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*Sabretache*



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# **SABRETACHE**

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The Journal and Proceedings of  
**The Military Historical  
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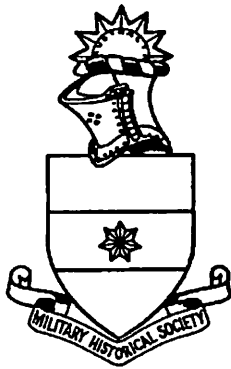
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**Apology:** The Editor apologises for the re-publishing of Neville Foldi's article in the last issue of *Sabretache* and for any embarrassment caused.

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Contributions in the form of articles, notes, queries or letters are always welcome. Authors of major articles are invited to submit a brief biographical note, and, where possible, submit the text of the article on floppy disk as well as hard copy. See the last page for further guidelines.

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**The Journal and  
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# SABRETACHE

## The Military Historical Society of Australia

The aims of the Society are the encouragement and pursuit of study and research in military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment and kindred matters; the promotion of public interest and knowledge in these subjects, and the preservation of historical military objects with particular reference to the armed forces of Australia. The annual subscription to the Society is \$30. A membership application is on the back page.

### Organisation

The Federal Council of Australia is located in Canberra. The Society has branches in Brisbane, Canberra, Albury-Wodonga, Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide and Perth. Details of meetings are available from Branch Secretaries whose names appear below.

### MHSA Constitution and Rules

The constitution of the Society adopted 1 August 1993 appears in *Sabretache* January-March 1993. The Society's rules adopted on 14 April 1997 appear in *Sabretache* April -June 1997.

### Sabretache

The Federal Council is responsible for the publication of the Society Journal, *Sabretache*, which is mailed to each member of the Society quarterly.

### Members' notices

Society members may place, at no cost, one notice of approximately 40 words in the 'Members' notices' section of the Journal each financial year.

### Queries

The Society's honorary officers cannot undertake research on behalf of members. However, queries from members received by the Secretary will be published in the 'Letters' section of the Journal.

### Branch Secretaries

ACT — Mr Graham Wilson, 234 Beasley Street, Farrer ACT 2607

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## “To have some tangible record”— Port Moresby’s First World War Memorial

John Meehan

At the corner of Ela Beach Road and Musgrave Street in downtown Port Moresby stand the Memorials to those who served in the armed forces during both World Wars. The 1914-1918 memorial is in the form of gate or archway which once stood at the entrance to the Public Gardens and Recreation Reserve (nowadays the site of the Ela Beach School). The pillars of the granite ‘gate’ have listed there-on the names of the 125 men and four women who were residents of Papua<sup>1</sup> and who left to enlist for Active Service during the Great War.

A ‘Roll of Honor’ Committee had been formed in 1917 to decide how best to perpetuate the memory of those who served. After considerable discussion a decision was finally made at the Committee meeting of 7th December 1922. Funds of £255 were raised, and supplemented with £145 from the Red Cross. The granite archway was constructed by D W Custer & Co of Sydney, and transported freight-free to Port Moresby by Burns, Philp & Co. It was officially unveiled by the Lieutenant-Governor, Judge Hubert Murray, on 21st December 1923, in the presence of a large number of the residents of Port Moresby.

Judge Murray commented that, “when the call went out for help, our boys responded promptly and nobly [he omitted the women]. Here we had no fervid orators haranguing on street corners, no bands playing, no processions; every man went from a cold sense of duty ... No monument was required to keep their memory fresh in the hearts of all, ... but to have some tangible record to hand down to commemorate the great deeds of great men”. He went on to say that out of a population of 1,000 Europeans, 328 were sent. The number of 328 people must be incorrect. The writer has traced references (some rather vague) to the names just under 200 people who enlisted, who tried to enlist but were rejected for various reasons, and those who did serve but were not included on the Memorial. Even so, a very large percentage of the population was involved; at 30th June 1916, the census recorded 647 adult white males and 216 adult females resident in Papua. It must be noted that the Papuans were not allowed to enlist.

Judge Murray had commented that no monument was required to keep their memory fresh, but to have some tangible record to hand down. Seventy years later the writer drew quite a crowd of on-lookers when he wrote down all of the names. Except for a few well known people such as Henry Ryan and Wilfred Beaver, who were they all? Murray’s tangible record remains, but to add some flesh to those unheard-of names became a substantial task of historical detective work (which still continues), but at least some information is now available on most of the 129 people named, together with some details of another 40 people who did serve during the war, but for various reasons, did not get their names inscribed on the Memorial.

During the war the newspaper of the day (the ‘Papuan Times’ until 1915 and afterwards the ‘Papuan Courier’) regularly published items on the farewell gatherings held for those leaving to

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<sup>1</sup> At the outbreak of war in 1914, the country that is now Papua New Guinea was administered as two separate colonies; the [Australian] Territory of Papua and the Schutzgebiet [Deutsch] Neu Guinea (German New Guinea). Though the Australian Forces captured German New Guinea in September 1914, it was administered as an occupied country by the Military and remained quite separate. Hence my use of terms such as “resident of Papua” because that was the correct geo-political description at the time.

enlist, regular 'Letters from the Front', and several lists of those known to have enlisted. The War Memorial Committee published two lists on 30 March 1923; the first of 113 people considered to meet the necessary qualifications, and the second of 44 names about whom the Committee sought further information.



The Port Moresby First World War Memorial

There were two requirements for the inclusion of a name on the Memorial, and the conditions were stringently applied:

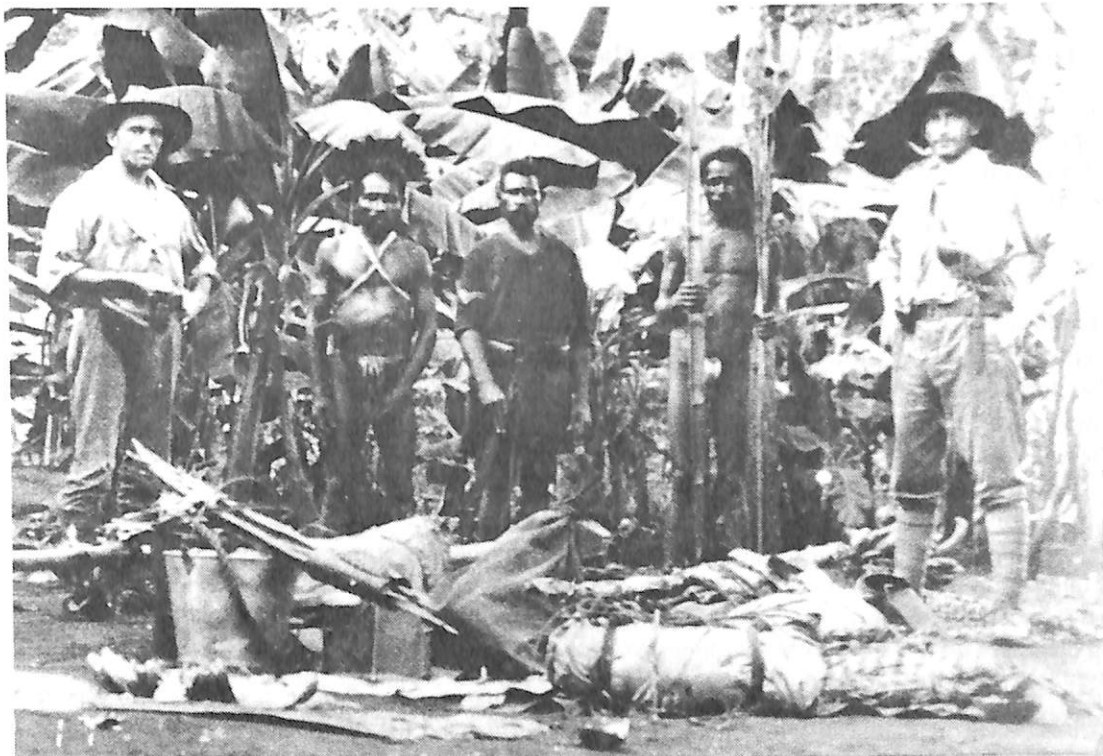
- 1 **Was he a resident of Papua at the time he enlisted?** A person resident in Papua for many years prior to the war but who had left the Territory before enlistment was not eligible, and
- 2 **Was the enlistment for Active Service?** Service in base areas in Australia or the UK did not count, nor did service in the occupation force in German New Guinea, except between the 12th and 21st September 1914 when the Australians captured the place.

Two well known men who spent most of their lives in PNG, and who both served in the Army, could not meet the conditions. Max Middleton came to Papua to open the Bank of New South Wales at Samarai in 1910, but the Bank had posted him back to Sydney in January 1914. He could not meet the residency criterion, even though he had returned to Papua in 1917 after losing an eye whilst serving with the Artillery in France. Les Joubert had lived in Papua since 1900, but he did not enlist in the Rabaul force until August 1915. There are other similar stories.

Most served in the Infantry or the Artillery, a number in the Light Horse Regiments, three in the Imperial Camel Corps, and some in British units such as the Honourable Artillery Company, the

Glousters, and the Royal Air Force. Three of the four women served in the Australian Army Nursing Service in France. The casualties were heavy; 22 were killed in action or died of wounds, and four died of accident or of disease. Many won awards and decorations. There was one Victoria Cross, five Military Crosses, a Distinguished Flying Cross, a MBE, and five Military Medals. Many were commissioned in the field. Those 'Anglo-Papuans', as they called themselves, served well.

Those whose names are recorded at Ela Beach were an interesting and varied lot as the following brief notes on a few of those people, once so well known in Port Moresby, illustrate.



This photograph was taken in 1911 in western Papua near the Dutch (now Indonesia) border. It shows, on the left, Wilfred Beaver, who joined the British New Guinea service in 1905, and made a name for himself as an anthropologist. Lieutenant Beaver served in the 60th Bn AIF until killed in Polygon Wood, France, on 26 September 1917. His book, *Unexplored New Guinea*, was published in 1920. Sydney Burrows (on the right) came to Papua as a Patrol Officer in 1909, and became one of Murray's 'outside men', ie, an explorer rather than a desk officer. In 1913, he became the co-discoverer of Lake Murray. During 1914, he was at the headwaters of the Fly River and discovered the Elevala River. He served in France as a Lieutenant in the 36th Bn until badly wounded by machine gun fire in April 1918. He could never again walk properly, and could not return to patrolling in Papua.

### **A Papuan Victoria Cross Winner?**

Claud Castleton was born in the UK, emigrated to Australia, and moved to Papua in 1912. He worked as an overseer at Lolorua when the rubber plantations were being established, then prospected for gold on the Lakekamu River during 1913-14. He left Port Moresby in March 1915 to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force. After service as a Private with the 18th Battalion



at Gallipoli, he transferred to the 5th Machine Gun Company. He was promoted to Sergeant in March 1916 when the Australians moved to the Western Front in northern France. On 28th July 1916 the 5th MG Coy were supporting a night attack at Pozières which turned into a disaster; some 150 men of the 20th Battalion's total strength of around 800 were killed, and many wounded lay unaided for hours. Castleton crawled out into the flare-lit machine-gun-raked no man's land twice, and carried a wounded man back each time. He went out a third time, and was returning with another wounded man, when he was killed instantly by a burst of machine gun fire. For this "splendid example of courage and self sacrifice" he was awarded the Victoria Cross. He was the only resident of Papua ever to be awarded the VC.

### **From Port Moresby Hospital to the trenches of France**

In 1913 Fanny Hamersley was appointed as a Nurse at the European Hospital in Port Moresby. She served until May 1915, when she and her Matron, Ethel Wilkins, left to join the Australian Army Nursing Service. After service in England and France she was discharged medically unfit in 1919, and then returned to her old position at the Port Moresby Hospital.

### **With the Imperial Camel Corps**

Frederick Henry Naylor was an adventurer. Born in Melbourne, he joined the Board of Works as a clerk after attending Brighton Grammar School. At the age of 22 years, he left with the 4th Victorian Imperial Bushmen for service at the Boer War, where he was awarded the Queen's medal with four clasps. Corporal Naylor was one the Australians serving in South Africa chosen to go to England to attend the King's Coronation on the 4th August 1902. On return to Australia, life back at the Melbourne Board of Works no doubt seemed rather dull. He probably arrived in Port Moresby in 1905, to do the usual service as a 'temporary officer' before being permanently appointed in March 1906 as a Clerk in the Government Secretary's Department. Rapid promotion followed; on 18th May 1906 he was appointed Assistant Resident Magistrate at Kokoda in the Northern Division (now Oro Province). He resigned on 30 October 1908 after a dispute with the Administrator, Judge Murray.

The next two years were spent as the business manager for a British newspaper in Buenos Aires. Back in Papua by November 1911, he first assisted his old friend from Kokoda days, Henry Griffin, to develop a Plantation at Tavai, about 50 km east of Port Moresby. Later he managed the Waigani Plantation near Alotau in the Milne Bay Province.

In March 1915 he joined the Australian Imperial Force and immediately applied for a Commission; he was appointed Second Lieutenant in the 21st Infantry Battalion on 24th April 1915. After service at Gallipoli, he volunteered for the Camel Corp and after four weeks training in camel handling, he was appointed commander of 3 Company, 1st Australian Camel Battalion.

He was killed in action at Gaza, Palestine, in April 1917 after capturing a Turkish position which could not be held during a counter-attack. The battle, known as second Gaza, is described in detail in Vol VII of the Australian Official History of the War. The Cameliers were to capture Tank Redoubt, a heavily fortified knoll in the otherwise flat landscape. The Turks were well aware of the knoll's importance; it was held by 600 men under German officers. The two companies of Cameliers only started with 200 men, who under their excellent officers fought with super-strength and actually captured the knoll. Naylor was wounded while leading his men up to the position, but went on, only to be killed during the defence. The position could not be held; only about 10 men survived. Naylor has no known grave, and is commemorated by an inscription at the Jerusalem War Cemetery.

### **An adventurous medical man**

Dr Colin Simson, M.B., joined the Government of British New Guinea in May 1905 "... temporarily and provisionally, to be the Chief [Medical] Officer at Port Moresby...." (the colony was renamed 'Territory of Papua' in September 1906). He had served during the Boer War, and was never satisfied with just Medicine. He purchased and developed a 500 acre (200 ha) copra plantation at Hisiu, some 100 km west of Port Moresby. In July 1909 'The Honourable Dr C C Simson' was appointed a member of the Native Regulation Board, however, because the plantation was deemed a conflict of interest, he resigned from the service in December 1909, to stay on in private practice.

Simson became a respected and well known resident of Port Moresby. In 1913 he became the first President of the Papua Club. He was a major shareholder in the Laloki copper mine, and a prominent spokesman on behalf of the Plantation industry. His large house near the highest point on Lawes Road is today is marked by a small road slightly mis-named 'Samson' Crescent. Many of the planters at the time were opposed to the policies of the Lieutenant-Governor, and Simson was deputed by a public meeting held in April 1915 to publicise their dissatisfactions in Australia. Whether he was leaving to enlist, or made that decision after arrival, we do not know, but he enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps.

Simson went to France as a Captain and was soon Mentioned in Dispatches for coolness and bravery at the Front; "the Doctor's courage under fire was a byword in the unit to which he belonged" said the Commanding Officer of his Artillery Regiment. Later came promotion to Major and the award of the Military Cross for bravery in attending to the wounded whilst under fire. He lived at Sydney after the war, but continued to visit his plantation at Hisiu every year until 1941 when he was 70 years of age. He remained associated with the area until his death in 1947.

### **From Patrol Officer to Fighter Pilot**

George Zimmer was a Patrol Officer stationed at Kerema before he joined the Royal Flying Corps. Posted to France as a Fighter Pilot he won a Distinguished Flying Cross, the Legion of Honour and was mentioned in dispatches. On return to Papua, he remained in the field service, eventually to become the Resident Magistrate (District Commissioner) at Kerema, but strangely he never again flew an aeroplane.

