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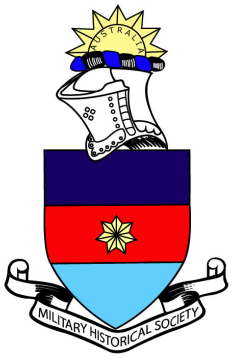

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Papers from the

MHSA Biennial Conference 2000

Queen's Birthday Weekend

Canberra

Part 1*

* Further papers will be published in the December issue.

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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**PO Box 367,
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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.

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

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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.

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Tailing the Boer—Australian Mobile Operations in the Boer War[1]

Max Chamberlain

After 100 years of the Australian Army's existence it is possible to see the century of sacrifice in perspective. Several patterns are apparent and although they cannot be used as predictors they provide interesting comparisons:

- By the end of the Vietnam War, Australians had been on active operations somewhere in the world during half the years of the 20th century in commitment to the British Empire and Commonwealth, the United States, or the United Nations.[2]
- Major involvements occurred at roughly 20 year intervals in the first half of the century—South African War 1899-1902, First World War 1914-1918, Second World War 1939-1945—with a short gap before continuing in the second half of the century—Korean War 1950-1953, Vietnam War 1962-1973, Gulf War 1990-1991. Also, as the major age group of those who served was 21-30, this meant that some servicemen and women served in more than one war, and in many cases successive generations of the same families were called upon.[3]
- By about 1975 Australian battle-deaths totalled almost one fifth of those of the United States in the same period, from a population never more than about one twentieth as large.[4] The motivation for this disproportionate per capita sacrifice was ostensibly patriotism or the honouring of alliances, but possibly was an insurance policy against the threat of attack on Australia.

In the first half century the veterans of the early campaigns in each war were regarded as elites, perhaps because they were the first to enlist, had served longer, fought well and suffered much. Possibly their stories were better recorded, or censorship less strict, or their aims and achievements more easily understood. In the Second World War they wore the Africa Star, in the First World War the 1915 Star, and in the South African War most battle clasps on their Queen's South Africa medals (QSA).

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[1] Paper presented on 10 June 2000 at The Military Historical Society of Australia 2000 Seminar held at Canberra on 9-12 June 2000

[2]

South African War	1901-1902	2 years
First World War	1914-1918	4 years
Second World War	1939-1945	6 years
Korean War	1950-1953	3 years
Malayan Emergency	1950-1960	10 years
Indonesian Confrontation	1964-1966	3 years
Vietnam War	1962-1973	12 years

[3] For example, see statistics for AIF in A G Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, AWM, Canberra, 1943, Vol III, p 890.

[4]

Australia		**United States of America**	
South African War	274	Spanish-American War	385
WW1, 1914-18	53884	WW1, 1917-18	53402
WW2, 1939-45	27073	WW2, 1941-1945	291557
Korea, Malaya, etc	319	Korea	33629
Vietnam	423	Vietnam	46397
	81973		425370

Australians: *Historical Statistics*, 1987, pp414-416.
USA: *Historical Statistics of the US*, 1960, p735, and US Information Service.

After late 1900 no individual QSA battle clasps were awarded, and no Australian war correspondents remained to report the deeds of the later units in South Africa. It is with this latter aspect that this paper is concerned, in reference to the Australians at the outset of the tradition—the understating of the Australian achievements in the later or guerrilla phase of the last eighteen months of the Boer War.

II

There is a pattern in most British histories of the Boer War, dissecting it into a regular phase consisting of a series of major actions up to about December 1900, and thereafter a guerrilla phase of a year and a half which was presented merely as a confusing series of hit and run affairs. Conan Doyle, in *The Great Boer War*, said that his 'treatment [of the guerrilla phase] may occasionally seem too brief but some proportion must be observed between the battles of 1899-1900 and the skirmishes of 1901-1902'.[5]

The large multi-volume histories reflect this. *The Times History of the War in South Africa* devoted one volume out of seven to the guerrilla phase, and Creswicke's *South Africa and the Transvaal War* one volume out of eight. When we look at the Boer accounts, however, it is interesting to note that they did not accept that they were guerrillas as their legal governments still existed, and De Wet's *Three Years War* and Reitz's *Commando*, for instance, give weight proportionate to time, ie for them there is no dissection into a regular war and a guerrilla war.[6]

This division is arbitrary in any case, as elements of guerrilla war emerged after the capture of Bloemfontein in March 1900, and aspects of regular war were not entirely absent after December 1900. Similarly, it is not correct to associate the regular war only with Lord Roberts and the guerrilla war only with Lord Kitchener.

