. W. Mackay, Lt. Col. W. Crooks and Major J. J. Frewen. The very generous sum provided by Major Frewen will be used to partly finance the Society's forthcoming publication of the autobiography of Air Commodore R. J. Brownell, CBE, MC, MM. The book, entitled "From Khaki to Blue", covers the author's service in both World Wars and utilises his unique collection of several hundred photographs (mostly taken by himself) of Gallipoli, England, France and Italy. Members are urged not to miss this publication.

REPORT OF THE FEDERAL SECRETARY FOR YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE, 1977

To say the least, the past year has been a period of transition for the Society, marked by a number of pleasing results, coupled with some problems to which I shall refer later. However it is my considered view that the Society is on the threshold of a period of expansion and it is up to every member to do his bit to assist the Society to secure its rightful place as the upholder, and recorder of Australia's proud military heritage.

I have much pleasure in announcing that General Sir John Wilton, KBE, CB, DSO, has accepted the Society's invitation to become Patron and we intend to ensure that the Society lives up to the great honour that Sir John has extended to us. On behalf of the past Federal Council and with the concurrence of your new Council, I would extend our sincere thanks to our past Patron, Major Warren Perry, ED, MA, BEc, FRHSV, for his services to the Society and to military history.

The membership of the Society has progressed, during the past year, to approximately 350, an indefinite figure because of the number of unpaid members as at 30th June, 1977. Since 30th June, we have gained 32 new members and the rate of enquiries has increased in such a way to indicate that the Society has achieved a wide acceptance by the community.

During the 1976-77 year two notable events worthy of special comment occurred, namely the formation of the Albury/Wodonga Branch. This event was mainly due to the efforts of President Don Campbell and while the Branch is small in numbers, the members make up for this lack with a massive enthusiasm. In the short period they have been formed, they have assisted in the setting up of the RAAOC Museum at Bandiana, and are in the process of setting up their own Museum in Albury. The second event was the opening of the Caloundra Military Museum by Mr Ken Hughes. The Museum was set up by Mr Hughes, who is a military vehicle enthusiast, with the assistance of a number of people including Society members Rex Clark, John Frewen, Ian Skennerton and myself. The Museum located at Caloundra, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, is without doubt the best of its type in Australia, excluding the Australian War Memorial, and includes many rare exhibits which the Society was able to obtain, on loan, for inclusion in the display.

The Society has been the recipient of many enquiries on Australia's military history, from Federal and State Government bodies, members and

private citizens and these have entailed a vast amount of correspondence, often causing delays in answering letters of a more routine nature.

It is in relationship to this correspondence that I should report that the postage in the attached set of accounts only relates to the mailing of Sabretache, the balance of Society correspondence being paid by the ACT Branch to the extent of some \$75.00, which amount may be considered a donation by the Branch to Federal Council.

I mentioned problems in my opening paragraph and consider that all members should be aware of the difficulties under which we have operated during the past 12 months. During 1976-77, your Council lost the active services of the President, Assistant Secretary, Editor of Sabretache and the Treasurer was restricted in the performance of his duties due to circumstances beyond his control. As a result of the workload of running the Society fell to myself, with the assistance of Rex Clark and a number of other ACT members, working on an ad hoc basis pending the appointment of a new Council. My sincere thanks to those members who helped out during this difficult period.

The second major problem has been finance, the lack of which has restricted the issue of Sabretache and resulted in the continual late issue of each edition. We have a most tolerant and generous printer, namely Derek Kelly, who has always given us a very generous deal in the cost of Sabretache however we cannot expect to live on charity and if we are to produce four issues per year it is obvious that we will have to increase subscriptions in the year from 1st July, 1978. As mentioned in the last issue of Sabretache, your Council is investigating methods to restrict any increase, however it is obvious from the attached financial report that our subscription rate is not sufficient to allow four issues a year. Inflation has affected our lives for the past four years and we have held our subscription static during this period, but the time is past when we can exist on the present rate. It is therefore recommended that the rate from 1st July, 1978 be \$15.

Since 30th June, 1977 we have received a very good response to our request for donations to assist the Society and these will certainly help us to meet our commitments for the current year, but in the long term, members must be prepared to pay the full cost of publishing Sabretache.

To conclude on a brighter note, we now have a new Federal Council, all actively interested in ensuring that the Society continues to enhance its reputation as the leading Society in its field and we look forward to a continually increasing membership and a better Society.

K.R. WHITE
Federal Secretary

Note. Due to unforeseen circumstances it was not possible for cash due from ACT Branch to be paid as at 30th June, 1977, however the amount has been included in the above Statement to show the true relationship of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ended 30th June, 1977. The balance due has since been paid, as have receipts by the Branch since 1st July, 1977.

K.R. WHITE
Federal Secretary

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE, 1977

CASH BOOK SUMMARY YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 1977

Balance brought forward 1st July, 1976	1.58
Add deposits	<u>2723.09</u>
	2724.09
Less Payments	<u>2710.00</u>
Balance carried forward 30th June, 1977	14.67

BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 30th JUNE, 1977

Balance as per Bank Statement 30th June 1977	714.67
Less outstanding cheque 442422	<u>700.00</u>
Balance as per Cash Book	<u>14.67</u>

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE, 1977

75/76	Income	76/77	75/76	Expenditure	76/77
540.49	Balance B/F	1.58	2331.00	Printing Sabretache	2710.00
1931.17	Subscriptions	2616.83	99.62	Postage 153.74	
	Owed by ACT Branch	265.00		less	
5.00	Advertising	40.00		receipts <u>8.50</u>	145.24
22.00	Donations	50.00		Payment due to	
18.90	Miscellaneous Receipts	2.50		ACT Branch	111.26
8.24	Bank Interest	5.26		94.00 Other Payments	
				<u>1.58</u> Balance C/F 30 Jun 77	<u>14.67</u>
<u>2526.20</u>		<u>2981.17</u>	<u>2526.20</u>		<u>2981.17</u>

DONATION

Federal Council wishes to acknowledge with thanks the gift to Society Funds
of Mr R.H. Leffler

S.A. BRANCH REPORT

The S.A. Branch is picking up its feet now after a spell in the doldrums - both our Branch membership and monthly attendances seem to be on the way up. We have had several successful and most interesting meetings so far this year, including a return visit to the Pitt Collection of Arms at Fort Largs (recommended to interstate visitors), our delightfully informal Annual Dinner, and an evening displaying and discussing items of Naval origin. Future meetings planned are:

Feb. 10th — Talk on Medals by David Matthews.

Mar. 10th — Film (probably "Culloden").

Apr. 14th — Auction.

May 12th — Talk - The S.A. Braendlin-Albini rifle.

Jun. 9th — Competition night.

Jul. 14th — Annual General Meeting.

Our meetings are regularly held at Keswick Barracks on the second Friday of each month. Any interstate members visiting Adelaide are invited to attend any of our meetings. If you are over our way between meetings get in touch anyway and we will try to introduce you to some of our Branch members and collections. We look forward to meeting you someday soon!

In closing, I remind members of the items that the S.A. Branch is advertising in this Journal (T-shirts and A.M.F. Puggarees). All orders will be promptly attended to.

With best wishes to all Branches from the S.A. Branch.

WANTED

TO COMPLETE SET — 1930-42 INFANTRY 6 Bn. City of Melbourne, 30 Bn. 1st Type, 37 Bn. and 41 Bn.

Will pay top prices for these items — Some swops available

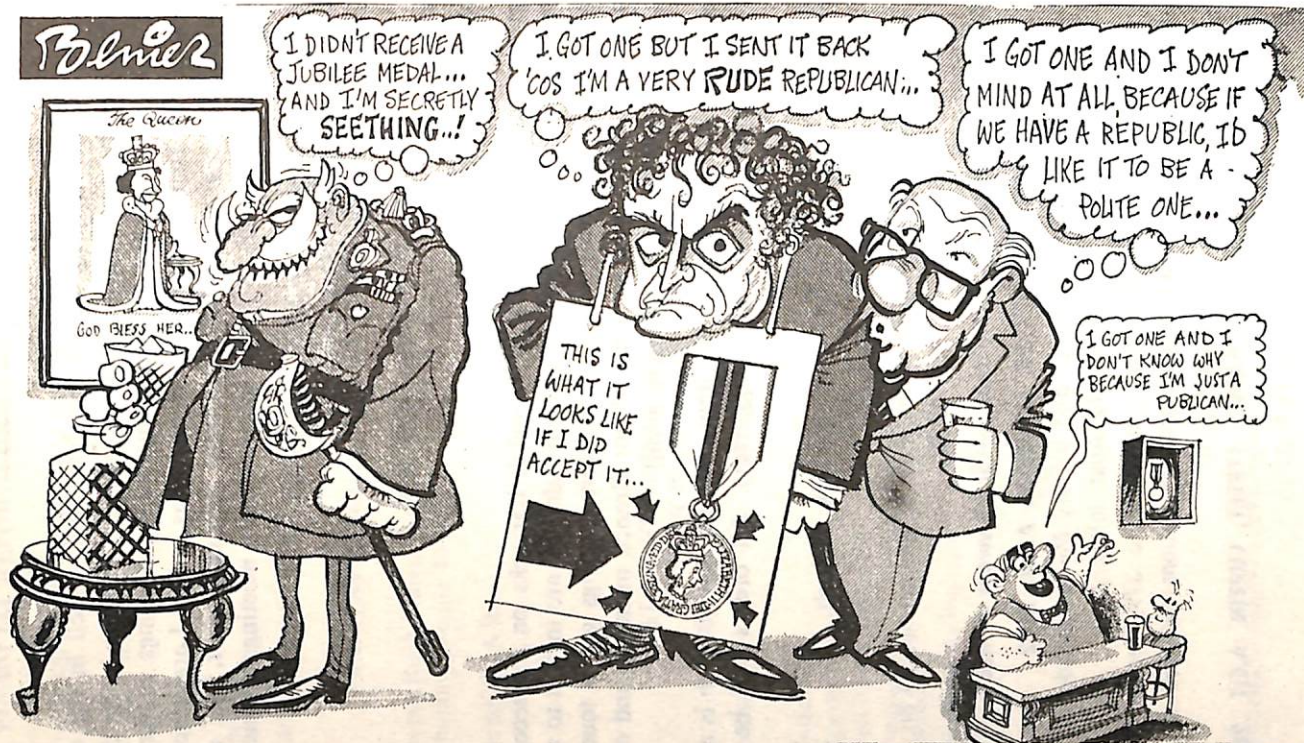
K. R. WHITE, P.O. BOX 68, LYNEHAM, A.C.T. 2602

WANTED: 1914-15 STAR, British War Medal, and Victory Medal, awarded to 1406 Sgt. Sydney W. M. Hillman, 12/Aust. Infantry.

Also: 1914-15 Star, and Gallipoli Medallion, awarded to 379 Lieutenant Frederick Gawler. Will purchase or swap other medals and decorations awarded to Australian recipients.

Contact — MARTIN KENNEDY, 28 HAINES STREET, CURTIN, A.C.T. 2605.

Bolner



(Reproduced with permission of the "Daily Mirror", Sydney)

THE LONG AND MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIAL AND EARLY COMMONWEALTH FORCES

By P. BURNES

By Royal Warrant dated 30 July 1830 King William IV instituted a silver medal for award to soldiers of irreproachable character who had served 21 years in the infantry, or 20 years in the cavalry. This "Long Service and Good Conduct" medal was the first medal adopted for recognition of personal service in the British Army. It is still awarded today, although the qualifying period is now 18 years in the Permanent or Regular forces. The original Long Service and Good Conduct Medal featured a design by B. Pistrucci of the arms of King William within a military trophy. The reverse simply bore the words, "For Long Service and Good Conduct". The medal was suspended from a plain maroon ribbon.

When Queen Victoria came to the throne she retained the Long Service Medal, although the arms of Hanover on the Monarch's arms were deleted from the design. In addition she instituted further awards for personal services. The Meritorious Service Medal, and the Distinguished Conduct Medal were introduced in 1845, and two years later the Victoria Cross was instituted. Of these, only the Victoria Cross was also available to officers. All the awards were suspended from maroon ribbons (so too was the C.B. for officers), except that the D.C.M. ribbon had a thick central blue stripe.

The Meritorious Service Medal was introduced for award to selected Warrant Officers and Sergeants after long and meritorious service, and was accompanied by an annuity. It was not then possible to receive both the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal. A close affinity existed between both medals because of the terms of their award. This was maintained until 1902 when it was stipulated that one person could henceforth receive and wear both medals. In 1917 the separation was completed with the introduction of distinctive ribbons for each medal.

The subject of the award of the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in the Australian colonies was first raised in 1891 when 3 artillerymen of the N.S.W. Permanent Artillery, having completed 20 years service, applied for medals. The question of their eligibility for the awards was passed to the British War Office through the Agent General. The medals were not forthcoming, however the War Office recommended that New South Wales should seek approval to issue its own Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and Meritorious Service Medals. Arising from this, each of the Australian colonies was then invited to seek approval for the award of Long Service and Meritorious Service Medals for their local permanent forces under War Office regulations adapted to suit their circumstances.

These awards were subsequently discussed by the Australian and New Zealand military forces' authorities. Finally on 22 March 1893 a request seeking approval for local medals was sent to the Imperial Government from the Agents General of New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland, New Zealand, South Australia, West Australia and Victoria. The request received favourable consideration and on 24 May 1894 a Royal Warrant was issued authorising the award of medals under Regulations similar to those of the British Regular Forces. This Royal Warrant was afterwards cancelled and one dated 31 May 1895 substituted.

The design of the medals to be issued in the Australasian colonies was to be identical to those on the medals issued to the Imperial Forces, except that the name of each Colony would be included in the wording on the reverse. The obverse of the Meritorious Service Medal was also updated so that the effigy of Her Majesty was the latest one. In addition to the inclusion of the name of each colony on the medals, it was further recommended that each colony be distinguished by a $\frac{1}{8}$ " coloured line down the centre of the medal's ribbon. The Colonies were allowed the choice of colour, and those accepted finally were:

New South Wales: Dark Blue.

Queensland: Light Blue.

Victoria: Nil.

South Australia: Nil.

Tasmania: Pink.

New Zealand: Light Green.

Conditions for the award of the colonial Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and the Meritorious Service Medals were not published until 1897 and the first awards were announced late that year. The awards followed closely the con-

ditions of their British counterparts. The Long Service Medals were awarded to N.C.O.s and men of irreproachable character after 18 years service. The Meritorious Service Medal was for men above the rank of Corporal who had rendered meritorious service. The medals were suspended from identical ribbons and it was not possible to hold both medals.