### **A Keen Enlistee**

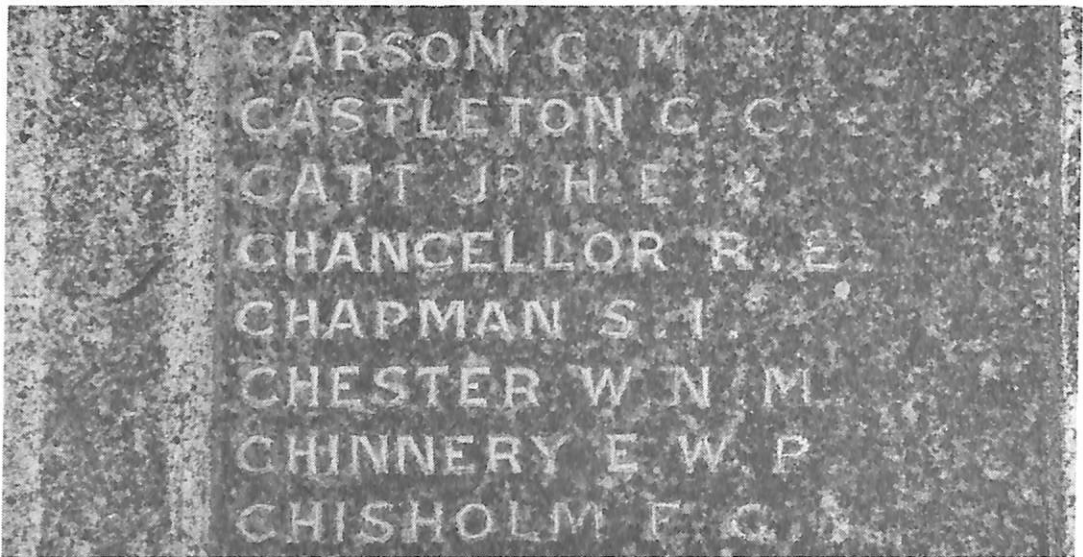
To quote from the Sydney *Bulletin* of 29 November 1916: "A hard case presented himself at the Cairns enlisting office the other day, and was accepted for active service. He said he had come from New Guinea and his name was Harry Gofton. After he had passed he asked for a refund of his boat fare. He said he thought he was entitled to it because, before he could get to a port of call for steamers, he had to walk 195 miles and 'well bare footed too!'. He got the refund." Gofton lasted only three months in the trenches before being killed in action.

### **Searching for oil in Papua**

On 15th October 1913 Leonard Langdale Wrathall arrived in the Territory of Papua to make a geological examination of the oil-bearing area in Gulf Province, and to furnish a report as to how he considered the field should be developed. The survey extended from Yule Island to Kikori, and to the head-waters of the Vailala River. Wrathall enlisted in the AIF on 4 April 1916. Because of his background, he served in the 2nd Tunnelling Company, was promoted to Lieutenant on 1 November 1916, and won the Military Cross. Wrathall's death is reported in

the Papuan Courier newspaper of 18 May 1928: "In London oil circles he was counted amongst the most brilliant of geologists."

There is a story behind every one of the 129 names recorded on the Memorial. Nearly all of them lived most of their adult lives in Papua New Guinea, and though they were all expatriates, each of them contributed to the early development of the country. Maybe in Governor Murray's era, "no monument was required to keep their memory fresh", but the Memorial Committee's objective of having, "some tangible record to hand down", did succeed, and has certainly allowed the writer a very personal glimpse into a lengthy period of PNG's history.



Detail showing eight of the names:

- Lieutenant George Carson MM, formerly entomologist and plant pathologist with the Territory of Papua Administration. Killed in action (KIA), France.
- Sergeant C C Castleton VC, KIA France.
- Private Henry Catt, Infantry, AIF, was once a Treasury Clerk at Port Moresby. Died of wounds, France, August 1916.
- Lieutenant Reg Chancellor, Infantry, AIF, survived the war and returned to his job in Papua as a plantation manager.
- Staff Sergeant Stanley Chapman, a clerk in the Government Stores, served in the Army Veterinary Corps. He returned to Port Moresby.
- In 1896 Bill Chester became the first European male born at Port Moresby. He only left Papua for his schooling and the war. He definitely deserves the title, 'Anglo-Papuan'.
- Pearson Chinnery joined the Australian Flying Corps in 1917. Later he became the New Guinea Government Anthropologist.
- Private Fred Chisholm, the Patrol Officer who nearly captured Detzner in 1914. KIA, France, September 1917.

## Harry Groom, A Migrant Soldier

Peter Bamforth

On a spring day in April 1892 a son was born to Benjamin and Annie Groom in the village of Brimington in the County of Derbyshire. The nearby market town of Chesterfield was the hub of the County and was situated at the junction of the Rivers Rother and Hipper and was home to much activity during the Industrial Revolution. George Stevenson, the famous railway engine maker and railway founder, lived at Tapton House (now a secondary school) and is buried at the Holy Trinity Church. The Grooms christened their son Harry Pendleton (this latter name being Annie's maiden name). They had another child who was three years older – a girl called Winnie. Later there was another male who died of asthma as an adult. Benjamin Groom was a school master and the family resided at School House which would indicate that he was the Headmaster or perhaps the House Master of the boarding section of a private school. Some years later the Grooms moved to Bingham in the County of Nottinghamshire. In March 1905, when young Harry was only 13 and Winnie was 16, their father, at the age of 54, died of liver cancer. The death was certified by Dr. Edward Trevor MRCS on 31 March. Annie, with three children to take care of, was in dire straits. However it was not long before she met a William Colby and they were married and lived at Oulton Broad near Lowestoft.

The house was called 'Highbury' and one gets the general impression that she married well. By this time young Harry had finished school and one must assume that he left home because his first place of employment was Holt which is some 60 miles north west of Lowestoft.

He joined the workforce at the age of 16 and his first employer was Cyril Bennington who was a grocer, tea dealer and provision merchant. Harry stayed there for two and half years when he left of his own accord, in May 1911. He gained two important things: a sense of responsibility and stability, and the respect of others. In fact he received two testimonials from Mr Bennington – one from the job aspect and the other a personal one. He then worked the summer months of 1911 until mid-July at the Manor House at Kinoulton. This was followed by three months at Bayfield Farm in Holt.

At the age of 18 he joined the Territorial Army and was appointed to the Norfolk Regiment. He served one year and 145 days and 'left of his own accord'. He then went down to London to work in the advertising department of Richard James & Co for five months. He left their employ on 9 February 1912. His reason for leaving was that he had applied to the Australian Government to be admitted as a migrant.

His application was approved and he sailed in late February 1912 from London for Fremantle on the Orient Line vessel *Orama*. Under the command of Captain A J Coad, the vessel arrived at Fremantle (via Cape Town where they called in for coal bunkers) on 2 April 1912.

The vessel was a large one (by the general standards of the times) – some 12,927 gross registered tons (grt) – with a length of 551 feet, draught 39 feet and the moulded breadth was 64 feet. She was commissioned in 1911. Built by the famous shipbuilder John Brown of Clydebank in Scotland she was registered in Glasgow. Her service speed was 20 knots. She was

built to '+ Lloyds 100 A 1'.<sup>1</sup> For comparison the *Titanic* had a length of 850 feet and a breadth of 92 feet and a grt of 46,328 tons with a 'hoped for' service speed of 21 knots.

The engine configuration was similar to that of the *Titanic*: triple screw with the two outboard screws each being driven by a four cylinder compound reciprocating engine and the centre screw having a low pressure turbine utilising exhaust steam from the reciprocating engines. Boiler pressure was 215 lbs/sq.inch.

She was eventually sunk by enemy action off the coast of Ireland in 1917. Captain A J Coad was still in command. Losses are not known. His fellow passengers were mainly people with rural backgrounds and included a coachman, dairymen, farm hands and labourers, domestics, ploughmen, housekeepers and spouses and children of many of the foregoing. Harry described himself with what would later become typical modesty as a 'labourer'.

On arriving in WA he initially found work in Brookton and later seemed also to have worked around the Pingelly area for some time. He had a minor clash with the law in the case, *Commonwealth Electoral Commission v Groom*. On 3 September 1915, he was fined the grand sum of seven shillings and six pence. Probable offence : not registering as a voter. Then in late 1915 he made the decision to join the army and so it was on 11 October he lodged his application and was provisionally accepted on this date – he was 23 years and 6 months old.

The army described Harry by his physical characteristics: Five feet and nine inches tall – and chest measurement expanded was 36 inches and he weighed in at 133 lbs. His eyes were grey, his hair light brown and his complexion was fresh. His address was care of the GPO Perth and next of kin was his mother Annie Colby of Oulton Broad in Suffolk. He took the oath of allegiance that same day and the attesting officer was Hon Lieut O Weaver. He was allotted number 763.

After an initial induction period of one week he was appointed to 33 depot under Camp Order 537. The preparation for war was about to begin.

Basic training, which consisted of the usual physical 'jerks', lectures, musketry, trench digging, signaling, and route marching caused the troops to chafe at the bit as they wanted to get going overseas and at the Hun!

During this period Private Groom demonstrated enthusiasm for his duties and honed his leadership skills. Thus it was on 7 December 1915 he was transferred to the 23 Depot for NCO training. Six weeks later he graduated from the NCO school and was promoted to Corporal by-passing the usual first step of Lance Corporal.

His daily rate of pay increased from 5/- to 10/- per day with the usual deferred 1/6 and an allotment of 6/- per day. The allottee was his brother Jas J Groom – this payment continued right through until 16 April 1919. As he did not make the allotment to his mother that further reinforces the thought that she was in comfortable circumstances with William Colby.

Much can be said too for his prior Territorial Army training with the Norfolk Regiment from 1910 to 1912 giving him a head start in the art of formal and disciplined soldiering. This was

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<sup>1</sup> Ships were built to a set of standards as determined by a Classification Society. The most famous of these Societies was Lloyds of London (not to be confused with Lloyds the insurance company) The actual standard was indicated by a series of coded marks and in the case of the *Orama* they were, '+ Lloyds 100 A 1'. This meant that she was built under survey (+) to Lloyd's Standards (Lloyds). The scantlings were in accordance with the rules (100 A) and the equipment was in accordance with the rules (1). It also stated that she was fitted with electric lights and that the steel was manufactured at an approved steelworks.

perhaps initially lacking to some degree in the Australian raw recruits, but did not detract from their ability later to effectively wage war against a hardened enemy.

Appointed to 43 depot, he participated in the training of recruits and added to his own military skills. In the early part of February, Corporal Groom was appointed to the newly formed 44th Battalion under the command of Lieut Colonel W O Mansbridge DSO who had seen action at Gallipoli where he had been wounded. Of the four newly appointed Company Commanders, three had already seen action at Gallipoli: Major Everett ('A' Coy), Capt Rockcliff ('C' Coy) both ex 11th Battalion and Captain Lamb ('B' Coy) who was ex 28th Battalion. None of these officers would have had any illusions as to what was before them having already experienced the 'whiff of gunpowder'.

The troops came from as varied a number of backgrounds as could be imagined: mechanic, veterinary student, civil servant, horse trainer, farmer, clerk, butcher, bookmaker, fisherman, farmer, stockman, grocer, barman, coal miner, fitter. The list was almost endless. The officers had more predictable occupations: Lieut Edgar Adams was a railway station master. Lieut Herbert Wells, the Quartermaster, had been an estate agent. Major Edwin Summerhayes was an architect. As mixed a bag as could be sent to war. Most declared themselves as 'C of E'.

The Battalion did not move overseas until June 1916 and this extra time was utilised to bring the troops up to a high standard of fighting efficiency and the officers and men started to get to know each other within the fabric of the family of the battalion and a feeling of *esprit de corps* began to develop.

On 6 June 1916 the Battalion embarked on HMAT *Suevic*, designated A29, together with the first draft of replacements: the 11th Field Ambulance and 11th Field Engineers. In total some 1,600 troops were crammed into the ship. The sea voyage was difficult and tedious and the cramped conditions made organised activities difficult. Nevertheless morale remained high. The officers had their time mainly taken up by censoring letters! The ship stopped at Durban and again at Cape Town and to keep the men on the ship the Quarantine Laws were invoked. This brought about some ugly scenes with the troops being in a pretty mutinous mood. The officers displayed firmness and the guards showed loyalty to the officers. It could be said to have been a 'tricky situation'.

Despite the aftermath of the Board of Trade Enquiry into the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912 there were only enough lifeboat berths for a third of the people aboard!

The tedium was relieved by the high jinks at the Crossing the Line ceremony with King Neptune dispensing rough justice to all those who had trespassed in his Domain. At the end of the day and in the traditional manner Neptune got a dose of his own medicine!

The *Suevic* arrived at Plymouth on 26 July 1916 and the troops disembarked for Devonport, and then entrained for Salisbury Plain. The sight of the English countryside entranced the Australians with the summer abundance of flowers in full bloom and the verdant carpet of the countryside. Quite different from the 'sunburnt country' from which they had come. Corporal Harry Groom would have had mixed feelings on his return to the 'Old Dart' The Battalion arrived at Amesbury and had a six mile march to Army Camp 13 at Larkhill on the Salisbury Plain.

This was only a short distance from the famous ruins at Stonehenge. The Salisbury Plain area was a mass of troops training and retraining and the whole of the 3rd Division was assembled there by August under the command of Major-General John Monash, who would later command the Australian Corps with five Australian Divisions. The troops were anxious to get

into the fighting but instead were treated to the familiar round of training previously experienced in Perth, right from the basics upwards. Even so, the morale was high and the 44th's Lewis Gunners were the best in open competition with the other battalions in the Division.

Corporal Groom's confidence was high and he enjoyed service life. His Battalion was part of the 11th Brigade, which comprised four Battalions – the 41st 42nd 43rd and the 44th. The Brigade was commanded by Brigadier General Cannan CB.

At the training grounds they were able to simulate trench warfare with an imaginary enemy. However, they reckoned that the worst thing they had to deal with was the rain. Little did they realise the way was being paved for the 'real' conditions at a later date. Eventually there came the day when the rumours became a reality and after four months in England, the 3rd Division embarked for La Havre in France on 27 November 1916.

Their arrival in France took on the aspects of farce – orders followed countermanding orders and confusion reigned. They were ordered to a 'rest' camp and access was via a winding road with a one in five incline. When they arrived, the British Officer in charge wasn't aware of their coming and therefore he could issue neither tents, blankets nor rations. The first night in France was one of pure icy misery with the wind and mud being the dominant factor – it was certainly a foretaste of what was to come in the next few weeks. It would take all of Harry Groom's resources and tenacity to lead men under these most difficult conditions.

The 11th Brigade was in the reserve lines supporting the 9th and 10th Brigades at the front, and after three weeks of this activity, the 11th Brigade moved up and took over the front line. The 44th Battalion supported their sister Battalion, the 42nd, who had taken over the Epinette portion of the Armentieres sector, and were now considered to have started their active service. They acted as carrying and working parties every night from their billets in Armentieres – they were kept fully occupied. At long last they occupied a section of the front line on their own account, relieving the 42nd. The sector was in flat country pock-marked with shell holes. Trenches were just breastworks made with sand bags and dug-out accommodation was poor giving inadequate protection from the weather. A direct hit would have been a disaster even with a small shell. Water was up to the knees.

The most intimidating weapon in the German armoury was the 'Minnie', a type of trench mortar, which had a devastating effect on the troops, both in terms of morale and physical damage. In fact it was a 'Minnie' that caused the first battle casualties – the deaths of three men from 'A' Company.

The Battalion occupied the Armentiers section until March 1917. They worked six days in the line and six days out supplying their reliefs with food water and ammunition. The weather had been unbelievably cold and it made conditions almost impossible and the ground was frozen eighteen inches beneath the mud's surface. It was so cold that the oil froze in the actions of the guns making them unworkable until they had been thawed out.