Australian references also neglect the guerrilla war. The Preface to L M Field, *The Forgotten War*, says this: 'If the war had ended in 1903 ... the deeds of those 3,000 [the first two contingents] might well have been remembered more vividly at home than they were when overlaid by the messier events of the next eighteen months':[7] This may be the reason why the guerrilla war has been neglected, but should not be an excuse to disregard it. As most Australian casualties occurred in the guerrilla phase, adoption of the standard British histories understates the value of their contribution, and because there was no Australian official history of the war, for many important actions we have only fragments or no detailed account at all.

In order to gain a fair idea of the value of Australian operations in this phase several important facts need to be highlighted:

- Whereas up to December 1900 most actions had taken place in the area of the Boer Republics or in the closely adjacent British territory, after December 1900 the character of the war changed, and in the guerrilla war the area of operations embraced the whole of southern Africa—from the Atlantic coast to Zululand and from Rhodesia to the southern Cape—and the British had to react to the widespread Boer initiatives.

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[5] A Conan Doyle, *The Great Boer War*, George Hell & Sons, London, 1902, p vii.

[6] L S Amery (ed), *The Times History of the War In South Africa*, 7 Vols, 1900-1909. Louis Creswicke, *South Africa and the Transvaal War*, 8 Vols, 1902. Christiaan De Wet, *Three Years War*, London, 1902, see pp 281-282 re guerrillas. Deneys Reitz, Commando, Faber and Faber Ltd, London, 1983.

[7] Ken Inglis, Preface to L M Field, *The Forgotten War*, MUP, Melb., 1979.

- The area of operations in southern Africa across which the Australians served was perhaps 1,000 miles square compared to the area in France and Flanders where the AIF made its name in 1916-1918, a battlefield of perhaps 100 miles square.
- Further, because of such enormous distances it was necessarily a mounted war. In the campaign in Sinai and Palestine in the First World War in 1916-1918, the Light Horse were opposed by an enemy, largely infantry, fighting in foreign terrain, whereas the Australians in South Africa had to contend with probably the finest irregular mounted infantry in the world at that time, fighting on their own ground.

This clash of horsemen against horsemen is unique in Australian military history, and it seems odd that a nation of horse- and adventure-lovers, which had made legends of its bushrangers and had written ballads and tales about its drovers and stockmen, should not have tried more to perpetuate their deeds in their first experience of war. It is a paradox that their history had gone unrecorded, especially in view of the later emergence of the Digger as the folk hero.

III

In many ways the regular phase was a continuation of the early 19th century tradition of campaigning, whereas the guerrilla phase foreshadowed operations of the later 20th century, and, because there was no Australian official history of the war, some lessons may have had to be re-learned—the high ratio of troops to guerrillas needed in nonconventional operations; the difficulty in identifying an enemy who wore no uniform and who appeared to be a peaceful citizen on concealment of his weapon; and the problem of safe-guarding areas when subdued. The first led to calls for enormous numbers of troops; the second to the burning of farms from which men searching for weapons and finding none were nevertheless shot in the back when they turned to go; and the third to the establishment of blockhouse lines and the interning of non-combatants for their own protection as well as to deny the enemy a source of replenishment or intelligence.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the necessary employment of such tactics has obscured to some extent the real value of the later Australian units in matching the Boers in this phase and driving them out of British territory. One writer states that the 'the commonest actions ... were looting Boer farms, destroying crops and houses, and sending women and children away to concentration camps'.[8] An examination of their casualty lists, however, shows that they suffered severe losses in actions against the toughest commandos across the course of the entire war.

Mounted operations were fast-moving, with many patrols and detachments ordered out on scouting or escort duties which do not attract mention in the histories. When, about December 1900, the commandos were sent into Cape Colony to draw off British forces from the beleaguered republics, foment rebellion and seek recruits from among the Cape Dutch, the British columns sought the highly mobile enemy, and the tracks of their movements resemble naval manoeuvres across the sea of grass which is the veldt. Because of the vast distances covered, it is not possible to make a pilgrimage to all the areas where Australians served in the guerrilla phase and most visitors seek out the less remote battle sites or the grave of Morant and Handcock.

Because the population of Dutch extraction in Cape Colony was nominally British the columns could not adopt the tactics of devastation and deportation employed in the republics, and the

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[8] Bill Gammage, 'The Crucible. The establishment of the Anzac tradition', in M McKernan and M Browne (eds), *Australia, Two Centuries of War and Peace*, pp 154-155.

Boers were able to gain supplies, fresh mounts and intelligence from the sympathisers among their Afrikaner kin. The statement that Australians mainly looted farms, destroyed crops and houses, etc, is therefore not valid for the campaign in the Cape. Different tactics had to be used to subdue the enemy garrisons on the Orange River drifts, rapid response by rail, and relentless pursuit, although eventually blockhouse lines were built there also. Just as the measure of success in the republics became not battles won but a statistical exercise—attrition, numbers of enemy eliminated or captured, and livestock and bags of mealies confiscated—so in Cape Colony the measure of success was not major actions fought but the protecting of towns and railways, preventing Boer concentrations, driving the commandos away from centres of population, and forcing them back to their own lands.