The Australasian colonial long and meritorious service medals were produced by the Royal Mint at the expense of each colony. Before issue the rank, name and unit of the recipient was engraved or stamped on the rim by a local contractor. There is evidence of the Long Service and Good Conduct Medals having been awarded in Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, and South Australia although exact numbers are not available. An indication of the small numbers awarded is given by the award of 14 Long Service Medals and 5 Meritorious Service Medals from recommendations submitted for 1891-98 in N.S.W. and the award of 3 Long Service Medals and one Meritorious Service Medal in Queensland in the three years from 1899-1903.

For the period up to 1903, when the colonial medals were issued, there are only two recorded unauthorised departures from the regulations. The first occurred in New South Wales, and the second in South Australia. In 1902 it was reported that recipients of the N.S.W. Long Service and Good Conduct Medals wore the medal with a narrow dark blue stripe on the maroon ribbon while those with the Meritorious Service Medal wore a different ribbon in-as-much as it had a thick dark blue stripe. The latter ribbon was in fact identical to that worn with the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and instructions were accordingly issued to have the ribbons replaced. However, there is evidence that this was not done by recipients who had already retired from the service. In the second instance there is a recorded issue of both the South Australian Meritorious Service Medal, and Long Service Medal to the widow of the late Barrack Sergeant Major C. H. Moritz, S.A. Permanent Artillery. In 1902 the Commandant of the South Australian Forces advised that, "no copy of any Regulations governing the issue of Medals in this state can be found". This probably accounts for the error.

The death of Queen Victoria in 1902 required a change in design of those medals previously featuring the old monarch's effigy. This change was also applied to the design of the British and Colonial Long Service and Good Conduct, and Distinguished Conduct Medals. Subsequently the long service and meritorious service medals were struck with the effigy of King Edward VII on the obverse. The reverse, and medal ribbons, remained unchanged.

Following the Federation of the Australian States in 1901, Defence passed to the responsibility of the new Commonwealth Government. Accordingly, it was decided that the long service and meritorious service medals should be changed to have a universal ribbon for all states and the words "Commonwealth of Australia" replace the name of each colony on the reverses. In designing the new medal ribbons it was decided that something distinctly Australian be considered. The designs submitted to the War Office were:

LSGC Medal: Gold ribbon with single $\frac{1}{8}$ " dark green central stripe.

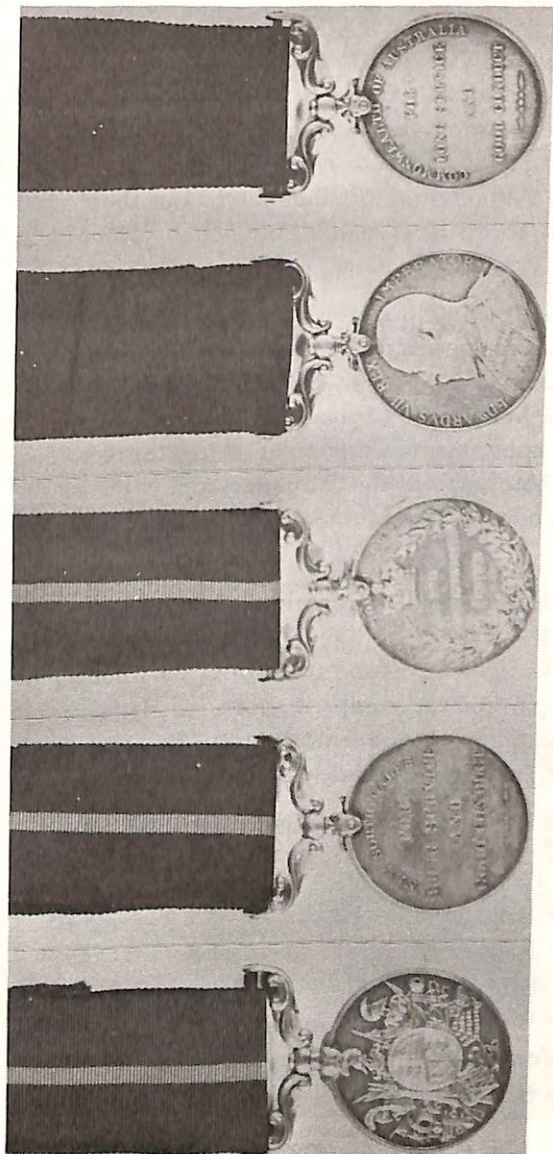
MS Medal: Gold ribbon with double $\frac{1}{8}$ " dark green stripes.

The designs for the new medals, which retained the effigy of King Edward VII on the obverse, were duly approved. However, the Imperial authorities advised that they were reluctant to depart from maroon as the basic colour for the medal ribbons. Subsequently, a compromise was reached with the Long Service Medal's ribbons being maroon with a single green stripe, and the Meritorious Service Medal the same but with double stripes.

The new medals arrived from the Royal Mint in 1904. It was then proposed that all awards made since 22 January 1901 be returned and the new medals issued in their place. Commonwealth General Orders of 1902 announcing the new medals advised that both the long service and the meritorious service medals could be awarded to the one individual although in such circumstances only the latter was to be worn. However, very soon afterwards General Orders advised that both medals could be worn, as similar instructions had recently been issued in the British Army.

The Commonwealth of Australia Long Service and Good Conduct Medal continued in use until 1910, when it was announced that a new medal, "The Long Service and Good Conduct in the Permanent Forces of the Empire beyond the Seas," would replace it. However, the Commonwealth of Australia Meritorious Service Medal continued to be issued. The obverse of the Meritorious Service Medal and the medal's ribbon remained unchanged although it was necessary to change the medal's obverse with each change of monarch. The Long Service Medal worn by the British Army (which had meantime undergone some changes itself) was reintroduced in Australia in 1931. It hung from a suspender with the words "AUSTRALIA" on it. The ribbon was maroon with white edges. The same ribbon is worn by the British Army.

The most recent chapter in the story of the award of medals for long service in the Australian Army was written recently with the issue of National Medals for 15 years service, under the new Australian honours and awards system (see previous issues of "Sabretache").



1. N.S.W. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Obverse). Central stripe on ribbon is dark blue. 2. N.S.W. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Reverse). 3. N.S.W. Meritorious Service Medal (Reverse). Ribbon was the same as worn on the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. 4. Original Commonwealth of Australia Meritorious Service Medal (Obverse). Ribbon is maroon with double green stripe. 5. Original Commonwealth of Australia Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (Reverse). Ribbon is maroon with single green stripe.

THE BRASSEY MEDAL

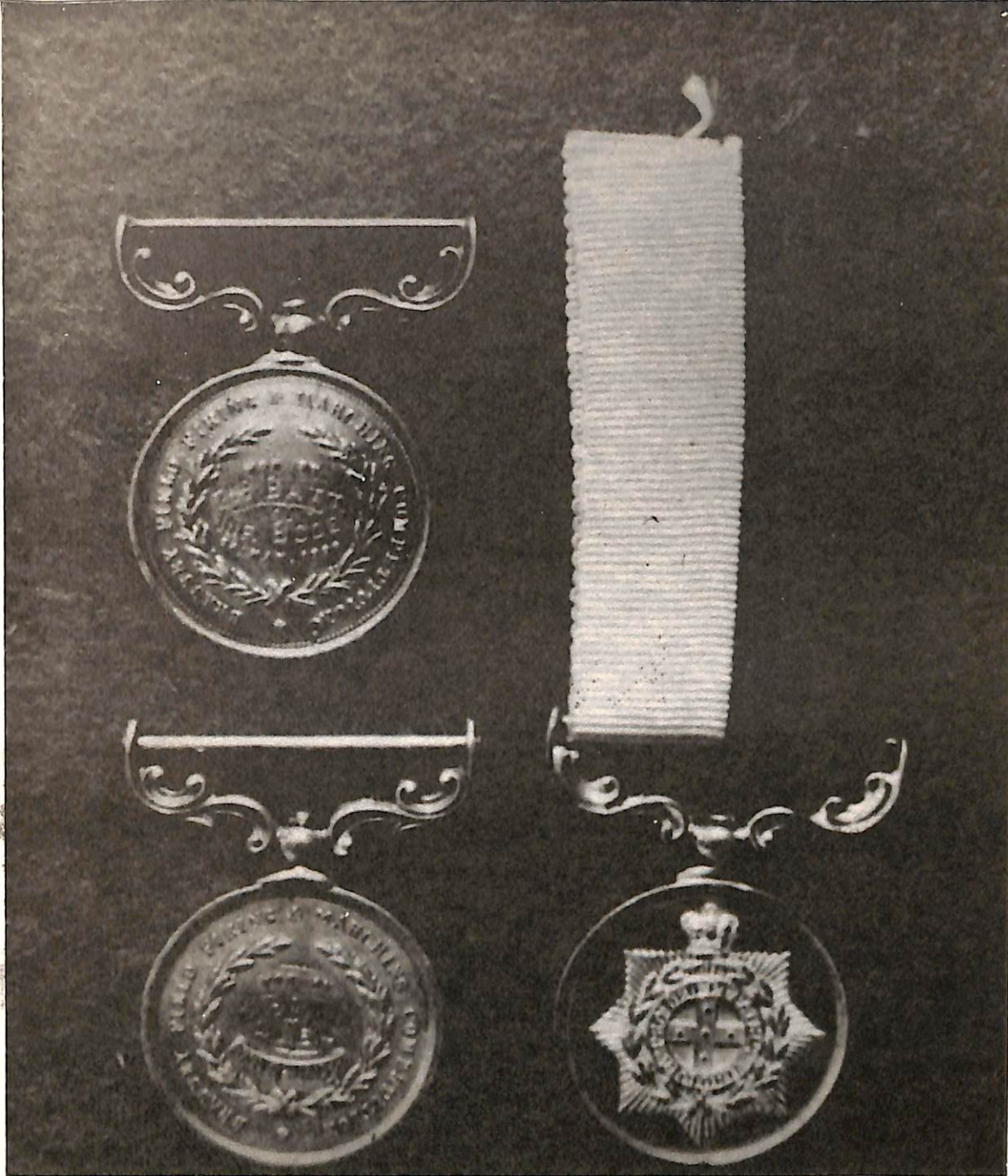
By R. CLARK

In 1896 the then Governor of Victoria, Lord Thomas Brassey¹, an enthusiastic supporter of the Local Forces introduced a competition known as the Brassey Field Firing and Marching Competition. Each member of the winning battalion was awarded a silver medal suspended from a ribbon of equal division of white and bright red brown (Plate 1). Although approximately 100 of these medals were awarded each year from 1896 to 1901 (around 500 issued - less than Suakin medals), specimens are now very rare and command high prices.

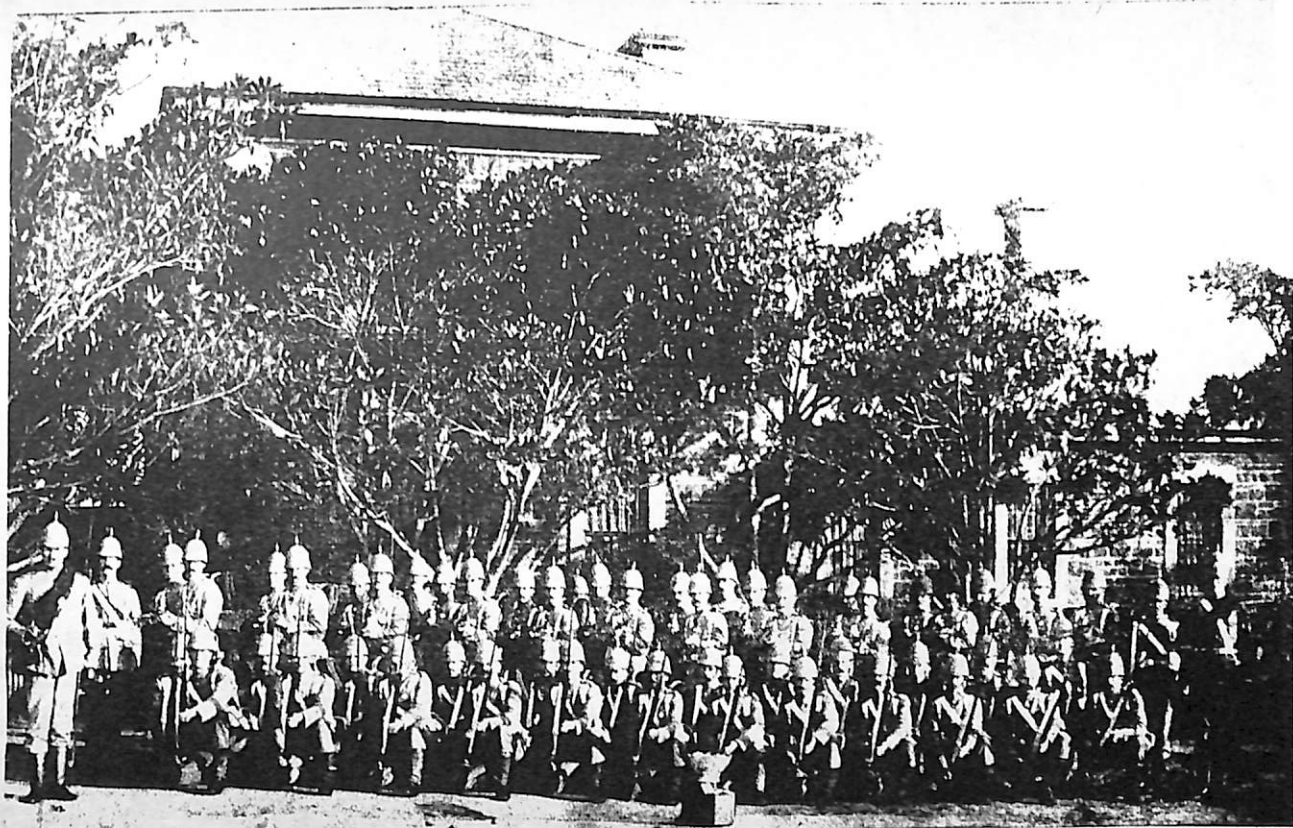
On the reverse of the medal the detail of the winning team and date of award is engraved, and around the rim is engraved/stamped the recipients rank, initials, name and in some cases his company. Those medals awarded for 1899 have cast as part of the medal the date '4 May 1899' (Type 3). The type of suspender varies as is illustrated in the photographs, the most popular being the scroll suspender (Type 2). However, from the photograph of the 'Brassey Trophy' those for the year 1896 at least, had a flat suspender (Type 1) which was fixed to the medal by a small ring.