It was about this time that Cpl Groom took a gunshot wound through the right thigh, putting him out of action. Wounded on 20 February 1917, he was taken to the Hospital at Boulogne-sur-mer and then transported to England per HS *Cambria*, arriving at the English hospital four days later. Despite being wounded he was glad to be out of the front line and in a position of safety – he had caught a 'Blighty'!



Lieutenant Harry Groom

Harry Groom spent the next few weeks in hospital recovering from the gunshot wound. He was released on 3 March 1917, and proceeded on leave for two weeks. He then reported to the depot at Wareham in Dorset. The Army Records are not complete and there are instances of contradictory dates. This was quite normal as some of the records were written up some time after the actual troop movements or activities. About this time, he met and courted Florence Mary Earl and later they became engaged. Unfortunately little is known about her but she was still in Harry's thoughts when he returned to Australia at the war's end.

Harry spent some more time in medical care (Cherry Minton Hospital) from 21 November 1917 to 16 February 1918 – the records being marked VD. The 88 days of treatment was without pay as it was considered that VD was 'self inflicted'. Again back to hospital – this time at the Eastern General Hospital for two weeks in May 1918. He was marked NYD (not yet diagnosed) and was probably latent shell shock. On 19 May 1918 he attended Musketry School for six days at Tidworth and on 24 May he was transferred to the No 2 Officer Cadet Training Battalion. This was his second attendance at an Officers' Training school however sickness by way of VD (probably picked up locally) prevented him from taking up his commission. Again, this was another example of omission in the records.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> He was initially recommended for Officer Training on 19 July 1917 by his Platoon Commander, Lieutenant G A Hooper. This recommendation stated:

'The bearer A/Sgt Groom has been a member of No 14 Platoon, 44th Battalion since its inception, of which I had command. During the training of the unit he showed great promise as an instructor. In the trenches he proved himself to be an efficient Non-Commissioned Officer and at all times showed a splendid example of courage and cool headedness to his men. I have always found him diligent and thoroughly trustworthy, and have no hesitation in recommending him for admission to the OTC.'

Corporal (A/Sgt) Groom attended the Officers' Course at No3 School at Tidworth from 20 August 1917 to 27 September 1917 and graduated with pass mark of 78%. His knowledge was described as 'Good'.



Training moved away, in part, from the practical and physical side and sometimes became a little more academic. Extracts from the Field Message Book: (Spelling is left as written in the transcripts. Indecipherable wording is marked, \*\*\*)<sup>3</sup>

He had to organise a wire laying party:

- 1 NCO and 7 men. Material required:
- 9 bundles of pickets
- 2 Coils Barbed 100 x
- 3 Coils Barbed 50 x
- 4 Spirals " 25 x.

There was a lecture on 'Recognition':

'Means the soldier understanding of the exact point at which his commander desires him to aim. Bad indication means poor recognition and consequent loss of fire effect.

Glasses used to search for a confirmed target.

\*\*\* parts described as seen with the naked eye a front always painted out.

Taught in two stages

1st. Direct Method without aids

2nd. By means of aids only used when necessary'

This carries on for another page – Cpl Cadet Groom must have found it more than a little tedious and the lecture did not say much! There is another item: 'Military Vocabulary ... Object: to understand instruction & able to report on what's seen' Odd as this may seem it was an important item in that people must always be able to understand each other in the heat of battle.

Range Discipline Rules for a revolver:

'Must be rigid especially when training an NCO ... revolver in hands of untrained man is a great danger ... Always treat weapon as loaded ... under no circumstances must a cocked pistol be placed into a holster. Normally men must be kept 5 yards behind the firing point'

The targets were 15 inches high and 12 inches broad. There were further instructions about loading and unloading. Next item refers to the Lewis Gun:

'Organisation and Equipment ... 16 guns per Battalion 4 per Coy

Team 8 men 44 mags each gun

No. 1 gun 30 mags in line

14 mags in reserve

2 Spare parts 3 & 4 Mags

Section Gun spare parts \*\*\* 1st aid case

Gun chest Gloves asbestos dust covers 44 mags

5 1/2 tin boxes 3 sets equipment 5 canvas buckets

2 revolvers – (No. 1 & 2) rangefinder 4 guns'

The notes continue:

'Duties of L G Officers attached to BH 2 Advice on position of attack and defences – responsible for ammunition (front line). Cleanliness of guns and equipment in proper order. If possible visit the guns daily spare parts L G Officers should deal direct with ordnance.

1 limber (4 guns). two mules

<sup>3</sup> He had difficulty in coming to grips with the spelling of 'casualty', and his variations were many! Maybe it brought the horror of it all too close to home?

4 guns 28 lbs 4 chest (33) 4 spare bags (15)  
 22 tin box 176 filled mags  
 9000 Saa (675)'

Under a section called 'Selection of Target' the question is mooted:

'Does target justify me giving position away' ... 'seek surprise effect always select oblique & infilade if poss.

'... try to keep 2 guns in reserve ...'

Course time which totalled 36 hours included a one hour lecture. 'Object of Range Practises' came next:

'... enables him to become acquainted with the peculiarities of his rifle ... get confidence at known ranges ... appliances required on range. Rifle rest, eye disc, range calculator, elementary figure targets ...'

More notes followed:

'Gas 9.6.18

What is a gas

Enemy 1) Object to cause casualties

2) " " reduce efficiency

1. Poisonous acts on lungs

2. Non-poisonous external parts eyes & skin

As used in warfare must be

1) Heavier than air

2) Easily transported

3) \*\*\* at ordinary temperatures

4) Must produce its effect when much diluted with air

5) Not very soluiable when acted on by water

6) Fairly cheap to use.'

The lecture then goes on to a lengthy description of the various types of gas including tear gas SK:

'... 4 times heavier than air – 120 deg. F- not poisonous – smell not unpleasant smarting and running eyes

Mustard or Yellow Gas ... 420 deg F 7½ times lungs throat heart eyes & skin delayed action

Sneezing Gas Blue + Gas ...

violent sneezing ... if strong burning sensation round throat & chest.

Method of Gas Attack Hague convention forbids gas

1) Cloud

2) Shell

3) Projectil

April 15/16 Ypres Canadian casualties great'

There is quite a bit more in this vein of a mainly technical nature. There are of course minor spelling errors but his writing technique and the things he has to say would indicate he was an expressive man.

He was gazetted Second Lieutenant on the 2 July 1918 and then placed back on the strength of the 44th Battalion three weeks later.

The preferred route to a commission was via the ranks and that became official policy in January 1915. From then on, the main source of commissioned officers was via enlistment as a private soldier. It is a fact too that the attrition rate was so high that they had little choice as to their sources for officers. There were exceptions: medical officers who were appointed as Captains on enlistment; newly graduated Cadets from Duntroon (few and far between); Militia Officers; and suitable officers with British Army experience. It certainly had the advantage of seeing how a man was going to behave under fire before promotion occurred.

He shipped over to France from Southampton on 20 July and rejoined his Battalion as a platoon commander seven days later. It was a different and wiser Harry Groom returning to the battlefield when compared to the bright eyed young lad who joined the colours in 1915. His salary as a subaltern was 21/- per day while on active service – he was to earn it.

Second Lieutenant Groom found his way to the Brigade and then on to 'D' Company, who directed him to his first command – the 14th platoon, where he had been the acting platoon Sergeant the previous year.

The Battle of Hamel had taken place on 4 July 1918. It was a major 'stunt' and was the brainchild of Major General Sir John Monash. He devised a battle plan that utilised the latest technology and devices to give maximum protection to the troops, which greatly reduced casualties and in turn led to making the use of infantry more effective. For the first time in any war aircraft were used to drop supplies to the ground troops and aircraft were used in a unique role in that they were flown at low level in such a manner their engines drowned the sounds of the tanks moving up into their start positions.

Groom just missed this action but came in time to fight in the battle of Bray. One of the last 'stunts' the Australians were made to endure, and it was to be Groom's last month of active service. His Company was North of Hamel and holding the line. On 3 August 1918 tank officers visited the line, which indicated to the troops that a 'stunt' was in the air. On the following night they were relieved and sent back to Hamelet with instructions to keep out of sight during the daylight hours – Groom was certain now that they were in for a major action.

Other briefing notes from his Field Message Book. (About 6 August)

'French on left 150 yds

200 yds behind barrage

Water bottles filled

Success 3 whites

Not too close to barrage

Bat \*\*\* C Coy A2 on right

100 bottles per Coy

Casualties returns

Prisoners to go to 13 . H . 2

souveniring prohibited

Rum issue 6 hours after zero

Reserve Lewis Guns at B . H . 2

Buriels behind B Coy

Salvage everything

Lewis Gun 1 NCO + 11 O.R.'

The Battalion eased to its starting point on 7 August 1918. The move was made in silence and there were no casualties. They lay in shell holes awaiting the dawn before the attack. At 0420 the guns roared their vengeful symphony and five minutes later the troops moved forward into fog and smoke from the guns which was so thick and dense it was outside the experience of the Australians. Company and platoon commanders had little control over their men and each soldier became an autonomous fighting unit battling on without orders. However, their spirit caused them to press on and always in the direction of the enemy.

A battery of German artillery opened fire from Malard Wood north of Chipilly and caused the 44th to lose many men. Eventually the 4th Division artillery engaged the Germans and after a lively exchange destroyed their positions. During the afternoon, American troops were brought in to mop up but they tragically suffered heavy losses. On 8 August 1918 in message No GR 1 2nd Lieut Groom reported:

'364 Pte Fulcher J. Bullet. dangerous

5798 " Bolger Missing.'

Pte Fulcher eventually died of his wounds. Pte Bolger was found with a serious wound to his right leg – he survived. It was an aerial bomb that caused his injury.

The 44th held the positions until 11 August 1918, then they moved forward to a gully near Morcourt at the rear of the Fourth Division. The Battalion remained there for two days digging trenches at night and resting during the day. They made one sortie and then moved back on 14 August to Old No Man's Land near Accroche Wood. They bivouaced for a few days. The casualties were about 20 killed and 70 wounded, which was about half of their original strength. They then moved across to Chipilly Gully a couple of days later.

An operation was planned for 24 August with the Battalion due to move at dusk and spread out on to the open Bray plateau in artillery formation, then advance 1,000 yards and dig in and wait for orders to exploit the situation. On this day Groom put in a casualty report indicating that his platoon was now down to one officer and 14 men.

'2122 Pte Lee J Killed

2085 Pte Benson C Wounded

2120 Cpl Little J "

2123 Pte Lee F evacuated sick

2897 Pte Fuch attacked \*\*\*

Total strength of platoon

1 14 total 14 (sic)

Consisting of

No 1 Lewis Gun team 1 & 5

No 2 Lewis Gun team 1 & 5

PH2 1 & 1

Officers 1'

The two Lees were brothers. Their numbers were 2122 and 2123 and they joined on the same day. His two Lewis gun teams, down to one NCO and five ORs, made the operation of the guns

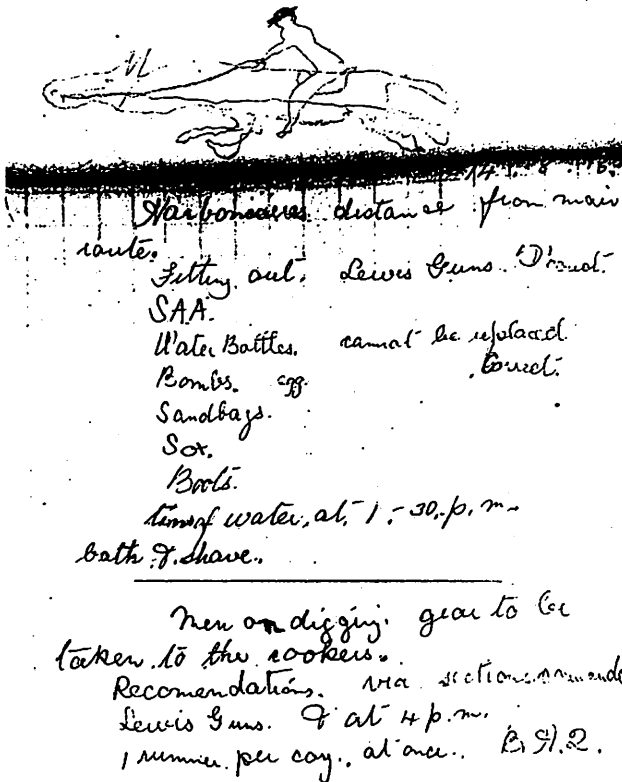
difficult. It was a gradual eroding of manpower and the Officers and NCOs were exposed to most risk and that fact showed up in the casualty returns.

The description of events by Captain Longmore in his book *Eggs-a-Cook* (The story of the 44th Battalion) are worth quoting:

#### 'OCs will Ride Horses

At the conference when details of the operation were arranged an order was given that officers commanding companies would ride their horses. This caused consternation, as heavy shelling, was expected and a horse under shell fire is a difficult proposition. After discussion it was decided that they could use their own discretion. Needless to say the horses were left behind – luckily as it happened, because no horse would ever have faced the barrage through which we all had to travel that day.'

The briefing notes for the Bray Operation in Groom's Field Message Book were headed by a quick sketch of a horse at full stretch with the rider wearing a steel helmet! Was it sarcasm or was it wit? The briefing notes were in fact an accurate forecast of the initial battle that followed.



#### 'The Attack on Bray

On the night of August 24 a move forward was made to assemble for an advance beyond Bray at Dawn the next day. The assembly was completed, the barrage came down, and the troops moved forward, but not a German was met until the high ground east of Bray had been occupied, where a number of prisoners had been taken. Long range artillery and gas shelling were the only enemy measures employed here to delay the advance.' (Longmore)

Extract from Groom's notebook

The Australians had been told that once the Battle for

Bray was completed then 'stunting' for the year would be at an end – all they had to do was to take the high ground east of Bray and hang on – but, this was not to be.

#### 'Daily Hop-overs

Fritz was obviously feeling the effects of the August battles, and the powers that be wisely decided to push on. Therefore for the next fortnight the Brigade advanced, took a position, consolidated and advanced again. ... there were a few casualties every day from machine

gun, rifle and shell fire , because except at Bray, Fritz never vacated a position voluntarily, and to be pushed every yard that he retired.

On one occasion, near Suzanne on 26 August the 44th 'hopped the bags' three times in twenty-four hours. Casualties were suffered but the objective was taken on each occasion. By the end of August, therefore, it can be realised that all ranks were feeling the effects of the strenuous part they had played since August. The strength of the Battalion had been reduced by battle casualties, until this period it mustered only two hundred and fifty almost physically exhausted fighting men.

Three weeks – perhaps

Marching, fighting and digging along the Somme, through Curlu and Hem to Clery-sur-Somme, was a continuous nightmare, with most of the chief events becoming only a blur on the memory, and the outstanding feature to every individual being his own physical fatigue. On one occasion 'D' Company was detached to advance as a liaison company with the Tommies on the left flank and although only with them for 24 hours they collected eighty-one prisoners (half as many again as their own strength) as their share of this little stunt.' (Longmore)

The Groom Field Message Book records that he was part of this activity:

'From "OC" 14 Platoon

D Coy 44 batt

To the adjutant 44 Battln

Message 10 r

Sir, I am, sorry to state I lost touch with the English Regt to which I was \*\*\* platoon. I reported to Capt Foxworthy who ordered me to endeavour to pick up the English Regt. Owing to very strong machine gun fire I left my platoon in the trenche C. 21 central & with the platoon Sgt went out to reconoitre at 9 am. I have just returned. I found first 'D' Coy of the 2nd 4th London Regt 173 Bgde in reserve occupying trenche running North & South C. 15.C.8.0.

I then went forward to the support company. The dispositions of the right company being one platoon. (right) being at C.15.D 1.0 to C.15.D 1.4

2nd platoon C.15.D 1.6 to C 15.C.8.8

3rd platoon C.15.A.3.10 to C 15. A.6.8.

It was reported to \*\*\* by two wounded Tommys that the 4th Battln L Regt were in touch with the 3rd Battln L Regt on their left. This was later confirmed to me from officer of NZ cycle corp Liasion Officer on the right flank of the 2nd 4th London Regt who also states that all objectives have been taken by the 2nd 4th London Regt

I am now in trench C 2 central where I await orders from you.

Groom 2Lt

Platoon 'D' Coy

DATE 1-9-18

TIME 11.30 AM PLACE C 2 Central

On 3 September 1918, the Battalion was relieved, and ordered to a quarry near Hem for a spell. The Diggers, on Divisional authority, were definitely informed that the rest would be for ten days at least, three weeks perhaps, and possibly a month – a very tired Battalion retired that night to blissfully dream of the long spell in store.

'Move at dawn

At midnight orders came from Brigade that the Battalion was to be ready to move at dawn. A hurried conference of officers decided to take a risk with the Brigadier rather than with the men, and not disturb them until morning in the hope that the move would come off later that day.' (Longmore)

Second Lieutenant Groom, except for a nil casualty report on 1 September, had no further comments except for vague references to American troops who would have appeared to join the platoon as replacements. His writing was imprecise and shaky which would indicate a very battle weary platoon commander.

'At Dawn on 5 September the 44th pushed on through Peronne to Doingt as the advance troops. Resistance became slight, and the advance went on so rapidly that it was mainly a question as to how far the physical condition of the troops would take them each day, the keeping of touch with flank and rear and the transmission of information as to the exact whereabouts of the front line troops.

Fritz was now going back as fast as he could. He was fighting a stubborn rear-guard action with machine guns and artillery; but even so, his main body was unduly hurried and harried by the rapidity, determination, and persistency of the Australians in advance ... The frontage on each battalion was at this stage 2,500 yards, a wide front considering that the strength of most Battalions was in the neighbourhood of two hundred and fifty men. However, it was sufficient. At the end of the last day of this advance, about the middle of September, all hands were so tired that, reaching the sunken road which marked the limit of the advance for the day, they simply lay down and slept without any attempt at digging the customary holes in the bank as protection from the artillery. That night they were relieved as vanguard, and after two days in a wood near Buire, they marched back to Doingt, a village near Peronne, there to have a fortnight's dinkum spell after six weeks of strenuous activity and crowded incident.' (Longmore)

About this time Second Lieut Harry Groom was admitted to hospital on the 15 September 1918 with influenza (later diagnosed as trench fever) – three days later he was transferred to the L&C hospital and at the month's end he was evacuated back to England and admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital on 1 October 1918. Harry Pendleton Groom's war over. A few days after the Armistice was signed he was promoted to Lieutenant. An extraordinary man – who with others of like manner and style – did their duty as they saw it. They fought and died in the most appalling and violent conditions and one would have had to have fought there to understand just how bad it was. The cost in death, injury and sickness was enormous with two in every three servicemen who served overseas becoming a casualty! One in five were killed in action or died of wounds – a statistic that speaks for itself.

Hardly a family was untouched and a large part of the prime section of the Australian population – 'the flower of its youth' – was cut down. At least their sacrifice is recorded in many ways and in many places and in many countries. These massive losses gave rise to the Anzac tradition and it is generally considered that the day we landed in that cove on the rugged peninsula at Gallipoli was when we came of age as a nation. With hindsight, that premise might no longer be accepted.

Those families who suffered the loss of loved ones would have perhaps wished for a different route for the nation's maturity. Further down the track it is a fact that we never learned from the lessons given to us by the Great War.

On 8 January 1919, Lieutenant Harry Groom was struck off the strength of the 44th Battalion and departed Britain on the MT *Orsova*, bound for Australia, arriving at Fremantle five weeks later. On 29 March 1919, his appointment was terminated at the Fifth Military District

(Australia). He had served for 981 days and for his efforts he was awarded the British War and Victory Medals which were issued to him towards the end of 1919. He collected the grand sum of £402 15s 3d made up from the deferred section of his pay plus outstanding pay due. He now had to earn a living in 'civvie' street. As an officer on active service his pay was 21/- per day. It was reduced when he went to general service duties and he received 17/6 per day.

Harry Groom's last contact with the Army was to be medically examined:

His final medical examination stated that there was 'no disability at present'. However he was discharged as 'permanently unfit for general service' and the document was signed by Captain C Douglas Kerr, the Medical Officer in charge of the case. Harry – now a civilian – returned to Pingelly and worked for H W Gayfer as a farm labourer. The farm was at Kunjin near Brookton. His wages were 30/- per week plus board and food. He left Mr Gayfer's employment on 1 March 1920 and sought land under the Soldier Land Settlement Scheme. He applied for sustenance to keep him going whilst he 'awaited productivity from the land' and this application was made on his behalf by the Pingelly-Wandering Local Repatriation Committee on 13 March 1920. Matters moved rapidly and four days later the grant was approved and became effective six days later. Officialdom in those days seemed to move with alacrity! The sustenance of one pound per week was confirmed five days later. The allowance was paid monthly. Harry's next step was to try and bring his fiancée, Florence Mary Earl, out from England. She met him when he was recovering from the bullet wound to the thigh received in February 1917.

Mary was aged 26 and came from Moseley, near Birmingham. The application was lodged on 27 January 1922 and was denied on the basis that more than two years had elapsed since his date of discharge from the Army (March 1919). The Chairman of the Pingelly-Wandering Repatriation Committee took his case up and asked that perhaps an assisted passage would be a possibility and apparently this too was turned down.

Harry made a good impression and was also somewhat of an enigma. A bright cheerful outgoing man who always wore his hat tilted to the right and walked head up which gave him a somewhat raffish appearance and his large boned hands gave an impression of controlled power. The fact that he seemed unaffected by the horrors he had experienced on the Western Front was the enigmatic side of his nature. In fact quite a lot of people in later years did not know that he had actually been in the Great War let alone commanded men in battle. He would perhaps have used the words 'been responsible for' rather than commanded. If his later life was any indication he would have been a fine officer had he been able to stay in the army.

During World War 2 he was 'manpowered' and drove a road grader in the Nor'west cutting out roads in the outback to facilitate troop movements. He was also involved in the construction of military air strips. A posthumous award of the Civilian Service Medal (1939-1945) is currently being sought to recognise the four years work he did during the war period.

Harry Groom died in 1979 at the age of 87 and Ida, his wife of nearly fifty years, died a few days before him. A Christian Gentleman and a Jewish Lady – they played their part in this country's development. Those who knew the Grooms, without exception, always spoke of them with affection and respect. Perhaps that can be their epitaph.



## The Faichney Brothers— Three West Australians in the Scottish Horse, Boer War

John R Sweetman

**I**n John Price's publication on the men from Australia who served in the Scottish Horse during the Boer War, *Southern Cross Scots*, the following appears on page 21:

'The Australian volunteers were a complete cross section of their community of the time, coming from widely differing social backgrounds. Their educational standards ranged from pupils in primary, or one classroom bush schools, up to University graduates. There were dentists, drovers, farmers, jockeys, labourers, solicitors, a sprinkling of "gentlemen", one was a tea planter, another an aerated water manufacturer. They left their homes in the inner suburbs of Fitzroy, Darlinghurst, North Adelaide and East Brisbane, the lovely Clarence River country of northern New South Wales, or the parched aridness of Moree in the same State. One man volunteered from Port Lincoln on South Australia's Spencer Gulf, whilst three brothers sailed from their home town of Albany, Western Australia. A veteran of the Queensland Imperial Bushmen gave his birthplace as Normanton, on the Gulf of Carpentaria.'

This is the story of those three brothers who sailed from Albany to serve in the Scottish Horse. The brothers had originally volunteered to serve in a Western Australian-raised contingent being raised for service in South Africa. However, due to Daniel Faichney being rejected during the selection process, owing to his horse-riding ability, John and William withdrew their applications. They then paid their own way to South Africa with the intention of joining a locally-raised unit upon their arrival in South Africa.

By the clasps on their Queen's South Africa Medals, it would appear that they landed in Durban, Natal, and because of their Scottish background, volunteered for, and were accepted into, the Scottish Horse.

From Natal, they were transferred to the Scottish Horse Regimental Depot at Elandsfontein, near Johannesburg, in the Transvaal. Here they were attested into the 1st Scottish Horse and were issued with their regimental numbers, uniforms, equipment, etc. They were taken on the strength of the regiment on 24 January 1901.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At p 27, *Southern Cross Scots*, John Price said:

'By the 15th February 1901 the Scottish Horse consisted of four squadrons – A, B, C, D – including 50 special scouts and 50 picked cyclists. Approximately half of the volunteers were Scots or of Scottish descent, the remainder being British colonial settlers, many of whom had seen active service during the early stages of the war. At this stage there were fifty-six recruits of Australian (Australasian) origin.'

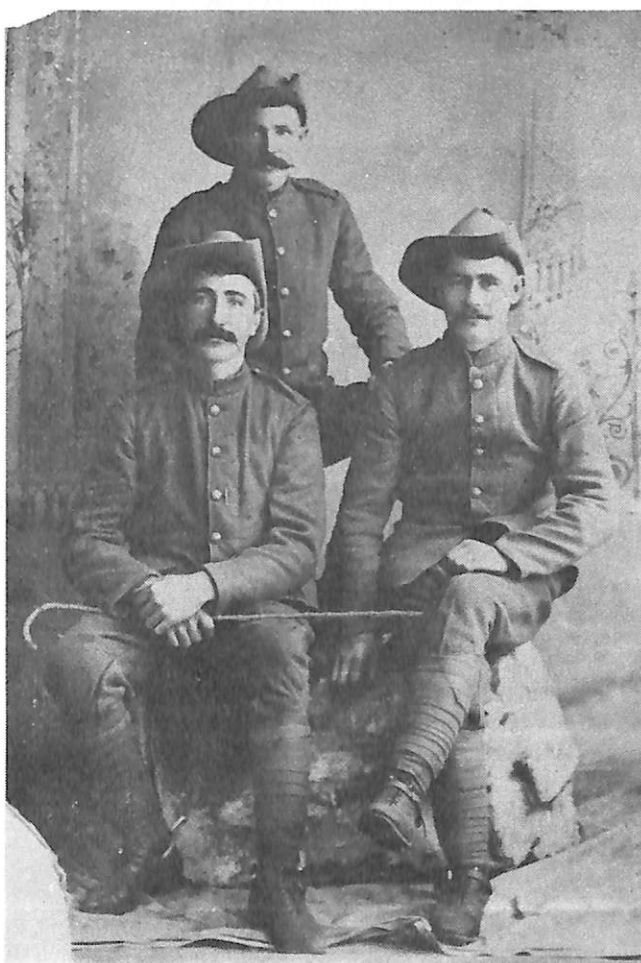
The State breakdown of those recruits was as follows:

New South Wales:	14
New Zealand:	10
Queensland:	3
South Australia:	2
Tasmania:	2
Victoria:	18
Western Australia:	7

During their service with the 1st Scottish Horse, they may have been involved in the action at Vlakfontein on 30 May 1901.

After being discharged from the regiment at the end of their six month contract on 31 July 1901, Daniel and John Faichney worked in the Johannesburg area to raise money for their boat passage back to Australia, while William served a second enlistment with the regiment.

During his second enlistment in the 1st Scottish Horse, William Faichney may have been involved in the action at Gruisfontein on 5 February 1902. He was discharged from the regiment on 27 March 1902, and along with Daniel and John, returned to Australia. The date of their departure and return to Western Australia is not known, but the brothers were in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, with their father when he died in 1906.



William Faichney, standing, John Faichney, seated (left) with cane, Daniel Faichney, seated (right)  
(William Laws Carney, Photographer, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa)

#### Sources

Price, J J, *Southern Cross Scots*, 1992

Mr J M Faichney (son of William Faichney), Como, Western Australia.

**479 Trooper Daniel Faichney**

Age: 21 years  
 Date of Birth: 23 December 1880  
 Birthplace: Adelaide, South Australia<sup>2</sup>  
 Occupation: Not stated  
 Marital status: Single  
 Domicile: Albany, Western Australia<sup>3</sup>  
 Religion: Presbyterian  
 Previous Military Service: Nil  
 Served: 24 January 1901 to 31 July 1901  
 Conduct: Exemplary  
 Awarded: Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps, Transvaal and South Africa 1901  
 Died: About 1963 in Melbourne, Victoria, after living in Sydney, NSW, from 1912 to 1945.

**478 Trooper John Faichney**

Age: 23 years  
 Date of Birth: 26 November 1877  
 Birthplace: Glasgow, Scotland<sup>4</sup>  
 Occupation: Not stated  
 Marital status: Single  
 Domicile: Albany, Western Australia  
 Religion: Presbyterian  
 Previous Military Service: South Australian Garrison Artillery  
 Promoted: Corporal, date not specified  
 Wounded: Slightly wounded at Rustenburg, 21 June 1901  
 Served: 24 January 1901 to 31 July 1901  
 Conduct: Exemplary  
 Awarded: Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps, Transvaal and South Africa 1901  
 Died: Aged 87 years, in Melbourne, 2 April 1964.

**480 Corporal William Faichney**

Age: 26 years  
 Date of Birth: 29 October 1874  
 Birthplace: Chester, Pennsylvania, USA<sup>5</sup>  
 Occupation: Miner  
 Marital status: Single  
 Domicile: Albany, Western Australia  
 Religion: Not stated  
 Previous Military Service: Nil  
 Served: 24 January 1901 to 31 July 1901  
 Re-enlisted: 11 September 1901  
 Promoted: Sergeant, date not specified  
 Conduct: Not stated  
 Awarded: Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps, Transvaal, South Africa 1901 and South Africa 1902  
 Died: Aged 70 years, in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, 4 March 1944.

<sup>2</sup> Date of arrival of the Faichneys in Adelaide is not known, but it must have been between 1877 and 1880.

<sup>3</sup> Date of the family moving to Western Australia is not known, but as their sister, Joanne, was born in Adelaide on 23 June 1883, it was after then.

<sup>4</sup> Date of the family's arrival in Scotland is not known, but it must have been between 1874 and 1877.

<sup>5</sup> Date of the family's arrival in or leaving America is not known.

## A Marine Who Made His Mark

Major R S (Bill) Billett BA (Hons) MA

Some years ago in the State Library of Victoria I saw a very interesting old photograph of a monument bearing a Royal Marines corps crest. At the time the photographs were being copied into a computer index system in a small room in the basement of the Museum, both institutions are housed in the same complex. The operator did not know anything about the photographer, or where the monument was. Later I tried to locate the photograph in the State Library's picture collection, without success.

During April 1996, I decided to take some leave and visit Tasmania. I had never been there and I needed to photograph some Russian cannon in Launceston and Hobart for a census of the remaining war trophies captured at the fall of Sevastopol during the Crimean War. This project is being conducted by The Crimean War Research Society. Also I wanted to confirm the barrel numbers on First World War German trophy guns for a book I was writing at the time.<sup>1</sup> On 10 April 1996, I flew from Melbourne to Launceston which is about a one hour flight across Bass Strait. On arrival I collected a hire-car and headed off to meet some friends and see the sights of Launceston. It did not take long to locate the Crimean War trophy gun in City Park Launceston. The following day I drove down the Midlands Highway to Hobart, stopping at the historic towns of Ross and Richmond on the way. It was clear why many of my friends say that Tasmania is very like England with its fields enclosed by hawthorn hedges and many Georgian buildings in the towns along the highway. On arrival at Hobart the Crimean War trophy I was looking for was outside the City's army headquarters, Anglesea barracks, which was on the road to the hotel I was booked into. Once the markings had been recorded and photographed, the main part of my visit had been accomplished.