In 1896 and 1897 a team comprised 1 Captain, 2 Lieutenants, 4 Sergeants, 4 Corporals, 46 Privates and 1 Bugler. In 1898 the size of teams was increased to 3 officers and 106 other ranks, which was the strength of an Infantry Company. The number of teams taking part in the competition varied each year with the main units being the infantry battalions of the First Infantry Brigade, the Victorian Mounted Rifles and the Victorian Rangers. The winning teams were:

Year	Winning Unit Team	Team (Medals) Strength of Awarded)	Type of Medal
1896	2nd Battalion, Infantry Brigade	58	Type 1
1897	2nd Battalion, Infantry Brigade	58	Type 2
1898	3rd Battalion, Infantry Brigade		
1899	2nd Battalion, Infantry Brigade	109	Type 3
1900	(Unable to find any reference for this year)		
1901	2nd Battalion, Infantry Brigade	109	Type 2



Brasseley Medals: Reverse of Type 3 at top; obverse and reverse of Type 2 at bottom



THE WINNING TEAM.

2nd Battalion, Infantry Brigade, the winning team of 1896.

Members of the winning team for 1896 (see Plate 2) were: Captain Evans,² Lieutenants Begg³ and Fuller⁴; Colour Sergeants Lane⁵ and Comins; Lance Sergeants Kilnain and Coffey; Corporals Conway, Jarvie, Stuart and Bell; Lance Corporals Lynch, Ridd, Hennessy, Dale, Bushell, Kimpton, Dowd, Biggsley, O'Brien, Wright, O'Rourke and Johnson; Bugler Robinson; Privates Blunder, Martin, Crooks, Hogan, Douglas, Robinson, Griffiths, Turner, Carpenter, Spurr, Benzie, Furbone H, Spriggins, Bilston, Conacher, Brown, Frike, Jackson, Buckingham, Furboro F, Campbell, Gray, Harris, Dickson, Payne, Plumridge, Nevin, Prior, Day, Read, Neyler, Newington, Johnson and Clark⁶.

It would appear that some winning team members (2nd Bn Inf) won the medal on more than one occasion, but it is doubtful if more than one medal was worn. The trophy consisted of a beautifully worked solid silver vase in the shape of a bowl. The medals for 1896 and 1897 had the flat suspenders, but it is thought that later issues had a scroll-type suspender. The terms of the competition allowed the winning team to hold the trophy for one year, and the first team to win it twice, not necessarily consecutively, became the possessor of the trophy.

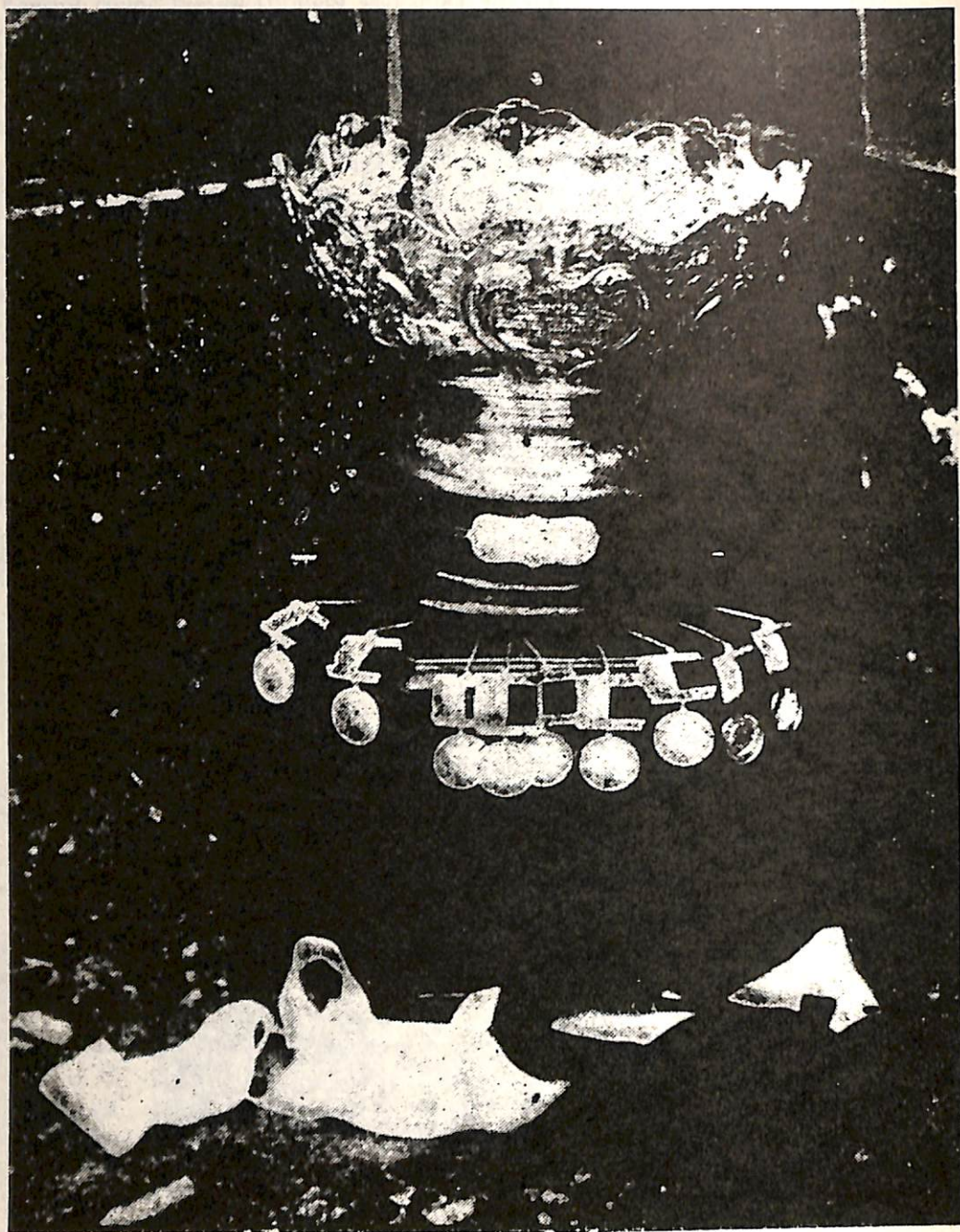
If the conditions were followed then the trophy should have remained with the 2nd Battalion (Melbourne).

A newspaper, "The Kyneton Observer", on Thursday 25 May, 1899, gave the following detail on the Brassey Competitions:

'The competition includes marching, field firing and camp pitching, and valuable prizes are given. The first is a trophy value £25; presented by His Excellency the Governor; 109 silver medals and £100. Companies competing were compelled to march 9 miles in 4 hours, then fire 13 rounds under certain conditions at targets representing an enemy in position; march to camping ground; about 2½ miles and pitch tents.'

The Results (1899)

Company	Points Deducted			Total Deductions	Points Gained Field Firing	Points Gained Tent Pitching (24)	Total Points Gained	Net Total	Order of Merit
	For Overtime on March	Fire Discipline Drill	Arms Dress Equipment						
2nd Bn Inf Bde	-	3	5	8	258	21	279	271	1
3rd Bn Inf Bde	-	8	2	10	256	21	279	269	2
1st Bn Inf Bde	-	8	7	15	254	20	274	259	3
1st Bn Rangers	-	5	13	18	212	18	230	212	4
1st Bn Mtd Rifles	10	15	5	30	222	19	341	211	5



THE BRASSEY TROPHY.

The rarity of these medals is caused by multiple awards to the same individual. Any reader who has a Brassey Medal please forward details to the author who is preparing a roll of recipients. A number of Brassey Medal winners are thought to have served in the Boer War and First AIF although none are known in groups.

- 1 BRASSEY, Thomas, 1st Earl Brassey (1836-1918), Governor of Victoria 1895 to 1900. Founder of the Navy Annual. Raised to peerage in 1886 and created an earl in 1911.
- 2 John Evans, VD (Hon Colonel 3 MD), born 27.12.58; first commissioned 2nd Bn Inf 28.8.85; served First World War.
- 3 Begg, Arthur Morton (Capt), born 14.2.69; first commissioned 2nd Bn Inf 3.3.91.
- 4 Fuller, Robert Arnold (Capt), born 5.5.71; first commissioned 25.9.91; RofO 10.12.04.
- 5 Lane, F. (Colour Sgt), also awarded medal in 1897.
- 6 "Weekly Times" 20 June 1896, p. 13.

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WRITE FOR CURRENT LIST

DETENTE, ADELAIDE 1882

By F. GARIE*

A sign of peaceful respect or detente exists when a country welcomes the armed emissaries of a potentially aggressive and untrustworthy world-power with open arms. Such a case occurred in Adelaide during the week ending 3 March 1882.

As our past and present Military and Naval chiefs advise, a country or independent province should not rest upon its laurels in its attitude upon defence; rather it should within its means provide an adequate defence force and equipment to cope with the general conception of attack. Without going into the pros and cons of the reasons which exist to drive a country along the paths of either peace or self-enrichment, this brief account of what South Australia's defence potential was in 1882 is given as a comparison of not inapplicable relevance to the present.

On Sunday, 26 February 1882, a morning of clear and fine weather, the lookout station at Glenelg saw columns of heavy smoke coming from vessels making towards Glenelg from the entrance to St. Vincent's Gulf. Who were these unannounced visitors? They were the Russians. Was there cause for excitement and apprehension? Yes! To explain this apprehension, I must recite the prologue.

During her colonial period, S.A. was a free colony of the British Empire. By the time of the Crimean War in 1854, S.A.'s population and economic industry had enabled her to exist independently of England other than for heavy machinery amongst which was defence equipment. The Crimean War saw England and France opposed to the Russians. This was due to England's policy of controlling the balance of power in Europe and Russia's aggressive imperialism. Russia's aim persists today but along more "civilised" paths.

Obligingly, S.A. together with other British-founded colonies, supported England in her policies then, and until after the disintegration of the British Empire. This meant that, during the Empire period, S.A. was as much subject as England was to foreign invasion, particularly with regard to S.A.'s large food exports. Consequently S.A. had to arm herself in preparation for any sudden attack. Being 12,000 sea miles from England left S.A. isolated.

* This article is a brief summary of material extracted from the author's manuscript (in compilation) entitled "Fort Glanville and South Australian Defence 1836-1894"

Russia's Pacific squadron was based at Petropavlovsk less than half this distance away and with no Russian naval bases in the Indian Ocean at that time, Australia was fairly safe from attack. This sentence is incomplete without the mention of the coastal and sea-lane protection of the Australian Colonies by Britain's Australasian and China squadrons composed of cruisers and lesser vessels.

However, the Pacific was a large ocean to patrol. In addition to the British Navy's requirement for coaling bases and ports to be defended by land gun-batteries, for example at Sydney and Albany, this defence was also designed to protect the populace of those ports.

At the time of the Crimean War, Adelaide's means of defence were small and suitable only in case a landing was made. S.A.'s colonial governments in succession continuously debated the expenditure of moneys for defence, but by the time of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-8, little had been done. British intervention in this war again put S.A. in danger and with public anxiety great, coastal guns, more modern field artillery and small arms were purchased. A coastal gun-vessel was not ordered because of cost until shortly after the Russian visit of 1882. Defence (insurance against invasion) is a power which needs to exist, not that which is created after the event.

By the time S.A. had armed itself to match the power of its intended opponent, the crisis was over, however, funds were authorized and the first of three forts, Fort Glanville, was built and except for a more impenetrable rear defence wall (the weak point in most fixed defence systems) was completed in 1880.

The contemporary woodcut shows the main armament of this fort, viz., two 10" Rifled Muzzle-loading Armstrong guns which were capable of putting "hors de combat" any vessel afloat at that time, and at ranges in excess of the potential of the vessels of the "enemy" which were known to be prowling the Pacific.

It must be realized that after the treaty ending the Crimean War, Russia was never at war with Great Britain and its colonies during the Colonial period, but the situation was that they were playing what we would call the cold-war game whereby the aggressor was continually prying, trying, and tempting the English of Naval supremacy, to test the limits of her hold on her possessions, particularly those which were ruled by more than one chief or those which were protected by treaties, promises, and other diplomatic subtleties and bluff. Such a case of bluff though most probably superiority was England's sea power commonly referred to as the "Pax Britannica".

As you may have seen the TV programme "Fall of Eagles" you would have gathered that the monarchs of the various powers were often the variables or fluxes moving the detente. This was true in 1882. The only other powers who may have had the means to go to war with England at that time were France and the United States of America. Of these two countries, the U.S. was the more troublesome, but does not concern us here. In effect our defences were based upon a Russian attack.

Our first limitation on foreign men-of-war was on Russian shipping. It was well established that the vessels most known to be used in an attack on S.A. were vessels no larger than light cruisers (of that time).

These vessels carried guns of no greater power than the flank guns of Fort Glanville, i.e., of approximately 6" calibre, hence Fort Glanville's 10" guns (capable of defence against capital ships) were quite capable of holding any vessel afloat within the battle ranges of those times.

Well the Muscovites knew of our defences when they purposely anchored south of Fort Glanville at our other "port" (than Port Adelaide) of worthy and extractable tribute - Glenelg. In effect Fort Glanville had served its purpose by protecting Port Adelaide and the shipping in the Port River from bombardment for tribute. Such tribute incidentally was not a matter the British would have succumbed to at the time or ever. The city of Adelaide was outside the range of Russian cruiser armament at this time.

By anchoring at Glenelg some old Colonists have said it was done to snub the easy-going new South Australians. What the Russians did do was to show their pluck in fooling the Australians, but also in antagonizing relations. Prior to their dropping anchor at Glenelg, this squadron of the two corvettes VESTNIK (Messenger) and PLASTOUNE (Scout), and the converted merchantman AFRIKA (the flagship), all unarmoured, had already visited Sydney, Hobart Town, and Melbourne. In fact the Afrika had been in dry-dock in Melbourne for a period immediately prior to visiting Glenelg.

A telegram had been sent to Adelaide to warn the people of the squadron's visit, but since S.A. were advised that the squadron would arrive towards mid-day, the recipient of the telegram did not pass the message on by the time of the squadron's arrival.