The following morning my wife and I explored the Saturday street market in Salamanca Place. It was old Hobart at its best. After we had finished browsing among the many stalls, we headed up towards the main part of the town to see the old graveyard where many early settlers were buried. On arrival at St David's churchyard, we found that the old headstones had been incorporated into a series of walls, making it very easy for visitors to view them. The old church had been demolished many years ago. Probably because of their size, the larger monuments had been left in the original positions they held when they were inside the old church. Soon I realised that I was looking at a very large monument, erected to the memory of the first Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemens Land, Lieutenant-Colonel David Collins, Royal Marines, who had been buried under the altar of the old church, below where his monument now stands. I think I already knew what I was going to see when I walked around to the other side of the monument, which was carved out of sandstone and stands about two meters wide and three and a half meters high. There it was, a very large corps crest, which must have been constructed after 1827 as it has the 'Great Globe' as its centrepiece.<sup>2</sup> It was indeed the very same monument I had seen in the photograph in the basement of the Museum of Victoria a few years before. The

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<sup>1</sup> *War Trophies*, is now completed and is to be published by Simon & Schuster (Australia) in April 1999.

<sup>2</sup> When over 900 battle honours were submitted by the Corps to be considered for a new stand of colours, George IV directed that because of the difficulty in selecting battle honours amidst so many glorious deeds, the Corps should have 'The Great Globe itself surrounded by a Laurel Wreath, retaining 'Gibraltar' as the first great battle honour to represent all previous and subsequent honours. (See Smith and Oakley, 1988).

wreath of the crest is half laurel and half oak leaves complete with acorns. Later in 1996, I did manage to locate a copy of the old photograph held by the State Library of Victoria, it was taken in 1924. To merit such a striking monument, David Collins must have been held in high regard by the early colonists. After some basic research it became clear to me why he had made his mark in Australia's early history. I will attempt to outline his links with Australia in the following paragraphs.

Born on 3 March 1756 in London, David was the third of eight children of Arthur Tooker Collins, an officer of Marines who later became Major-General commanding Plymouth Division.<sup>3</sup> At the age of 14, David joined his father's Division as an ensign. He was promoted to second lieutenant on 20 February 1771, and in 1772 was serving in HMS *Southampton* when Queen Matilda of Denmark was rescued. Three years later young Collins was in the American colonies, serving in 3 Company, part of a force of Marines<sup>4</sup> under Major John Pitcairn. In April 1775, this force was employed in the initial engagement of the American War of Independence. They were on their way to destroy a revolutionary stores dump at Concord, when they were ambushed at Concord Bridge. This action was the prelude to a mass uprising of the revolutionaries and the Marines retired to Lexington. For his performance during the Battle of Bunker Hill, 17 June 1775, David Collins was commended in orders. One week later he was promoted to first lieutenant. On 13 June 1777, Collins married Mary Proctor, daughter of Captain Charles Proctor, at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

On his return to England Collins was appointed adjutant of the Chatham Division and promoted to captain-lieutenant. He was again promoted to the rank of captain in July 1780. In February 1781 he was posted to HMS *Courageux* in the Channel Squadron. He hated 'the salt sea ocean' and was very relieved to return to Chatham in January 1783; in September of that year he was placed on half-pay.<sup>5</sup> During 1786, David Collins was encouraged by his father to accept an appointment to the expedition to Botany Bay. On 24 October he was commissioned deputy-judge-advocate, and appointed by Admiralty warrant to the Marine detachment. The expedition was commanded by Captain Arthur Phillip RN, selected to be the first governor of New South Wales. On 13 May 1787, the First Fleet, as it became known, sailed from England. David Collins was in the *Sirius* with Major Robert Ross, Lieutenants John Long and James Furzer.<sup>6</sup> On 18 January 1788, the fleet arrived at Botany Bay. Phillip found that the site was unsuitable for a settlement and the next day set off to explore Port Jackson to the north. Collins accompanied Phillip on this expedition which soon found an ideal location for a settlement in a spot they named Sydney Cove after the Prime Minister of the day. James Cook had marked Port Jackson on his charts but had not entered it. Had he done so he would have found what Arthur Phillip described as 'the finest harbour in the world'.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after his return from Sydney Cove, two French ships under the command of the Comte de Lapérouse were spotted on the horizon. Phillip decided to move his fleet into Port Jackson without delay. On the morning of 24 January, the First Fleet sailed out of Botany Bay headed for Sydney Cove as the French sailed in.

On 26 January 1788, a simple ceremony was held to mark the foundation of the new colony, a marine guard was furnished by HMS *Supply*. On 7 February the government was inaugurated

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<sup>3</sup> For a picture of Arthur Tooker Collins can be found in, Peter C. Smith and Derek Oakley, *The Royal Marines A Pictorial History 1664-1987*, Spellmount, Tunbridge Wells, 1988, p.20.

<sup>4</sup> Not until 1802 was the title 'Royal Marines' awarded

<sup>5</sup> A G L Shaw (Ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 1: 1788-1825*. Melbourne University Press, 1968, pp. 136-240.

<sup>6</sup> John Moore, *The First Fleet Marines 1786-1792*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Scott, *A Short History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1930, p.45.

with Captain 'Collins reading the relevant New South Wales Act, commissions and letters patent'.<sup>8</sup> Collins settled down to his legal duties during the difficult early years of the new colony. By February 1790, the shortage of supplies at Supply Cove soon became acute. Governor Phillip despatched *Sirius* and *Supply* to Norfolk Island, with both convicts and marines, in order to relieve the pressure on the resources at Sydney Cove. It also gave Phillip the opportunity to get rid of Major Ross who had proved himself to be a threat to the good governance of the settlement.<sup>9</sup> Ross was to relieve Lieutenant King RN as Lieutenant-Governor on Norfolk Island. On 17 March 1790, shortly after arriving, HMS *Sirius* was wrecked on the reef at Kingston Harbour, the landing place for Norfolk Island's settlement. This incident provides an indication of the relationship between Ross and Collins. In March 1790, Collins had refused to accept an appointment as second in command to Ross following the death of Captain Shea. On hearing about the loss of the *Sirius* Collins wrote a letter to his father, he reported that 'Since Major Ross went from here, tranquillity may be said to have been our guest. Oh! that the *Sirius* had proved his—but no more of that. While he made me the object of his persecution — a day will come— a day of retribution'.<sup>10</sup>

In 1791 news reached the colony that the marines were to be relieved by the newly formed New South Wales Corps. In December 1791, the marines sailed home in HMS *Gorgon* without Collins who had decided to remain as secretary to Governor Phillip, an additional duty he had carried out since June 1788. Collins stayed on in the colony hoping that his father could find him a civil appointment in England. But he gave up hope of this with news of the death of his father which he received in October 1793. He again stayed at his post until he left the colony in HMS *Britannia* during August 1796.

On arrival in England he was once again placed on half-pay and settled down to write the first history of the Australian colony. On 1 January 1798 he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel, without pay or command, in recognition of his services in New South Wales. In May 1798 Collins completed the first volume of his *An Account of the History of the English Colony in New South Wales*. This was followed by a German version of the history in the following year. A second volume was to follow in 1802.

In 1800 Collins wrote to the under secretary of war, John Sullivan, offering to act as liaison officer for New South Wales. Nothing came of the offer but his knowledge of the colony was recognised when in 1802 he was chosen to form a new settlement in Bass Strait, the body of water between the mainland and Van Diemens Land, the French were showing interest in the area. In 1803 Governor King decided to occupy Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) before the French did, and sent Lieutenant John Bowen RN in the *Lady Nelson* to secure a settlement on the River Derwent at Risdon Cove.<sup>11</sup> On 4 January 1803 Collins was commissioned lieutenant-governor of the proposed new dependency in Bass Strait. In April the party embarked in HMS *Calcutta*, and the supply ship the *Ocean*, sailed for Port Phillip Bay arriving there in October 1803. The Entrance to Port Phillip Bay had been surveyed by Bowen the previous year. Lieutenant John Murray RN, in command of the *Lady Nelson*, had sailed into the bay on 15 February 1802, and on 8 March he took possession of Port Phillip. This was the first time the new Union Jack, which came into being in 1800, flew over newly discovered territory in the British Dominions.

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<sup>8</sup> A G L Shaw, op cit, p.327.

<sup>9</sup> See 'Moore', p.227.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p.327.

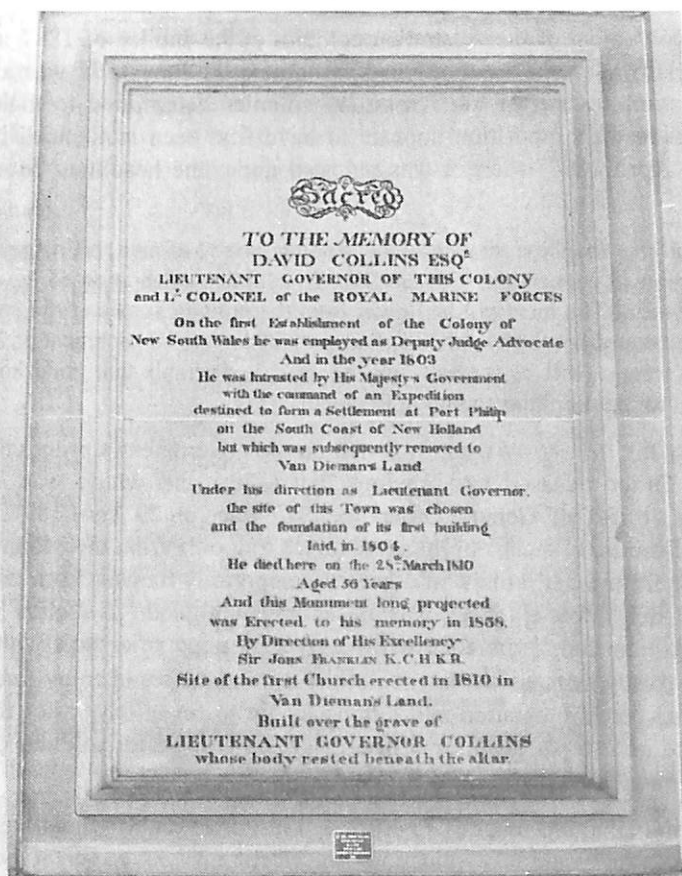
<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p.91.

Just like Botany Bay, the first site selected by Collins, Sullivans Bay (near Sorrento) proved to be lacking in fresh water and inhabited by hostile aborigines. The convicts and even the marines were no less troublesome. Several convicts escaped, one of whom William Buckley, an ex-soldier of the 4th Regiment, ran off to live the next 30 years with the aborigines in the Western District of Victoria. Collins wrote to Governor King informing him of his intention to leave Port Phillip and take the expedition to settle in the River Derwent, in Van Diemens Land. King gave his approval and Collins sailed for the Derwent arriving at Risdon on 16 February. Once again he did not find the location selected by Bowen to be satisfactory and relocated to Sullivans Cove, the site of present day Hobart.



Memorial to Lt Col David Collins in St David's churchyard, Hobart. Photograph taken in 1924

In April 1808, Collins was promoted to brevet Colonel. His years in Hobart were not easy, starvation nearly ended the idea of permanent settlement and there was ever trouble with the convicts, but he struggled on. More trouble came with the arrival of ex-governor William Bligh (of the *Bounty*) who had been deposed in Sydney and arrived at Hobart in the *Porpoise* on 30 March 1809. Collins vacated Government House for the Admiral, who assured Collins he would not meddle in his affairs, which he did. Collins soon learned that Bligh had pledged to the authorities in Sydney that he would go direct to England. When he was confronted about this, Bligh re-embarked in the *Porpoise* and moved to midstream where he proceeded to levy tolls on passing vessels and firing on those that tried to evade him. This virtual blockade lasted until 4 January 1810 when Bligh sailed for Sydney to obtain news of his replacement.<sup>12</sup> A few months after Bligh had left Lieutenant-Governor David Collins died suddenly in office on 28 March 1810 aged 54<sup>13</sup>. He was buried with full military honours befitting his status. His monument was erected by Governor Sir John Franklin in 1838, over the site of the altar of the old church built in 1810, under which Lieutenant-Colonel David Collins was buried.



Inscription of reverse side of memorial in St David's churchyard in Hobart.

<sup>12</sup> A G L Shaw, p.239.

<sup>13</sup> Not 56 as a stonemason has engraved on the memorial.



## The South Australian Contingent To Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations 1897

Anthony F Harris

Queen Victoria acceded the throne of Great Britain in 1837 on the death of her uncle King William IV. One of the longest lived of British monarchs, she died in 1901 after a reign of nearly 64 years. The 50th anniversary of her accession to the throne was celebrated in 1887, which paled almost into insignificance when compared with the Diamond Jubilee of 1897 - a huge public expression of recognition of a long and largely popular reign. At these celebrations the British public was treated to a display of parades, exhibitions, military displays, musical extravaganzas, sporting events and church services etc.; everything that was seen as being representative of the vast empire that Britain now controlled, though whether this control was exercised wisely or well is for other forums to decide.

The degree of involvement of the Australian colonies at the Jubilee of 1887 in England is not widely recorded. However, the celebrations surrounding 22 June 1897 was a totally different thing altogether, with several of the Australian colonies determined to make a showing in London. In Adelaide the proposition appears to have first been announced in the *Advertiser* newspaper of 15 April 1897 where it was reported under the headline, 'Mounted Rifles For England':

'we understand that the Government intend sending a body of men to England to take part in the procession in connection with the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the reign of Her Majesty the Queen. The men will be drawn from the military forces of the colony, and of course will be taken from the Mounted Rifles, provided a good detachment of 25 can be got together. The troops...will be specially picked, as it is desirable that good horsemen only should be sent to represent the colony in England'.

The following day the *Advertiser* again reported on the government's proposals, adding details from a General Order released the previous day (15th) and which was subsequently re-published as Para 1 of SAMF General Order No.6/97, issued on 23 April 1897. The detachment was to be drawn from *all* branches of the local forces (not only from the Mounted Rifles as just quoted), but those from other units would have to temporarily transfer from their present corps to the Mounted Rifles. Great emphasis was placed on being good ('first class') horsemen, with the added qualification that 'preference will be given to good rifle shots with a view to their taking part in the Bisley matches'.<sup>1</sup> The men of the contingent would enjoy free return passages to England, barrack accommodation and rations for up to seven days after the celebration, a uniform allowance of £10 per head for officers and £6 per head for soldiers, plus special duty pay at regulation rates for sixteen weeks from 25 April 1897.

Following the initial announcement of 15 April and just prior to the annual Easter encampment at Cheltenham between 70 and 80 applications for selection were received at the Staff Office; of this number, about 40 were recommended by their respective commanding officers. The applicants were inspected by the Colonel-Commandant at the Easter camp, then on the following Wednesday (21 April) at noon the applicants were paraded at the Police Barracks yard, North Terrace. The applicants were then advised that their commanding officer would be

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<sup>1</sup> *Advertiser* 16 April 1897

Lt.-Col. James Rowell, O/C of the Mounted Rifles, and his 2 I/C would be Captain Howard Wilson of the Mt Gambier company, Mounted Rifles.<sup>2</sup> From this muster of about 70 on parade, a short list of 35 men was ordered to parade at the NCOs Club at 2.30 that afternoon where the final selection was to be made. The soldiers were passed over to the scrutiny of Sgt.-Major DePassey 'to be tested in horsemanship'. The *Register* newspaper reported:

'The scene was amusing. Two police horses had been provided, a bay and a grey, and they appeared to be past masters in the art of buckjumping ... One infantryman turned a parabolic curve from the saddle and struck the ground the wrong end first, but an up-country rifleman sat him serenely, and the grey soon discovered extra exertion was a waste of time and tissue'.<sup>3</sup>

The final selection of men for the contingent was approved on 22 April and details were formally published in General Order 6/97 the following day.<sup>4</sup> The contingent comprised:

Lt-Col J Rowell	L-Cpl G E H Noblet	Pte J C Kubale (Perm. Artillery)
Capt H L D Wilson	Pte W E Avery	Pte K MacIntosh (Infantry)
Sgt-Maj W DePassey	Pte A A Baldwin	Pte C T Major
Sgt J E Rowell	Pte A E Cook	Pte T J H Mitchell
Cpl H J Meyer	Pte H E Francis	Pte R Sampson (Infantry)
Cpl D A Harrington	Pte I E Franklin	Pte J E Thyer
Cpl-Trumpeter W F W Davis	Pte J F Humphris	Pte G J Walter (Field Artillery)
L-Cpl A J Kilsby	Pte C A Kean(e)?	
L-Cpl J McGillivray	Pte R J Kilsby	

It is notable perhaps that several of the contingent dropped rank to get selection. Trooper Baldwin had actually attained the rank of sergeant in the Mounted Rifles, while Tpr Richard Sampson was a Captain in the Gladstone Company of the Infantry Reserve. There is little doubt that Sampson, not a young man, was selected because he was a superb rifle shot; while Baldwin was apparently recognised as an excellent horseman and swordsman.

The local press seemed fairly satisfied with the final selection and published a number of 'thumbnail' biographies of the men and their respective qualifications. For instance, the *Register* of 23 April states:

'There has been great difficulty in making the selection owing to the shortness of the notice, but in the circumstances the choice has fallen fairly well, the men being tried and true, some of them of comparatively long service, and several being noted shots'.

While the *Advertiser* of the same date reported:

'An undoubtedly fine body of men has been got together at short notice. The Contingent includes some splendid swordsmen, good horsemen and capital rifle shots'. ...

The troop is one that will worthily represent South Australia, as the members generally are of fine physique, good dashing horsemen with nice seats and hands, and first class rifle shots'.

However, not all were so supportive of the selection, or indeed of the participation. The satirical Adelaide weekly *Quiz*, which seems to have delighted in taking the opposite view to practically any move the government or the establishment made, had this to say:

<sup>2</sup> *Register* 22 April 1897

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Author's collection

'Our team of Mounted Infantry to be sent to England is not likely to cut much of a dash. Even with [Premier Charles] Kingston at their head in full regimentals the display would be meagre, and the great British public are sure to make derisive remarks concerning the strength of 'Horsetralia's Harmacy'. If a military corps were a necessity with our Premier's jaunt a squad of our Permanent Force [the Permanent Artillery] would have been our best advertisement. The Permanent men are all young fellows of fine physique, and would be able to mash the nursemaids in Hyde Park to the discomfiture of the Grenadier Guards. But the whole project is tommyrot'.<sup>5</sup>

Another barbed comment appeared a week later:

'Jamestown [a small town about 200 kms due north of Adelaide] is delighted at having five representatives in the Mounted Infantry contingent for England. Jamestown is in Treasurer Holder's district [electorate], but this fact had nothing to do with the selection of the men'.<sup>6</sup>

Comments such as these did not go un-noticed. The Editorial of the *Register* of 27 April discusses:

'South Australia[s] ... unpretentious little military contingent ... Small as the guard of honour is – and it has already evoked facetious allusions to South Australia as a "twenty-five-horse colony" – its members have no occasion to apprehend uncomplimentary reference to their physique or appearance or military attainments ... The South Australian Mounted Infantry is a fine body of men'.

Following the final selection process the men went off to Messrs Shierlaw's, a military tailor in Hindley Street, to order their new uniforms. However, another newspaper reference suggests that new uniforms were issued from store, and it seems that the whole contingent was issued with new uniforms, not only those few men from other units who were required to transfer to the Mounted Rifles. General Order 6/97 also allowed for 'Any officer or soldier of the South Australian Military Forces who is proceeding to, or who may be in England during the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, and who desires to be attached for duty with the South Australian Mounted Contingent will apply to the Commandant'. The opportunity was subject to certain conditions, details of which were available on application to the Chief Staff Officer. It appears that there was only one applicant for attachment to the contingent; Lt. James Hay of the Mounted Rifles. The colony's Agent General in London was advised:

'Lt Hay whose application for attachment to the contingent has been granted, intends leaving for London tomorrow [5 May], and he has been instructed to report himself to you on his arrival'.<sup>7</sup>

The Agent General was the colony's intermediary in making the London arrangements for the contingent. He was advised that 'The barrack accommodation, rations, horses, saddlery, swords etc. should all be arranged for before the arrival of the contingent' and that an official from his office was to meet the contingent on arrival. He was also to ensure that at least £700 was available to cover the commanding officer's requisitions for the pay of the contingent and for other incidental expenses.<sup>8</sup>

The contingent was to sail on the ship *RMS Oratava* on Wednesday 28 April, joining a Victorian contingent which had embarked in Melbourne and would pick up a detachment from Western Australia after leaving Adelaide. Members of the contingent from country areas such as Mt.

<sup>5</sup> *Quiz* 22 April 1897 p.6 Mortlock Library of South Australia

<sup>6</sup> *ibid* 29 April 1897 p.6

<sup>7</sup> GRG 45/3 Vol.17 p.541 State Records

<sup>8</sup> *ibid* p.529

Gambier and the mid-north of the colony began to arrive in Adelaide over the weekend of the 24-25 April, and it was planned that all luggage would be stowed on board by Tuesday 27th, allowing the troops a more or less uncluttered day for the farewell parades etc. on the Wednesday. The time up until departure was spent mainly in the fitting of uniforms & equipment, packing luggage and yet more drills and parades. The NCO's Club, previously known as the 'old drill shed', became the centrepiece of the contingent's activities. The *Oratava* berthed on Monday 26 April and by evening a number of the 50-strong Victorian contingent had found their way to North Terrace, 'fraternis[ing] with their future shipmates and comrades in arms'.<sup>9</sup>

The officers of the Victorian contingent were entertained at dinner that evening by the officers of the SAMF at the Naval & Military Club. During the course of the evening Lt-Col. Hoad, O/C of the Victorians, caught the ear of the press with a statement that was repeated several times thereafter; that the joint parade of the South Australian and Victorian contingents scheduled for the following day would be 'the first march of federal troops' seen in Australia.<sup>10</sup> The Victorians were formally welcomed to South Australia on Tuesday 27 April at the Adelaide Railway Station. The local contingent paraded at noon adjacent to the Police Barracks and Staff Office and were addressed by the Commandant, SAMF, Colonel J M Gordon. During his address the theme of federalism was again mentioned:

'Today ... For the first time in the history of Australia troops from different colonies selected to represent their military forces will side by side march in unison and be inspected as a whole by Her Majesty's representative. This may well be called "the first federal parade" and I personally rejoice indeed to have the honour of being the Commandant of the colony upon whose ground so auspicious an event has taken place. Through the City of Adelaide the tread of Australian soldiers will soon be heard – only a handful – but behind them lies the manhood power of a strong and healthy young nation'.<sup>11</sup>

The band of the SAMF then marched off to the railway station to 'play' the visitors back to the barracks yard and on the arrival of the Victorians the two contingents paraded together for the first time. Shortly after this 'the first march of the Federal Army', preceded by the band, headed off to Government House to be inspected by the Governor and the Premiers and senior officers of the two colonies, and to take lunch; the officers and dignitaries being entertained in the dining hall while the non-commissioned officers and men 'partook of a sumptuous meal in a marquee' on the lawns.<sup>9</sup> After lunch the two contingents marched to the Town Hall to be entertained by the Mayor, Mr C Tucker, the day concluding with both contingents being taken for a drive around the city and hills.<sup>12</sup>

The day of departure was busy. On parade at 8am, then a short march to the railway station to catch the 9.50am train to Largs Bay. Huge crowds followed the progress of the contingent: 'a dense throng – but the utmost good humour prevailed'. At Port Adelaide the two contingents de-trained briefly to allow the Mayor, in company with local MP's and other prominent identities, to address them. Having reached Largs Bay they went through the same procedure yet again, this time with the Mayor of Semaphore taking the stage. By this time the men of the contingent must have been getting bored witless after listening to the same plaudits and platitudes for the best part of a week!

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<sup>9</sup> *Register* 27 April 1897

<sup>10</sup> *op cit*

<sup>11</sup> *Advertiser* 28 April 1897

<sup>12</sup> *op cit*

The Permanent Artillery from the garrisons of Fort Largs and Fort Glanville was on hand to farewell their colleagues, having been granted leave for the event; together with a detachment from HMCS *Protector* drawn up on the pier. The men embarked the *Oratava* by launch accompanied by the Commandant and some senior officers of the SAMF, followed soon after by Premier Kingston. The Victorian contingent was already on board and gave the South Australians a rousing welcome as they came on board.<sup>13</sup> Yet another joint parade on deck to farewell those visitors on board as they returned to shore and, at noon, the voyage begins.

The journey to Western Australia started well in the protected waters of the gulf, but once past the Althorpe Islands and into the open sea conditions began to change. Sgt. John Rowell 'felt upset' by 8.00pm in the evening, didn't eat anything until the Friday evening and finally surfaced on the following Saturday morning.<sup>14</sup> It seems many of the passengers were ill during a very rough passage; Trooper T J H Mitchell records, 'The doctor came round and told us to eat as much as possible and keep on deck. Very good advice seeing you can't lift your head off the pillow and as soon as you eat up it all comes again'.<sup>15</sup>

The *Oratava* berthed at Albany at about 7.30pm on Saturday, 31 April but, being dark, no one went on shore. The Western Australian contingent embarked here and, as soon as the luggage and mails were on board the voyage continued. The fore-part of the ship had been set up troopship style for the contingents and over the next few days they had the liberty to modify their quarters to suit their needs and make themselves more comfortable.<sup>16</sup>

Drill parades were held almost every morning, often dependent upon the weather and usually with each contingent parading individually but often combined. Parades generally seem to have been held at 9.00am though some starts as early as 6.30am were made particularly when the weather started to get warmer closer to the equator. Besides drill parades, manual and firing exercises, sports seem to have held a fairly predominant place in the activities of the contingents. On Wednesday 4 May a tug-of-war competition took place between the contingents and was won by the Victorian detachment, the Western Australians coming in second. The following day the South Australian contingent raised a cricket team, playing against the first-class passengers and ships officers. The match was umpired by Lt-Colonel Rowell and the principal barracker was Premier Kingston. Saturday, 8 May was set aside for a drill competition between squads raised from the three contingents and contested Manual exercise, Firing exercise and 'go as you please' (an obviously popular segment at the time but totally unknown to this writer). The Victorian contingent won this tussle although a South Australian squad under Cpl Kubale 'got the highest number of points, but were disqualified because the corporal carried a whip instead of a rifle'.<sup>17</sup>

Another popular form of entertainment was the concert, a number of which were either organised by or participated in by all three contingents during the voyages both out and back. Following the drill competition just mentioned, the three contingents gave a concert on the spar deck for the officers of the contingents and the ship and the first class passengers. It was a great success; in fact according to the ships officers: 'the best ever given on board'.<sup>18</sup> Obviously flushed with their theatrical applause, the concert was repeated the following Monday in the

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid* 29 April 1897

<sup>14</sup> J E Rowell Diaries, D6348 (L) MLSA

<sup>15</sup> Anne Both, 'A Pleasant and Very Enjoyable Trip' in *The South Australian Genealogist*, Vol.24 No.3, August 1997, pp.22-30. (from the diaries of Tpr T J H Mitchell)

<sup>16</sup> *Advertiser* 30 August 1897

<sup>17</sup> *op cit*

<sup>18</sup> *op cit*

second-class saloon with 'great success'.<sup>19</sup> Church services were held on board each Sunday which the men of the contingents were free to attend. Indeed, some took part in the services. Tpr Mitchell was an organist, pianist and singer; while Cpl-Trumpeter Davis on cornet and Pte Sayers and another of the Victorian contingent on violins sometimes acted as accompanists.<sup>20</sup>

The *Oratava* reached Columbo, Ceylon, on 12 May and the passengers enjoyed a day on land being tourists while the ship re-stocked with fresh food and fruit. On 22 May the SA contingent drew 2 weeks pay and the next day reached Suez and the canal. Port Said was reached on Sunday, 24 May at 3.00am where the ship took on coal for six hours and the contingents prepared for a grand Queen's Review. The parade was inspected by Lt-Col. Rowell, in company with the colonial Premiers and the ships officers. After the ranks had been inspected 'the South Australians and West Australians fired a feu-de-joie, and then Lieut-Colonel Rowell called for three cheers for the Queen, which were given very heartily'. The next stop was Naples on 27 May where the Premiers dis-embarked with a number of other passengers to travel overland to London.<sup>21</sup>

On Saturday, 29 May the Victorian contingent was having a drill competition among its troops on the forecastle under the adjudicating eye of Sgt-Maj. DePassey of the South Australian contingent. The decks, hatches and other vantage points were crowded with spectators and barrackers while the crew went about its daily tasks. The boatswain called for the decks and hatches to be cleared so that a jammed pulley block could be retrieved from above. The vagrant block slipped and fell to the deck just as Pte Sneller of the Western Australian contingent jumped up onto a hatchway, striking him on the head and killing him instantly. Rowell describes the accident in some detail in his diary, though the newspaper reports are a little less graphic. It was decided that rather than a burial at sea, Sneller would be buried at Gibraltar, consequently the ship put on extra steam and reached The Rock at about 8.30pm that evening. The body was transferred to a waiting launch and was to be given a military burial by the garrison troops the following morning. A collection was taken among the passengers and crew and a sum of £55 was raised for a suitable headstone to be placed on the grave, the Western Australian contingent officers to act as trustees, and condolence cards were prepared for his family by all on board. One particularly sad part of this accident was that Pte Sneller was planning to see his parents in England but they were not even aware that he was on his way. The first they would know of his surprise visit would be the notification of his death en-route.<sup>22</sup>

The *Oratava* berthed at Plymouth at about 4.30am on 3 June, when the Victorian and South Australian commandants dis-embarked to travel to London overland to make arrangements for the arrival of the contingents. After a slight delay in the channel due to fog the *Oratava* reached Tilbury docks around noon on Friday 4 June. Having passed through Customs the contingents eventually entrained for St Pancras station where they were met by Lt-Cols. Hoad and Rowell and a number of other military and government officers. The joint contingents then marched to Chelsea Barracks headed by a drum and fife band of the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards, arriving at barracks at about 5.30 in the afternoon.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Rowell Diaries

<sup>20</sup> Mitchell and Rowell Diaries

<sup>21</sup> *Advertiser* 30 August 1897

<sup>22</sup> op cit. Also Mitchell and Rowell Diaries

<sup>23</sup> *Advertiser* 30 August 1897



Colonial troops in the gardens adjacent to Croydon Town Hall on 12 July 1897. Sgt. John Rowell can be seen in the centre of the photograph in the second from back row (8th from left).

While in barracks the contingents had to comply with full military regulations. Reveille at 5.30am, close up the bed & bedding and attend to barracks housekeeping. Breakfast at 7am, morning parade at 8.30am. After morning parade and exercises etc, which generally took all morning, the men were allowed leave until midnight unless they were rostered for duty. Lights out was at 10.15pm so 'any man coming in after that had to go to bed in the dark, which often occasioned a bit of fun'.<sup>24</sup> It seems the men had plenty of opportunity to visit people, places and functions, though the days leading up to the day of the celebrations were generally busy with preparations, more drills and yet more preparation. For instance:

'Monday 7 June. Formed into a cavalry regiment along with other detachments – nearly three hours drill. Preparation for inspection by the Duke of Connaught'.