If the squadron had attempted to drop anchor at the Semaphore anchorage, Adelaide's alarm may have been so great as to man Fort Glanville.

Not having a permanent artillery force until shortly after this visit, only the volunteer artillery were available. To have summoned the necessary gunners to their guns in time to contest the Russians would have taken anywhere up to two hours and by then if the Port had been bombarded, S.A.'s perpetual policy of not spending money on defence until absolutely necessary would have been seen in the light of the folly it was.

To protect the uncompleted rear defence wall of the fort, the field artillery would also have been mobilised, and to run their eight rifled muzzle-loading field guns and limbers (if they could get the required number of hired horses) down the Military road and into the epaulments nearest the Russian's landing.

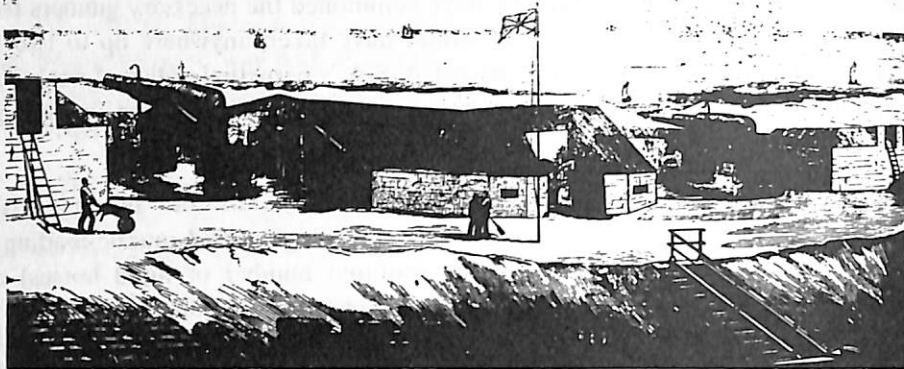
No such mobilization was effected for telegrams had been hastily sent from Glenelg to the commandant at Fort Glanville and to the Military Staff Office on North Terrace.

The Russian officers were feted for a week. The tour began with a visit to Rear-Admiral Aslanbegoff's flagship by a Glenelg councillor (as no other higher ranking official was available) and staff. A telephone call was received by the Commander in Chief of S.A.'s Military Forces (His Excellency the Governor) at his Marble Hill residence advising him of the event. Upon arrival on South Australian soil, the admiral and his officers were refreshed in the mayor's room at the Glenelg Town Hall.

Following this they were conveyed to Adelaide by train and thence by coach to Marble Hill for afternoon tea with His Excellency. That night the Russians attended "Olivette" at the Theatre Royal, and on Tuesday saw the Governor returning the Admiral's visit on board the AFRIKA.

After coaling, and with the Governor's visit the vessels were opened for public inspection. On Wednesday the Russian officers were hosted at the Adelaide Town Hall by the Lord Mayor and further graced by a luncheon under a large marquee at Mt. Lofty. The River Torrens was even lit up at night.

Sightseeing the entrance to the Port River and Adelaide's full breadth of beaches, together with a balloonist's eye view of Adelaide from Mt. Lofty not the least to mention the supply of updated Admiralty charts of South Australian waters, certainly provided these gentlemen visitors with all they desired for military purposes.



1880 — Fort Glanville's two 10", 20 ton M.L. guns.

These facts were hidden beneath the numerous toasts made to the respective monarchs, the dignitaries, and even to the military engineer who had recently designed Adelaide's defences - the Governor, His Excellency Sir W. F. D. Jervois, G.C.M.G., C.B., B.E. The admiral promised he would write home telling of South Australia's greeting, etc.

After having met the Portonians, the Russians attended a ball at the Glenelg Institute on Thursday night, and then after much cordiality into the wee hours of Friday morning, the Russians weighed anchor and steamed away to King George's Sound for more coal en route to Batavia.

It is of interest to note that secrecy as we know it today was not an institution greatly favoured by the English in those times. It is argumentative where the advantages lie in defence. Either let the enemy know what your defences are and presume they're adequate to curb direct aggression (as told by the preceding) or keep it all secret and suffer an attack which might just not happen to be successful.

From my research I feel such in 1882 was an expression of the detente.

NOTE: In addition to the purchase of the South Australian cruiser H.M.C.S. Protector, the raising of S.A.'s regular army and navy, the further purchase of ordnance (some of which was destined for Fort Largs in 1884) guns were also purchased for Fort Glenelg, but by then Naval supremacy in Australasian waters was achieved, or was it?

HE DIED THAT THEY MIGHT LIVE — AN ALBERT MEDAL IN GOLD

By I. C. TEAGUE

Three members of the AIF had the rare distinction of being awarded the Albert Medal (AM), one of which was in gold. The standard of gallantry for the award of an AM is such that in recent years the awards of the AM were converted to the George Cross (GC).

David Emmett Coyne was born on 14 March 1896 at Mackay, Queensland, and enlisted in the AIF in January 1916. During his period of training in Fraser's Hill camp, Brisbane, he was the hero of an incident which probably saved one or more lives and earned for him at the time the admiration of all who witnessed the daring of his deed and his presence of mind. On that occasion the horses in an express waggon bolted, the brake of the waggon broke and the driver was thrown off. The runaways caused great excitement and not a little alarm but Coyne remained cool. When the waggon approached him he caught the near-side horse, vaulted on to its back, gathering up the reins from both horses, and brought them to a standstill just as their mad stampede was threatening the safety of a number of soldiers in the camp. Coyne was a noted athlete and his robustness may be judged from the fact that though he was then aged 19 his weight was 86 kg.

On the troopship which took him to France he was all-round champion and was admired for his remarkable geniality as well as for his athletic prowess. In the battle of the Somme in 1916 he was wounded, but returned to the firing-line. The fine character of Coyne is shown in the following letter written on 15 May 1918 by Captain Robert C. Aland, Coyne's company commander, describing the act of self-sacrifice which led to his death:

“ Dear Mr. Coyne,—You will probably have received word by the time this reaches you that your son Dave was severely wounded on the 14th of this month. He himself will probably have cabled you saying that he's getting on all right. As his company commander, I am writing to tell you that he gained his wounds by one of the biggest acts of self-sacrifice I've ever heard of and that I'm proud to be able to say he belonged to my



Sergeant D. E. Coyne, AM (Gold)

company. By a miracle he lives, but when he performed this act it was with the full intention of giving his life to save his comrades. He will probably have told you some time ago that he was a qualified bombing instructor. Last night he had doubts as to whether a certain boxful of Mills grenades were in working order owing to a little water having got into the box. He decided to throw one to test them. In the fire bay at the same time were seven other men. As he threw the bomb it hit the top of the parapet and rolled back into the trench. It is possible to follow the working of his mind at the same time and the rest he himself told me. A Mills grenade explodes five seconds after it is ignited. By the time the bomb reached the bottom of the trench one second had gone. The night was pitch dark and your son spent another two and a half seconds in a vain attempt to find the bomb and throw it out again. With one and a half seconds to go he decided that it had been his mistake so he would take the full consequences, instead of allowing the others to be wounded or killed. With a 'here goes', he flung himself flat in the bottom of the trench over the approximate position of the bomb, so that when it exploded his body should act as a damper to stop the fragments from flying and injuring the others. He was quite prepared to give his life for them. The bomb exploded and not one of the other men received even the slightest injury. Dave, however, was badly wounded in the face, neck, chest, right arm and right leg. He must have had at least 20 wounds and I should judge that the pieces all remained in him. He brightened up wonderfully when they brought him to my headquarters to dress him. He had a rum, smoked a cigarette and joked about the event all through the proceedings, although he must have been enduring perfect agony. A man who can do this is lion-hearted. The medical officer stated that he would live all right, so that set our minds at ease. We got a report this morning from the casualty clearing station to the effect that he had died; but happily this was contradicted by a later one, which stated he was progressing favourably. So probably you will be getting letters from him telling you of the good times he is having in 'Blighty'. I have sent in a strong recommendation to the CO for his brave action, so don't be surprised if you hear he has gained the Victoria Cross. He certainly deserves it. You have every reason to be proud of him. He is one of the best liked NCOs in the company, always cheerful, always willing, no matter how trying the state of affairs. If there is any more information I can give you at any time, I will only be too

glad to give it.”

The following letter from Sister A. I. Baird, 61 Casualty Clearing Station, B.E.F., dated 20 May 1918 and addressed to Mr. Coyne, conveys particulars of his son's death:

“ Dear Sir,—I am sorry to tell you the bad news of the death of 3347 Sergeant D. E. Coyne, 31st Battalion, IF. He was admitted here on 15 May with multiple bomb wounds and died the same day. Everything possible was done for him, but recovery was impossible. He was too ill to speak or leave any messages. With deep sympathy, I am,” etc.

The following extract from a Mackay newspaper (date unknown) gives detail of the presentation of the award. “ At the concert held in McMahon's Hall, Marian, on Monday night, the Albert Medal in gold was pinned on the breast of Mrs. David Coyne, of Marian, the mother of the late Sergeant D. E. Coyne. The decoration, which is the highest won by any soldier in the district, was taken to Marian by the Mayor (Ald. Hucker) accompanied by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Kelly and Lieutenant Robertson. Dr. Kelly explained the decoration and pointed out that it is the highest given by the King in its own particular class. He then called upon the Mayor to make the presentation, after having read the following extract from the Government Gazette of March 13, 1918:

‘ The King has been pleased to award the Albert Medal in Gold in recognition of the gallantry of No. 3347 Sergeant David Emmett Coyne, of the 31st battalion, Australian Imperial Force, 1st Military District, in saving life in France at the cost of his own life. On the night of 15th May, 1918, in order to test some Mills grenades, Sergeant Coyne threw one of them, but it failed to clear the parapet and fell into the trench, in which there were a number of other men. Sergeant Coyne shouted to them to run for their lives, and endeavoured to find the bomb, in order to throw it away, but owing to the darkness he was unable to lay his hand on it in time and the men not being clear of the trench, he deliberately threw himself on to the top of it and let it explode under him, receiving fatal injuries, but saving the lives of his comrades’.”

MEDALMAN

What Value the VC — As mentioned in the last edition of Sabretache, The Armoury, a most reputable dealer in militaria, sold at a realistic price the Towner VC, MC group. This, however, does not establish a market value for a VC as there are those who greatly over-rate the value of this coveted award. The circumstances of the award, to whom awarded and other medals in the group have a great bearing on the value. Readers are no doubt aware that the VC is not as rare as some other decorations and has even been awarded by ballot. Medalman considers that there are many VCs that are greatly over-valued while lesser, yet rarer, awards are greatly under-valued. There has never been a shortage of VCs to those with the necessary capital, yet no amount of money can obtain some other awards, so I suggest a measure of rarity must be whether an item can be readily purchased or not.

Colonel H. P. Airey, CMG, DSO — There is no doubt that Colonel Airey was the first Australian to be awarded the DSO. After reading the most interesting article on his service in Burma I wonder if he would have been listed as the first recipient of the DSO? Would any reader know the whereabouts of Airey's medals or the detail on his Indian General Service Medal?

Suakin Medals Increase in Value — The latest sales in the U.K. and locally of Suakin medals awarded to members of the NSW contingent indicate (as predicted) that the prices will continue to rise with a price of \$2,000 being a most likely figure by the time of the 100th anniversary in 1985.

Collecting Second World War Groups — A most interesting area for the collector of Australian medals who does not want to spend a large amount of money but purchase items which will increase in value is Second World War groups. There are a number of combinations of stars, some of which are very rare, that are within most collectors price range. In addition to groups with the different stars, groups to the more famous ships, squadrons and units can be collected. The study of such groups will be most rewarding to those interested in our war time history.

Queen's Birthday (1978) Weekend Display — Part of the proposed display by the Society in Canberra next Queen's Birthday weekend will be a most extensive display of medals awarded to Australians. Readers who have items for display should send details to the Federal Secretary. Prizes are planned for the best displays in various sections so support the Society by preparing a display.

Australian Honours Display — Visitors to Canberra should visit the National Mint, where the complete range of Australian honours are on display.

Kapyong Awards — With the recent excellent publication on the medal roll of the 3 Battalion RAR for the battle of Kapyong, the value of medals to those listed can be expected to rapidly increase in price to around \$200. The photograph showing the style of naming on these medals is that used by one contractor; a number of other contractors have also done the naming for Korean medals. What a pity the author was unable to list all service medals awarded to those present at Kapyong. Most decorations, long service and meritorious service medals are listed on the roll regardless of when awarded. The author is to be congratulated on the publication which is a must for every medal collector.

Governor-General's Awards — His Excellency Sir Zelman Cowen, AK, GCMG, KStJ, QC, served as an officer in the RANVR during the Second World War and was awarded the Defence Medal, War Medal and Australian Service Medal. In addition, he has the Queen's Coronation and Jubilee Medals but at the 1978 RMC graduation parade wore no decorations or awards.

The Autobiography of A.M. Sir Richard Williams — The author in a most readable book quotes a number of incidents where Australians have been given second class treatment with regards awards. Of particular interest he tells of his fight to have Australian ground staff, for service in the U.K. (where they were subjected to bombing, etc.), to be awarded the 1939-45 Star. As England was not overseas service to the locals, who made the regulations for awards, they were not interested in having the RAAF receive the award although U.K. Forces serving in the Darwin area were awarded the 1939-45 Star. The following extract from his book is equally applicable to Vietnam awards:

“The obvious solution was for the Australian Government to decide to make the award without U.K. agreement but neither the Labour Government or the following Liberal Government could be persuaded to do this; neither had the necessary interest and resulting determination, something spelt GUTS to do so.”

As medals have been awarded up to 50 years after an incident, Medalman suggests the MHSA take up this and other cases of anomalies with awards to Australian servicemen.

Voluntary Medical Service Medal (VMSM) — Awards of this Queen's approved medal which is often incorrectly referred to as the St. Andrew's or Red Cross Service Medal are not common to members of the Armed Forces. However, since its institution in 1932 there have been over 18,000 medals awarded. Service for this medal does not have to be continuous and is retrospective to 1904 when Voluntary Aid Detachments were first formed. The VMSM is awarded for 15 years service with a bar for each additional 5 years service. Up to 6 bars have been awarded which indicates an incredible period of service to the sick and injured. In England it is not uncommon to see both the VMSM and St. John Ambulance Service Medal being worn together as service in either is qualifying service.

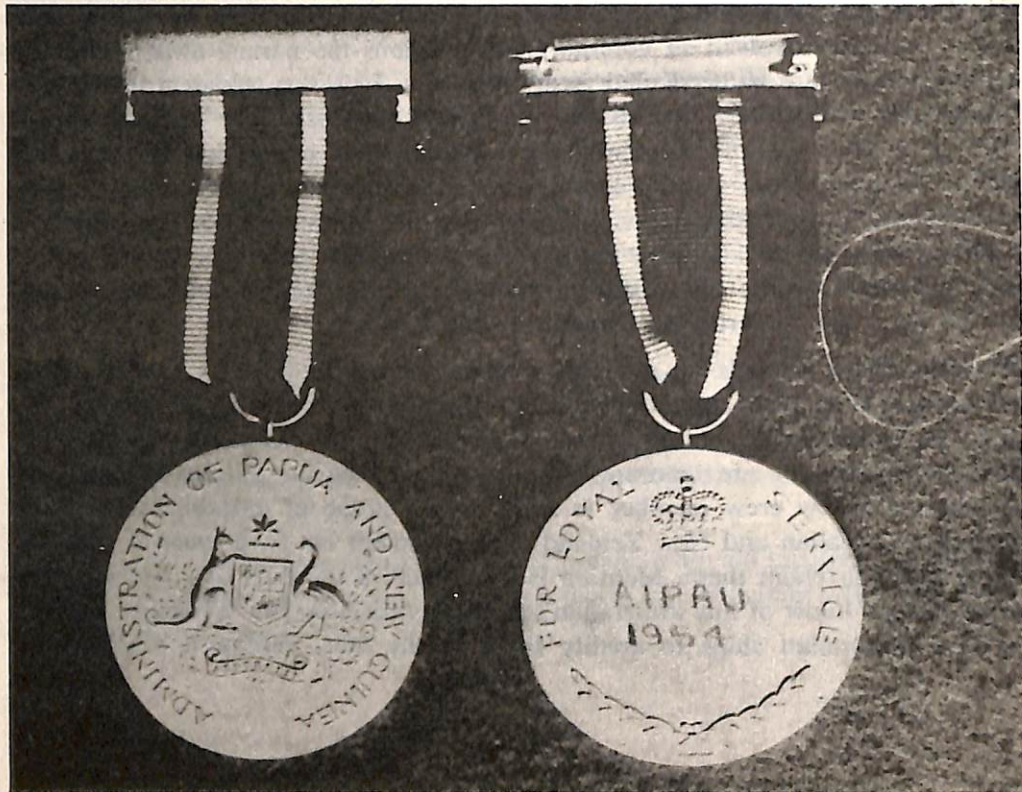
Community Service by Members of the Armed Forces — Through no fault of the individuals in times other than war there is always a tendency by the public to look upon members of the Armed Forces as outsiders. Such feelings are broken down when members of the Forces take an active part in community activities, be it as a chairman of a school committee or a first aid attendant at a football match or any variety of voluntary activities. It is rumoured that to help ensure the Army does not gain acceptance in the community and encourage members not to become involved in voluntary organisations the normal awards for community service are to be denied Army members. It is very apparent that to gain recognition within one's profession is relatively easy, especially for those awards that go with rank and appointments, whereas civil recognition for voluntary service is much more worthy and harder to obtain reflecting far greater on the armed services. Medalman cannot believe that the Minister or his generals would contemplate such a ridiculous attitude that would only harm the services. Those who earn civil awards are worthy of the highest praise and should be encouraged by the brass for undertaking community activities.

Merchant Navy Awards — A medal collector, Ernie Trowbridge, who is himself a Merchant Seaman, wrote to Medalman regarding the rarity of MN awards. He states that one of the reasons is that MN members are either reluctant to apply for their medals or are ignorant of the fact that they are entitled to them. He mentions a fellow crew member is entitled to a group of medals which include both the Australian and New Zealand Service Medals but no amount of coaching can get him to claim them. Mention is also made of the Italy Star and its rarity as he did not know of any Australian ships who qualified. The 'Manunda' was one of three Australian ships to qualify for the Italy Star. Perhaps a reader could



Examples of War-time Awards of Loyal Service Medallion

PNG Loyal Service Medal 1953-1973



give a complete list. Captain James Garden, OBE, who was Master of the 'Manunda' has the Italy Star in his impressive group. Did any Australian MN qualify for the Naval General Service Medal?

PNG Loyal Service Medal — Medalman has been informed by an authoritative source that since the title of the PNG Loyal Service Medallion was changed in 1953 to the Loyal Service Medal the award was changed to a gilt medal with a red, white and blue ribbon. This 'should' mean that any awards since 1953 were gilt medals with ribbons and NOT medallions with chains. The same source states that there were 320 awards for wartime service of the silver medallion with chain. What a difficult task to accurately document these rare and interesting awards.

Postal Militaria Auction — Members have requested that sale of items through the MHSA be by postal auction. The list for the first auction contains some real Australian rarities which rarely come on the market so take this opportunity and get in your bid.

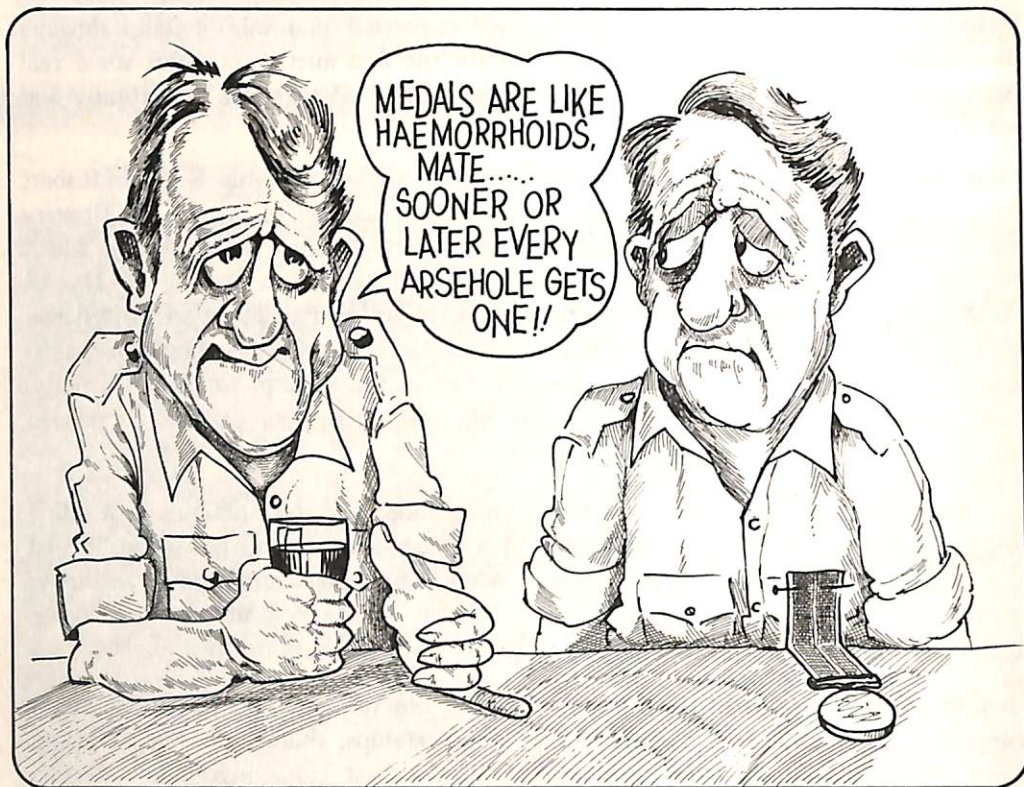
First Serviceman to be Awarded the Bravery Medal — Able Scaman Robert Angus McLeod of HMAS 'Stirling' is the first serviceman to receive the Bravery Medal. The award was for rescuing five shipmates during Cyclone Tracy, which hit Darwin on Christmas morning 1974. AB McLeod was serving on HMAS 'Arrow' when the cyclone struck. The crew were ordered to abandon their patrol boat at the height of the cyclone as the boat was about to be crashed against the concrete Darwin jetty. Two shipmates died in the attempt to reach the jetty. The citation says that although McLeod was injured by flying debris he pushed and lugged five of his shipmates to the wharf.

The Honours Committee are to be commended for their action in awarding this medal for an act three years old. Bravery should be rewarded regardless of how long ago the deed was performed. What a pity the committee is unable to reward those deserving acts performed by our servicemen during the closing stages of the Vietnam war, which have been ignored by those in authority.

Medals as an Investment — Medalman has been requested to publish a graph comparing the increase in medals against coins, stamps, shares, etc. Such a graph would indicate that investment in medals is the best value investment by far. The rises in value of medals has occurred with little to no press coverage, which has kept big investment out of our hobby. Publication of graphs and articles in

the press on the increase in medal values would soon put most items out of the price range of most collectors. There is no doubt that big investors will move into medals to Australians and prices will rocket to several times present values, so those genuine collectors should now establish their collections.

Publications for the Medal Collector — Medalman strongly recommends to all medal collectors the two latest publications. 'Australia's First Naval Fight' and 'The Nominal Roll of Overseas Contingents 1911'. It is an unwise medal collector who does not have good reference books. Both available from the Federal Secretary at \$5 each.

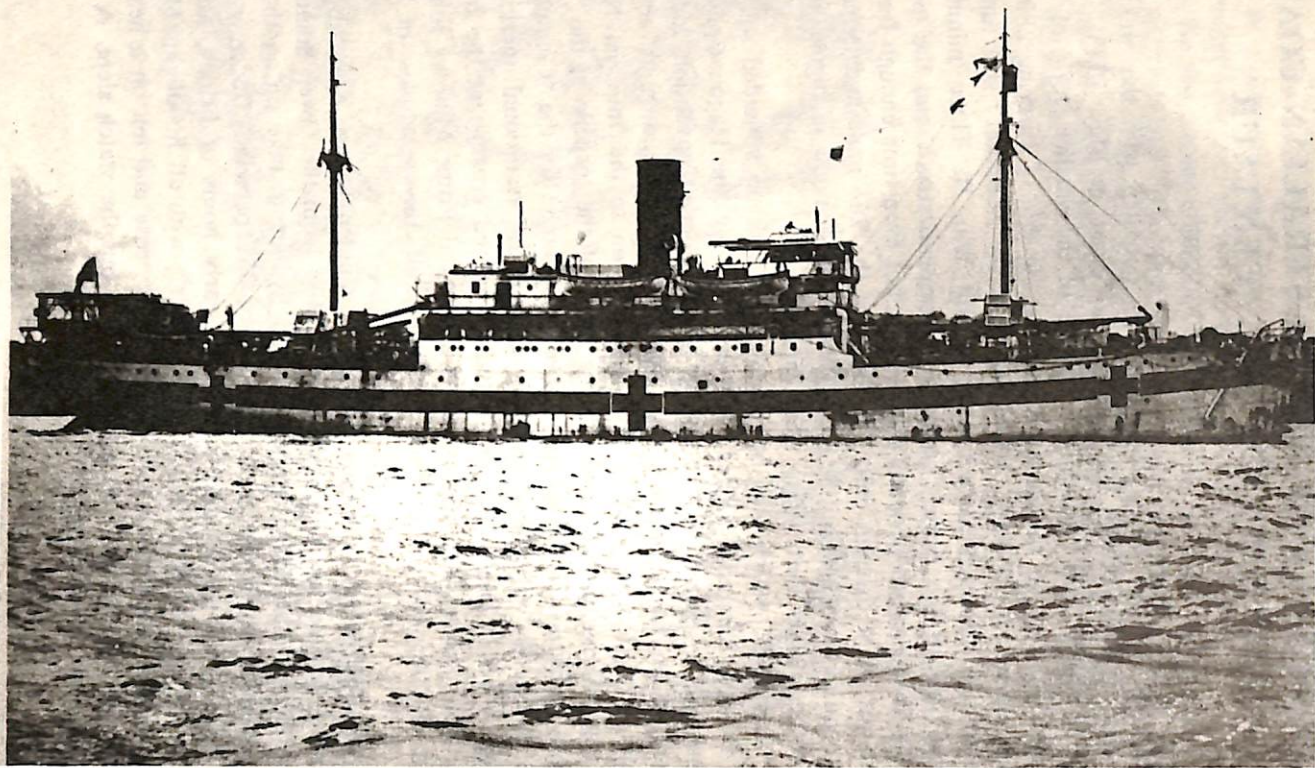


ATROCITY OFF THE AUSTRALIAN COAST: SINKING OF THE "CENTAUR"

Submarine warfare came to Australia's doorstep with the sinking of the hospital ship "Centaur" off the Queensland coast in May 1943. The 2/3rd Australian Hospital Ship "Centaur" was one of the smaller ships, of 3222 tons commissioned for use in the islands. She was capable of carrying 280 cot cases for voyages of up to 18 days. The sinking of the "Centaur" still ranks as one of the most cold-blooded atrocities of World War II. Three minutes passed between the instant the enemy submarine's torpedo struck and the moment the hospital ship disappeared beneath the surface, not even time enough for the radio operator to get off a distress call. For some of the 268 male and female victims death came quickly in the initial blast, others were caught in raging fires, many simply drowned. And then there were the sharks.

The "Centaur", which was on her way to pick up wounded soldiers from the Gona-Buna-Sanananda battles, was protected by the Hague Convention to which Japan was a signatory. As required by the Hague Convention, identification details were given to all nations and the Japanese Government received this information on 5 February 1943 and passed it on to the Imperial Navy. The captain of the submarine who ordered the firing of the torpedo at the "Centaur" could not have any doubts about the nature of his target for the "Centaur" blazed from stem to stern with lights showing clearly the traditional markings of a hospital ship - white hull, wide green band and red crosses on the hull, deck and funnel. The sinking was, therefore, as a shocked Prime Minister John Curtin declared, a deliberate wanton act 'violating all the principles of common humanity'.

In mid-February the "Centaur" made her maiden voyage as a hospital ship to New Guinea to take on hundreds of casualties from the Owen Stanleys campaign. After discharging the wounded she left Sydney to take on another batch. As the ship headed north she carried a total of 332 persons - 76 crew and 256 doctors, nurses and hospital orderlies. In the early hours of Friday, May 14th, she was 40 miles east of Brisbane. The "Centaur", with all floodlights blazing to ensure she would be recognised as a hospital ship, rose and fell on a heavy well. The horror began at exactly 4.10 a.m. when all but the watch slept. A torpedo hit her just forward of amidships!