Thursday 10 June. Drill. Assisted the Canadian Frontier Police [RCMP?] with their horses'. (This unit brought their own horses with them)

Friday 11 June. Rehearsal in morning. 2pm. Inspection by Duke of Connaught'.

Saturday 12 June. Inspection by General Roberts. Afternoon Review of the Scottish Volunteers'.<sup>25</sup>

The detachments were mounted for the first time on Wednesday 16 June when colonial troops paraded through the streets of London. The following Saturday troops taken from all the contingents in London paraded through the streets of the East End of the city, many of whose residents would probably be unable to get to see the main celebratory parade the following week. Only ten of the South Australian contingent took part in this parade but their reception was just as warm and enthusiastic as on every other occasion.<sup>26</sup>

While in London the contingents were invited to numerous social functions from numerous sources. Private families – complete strangers – invited them to share tea with them, wealthy upper

<sup>24</sup> op cit

<sup>25</sup> Rowell Diaries

<sup>26</sup> op cit

class gentlemen invited whole contingents to the family manor for picnics and cricket matches, local military companies invited them to evening smoke socials and military sports. Sgt Rowell records, 'a grand dinner by the Metropolitan Tactical Association of Sergeants ... a grand smoke social at the HQ of the Victoria and St George Rifles ... dinner at the Artists volunteers'.

Monday 21 June saw the South Australian contingent on parade at 5.45am for a rehearsal along the route of the procession. Some of the contingent had succumbed to the change of weather, compounded no doubt by many late nights, early mornings and too much hospitality. Rowell records: 'while we were out I caught a cold...Most of our men have got a cold, and Baldwin, Meyer and McGillivray have been in the barrack hospital and this morning McGillivray was taken to the Rochester St Guards Hospital'.

That night, Rowell continues, 'About 3am...I was so feverish and bad I thought I was done for the procession, but when I got up in the morning I felt a little better'. There is no indication of the condition of Baldwin and Meyer on the morning of the big parade, but McGillivray was detained in hospital for at least two weeks. There is some conflicting detail about the events of the morning of 22 June 1897. T J H Mitchell states the contingent was 'up at 5.30am and marching at 6.45am to the Hotel Cecil where they waited to accompany the Colonial Premiers to St Paul's Cathedral...arriving at 10.45am', while Rowell says:

'We fell in at 8.30 and started out at 9am. The mounted Colonial Troops were marched first to the Thames Embankment (the Hotel Cecil ?) and brought the Premier in procession to Buckingham Palace and then started on the route [to] St Paul's'.

Yet another account – a newspaper column 'by one of the [contingent] members' records:

'On Jubilee Day we were in the saddle at 6.45am and marched to the Hotel Cecil, and there the Premiers joined the procession...Starting at 8.45 we marched through the principal streets en-route to St. Paul's Cathedral...[which] we reached...at 10.45am'.<sup>27</sup>

Disappointment faced the contingent on reaching St Paul's. They were directed into a laneway on the north side of the church and consequently were not able to see the main procession or the Queen. However, a soldier is said to live on his stomach and 'as we were against a nice refreshment room several of us made ourselves comfortable' (Rowell). Or, for Mitchell: 'we...had a good time by the crowd as they treated us to drinks, cakes and smokes as well as fruit'. At the conclusion of the church service the South Australian contingent was formed up and took its place in the return parade.

The march went through the city to London Bridge, crossed to the south side of the Thames, then went around to Westminster Bridge and back across the river to the city again, returning to Chelsea Barracks at about 3.15pm. Rowell records, 'The crowds got thicker and thicker as we went on and it was one continuous roar of welcome and applause as the Colonials marched on'. This was echoed by Trooper Mitchell, 'when the colonials came along the crowd roared themselves hoarse'.

In the evening London turned on the 'grand illuminations'. Rowell declined to go out in the evening due to his cold 'so I lost the illuminations. Those who saw them say it was grand, and the crowd went nearly mad over the Colonials'. The following day the contingent was in the saddle at 8.30am for a mounted parade and inspection by General Wolseley. Disappointed at not seeing the Queen the previous day, the South Australians, according to Mitchell, 'kicked up a fuss' whereupon Col. Rowell was able to arrange for the contingent to get access to the railway platform

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<sup>27</sup> *Advertiser* 30 August 1897



where Queen Victoria was to leave for her return to Windsor. Under the charge of Sgt. Rowell and together with some Queenslanders and Victorians, the contingent went to Paddington station where they were drawn up close to the Queen's carriage. Mitchell records, 'as she walked to her carriage ... she turned her head and looked at us ... The Duke of Connaught asked us who we were ... then told the Queen ... we were all South Australians'.

Numerous activities followed. A demonstration of Maxim machine guns at Eynesford ranges; a day at Portsmouth to see the Naval Review; a Military Review at Aldershot comprising around 25,000 British troops. Together with his brother the Colonel, Sgt. Rowell went off to Sandhurst Military Academy to watch a Review of the cadets by General Wolseley. One of the highlights for the contingents on 2 July was a visit to Windsor to be inspected by the Queen. During the course of the afternoon one officer and one o.r. from each corps was presented to her Majesty by Lord Roberts; the South Australians thus presented were Lt-Col. Rowell and L/Cpl Noblett. The following day was also quite an occasion when the detachment was marched to Buckingham Palace to receive their Jubilee medal from HRH the Prince of Wales. That same afternoon several of the men went to a Military Tournament at Crystal Palace where a few South Australians had entered for events. Trooper Alfred Baldwin won a medal for 'Slicing the Lemon' (a mounted swordsmanship competition); the medal is now in the numismatic collection of the South Australian Art Gallery.<sup>28</sup> In the evening the colonials had invitations to a concert given by Madame Albani, Miss Ada Crossing and others. Poor Tpr McGillivray missed out on all this jollity – he was still in hospital!<sup>29</sup>

The period after the great procession of 22 June gave many of the men the opportunity to travel, visit relatives and family friends as well as attending other Jubilee celebrations across the country. The South Australian contingent vacated Chelsea Barracks on 6 July and found alternative accomodation until their scheduled sailing date; Sgt Rowell was able to secure rooms at the London Soldiers Home in James Street. Rowell and a friend (possibly Tpr Cook) travelled to France for a few days, while Tpr Baldwin is known to have visited Birmingham.<sup>30</sup> No doubt Tpr Sampson, of an old Cornish family, went down to the west country to visit some of his direct relatives. Many others of the contingent remained in London 'seeing the sights' and enjoying cricket matches, picnics and other social activities. Tpr Kubale, a Corporal of the South Australian Permanent Military Force, stayed on to undertake a gunnery course at Shoeburyness after the main body of the contingent returned to Australia. Lt Hay also stayed on in England for a while longer. On the afternoon of 12 July, Sgt Rowell went with about 70 of the colonial troops to visit Croydon, a south London suburb, probably at the invitation of the Town Council. Judging by Rowell's comments in his diary, it must have been one his best days out:

'When we arrived we found the place was smothered with bunting and the streets crowded with local troops and people, who gave us a grand welcome. We were marched headed by a band through the principal streets to the Croydon Theatre where they gave a grand performance, we then marched to the Town Hall where afternoon tea was provided. We then strolled in the gardens attached where we were photographed. Then in the evening we were entertained at a grand banquet in the Hall and a great military tatoo (sic) at 10pm. We then marched back through the crowded streets to the station, the crowd smothering us with confetti and flowers. This was the jolliest march we have had, we arrived in London at 11.40.'

The Rowell family were predominantly market gardeners so, shortly before the contingent was due to sail, Sgt Rowell made a point of visiting Covent Garden produce markets, casting a

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<sup>28</sup> Art Gallery of SA Accn No 755 N16

<sup>29</sup> Rowell Diaries

<sup>30</sup> Author's records

professional eye on all aspects of the trade and bringing away samples of seed, cuttings etc. to experiment with at home in Australia.

The Contingent embarked RMS *Oroya* on 23 July at Tilbury Docks (London) and left Plymouth for the voyage home on 24 July. The return journey was very similar to the outward, with drills, concerts, sports, etc. Shore leave was granted at Gibraltar, Naples (where they visited the ruins of Pompeii), Port Said and Colombo. Gibraltar made a great impression on Tpr Mitchell, describing the defensive features and the gun galleries while also commenting on the Spanish women being 'very pretty with dark eyes'! Some excitement to break the routine of shipboard life occurred shortly after midnight on 9 August when the passengers were woken and told of a fire in the cargo hold. The military personnel volunteered to assist the crew in fighting the fire and pacifying other passengers. Mitchell records that the fire was put out after a couple of hours or so and many of those involved spent the rest of the night on deck as 'the smoke was stifling'. The following day, he continues, 'The Colonel shouted every man drinks'.

On 16 August the ship arrived at Colombo giving Sgt Rowell and his new friend and colleague, Sgt. Strong of the Victorian contingent, the opportunity to visit a fellow sergeant of the Ceylon Mounted Rifles who was in barracks together with his wife and children. After leaving Colombo the ship twice had to stop at sea for several hours to make mechanical repairs over 21-22 August. Between the two stops there was a joint full dress parade of both the South Australian and Victorian contingents, and another hour of drill on the 25th.<sup>31</sup>

Australia was sighted on 26 August and the ship anchored at Albany, Western Australia on 27 August. While travelling across the bight the South Australian detachment resolved to hold an annual dinner in September and to invite the Victorian contingent. An organising Committee was formed and Sgt Rowell was appointed Treasurer. Another reference states that it had been arranged that a cricket team from the Victorian contingent should visit South Australia 'about Christmas' to play a match with the SA contingent.<sup>32</sup> It is not known if either the reunion dinner or the cricket match did ultimately take place the following year. Kangaroo Island was sighted early on 30 August and the vessel reached Largs Bay at around 1pm. A reception committee of the Chief Secretary, the Hon. J V O'Loughlin, and a number of local military officers welcomed the contingent home, and following disembarkation by launch reached the city at 4.30pm. Here the contingent was met by a guard of Mounted Rifles, the Lord Mayor of Adelaide and yet more officers of the local forces. The contingent then marched to the Town Hall for a formal reception, following which they were marched back to the Police Barracks yard, were inspected and the contingent disbanded.

The day, and the journey, concluded with a smoke social hosted by No.1 Company, Mounted Rifles in the NCO's Club. Performances included instrumental, vocal and recited numbers from members of various sections of the local forces including the returned contingent. More toasts and speeches by officers of all branches of the forces were given, snippets and stories of their experiences were related, including the tale of an English lady who, on being told it was then winter in Australia, asked 'Well, what month is it out there now?'<sup>33</sup> It was obviously an evening of cheer, humour and good old Australian bull-dust; a suitable conclusion perhaps to what was obviously not only a great personal experience for the men of the contingents, but hopefully a valuable exercise in military co-operation.

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<sup>31</sup> Rowell Diaries

<sup>32</sup> Register 31 August 1897

<sup>33</sup> op cit. Also Mitchell and Rowell Diaries

## Books Available

*'Vigilans' a history of the Western Australian Defence Force*, Jim Grant. An electronic book, \$27.50 on disk, including postage.

After fifteen years of research I have completed a 96,000 (approx 300 pages) word history of the Western Australian Defence Force, 1861 to 1901, which I believe would be a useful acquisition for any individual or organisation interested in history, education or social development. This consists of an overview of the colony's defence arrangements and a section on each unit raised for home defence. Each section contain information on:

- (1) the development of the unit
- (2) details of its uniforms
- (3) weapons used
- (4) medals awarded to members during the period under review
- (5) names of those who served in the South African War 1899-1902
- (6) a nominal roll of men who served (some 4900 names).

Other sections include proposed units, the Land Grants Scheme, offers of service for the war in the Sudan, special parades, Commonwealth Inauguration Contingent and miscellaneous lists relating to the raising of units. As production costs for a small print run are prohibitive I am offering this information in the form of a standard three and a half inch disk available in MS Works 3 or RTF. While retaining overall copyright this disk may be copied, or printed, in whole or in part with the appropriate copyright attribution, as often as required with in the purchasers organisation, provided it is not sold or exchanged. The cost of the disk is \$27.50, including postage. When ordering, please indicate preferred format Works 3 or RTF.

Jim Grant  
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PO Box 1460  
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## Around the Water Cart

by 'Joe Furphy'

On Thursday 29 April at the Society of Australian Genealogists, 24 Kent Street, Sydney (ph 02-9247-3953 for bookings), genealogist Angela Phippen will speak on a project she is undertaking with Marrickville Heritage Society to record war memorials in that district including Newtown, St peters, Petersham, Stanmore and Tempe. Time: 12noon to 1pm; door charge \$3 members and \$5 non-members. (*Descent*, Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists, December 1998.)

Interested in a 1999 Anzac tour of the Dardanelles and Gallipoli? A 15 day/14 night tour of Turkey, including economy air travel from Sydney to Isatanbul and accommodation and travel

in country is being arranged by Jetset Travel, Dickson, ACT, departing Sydney on 17 April. Cost is approximately \$2280. Also WMC Tours (Pat Williams ph 02-9267-2599) offers a Gallipoli and Western Front Tour from 19 April to 8 May 1999, with 20 days of visits retracing the footstep of the First AIF. (*Army*, 10 December 1998.)

A member of the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) has recently unearthed a NSW colonial army squad book listing the names of 168 men who joined the NSW army within the first ten years of its formation on 6 August 1871. It contains names, dates of joining, heights, professions, discharges, and details of any desertions. The original has been presented to the Australian Army and a copy is held by SAG (*Descent*, December 1998.)

In their regular newsletter, *Memento*, National Archives of Australia has asked correspondents to note that their sole postal address is now PO Box 7425, Canberra Mail Centre, ACT 2610. Direct contact with the World War I records section can be made by telephone on 02-6212-3428 or fax on 02-6212-3499. (*Memento*, No 10, January 1999.)

National Archives is also including in *Memento* details of recent archival records in their various offices around Australia. Joe will mention any that might be of interest to our members. In the current issue, the Brisbane Office has recently received the property register of Command Headquarters of Northern Command, Australian Military Forces for 1946-1947 (*Memento*, No 10, January 1999)

Our sister society in New Zealand, the New Zealand Military Historical Society Inc sends us copies of their Journal, *The Volunteers*. In the November 1998 issue, is a report on and review of a publication by Jeffrey E Hocking, a tutor and PhD student at Queensland university who is examining the impact of the Australian involvement and participation in the new Zealand Land Wars of the 19th century. As part of his studies, he has published the first of two volumes, "Selected New Zealand Medal Rolls of Enlistments, Rejections and Applications Granted up to 1900", giving details of medal awards to those serving in units in which there were up to 2,400 Australian colonials, including the crew of HMCS Victoria, which (Hocking says) was the first Australian colonial unit to be involved in war. He has identified recruits from Australia who entered the New Zealand Armed Constabulary and the Provincial Police Forces during the latter part of the 19th century. The first volume, a4 size, soft cover, is available at \$30 from the Victoria Barracks Historical Society, PO Box 1102, Milton, Queensland 4064. (*The Volunteers*, Journal of the NZMHS, November 1998.)

For those who have found Ian Skennerton's series, "List of Changes in British War Material" useful, Volume V (1918-1926) is now available and includes a master index to all five volumes. \$24.50 from PO Box 80, Labrador, Queensland 4215. (Price list, October 1998.)

Do you have items of military historical interest which you have problems storing, safekeeping, etc? Perhaps you have been affected by recent firearms legislation? Time to consider donating them to accredited museums under the Taxation Incentives to the Arts Scheme, which may allow you to claim the value of the donation, certified by authorised valuers, against your tax return for the next taxable year. A list of valuers and other details of the scheme is available from the Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts. (Courtesy of Ian Skennerton in reply to letter in *International Arms and Military Collector*, No 14, November 1998.)