Hospital Ship "Centaur"

One second all that could be heard was the surging of water boiling at the ship's bow. Next instant a blinding blue flash lit up the vessel as the explosion practically ripped her in two. Then oil, gushing from the wreckage of the engine-room, ignited. Fed by gale-force draughts from the gashes in the hull, the fire raged through the ship like a great blow-torch. The explosion extinguished every light on the ship so that those below who still lived had to grope their way through the darkness. The blazing oil gave illumination to some but death to many more.

One of the first reactions of Sister Eleanor Savage of Quirindi, Queensland, when the torpedo ripped into the "Centaur", was to run to her friend Sister King who could hardly swim. They got to the main deck together but in the crush they lost each other. Realising the necessity of getting clear of the stricken ship as soon as possible, Sister Savage took the hand of another nurse and together they jumped overboard into the oil-fouled sea. The nurse died in the water when a length of timber fell on her. The beam also struck Sister Savage but she escaped with lip lacerations and blackened eyes. Sister King was never seen again.

Driver George McGrath of Braidwood, New South Wales, a member of the 2/12th Field Ambulance travelling on the ship, was hurled from his bunk by the force of the explosion. The torpedo struck on the port side, in the ward just ahead of where he and nine others were sleeping on the lower deck. The ship almost immediately began steeply sloping towards the bow and McGrath dashed up on deck and leaped overboard - the only person from his section of the ship to escape. By the time he turned in the water to look back the "Centaur" had gone. Only 13 of his unit of about 200 survived the attack and following ordeal.

It was possible in the short time available to get away only one life-boat but when this hit the water it carried so many holes it sank to the gunwales. Yet it did provide some buoyancy for two men who climbed aboard. Daylight illuminated a sea of oil, splintered wreckage from the ship, already-bloated bodies, and stricken survivors, some dog-paddling and others clinging to deck rafts. Of 12 commissioned nursing sisters, Eleanor Savage alone lived. With an injured hospital orderly she lay on the roof of the ship's chart-house. The other survivors were scattered over a wide area on one large and five small rafts. Using hands and planks as paddles some of the rafts finally converged and were lashed together. Those survivors on rafts could only watch as others drifted off in the distance or were taken by sharks.

Colonel Outridge, a RAAMC officer, and Sister Savage worked ceaselessly tending the injured as well as those who had swallowed oil and were convulsively ill. One man was so badly burned he obviously could not live long but his screams reverberated over the water until he died next day. Another man went insane and, saying he was going to look for water, swam away to oblivion. Sister Savage took charge of the rations in her party - two gallons of water, a tin of chocolate tablets, prunes, raisins, meat extract and 2000 malted milk tablets. The first meal consisted of a little meat extract, two prunes, a milk tablet and enough water to wet the mouth.

Intermittant rain squalls lashed the survivors. Several planes and a ship were sighted on the first day but visibility was poor and the survivors' frantic signals could not be seen. After dark they again heard motors, very close this time. They could see the silhouette of a submarine, obviously Japanese, probably the one that had sunk the "Centaur". They had heard stories of enemy crews mowing down the survivors of sunken ships with machine guns and lay flat and silent. The call from the submarine came clearly over the water - "Coo-ee". Several times it was repeated. It was a trick the Japanese had used on the Kokoda Trail to relax the Australians' normal vigilance, but by 1943 the ruse had worn thin. The survivors knew that if it were an Allied submarine the call would have been "Ahoy". For what seemed hours (but was actually about 30 minutes) those on the rafts scarcely dared breathe. The sound of the motors on the submarine never ceased as the batteries were recharged. Then at last the survivors heard the clang of the enemy's conning tower hatch and the rush of water as the ballast tanks filled. Slowly it disappeared from sight below the surface.* It was a night of horror for, intensely cold and with little clothing, the tragic band huddled together for warmth like abandoned young animals. And the hideously burned dying man continued screaming. Dawn of Saturday was approaching when at last his torments ceased. Prayers were said and the body slid overboard into the sea and drifted slowly away.

* Mr. G. W. McGrath, who now lives in Canberra, was in a group of 22 survivors only 150-200 yards from where the submarine surfaced. He did not hear the submarine's crew hailing but says other parties of survivors may have been closer and better able to hear. However, he does recall that when the submarine suddenly surfaced a member of his party who favoured being taken prisoner lit a flare before he could be stopped, whereupon the submarine immediately crash-dived. He also claims that a submarine had been sighted during the mid-day meal the day before the torpedoing took place and that "boat-drill" had been ordered.—Editor.



Sister Savage, GM, AANS, sole survivor of twelve nursing sisters.

At 2 p.m. a plane and a ship were sighted almost simultaneously. Some smoke flares had been salvaged and quickly these blossomed up from the rafts. The plane, an Anson bomber, turned a little and dipped its nose. Then as it circled a few hundred feet above the rafts a board was held up bearing the single word "Centaur". In the plane the radio operator sent a message to the distant ship, the American destroyer "Mugford" on escort duties. When the ship drew alongside an officer called to the survivors asking if they had seen the submarine that had sunk the ship. Told that the submarine had surfaced on the previous night, the destroyer steamed off on a pattern course to ensure the enemy was not still lurking about. Sonar indicated clear waters and at various stages 60 "Centaur" survivors were taken aboard. Three others were later found. One of these, a hospital orderly, had spent the long hours since the sinking straddling a hatch cover and holding the hands of two men in lifebuoys.

Sister Savage's work among the survivors before they were rescued earned her the George Medal. The citation to her award read simply:

"In recognition of conspicuous gallantry in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner."

In "Windows of Fame", Bruce Harding quotes one of the survivors as saying of Sister Savage:

"She was wonderful, she must have been in great pain from her own burns and injuries but she didn't say a word about that. Her leadership was a great factor in keeping up the morale of the party of survivors."

Sister Savage was to continue to serve with the Army throughout the war years. In 1946 she won a Florence Nightingale Nursing Scholarship for two years overseas study in the United Kingdom, and this she accomplished with distinction.

Following the sinking, numerous pieces of wreckage were washed up on the beach fronting Caloundra and Bribie Island, but the only relics presently known are a cabin door lock in the possession of Mr. Ken Hughes at the Caloundra Military Museum, and a watch owned by Driver McGrath. The watch had been given to him by a Braidwood citizens group when he enlisted and is now in the Australian War Memorial at Canberra, its hands still showing shortly after 4 o'clock. Around the mid 1960's, the Rotary Club of Caloundra undertook the task of establishing a park to commemorate the sinking and to perpetuate the memory of those who lost their lives. A small but attractive area was chosen,

picturesquely situated on the headland fronting the sea at Caloundra, and a memorial cairn in Centaur Park now briefly tells the story of that fateful morning in 1943.

Work on the project was completed in 1968, and the ceremonial unveiling and dedication of the memorial and park took place on Sunday, September 15 in that year, with Sir Francis Nicklin, K.C.M.G., M.M., LL.D. and Naval Chaplain Rev. C. D. Alcorn, M.B.E., M.A., B.D., R.A.N.R. performing the ceremonies. The crowd, which included a number of "Centaur" survivors, is said to be one of the largest ever to assemble in Caloundra, while the naval ship H.M.A.S. "Adroit" standing off the headland, and the presence of a naval shore party from H.M.A.S. "Moreton" forming a guard of honour, lent added dignity and solemnity to the occasion.

At precisely 11 a.m., three Canberra bombers from Amberley air base flew over the scene, approaching from the direction of the sinking. The planes returned to make a second fly-over as Reveille was being sounded. Music was provided by the Northern Command Band. Much of the organisation of the ceremony was handled by former Rotarian Ken Hughes, now proprietor of the Caloundra Military Museum.

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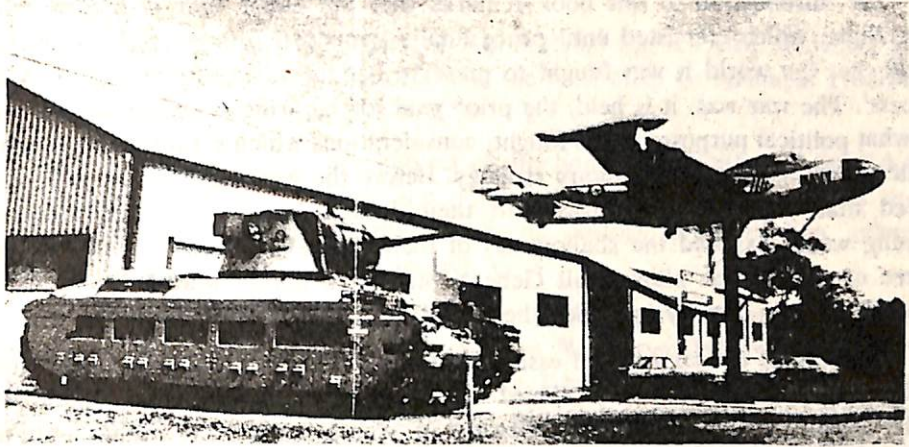
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BOOK REVIEWS

War Aims and Strategic Policy in the Great War 1914-18, edited by Barry Hunt and Adrian Preston, London, Croom Helm, 1977, 131 pp, £6.95 (U.K.).

The introduction to this book remarks that the Great War was a senseless catastrophe which 'persisted until peace finally happened four years later only to reveal that the world it was fought to preserve had been utterly destroyed in the process'. The war was, it is held, the price paid for ignoring questions of why and for what political purposes it was fought, considerations which should have governed matters such as means or military strategy. Before the war the generals were convinced that they held the answers to their nations' needs, yet even after the opening weeks exposed the shallowness of their professional wisdom an unusual degree of control was allowed all General Staffs and purely military assessments were allowed to directly influence the evolution of national policies.

The bulk of the six original essays comprising the book were first presented, in slightly different form, to the Third Annual Military History Symposium held at the Royal Military College of Canada in March 1976. The authors are all distinguished scholars and write from the viewpoint of their own special interests. The countries whose war aims make up the subjects of the essays are England, France, Canada, the United States, Italy and Germany. An interesting work for the historian.

The Victorian Army at Home: the Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899, by A. R. Skelley, London, Croom Helm, 1977, 366 pp, £9.95 (U.K.).

This book is an inquiry into the world of one of Victorian Britain's most neglected and misunderstood characters - the regular soldier. Commonly the victim of jokes and discrimination, the soldier lived in a world that was far removed in many respects from the mainstream of society. Yet he, as much as anyone, carried the initial burden of Empire. Often the leading edge of British civilisation and for many native peoples the personification of European society, it was in his footsteps that British rule, customs and language were spread and that commerce flourished. This important study sheds new light on the man in the ranks - who he was, what he was like, and why.

Recruitment, one of the most important concerns of the period, is closely examined. Always a contentious issue, manpower needs influenced the course of reform and served as an indicator of success by measuring the army's appeal to the labour market. Widely-accepted beliefs about the background and origins of the men in the ranks and therefore of the success of related reforms are questioned in this study and the need for revision shown. This book presents an even-handed treatment of the subject and is one that will prove absorbing reading.

These Are Facts, the autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams, published by the Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, 428 pp, \$13.50.

The claim of the author and subject of this book to be 'Father of the RAAF' is no exaggeration, nor is there any doubt that the appearance of this autobiography is an important contribution to the history of Australian aviation, related by the man best-qualified to tell it.

The author was Director of Intelligence and Organisation on the first Air Board of the Australian Air Corps formed in November 1920, and carried on through the formation of the Australian Air Force in March 1921 (the prefix 'Royal' followed in August) until October 1922 when his title was changed to that of Chief of Air Staff. Although his term of office ended in December 1922, Williams was again CAS from February 1925 until December 1932.

His flying career began in 1914 as the first officer of the permanent military forces to undertake flying training at Point Cook in Victoria. He saw active service during World War I as a pilot, and is a strong critic of the determination of Australian politicians to denigrate this country's own professional service officers by preferring RAF officers as CAS during World War II, and to cheat them of recognition for wartime services. In June 1946 he became Director-General of Civil Aviation and directed the development of post-war civil transport.

This is a handsomely produced book, well illustrated with photographs and attractive line drawings of early aircraft types; there are also four maps which are a helpful complement to the text. This is an important work and worthy of any bookshelf.

"Modell Magazine - War Album No. 2", published by Argus Books (Australian agent: Thomas C. Lothian Pty. Ltd., Melbourne), price \$7.95, 94 pp.

This book is the second volume produced by the German publisher, Modell Magazine, and contains some 200 photographs, mainly unpublished previously, of both WW1 and WW2 vintage, and covering the equipment of all services. As a German publication the majority of photographs refer to German equipment. However, there is a limited cover of Allied aircraft. The photographs will provide the modeller with many variations of standard aircraft, AFV's, etc. and also provide authentic markings of obscure units not normally found in model kits.

Each photograph is provided with an explanatory text, in both English and German, setting out the salient features of the item illustrated and, in many cases, technical information on the variant if not standard.

This book will provide a useful reference for the modeller interested in WW1 and WW2, and the photographs could provide inspiration to the diorama modeller.

"Military Flags of the World 1618-1900", by Terence Wise, published by Blandford Press (Australian Supplier: Australia & New Zealand Book Co. Pty. Ltd., Brookvale, NSW), \$11.50, 184 pp.

The author is a professional military writer with a long standing interest in military history, this being his twelfth book related to his researches. The illustrations have been drawn by Guido Rosignoli, who will be well known to all collectors of military insignia.

The period covered, 1618-1900, would seem to make a book of this nature an almost impossible task. However, with 64 full-colour plates covering almost 400 flags, the student of military heraldry will find much to excite his interest. To assist the modeller the plates are divided into the principal wars of the period and illustrate examples of the principal nations involved.

The text covers in great detail the significance of the heraldic devices illustrated, as well as provide the story of each flag included. In all cases the flags were carried into battle and in fact it is possible to follow from their flags the gradual emergence of national armies over the period, as distinct from the local bands raised by feudal barons up to the 17th century.

This publication is worthy of any military library and a must for students of military heraldry and modellers of pre-1900 figures and diaramas. It is to be hoped that a companion volume of the post-1900 period will follow.

"GERMAN ARMY HANDBOOK, April 1918", a reprint of the British Army's Intelligence handbook of that year, published now by Arms and Armour Press, with an introduction by David Nash, of the Imperial War Museum. Size approx. 9" x 6½", 186 pages including Index. With tables, illustrations and maps. U.K. price £5.95. Hard cover with an impressive dustjacket.

In the years prior to the First World War, the Intelligence machinery of the British Army prepared a series of handbooks on the German Army, designed for the information of British officers and men in time of war. This remarkable volume was the last of the series to be used in the War, and as such it represents the most up-to-date and reliable information available to the Army at that time. Though not without errors, these were nevertheless of a minor nature, and the book can be taken as almost completely reliable.

It contains a wealth of information that will be invaluable to the collector who, like this reviewer, has been bewildered until now by many features of the German military system. The liability for military service, recruiting, the organisation of the German Army, training methods and the chain of command are all set out clearly and concisely. The formations of the Army are then dissected, with attention to the work and equipment of all branches. Weapons and ammunition are discussed and described, as are other items of personal and general equipment, including aircraft, signalling apparatus and messenger dogs!

Finally, some excellent information on the German Army uniform and dress details of the time, with illustrations, will prove most valuable to the uniform student, or collector.

"THE LANCASTER MANUAL", Volume 5 in the R.A.F. Museum Series, under the general editorship of Mr. John Tanner, Director, R.A.F. Museum, Hendon. Publisher, Arms and Armour Press. Size 9" x 6½", 521 pages plus several illustrations. Hard cover, with distinctive dustjacket showing a Lancaster in flight. U.K. price £7.95, Australian price through the distributors, Thomas C. Lothian Pty. Ltd., 4-12 Tattersall's Lane, Melbourne, \$14.25.

The Lancaster was Britain's most famous bomber of the Second World War, and in this volume the ardent student can study sufficient details of the Marks I and III, used between 1942 and 1945, to enable him to understand perfectly every function of every part of these aircraft. Indeed, as the material comprises a reprint of the original workshop manuals, it would not be too much to say that a dedicated mechanic could assemble an aircraft, given the necessary parts. Illustrations are

many and detailed. This is not a book for everyone, but for the enthusiast, it is definite. And, for the price, very reasonable.

"THE WORLD'S SUBMACHINE GUNS (MACHINE PISTOLS), Volume 1" by Thomas B. Nelson. Publisher Arms and Armour Press, Australian representatives Thomas C. Lothian Pty. Ltd. U.K. price £10.95, in Australia \$31.75. Size approx. 11½" x 8½", 739 pages, copiously illustrated.

Thomas Nelson has covered over 300 weapons in the period from 1915 to 1963, and has described their development, their reason for being, and their methods of operation in such a way that the book can be used as a reference work by anyone, for any reason connected with this subject.

The result of many years of preparation, with valued contributions by many named individuals, this large volume must be the best of its type, for clarity of print, wealth of detail on the weapons included, and for layout. It really is well done!

"COMBAT AIRCRAFT OF WORLD WAR II" compiled by E. C. Weal, J. A. Weal and R. F. Barker. Publisher Lothian Publishing Co. Pty. Ltd. with J. M. Bruce of the R.A.F. Museum, Hendon, as Editorial Consultant. Australian Representatives, Thomas C. Lothian Pty. Ltd. Australian price \$19.95. Size 12¼" x 9¼". 238 pages including Index. Hard cover, attractive dustjacket.

One would have thought that there was little left to be written about aircraft of the Second World War, but this comprehensive and imposing publication will be a valued addition to the library of the enthusiast. Five years of research have resulted in an impressive coverage of all machines used operationally by the combatants, with performance statistics, concise summaries, and, in many cases, orders of battle of various air arms at different stages of the conflicts. There are over 100 pages of excellent line drawings, while 176 illustrations in full (and very striking) colour, are most impressive. In the cases of some of the larger aircraft, a double-page spread is used. Little human figures serve to show size, an unusual and welcome idea. Each illustration is accompanied by a section giving types, the unit to which the illustrated machine belonged, and many other details. Marking and camouflage details of which many are unusual, are shown.

As a pictorial encyclopaedia, this book covers a great deal of ground in an expansive subject, a welcome change from those books which merely scratch the surface, or from those which go into great detail for the specialist in a particular aircraft. Here is a book which will make a fine gift for boys of all ages, young and old alike - and a very attractive volume too!

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By R. CLARK

Johnston Burley, soldier, carpenter and engine driver, was born on 26 September 1870 at Aghavea, Lisnaskea, Ireland, the son of dairy farmer William Burley. In 1885 the family of six boys and two girls migrated from Ireland to Melbourne, where Burley after schooling trained as a carpenter. In 1896 Burley moved to Western Australia where he worked as a builder in the Shark Bay area.

Burley started his military service with Volunteer units in Melbourne and was serving with the West Australian Mounted Infantry as a Lance Corporal when he enlisted for service in the Boer War on 13 October 1899. The 1st WAMI Contingent left Albany on 7 November 1899 in the transport "Medic" and arrived at Cape Town on 27 November 1899. The West Australians were amalgamated with units from other Australian colonies to form The Australian Regiment and became part of the Kimberley Relief Force, being employed on the lines of communications between De Aar and Modder River. On 1 February 1900 the West Australians were converted into mounted infantry.

Lance Corporal Burley was prominent in the gallant defence of a kopje at Slingersfontein (afterwards called West Australian Hill), where two officers and twenty-five soldiers resisted 400 Boers. For ferocity of fighting and casualties incurred, this action exceeded the more publicized defence of Elands River. As a result of his outstanding gallantry at this defence, Burley became one of the first West Australians to be awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM).

Burley subsequently participated in operations in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape Colony, including actions in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Diamond Hill, Wittebergen, Vet River, Zand River, Waterval Onder and Colesberg as well as many skirmishes. He was among the West Australians scouting the besieged garrison at Elands River. After reaching Pretoria, Burley's unit was employed in the central Transvaal where they were involved in a number of actions.

In November 1900, Lord Roberts inspected the West Australians and commended them for their gallantry and fine work and on 13 December 1900 the

WO1 J. BURLEY DCM and Bar



BADGES COLLECTED BY CORPORAL BURLEY, DCM, DURING HIS WAR SERVICE



DECORATIONS AND MEDALS AWARDED WARRANT OFFICER J. BURLEY, DCM*

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FIRST AID AND RAILWAY UNIT
FOR SERVICES IN TWO WARS J. BURLEY WAS AWARDED THE FOLLOWING: DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL, DCM FOR GALLANTRY IN BOER WAR; BAR TO DCM FOR GALLANTRY IN FIRST WORLD WAR; QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICA MEDAL WITH FOUR CLASPS, BRITISH WAR MEDAL AND VICTORY MEDAL. WARRANT OFFICER BURLEY IS THE ONLY AUSTRALIAN TO HAVE WON THE DCM IN THE BOER WAR WITH A BAR FOR THE FIRST WORLD WAR.



CORPORAL J. BURLEY, DCM, WEST AUSTRALIAN MOUNTED INFANTRY, 1900



QUEEN VICTORIA'S CHOCOLATE TIN

A TIN CONTAINING CHOCOLATES WAS GIVEN TO CORPORAL BURLEY AT CHRISTMAS 1900 WHILE SERVING IN THE BOER WAR. HE SENT THE TIN HOME TO HIS MOTHER WHO KEPT THIS GIFT FROM QUEEN VICTORIA AS A SOUVENIR.

contingent left Cape Town in the transport "Orient", arriving at Albany on 29 December 1900. The unit was disbanded on 29 March 1901. Corporal Burley had served for one year and 168 days, during which time he was awarded the DCM, was mentioned in despatches, wounded and earned four fighting clasps for his Queen's South Africa Medal.

After the Boer War Burley continued his military interest, serving as a sergeant in the West Australian Mounted Infantry, a militia unit. On 17 July 1916 he joined the Instructional Staff in a temporary capacity with the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2. Although he had a wife and five children Burley considered it his patriotic duty to volunteer for overseas service and accordingly lowered his age in order to qualify. On 19 January, 1917 he was appointed to the AIF as Company Sergeant Major of 5th Railway Operating Squadron, a unit serving in France. He sailed in the "Militrades" on 29 January to join his unit.

Burley served with this unit in France and in June 1917 was involved in an incident which gave him the unique distinction of being the ONLY Australian Boer War DCM winner to be awarded a bar for service with the A.I.F. An extract of the citation for the award of the bar is as follows:

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in charge of a train. A waggon containing shells was set on fire by hostile shelling, whereupon he uncoupled the remainder of the train and sent it to a safe distance, subsequently returning to the blazing waggon and endeavouring very gallantly to put out the flames. In spite of great efforts, he was unsuccessful, and the truck exploded, but his energy had saved the remainder of the train, including a gun which was on board."

—CAG No. 95 of 27 June 1918

Nearly at the end of the war Burley was made a Regimental Sergeant Major and held the appointment for the return voyage to Australia. On 19 July 1919 he was discharged from the AIF, having completed three years and eight days military service of which two years and 134 days were spent on active service.

On 24 February 1904 Burley married Alice Mahala Palmer at Perth and they had two sons, Howard Samuel and William Johnston, and four daughters: May, Beatha, Alice and Grace. In civil life after his marriage Burley became an engine driver with the West Australian Government Railways, an occupation he returned to upon discharge in 1919. He also worked a property, with the help of his two sons, at Bullsbrook. In 1934 he was badly injured in a railway accident which

resulted in the loss of his left foot and right leg. A small lump sum of compensation was payed for the injuries and with this money he purchased artificial limbs and paid off his Bullsbrook property. Things were bad for those on the land during the depression period and one of his sons left the property, which he was then unable to work because of his injuries.

The ingratitude of the government of the day to this gallant Australian is exemplified in the following. In 1936 he applied for a decoration allowance which was being paid by the Imperial Government but, as he was in receipt of a small service pension and had not been discharged due to long service or disablement, the application was refused. In 1938 the Government reduced his pension and Burley wrote for reconsideration pointing out his outstanding service in two wars and his medical condition due to the railway accident, he went on to say:

“ I am drawing near the allotted span of my life (70 years) so surely 16/7½d per week is not asking too much for an old man to eke out an existence for the rest of his days. Apart from all this I hold three good military discharges, six medals including the DCM (South Africa), a bar in France and was mentioned in despatches three times, surely this ought to be taken into consideration. I am not begging, for had I the use of my limbs I would not be asking anything from anybody.”

The Deputy Commissioner of Pensions was unmoved and no reinstatement of pension to its previous level was made. We certainly gave 'special' consideration to those who did so much to give us our proud military heritage. Each Anzac Day until four years before his death Burley would, unaided, proudly march with his unit. He died in 1955 and was buried at Karracutta cemetery.

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LETTERS TO EDITOR

Dear Sir,—In an endeavour to establish when barbed wire was introduced into warfare, i.e., sometime after the mid 1870's, can members please advise of a publication in which documentary proof exists of its earliest use? The common "wire entanglements" as used at Port Arthur, other fortifications, and as British field training books of 1914 vintage portray, unless specifically illustrated or described, is generally ordinary fencing wire laid out merely for tripping purposes and not to tear and snag soldiers and their clothing, etc.

Also, when were fragmentation (offensive) grenades re-introduced into warfare? Again, Port Arthur references are sketchy and appear to refer only to gun-cotton (defensive) type grenades of local and extemporary manufacture. Documentary proof will be appreciated.

I am desirous of borrowing an original helmet plate of South Australia's Permanent Artillery Force for reproduction, without any damage whatever to the returnable original. This badge of pierced design is basically an oval sun-burst surmounted by a crown with a "Eureka" cross in the centre and emblazoned with the words "South Australia" and "Aut pace aut bello", in a garland surrounding it. Without an original sample to work off, the cost will be considerable.

—FRANKLIN GARIE, 1159 Kensington Road, Kensington, S.A. 5068.

Dear Sir,—I found the "Aboriginal Medal Winners" article very interesting, on three counts. The first concerns the DCM winner, Albert Knight, who was born at "Toorale" Station, near Bourke. My interest is that I worked there not long before war was declared in 1939. It was at that time the biggest sheep run in New South Wales, over a million acres of it, 40 miles down the river from Bourke and situated in the junction formed by the Warrego and Darling rivers.

The second point concerns the MM winner, Timothy Hughes. The article states that he won the award at Gona on 26th of December and that has to be quite wrong. The battle for Gona was wrapped up on the 18th of December and obviously "Gona" should read "Buna". In any case, the 2/10th never served at Gona. An obvious printing error is the "January 1947", top of p. 247.

Third and last point is that of Corporal Charles Mene, MM, with whom I

served in the 2/33 Battalion. Charlie was an original member and served in England, which I did not. Strictly speaking, he is not a Queenslander, but is a full-blood native of Thursday Island and as such his physiognomy is entirely different to that of a native-born Queenslander. In fact, he could easily pass for a New Guinean, the facial resemblance between them being very strong. He excited a great deal of interest among the Arabs in the Middle East, though they took little notice of the several part-Aborigines who served with the battalion. To the best of my knowledge he is still employed as a wardsman at the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital, Brisbane, and led the Battalion Association in the 1975 Anzac Day March in Sydney.

—W. MACKAY, 22 Delhi Street, Lidcombe, NSW 2141

Dear Sir,—I was very interested to read the article "Aborigine Medal Winners" that appeared in "Sabretache" for October 1977. Could you please give me any information on the following queries:

- 1—Did any aborigines serve with any of the contingents that were raised in Australia for service in the South African War of 1899-1902?
- 2—If so, in what unit or units did they serve?
- 3—Their names, if possible?
- 4—How were they employed?

—R. GRAY, 5 Elder Terrace, Glengowrie, S.A. 5044.
Can any reader assist Mr. Gray?—Editor.

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A VETERAN OF THE ARMY WORKS CORPS

By J. R. WILLIAMS*

At the Public Record Office, London, I came across the following information in a volume entitled "Register of Soldiers Discharged Vol. 3" (P.R.O., W.O. 25/3861), which I thought might be of interest to the readers of "Sabretache". It concerns an English labourer - Robert Muras Spowant - who served in the Army Works Corps during the Crimean War and ended his days in New Zealand. The old man eventually wrote from New Zealand in June 1903 to secure bona fides for his entry into an old soldiers' home in Auckland:

"Sir,—After such a long lapse of time you may not be able to supply me with a proof of my being one of the Army Working Corps under Sir Joseph Paxton that the Army would be more available for the Field in the Crimean War by this A.W.C. relieving soldiers from the necessary work required. I joined and was sworn in amongst many at Sydenham Crystal Palace then not in a finished state in 1854 about 500 of us left the Thames London on the "Hansen", a German Paddle Steamer and was landed at Balaclava Crimea.