During 1998, Joe was able to attend, with members of the ACT Branch, a screening of the excellent ABC video, "Five Bloody Weeks" (Roadshow Entertainment, 44 mins, \$29.95) on the Australian 7th Division's advance into Syria in 1941, fighting against the Vichy French. Produced by Army's Training Command, this is an excellent video. Watching it in his own home would not have allowed Joe to participate in the lively discussion that took place after the screening. In the discussion around the water cart later, we wondered whether other Branches might be interested in arranging such screenings and discussions. (Thanks to Cpl Jason Logue of *Army*, who attended the Branch screening and reviewed the video in *Army*, 12 November 1998.) Now available at the same price from ABC videos is "In the Desert", on the deeds of the Light Horse from Egypt to the Nek and on to Romani and Beersheba. It is hosted by Mark Lee, the star of the movie, "Gallipoli". (*Army*, 10 December 1998.)

From *In the Trenches*, the newsletter of the Geelong Branch, Joe noticed that the Geelong Military Re-enactment Group is planning a *Major* (their emphasis) Military Fair/Tattoo for the latter part of 1999, when they propose to have the Geelong Showgrounds to themselves with a wide variety of enthusiasts. Contact Robin Mawson of the Branch for more details.

Incidentally, the same issue of *In the Trenches* reported that Ian Barnes of the Branch is conducting regular two-hour evening military history presentations as part of the 1999 program of the Geelong Adult Training & Education Centre. Are there opportunities in other locations for using members' interests and expertise to instruct and excite others about military history? Why not ask your local adult education authority?

Don Wright, President of the Queensland Branch is seeking information on the locations in which battalions of the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) were raised in World War 2 and where companies had their areas. Does any member have access to, or know a source for, this information? The VDC was first raised and maintained by the RSL in 1941, and later was transferred to Army control.

South Australia's Branch newsletter, *The Trench Observer*, of December 1998 reports a previously unknown badge: a cross belt plate with Queen Victoria Crown, a wreath and the initials SAV; screw back in silver or white metal. Possibly South Australian Volunteers? Contact SA Branch.

Followers of the oft-repeated TV series, "Dads' Army", may be interested to know that several of the actors have interesting military backgrounds:

- Arthur Lowe (Captain Mainwaring) enlisted in the British Army in 1938 as a trooper, served in the Middle East on searchlight repairs, and returned to Egypt in 1945.
- John Le Mesurier (Sergeant Wilson) was called up in WW2 and sent to India, where he finished his service as a Captain.
- Clive Dunn (Corporal Jones) joined the Fourth Hussars as a trooper when WW2 broke out. His unit was captured in Greece by the Germans but he slipped away and spent time on the run in the Greek mountains. Captured, he was shunted from POW to labour camps and spent three years as a POW in Austria.
- John Laurie (Private Frazer) joined the Honourable Artillery Company in WW2, was wounded at the front and ended the war as a Sergeant of Musketeers at the Tower of London.

- Arnold Ridley (Private Godfrey) served as a Lance Corporal in WW1 and was wounded three times on the Western Front. In WW@ he enlisted again and served in France as a Major on intelligence work before joining the Surrey Home Guard. (Thanks to Albury-Wodonga Branch Newsletter, December 1998.)

Members with an interest in the Falklands Campaign of 1982 may like to know that Major General R J Sharp AO RFD ED (Retd), a member of the NSW MHS visited the Falklands in February 1998 and has written about his visit in *Despatch*.

Arthur Wesley Wheen was born in Sunny Corner near Bathurst in NSW in 1897. In WW1, he served in 54th Bn AIF and was awarded the MM with two bars. He was the NSW Rhodes Scholar for 1919 and returned briefly to Australia in 1926. On return to England, he became Keeper of the Library at the British Museum and translated Eric Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* into English. (*Despatch*, Journal of the NSW MHS, September/October 1998: from a talk by John Hopley.)

Don't lose the opportunity to pass on your knowledge of military history! In 1989 there were 451 historians in Australian universities: in 1998 there are less than 300. The history department at La Trobe University has shrunk from 44 in 1994 to 26 now; at Queensland from 24 to 16; at Sydney from 41 to 23. In universities that still do teach history, the range of choice is becoming increasingly restricted. In schools, history is being squeezed into a single "key learning area" often called Studies of Society and Environment, where it has to compete with all the other humanities and social sciences. (Newsletter of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, November 1998.)

Did you buy a poppy on Poppy Day 1998? At the end of WW1, a French woman, Madame Gherkin, suggested that artificial poppies be made and sold to raise money for ex-servicemen and their families, and this idea was adopted by the British Legion. The first Poppy Day was held in 1921 and a British ex-soldier, Major George Howson MC, suggested setting up a 'poppy factory' to make poppies in England, employing disabled soldiers. The factory opened in 1922 and is still in production and open to the public at Richmond in Surrey. Major Howson died in 1936. His only son, Peter Howson, served with the Royal Navy in WW2; he was the Liberal MP for Fawner, Victoria, from 1955 to 1969 and Minister for Air (Victorian Branch Newsletter, courtesy of Wendy Rankine).

Has anyone heard of Violet Day? The Editor tells Joe that she has a badge with the colour patches of all the South Australian First AIF units around the edge, with the words, "In Remembrance of Famous SA Troops that helped to secure the Victory. Violet Day 1919".

Tim Kelly of 22 Victoria Street, Millthorpe, NSW 2798, is seeking members' photographs or memorabilia for a unit history of "Sons of Guns", the AIF Concert Party which served in the Middle East in WW2. (*Sydney Morning Herald*)

A new Defence Long Service Medal (DLSM) has been approved. It will replace the current family of Defence Force Service Awards, which recognise long service in the ADF. The new award will not discriminate between ranks; nor will it discriminate between full-time or part-time service. Therefore, it will not carry post-nominals. The medal will be issued for 15 years service with clasps for each subsequent five years. Like all other awards within the Australian system of Honours and Awards, the DLSM has a commencement date of 14 February 1975. (Defence Force Personnel Newsletter.)

A 9.2in howitzer which spent 50 years guarding the gate of Australian artillery units was recently moved from Holsworthy to the AWM. The howitzer was the heaviest piece of artillery used by the AIF in WW1. None came back to Australia at the end of the war and this particular piece only arrived in 1938 as a result of a request by the Australian War Memorial. It was later used at Port Wakefield test range in South Australia and since 1948 has been on display at Army bases. After minor restoration, the howitzer is expected to go on display near a German 210 howitzer of the same era (*Army newspaper*.)

In May 1998, Sotheby's of Melbourne auctioned the medals of Captain Archibald Lang MacLean, chief medical officer on Sir Douglas Mawson's Australian Antarctic Expedition of 1912-1914, and later a medical officer with the First AIF. The medal group, which realised \$12,000 (lower than expected) consists of the MC, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Allied Victory Medal with MID, and Polar medal with clasp 'Antarctic 1912-1914'. (ACT Branch Newsletter.)

Gordon Herigstad of Burbank, California, USA, has written to the Society seeking help with research on Colt Thompson submachine guns. He is writing a nbook that will include serial numbers and histories of particular weapons. There were 15,000 Colt Thompsons made in 1921. Gordon has information about nearly 7,000 of them but little on those that remain outside the United States. If any Society member has or knows of a gun in museums or private collections outside USA, Gordon would like to be informed. Contact him at 208S Frederick Street, Burbank, California, 91505. (Letter)

## Letters

### Sgt Maj John Gamble

In "They shall grow not old" by Travis Sellers *Sabretache* (December 1998) on pages 28-29, the biographical details of Sgt Maj John Gamble mentioned him refusing a bribe of £25,000 in India during the Mutiny. At the time such a sum of money would have been a large fortune. The report seemed fictional, and may well have been a misprint in *The Australasian* in 1926. This prompted me to look more closely at Gamble.

As I have a copy of *The Medals of the Royal Highland Regiment (Black Watch) 1801-1911*, published in 1913, it was a simple matter to check him on the medal rolls. No man named Gamble, of any rank, received campaign medals for either the Crimea or the Indian Mutiny in the 42nd. No man of that name served in the Ashantee campaign of 1873-4 with the 42nd either. Neither did any man of that name serve in the 73rd during the Indian Mutiny. The 42nd and 73rd were amalgamated in 1881 as part of the Cardwell reforms. My last check was in the section listing recipients of the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal – no man named Gamble received a LSGC in either the 42nd or the 73rd between 1850 and 1881.

The rejected bribe is probably as fictional as his service in the Black Watch. I used to think that Walter Mittys were a modern phenomenon, perhaps I need to think again.

Graeme Marfleet  
PO Box 484  
Lane Cove NSW 2066

### Web site - NEC PLURIBUS IMPAR

I am a member of the French association, Association des Collectionneurs de Figurine du Centre Loire, which publishes *Le Briquet*. Recently I created and published on the WEB an electronic magazine 'NEC PLURIBUS IMPAR' which is devoted to the armies of the Seven Years War and the armies of the 17th and 18th centuries: <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/nec.pluribus.impar/>.

Jean-Louis VIAL  
23 Domaine de ROCHAGNON  
38800 CHAMPAGNIER FRANCE  
E-mail: [vialje@wanadoo.fr](mailto:vialje@wanadoo.fr)

## Members' Notices

### Medals required

The following are requested for purchase or swap to complete sets:

Griffiths, H	1830	12 Bn
Gates, H J	2934	12 Bn
Long, M A	5360	18 Bn
Brown, R W	1082	7 ALH
Clarke, E G	57044	1 ALH
Knaver, C V	64073	7 ALH
Luff, J F	929	9 ALH

Roy Manuel  
37 Susan Street  
Turners Beach, TAS 7315

### More Medals

I am looking for the following medals that have left my family.

- WW1 Trio for No. 2778 Lance Corporal Leslie Alexander SCOLLER 8th Battalion. He was killed in action on 26 August 1918.
- WW1 Trio for No. 1964 Private Arthur James SCOLLER 23rd Battalion. He died of disease on 9 March 1916.

I am also seeking their death plaques.

Terry Diggines  
2 The Knoll  
Somerville Vic 3912  
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## **Their Service – Our Heritage**

Their Service – Our Heritage is a program of significant national events raised by the National President of the RSL with our Society. Federal Council is keen to see this program of good work being done by the Department of Veterans' Affairs supported in particular through articles and even perhaps by assistance to schools.

Many of our members have an interest in one of these commemorative activities which are

October 1999	Nurses National memorial: Centenary: Anzac Parade Canberra
October 1999	Boer War Commemoration: Centenary: Australians disembark in South Africa
April 2000	Korean National Memorial: Dedication on Anzac Parade Canberra and a pilgrimage conducted to Korea
October 2000	Boxer Rebellion in China: Centenary: Australian Naval Brigade returned 25 April 1901

It would reflect credit on our members and readers to promote these commemorative activities by informed comment and articles giving a sharper focus to them during the actual year of commemoration.

Themes that could be addressed in talks seminars and articles include:

- beginning and ending of war (origins of conflict)
- differences between opposing forces
- recruiting
- medical services
- technology
- tactics and strategy
- battles (for example Kimberley Mafeking Elands River Pakchon Kapyong and Maryang-San)
- Individuals in minor but nonetheless significant action

Their Service – Our Heritage is a commemorative program acknowledging the debt we as a nation owe our veterans. The material in the Department of Veterans' Affairs small book (revised Jan 98) *Australians at War – Key Dates and Data since 1901* reminds us where and when Australians have been called upon to meet the challenge of war. It points to those other thousands of occasions which it cannot possibly list where our servicemen and women provided each other with support and courage.

Richard Murison  
Federal Vice-President

## MHSA Branch Office Bearers

### ACT

President	Col Simpson	4th Monday of the month
Vice-President	Brad Manera	Feb to Nov at 7.30 pm
Secretary/Treasurer	Graham Wilson	Upstairs
	234 Beasley St	Canberra City RSL
	Farrer ACT 2617	Moore St Civic
	02 6286 7702 (h)	
	02 6265 4560 (w)	

### ALBURY-WODONGA

President	Nigel Horne	1st Monday at 8 pm
Secretary/Treasurer	Doug Hunter	every 2nd month (Jan/Nov)
	575 Poole St	VMR Museum
	Albury NSW 2640	Buna Barracks
	02 6021 2835	Victoria St Albury

### GEE LONG

President	Robin Mawson	1st Friday of the month. 7.30 pm
Vice-President	Ian Barnes	Osborne Naval Museum
Secretary	Steve Chilvers	North Geelong
	110 Beacon Point Road	
	Clifton Springs Vic 3222	
	03 5253 1176 (h)	
	03 5249 3222 (w)	
Treasurer	Rob Rytir	

### QUEENSLAND

President	Don Wright	7.30 pm, 4th Monday of the
Vice-President	Dave Radford	month except December
Secretary/Treasurer	Syd Wigzell	Yeronga Service Club
	17 Royal St	Fairfield Road
	Alexandra Hills Qld 4161	Yeronga Brisbane
	07 3824 2006	
	07 3395 1843	

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

President	Tony Rudd	8 pm, 2nd Friday each month
Vice-President Secretary	Tony Harris	except Good Friday
	PO Box 550	Army Museum of SA
	Mitcham SA 5062	Keswick Barracks
	08 82718619 (h)	Anzac Highway, Keswick
	08 8226 4779 (w)	
Treasurer	John Lawrence	

### VICTORIA

President	Steve Gray	4th Thurs of month except Dec
Vice-President	Robbie Dalton	Toorak Bowling Club
Secretary	George Ward	Mandeville Cres
	7 McKenzie Crt	Toorak
	Croydon Vic 3136	8.15 pm
	03 9725 2916	
Treasurer	Bill Black	

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

President	Peter Epps	3rd Wednesday of the month
Vice-President	Ian Macfarlan	cnr Scarborough Beach Road
Secretary	John Sweetman	and Oswald Street
	3 Altone Rd	Innaloo
	Lockridge WA 6054	7.30 pm
	08 9279 5572	
Treasurer	Gary Hayes	

## Notes from the Editor on contributions to *Sabretache*

While the following are merely guidelines, it certainly helps the Editor in preparing copy for publication if these guidelines are followed. Nevertheless, potential contributors should not be deterred by them if, for example, you do not have access to computers or typewriters. Handwritten articles are always welcome, although, if publication deadlines are tight, they might not be published until the next issue.

Typewritten submissions are preferred. Material should be double spaced with a margin. If your article is prepared on a computer please send a copy on a 3.5" disk (together with a paper copy).

Please write dates in the form 11 June 1993, without punctuation. Ranks, initials and decorations should be without full-stops, eg, Capt B J R Brown MC MM.

Please feel free to use footnotes, which should be grouped at the end of the article (however, when published in *Sabretache* they will appear at the foot of the relevant page). As well as references cited, footnotes should be used for asides that are not central to the article.

Photos to illustrate the article are welcomed and encouraged. However, if you can, forward copies of photos rather than originals.

Articles, preferably, should be in the range of 2,000-2,500 words (approx 4 typeset pages) or 5,000-7,000 words (approx 10 typeset pages) for major feature articles. Articles should be submitted in accordance with the time limits indicated on page 2. Recently, lateness in receiving articles has meant that the Journal has been delayed in publication. Nevertheless, where an article is of particular importance, but is received late, the Editor will endeavour to publish the article if possible and space permitting.

Authors of published articles retain copyright of their articles, but once an article is published in *Sabretache*, the Society, as well as the author, each have the independent right to republish (electronically or in print), or licence the use of the article.

Elizabeth Topperwien  
Editor



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I/\*We .....  
(Name/Rank etc.)

Of (Address) .....

.....

hereby apply for membership of the MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA and wish to be admitted as a \*Corresponding Member/\*Subscriber to *Sabretache* /\*Branch Member of the

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My main interests are .....

I/\*We enclose remittance of A\$30.00 being annual subscription, due 1 July each year.

Send to: Federal Secretary, PO Box 30, Garran, ACT 2605, Australia



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