After Peace was proclaimed some 300 of us returned to London on the screw boat named "Antelope" (the corps I heard numbered 5000). I would be thankful for a Form of Proof of the above if there is a record of my name in said corps - as I am now 78 years of age, born in Spittal, Berwick-on-Tweed, April 1825. They are having a Veteran Home in Auckland, N.Z., and the proof I ask may secure me this claim."

He added a postscript to this letter:

"I may mention that I was a carpenter and worked on the railway works, our camp of V Huts were near on the opposite side of the road; we were a little above the land locked natural harbour of Balaclava on the Black Sea."

Officialdom responded on 12th August 1903 as follows:

* The author is a member of MHSA and lives in Stourbridge, in the West Midlands of England.

The Adjutant-General is directed to forward to Mr. Spowant, in reply to his letter of the — June 1903, the attached copy of a letter, and an extract of his services in the "Army Works Corps", which has been furnished from the War Office Records preserved in Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, and is issued to him as a very special case.

"Particulars respecting R. M. Spowant.

By trade a carpenter, he was engaged for service in the Army Works Corps on the 20th Sept. 1855, and embarked for the Crimea on the 20th Oct. He re-embarked for England on the 9th July 1856. No. in Register 2312. Engagement No. 3167."

With this correspondence are four mimeographed typescript sheets reproducing the articles of employment for a member of the Army Works Corps.

"ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT.

Formation.

*WHEREAS Her Majesty's Government have directed Sir Joseph Paxton to organise and despatch to the Crimea a Civil Engineering Corps, for the purpose of assisting the operations of the Allied Forces in conducting and carrying on the present war: AND WHEREAS William Thomas Doyne Esquire, Civil Engineer, has been recommended by the said Sir Joseph Paxton, and has been commissioned by Her Majesty to get together and form such Engineering Corps, and, when formed, to superintend and take command of the same: NOW THESE PRESENTS WITNESS that the undersigned persons do, and each of them doth hereby agree with the said Sir Joseph Paxton and also with the said William Thomas Doyne, and with the Officer in Command of the said Corps for the time being, to join the said Corps, and to enter into the service of the said Corps for the time being: and that they will, whenever required, upon a free passage being provided for them for that purpose, embark for the Seat of War; and, upon their arrival there, be employed with the Ordnance, or otherwise, in assisting the operations of the Allied Forces in the Crimea or elsewhere and will, in all things, act under and conform to the orders, rules and regulations to be laid down and given by the Officer in Command of the said Corps for the time being, or by those placed by the said Officer in authority over them in the execution of all works required to be executed by them, and will promptly and faithfully execute all orders to the best of their skill and ability, and conduct themselves soberly and steadily, and will, in all things connected with the execution of the said works, submit to such regulations as may be directed by the proper authorities, and shall and will, while this engagement lasts, be subject to the

Mutiny Act and Articles of War for the time being in force, AND the said Sir Joseph Paxton and William Thomas Doyne Do, and each of them Doth, hereby agree with the undersigned, and each of them, that they shall be supplied with an outfit on going on board ship, and with a free passage to the Seat of War, and shall be employed as Labourers, Excavators, or Navvies in such Corps, as aforesaid, for a period of two years, and from and after their embarkation on board ship they shall be supplied with rations of the like quantities and qualities as shall be supplied to the Soldiers in Her Majesty's Army with whom they shall be serving, and shall receive in addition Wages for such services at the rate Thirty shillings per week, with a pension the same as is paid in the Army in case of disability AND the Undersigned do, and each of them doth hereby agree that they will continue in the service of the said William Thomas Doyne, and of the Officer in Command of the said Corps for the time being, for such period of two years, and for a further period of one year after the expiration of such two years, if required by the said William Thomas Doyne, or such Officer as aforesaid, AND the Undersigned do, and each of them doth, further agree that the said Sir Joseph Paxton, or the said William Thomas Doyne, or the Officer in Command of the said Corps for the time being, may at any time during such period of two years, and further period of one year aforesaid, give notice to them or any of them that their services are dispensed with, in which event, or at the expiration of this Agreement by effluxion of time, each of the Undersigned shall, if his conduct is approved by the said William Thomas Doyne, or the Officer in Command of the said Corps for the time being, be entitled to receive a gratuity of twelve Pounds, AND the said Sir Joseph Paxton and William Thomas Doyne further agree that upon the termination and fulfilment of this agreement, the Undersigned shall be provided with free passage to England. AND the Undersigned further agree that until they are required to embark for the Seat of War, they will execute such work as may be required by the said Sir Joseph Paxton, or by such person or persons as may be placed by the said Sir Joseph Paxton in authority over them, receiving wages for such work at the rate of twenty one shillings per week.

WITNESS the hands of the parties this Twenty seventh day of August, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five."

The articles are annotated as follows:

"*Army Works Corps (Raised 1.7.55, ended 9.8.56). After the Balaclava Railway was completed, which commenced 1.1.55, completed 30.6.55, formed from the same body of Navvies which built the Railway. 151 men of this Corps died in the Crimea, between 17.8.55 and 14.10.56".

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GENESIS OF THE ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE, DUNTROON

By C. D. COULTHARD-CLARK

People who know anything at all of the origins and history of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, will most probably point to Lord Kitchener's 1910 report on Australia's defences as the event which led to the establishment of the college.

Very few would be aware that the question of creating such an institution in this country already had a 55-year history before Kitchener made his recommendation.

The earliest known call for a college came only three days after the Eureka Stockade. At a public meeting in Melbourne on December 6, 1854, copies were circulated of a proposed new Constitution for the colony of Victoria which reflected both the strong anti-military feeling engendered by events at Ballarat and popular fears of attack by Russian warships (England was at war with Russia in the Crimea).

At the same time as calling for the disbandment of the colony's regular police and military forces, excepting only a staff of instructors, the new Constitution advocated the raising of a militia and other defensive measures including a 'Military College to be forthwith established'. The suggestion was clearly premature and was not acted on, although the "Constitution" found its way into the records of the House of Commons.

The need to obtain properly trained officers assumed new importance after the British troops garrisoning Australia were withdrawn in September 1870, leaving the colonies to provide for their own defence. In 1881 a Royal commission into NSW defences cited Canada's military college, established at Kingston five years earlier, as a model for a "central military school" for the Australian colonies, although it is plain that none of the commissioners really understood the proposed model and meant only to have a school of instruction to conduct post commissioning training and not a formal cadet college.

Nonetheless, a cadet college was soon proposed. In September, 1885, Major-General Sir Andrew Clarke, Inspector-General of Fortifications, wrote to Mr. Frederick Sargood, Victoria's Minister for Defence, suggesting a Kingston-style college at Melbourne. Sir Andrew evidently saw an ideal opportunity for having his proposal put into effect, as the colonies had recently been gripped by a war-scare resulting from a confrontation between Russia and Britain in Afghanistan, at a time when British forces - including, for the first time, a contingent of troops from NSW - were subduing rebellion in the Sudan.

These same events probably inspired Mr. Augustus Morris, explorer, pastoralist and former parliamentarian, to make the same proposal a month later in NSW. He published a letter in *The Sydney Morning Herald* from the Commandant of Kingston, Colonel E. O. Hewett, to Captain W. W. S. Bridges, RN, of Moss Vale, which similarly argued that Australia needed a college. Captain Bridges' son had been a cadet at Kingston six years before (he left without graduating) and was to become the first commandant of Australia's college.

Mr. Morris' suggestion was largely ignored, but Sir Andrew's probably prompted a move in 1886 to establish a military college to serve all the Australian colonies within the grounds of the University of Melbourne. A Bill was introduced into Parliament on November 30 but, although it was supported by all sections of the House, the Opposition objected to such an important measure being rushed through so late in the session and it was accordingly withdrawn to allow more urgent legislation to be dealt with. The Bill was never re-introduced, although as late as 1900 university land was still reserved for purposes of a college.

The idea of using existing educational institutions as a base on which to graft a military branch was evidently seen as an economical solution to the problem. In August, 1887, Major-General Henry Schaw, defence adviser to NSW, Victoria and New Zealand, called for the establishment of a college but said that, in the meantime, a military department should be formed at the University of Sydney, using the university's existing facilities to give officers instruction in mathematics and physics. His proposals, too, failed, although the Government was questioned in Parliament in 1888 on what action it had taken on his report by Mr. J. M. Creed, an acid critic of the Parkes administration.

The visit of Major-General James Bevan Edwards in 1889 to inspect and report on Australia's defences produced yet another recommendation for a



Lieutenant-General Sir Andrew Clarke, GCMG, CB, CIE (1824-1902)

college along Kingston lines. He additionally justified a college as a means of fostering in officers a spirit of national pride, free of parochial aspirations. More was made of his call outside of Australia than by any of the colonial governments. Even the Governor-General of Canada, the Marquis of Lorne, seemed more responsive when he said in 1890 that Australia needed a college like Kingston. Victoria briefly debated the merits of Geelong and Melbourne as sites for a college in January, 1890, and Queensland asked for six copies of Kingston's regulations and syllabus in September but nothing further was done in either case.

The depressed 1890s and the onset of an eight-year drought in 1895 caused interest in beginning a college to fall away markedly. The only calls in this decade were both in 1897. Mr. George Cathcart Craig published a book entitled 'The Federal Defence of Australasia' which advocated yet again the Kingston model; while Major-General George Arthur French wrote in his first report as Commandant of the NSW Military Forces that if a college was achieved, then the colonies would need to obtain British officers on loan 'to prevent the whole sinking to a state of helpless mediocrity'. Federation may have been a stumbling block, but in 1899 Queensland attempted to obtain Kingston graduates for the Queensland artillery in which prospects were reportedly good owing to impending union.

Federation did not see the immediate establishment of a college, although Sir Andrew Clarke again recommended this course to the new Commonwealth Minister for Defence, Sir John Forrest, in July, 1901. Not until Major-General Sir Edward Hutton arrived to command the Commonwealth Military Forces in 1902 did the cause gain an authoritative advocate. Sir Edward envisaged an institution which adapted Kingston, the US Military Academy at West Point, and the Great Public Schools of England. He also justified a college on other than strictly military grounds, arguing that training at the college would be of general educational value to the public at large. He too, however, was forced to accept that his ideas could not be implemented owing to the financial stringencies imposed by the severe drought through which Australia was passing.

He returned to England late in 1904 but he had aroused serious interest in a college. Even as he prepared to depart Melbourne a development had taken place with considerable significance for training of military officers. A new scheme devised by the British War Office in 1903 to obtain university graduates for the Regular Army led in 1905 to a proposal by the University of Sydney to set up a department of military science to qualify candidates for British Army and



Views of early Fortoon

Australian commissions. The Minister for Defence, Mr. J. W. McCay (himself a militia colonel) arranged for the Chief of Intelligence, Colonel W. T. Bridges, to negotiate with the university's Senate as his representative. Colonel Bridges was at pains to point out to his minister that the new department, while a useful innovation, would not be a substitute for a military college, a distinction the university was also anxious to have understood when it stressed that it was proposing an academic institution and not a 'military training college with the full disciplinary powers of such a college'. Nonetheless the new department was headed by a British Army officer, Colonel Hubert Foster, of the Royal Engineers.

The view that a "proper" college was necessary still prevailed. In September, 1906, the Inspector-General of Australia's forces, Major-General Harry Finn, reported that the necessity 'has become exceedingly accentuated'. There were, however, practical problems to be overcome, as the Prime Minister, Mr. Deakin, explained to the 1907 Colonial Conference in London. For a college to be feasible a regular and minimum output would be essential but Australia's forces were too small to provide employment to all graduates. This problem had been overcome in Canada by allowing graduates to accept commissions in the British Army or appointments in the civil service, but Australia was unwilling to follow this practice.

The question remained in abeyance until the following year, when the new Labor Government of Mr. Fisher was asked by New Zealand whether any action was contemplated towards establishing a college. The inquiry was referred to Colonel Bridges, who reported that a joint college with New Zealand would ease, but not overcome, the disability of which Mr. Deakin had spoken the previous year.

The decision of Australia to join with Britain and the other dominions in creating an Imperial General Staff highlighted the need for numbers of staff-trained officers in the Australian forces. Australia now had an urgent need of a college to provide these officers. The Inspector-General, Major-General J. C. Hoad, early in 1909 noted that a military college might be impossible for some time to come but sought the establishment of a school to prepare officers for staff college in England or India.

By this time the Government was clearly committed to creating some sort of military educational institution and £4,000 was placed on the 1909 draft Budget for this purpose. The institution to be set up was termed a "military staff college", although whether this actually meant a cadet college is not clear. Major-

General Hoad, as the Government's senior military adviser, no doubt expected that the college would be structured along lines proposed by him, but the Government evidently was not convinced and referred his scheme to Colonel Bridges, now Australia's Chief of the General Staff. He concurred with the suggestion of an Australian school but doubted whether the lines proposed by Major-General Hoad were the best that could be devised. He preferred a school along the lines of Kingston or West Point.

Major-General Hoad pressed on with his scheme and in June, 1909, presented it again in an expanded and amended form. The school he proposed was to prepare candidates for commissions in both the permanent and militia forces but would also run promotion and refresher courses and conduct higher instruction for warrant and non-commissioned officers. The needs of the permanent forces were to be met with three annual cadetships to a one-year course.

In November, Major-General Hoad said that the scope of work to be done by the college would be beyond any existing college if the new Defence Bill to introduce compulsory training was passed, and he said that Kingston was not a suitable model for a college of this kind. To head his proposed college, he recommended the name of Colonel Foster, the director of the Department of Military Science at the University of Sydney. Colonel Foster had at one time been considered for the post of commandant of Kingston but was rejected because he was regarded as too poor a disciplinarian for a cadet college. He was, nonetheless, keen to accept the position proposed by Major-General Hoad but the Government demurred.

The whole issue was, however, linked to larger questions than simply that of finding a suitable director. In particular the Government was undecided on which advice to follow. To resolve the differing views of Colonel Bridges and Major-General Hoad, it was decided to refer the matter to Lord Kitchener during his visit, with the result that Colonel Bridges' advice was endorsed and Colonel Bridges himself was appointed to establish and command Australia's new college.

Although much credit is due to Lord Kitchener for providing the weight of his prestige and the detailed scheme for the college which finally spurred the Government into action, the idea that Australia needed such an institution had been under consideration for many years. Lord Kitchener's contribution was therefore not so much innovative as confirmatory, and the actual shaping of the college fell to Colonel Bridges as the man called upon to put Lord Kitchener's scheme into effect.



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