To do this the British had to emulate the Boers in travelling light and fast in small columns exactly like commandos. Even so, there were often serious actions when the Boers cut out vulnerable British forces. Both sides still towed guns and it is too simplistic to write off the last eighteen months as merely hit and run actions. Also, men who had served in both the regular phase and the guerrilla phase said that the sporadic surprise attacks of the latter were far more terrifying than the more predictable actions of the former. The task called for men with bushcraft and horsemanship, tenacity and endurance, and ability to exist on meagre rations and little rest. The Australians proved that they deserved greater recognition for their achievements in this phase than as mere participants in skirmishes.

IV

When the Bushmen units were being formed in early 1900, public contributions were sought to fund the Corps and in Victoria the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Madden, published an appeal, stating, 'It is earnestly desired to put in the field a thoroughbred regiment of 'men from the Snowy River', to show our enemies that they have no weapon that we cannot better, and that, if mobility is their strong point, they will have to keep moving till their hearts break before our stockmen leave tailing them ...'.[9] How prescient this was can be best illustrated by examples from the guerrilla phase.

The war had begun badly for the British with Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking besieged and a series of defeats during Black Week', mid-December 1899, but with the arrival of Lords Roberts and Kitchener and reinforcements, the Boers had been gradually forced to withdraw from the besieged towns; the Boer capitals, Bloemfontein and Pretoria, were captured; and the enemy pushed eastwards into the mountains until they were dispersed at the Portuguese East African border in September 1900. The war was thought to be over. President Kruger had departed into exile in October, and in November Lord Roberts had been replaced as Commander-in-Chief by Lord Kitchener, whose task appeared to be merely mopping-up.

The Boers thought differently, however, and at a meeting of leaders at Cypherfontein in the western Transvaal in October, resolved to invade Cape Colony and Natal again. In December General De Wet attempted to cross the Orange River but was prevented by pursuing troops and flooded drifts, although commandos under Hertzog and Kritzinger managed to do so at different places, hoping to arouse support from the Cape Dutch. With Boer forces at large in the Cape martial law was declared in the affected districts as Hertzog headed west and Kritzinger ventured south, the commandos disrupting rail and telegraph communications, occupying towns and terrorising rural populations.

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[9] Sir John Madden, *The Argus*, Melbourne, 19 Jan 1900.

Hertzog made his way towards Lambert's Bay on the Atlantic coast to meet an arms supply ship, but his scouts reported a British warship there instead. This was HMS *Sybille* and the Boers fired at it with their rifles and heard their bullets ricochet off its hull and later claimed to have fought the only naval battle of the Boer War. Ironically, a few weeks later the ship ran aground and became a total loss.[10]

Among the British forces rushed south to combat the threat was De Lisle's Corps (including New South Wales Mounted Rifles and Western Australian Mounted Infantry). They raced down the Cape Town railway to Piquetberg, and advanced to Clanwilliam where they were between Hertzog and the sea. With columns closing in Hertzog retraced his tracks. De Lisle pursued via Calvinia and Williston, some Australians undertaking the remarkable feat of climbing a narrow bridle path across the precipitous Roggeveld Range at night, but the Boers were able to keep ahead and DeLisle trekked to Victoria West to entrain north again.[11]

V

De Wet had succeeded in crossing the Orange in early February, followed by General Plumer's Bushmen from all the Australian colonies, and as he headed west, the Australians brought him to action at Wolvekuil, where they cleared him off a ridge with great dash. He crossed the western railway and turned north-west, then west, then northeast, the Australians clinging to his tail. Other columns continued to follow his presumed course into the Karoo, until a couple of Australian scouts from Plumer got a message through and the British force swung around to follow, although by then it was too late.[12]

By 19 February De Wet realised that Hertzog's expectation of a strong uprising was wrong and abandoned his invasion. On the 23rd, Australians took his guns at Read's Drift. He crossed the railway on the 24th, met Hertzog and was forced to seek a place to cross the flooded Orange on the 28th. Plumer's men were railed to Springfontein in the Orange Free State and fought with his rearguard near Fauresmith on 4 March. De Wet dispersed his men and the chase was abandoned at Petrusville, but this third De Wet hunt had defeated a serious threat to Cape Colony, largely due to the relentless pursuit by Plumer's Australians. They headed north to capture the last Boer capital, Pietersburg.

Kritzinger, meanwhile, had headed first to Stormberg, then south to Aberdeen and Willowmore and as far as Oudtshoom, near Mossel Bay. He also retraced his steps through the Midlands, as British forces, including Victorian Imperial Bushmen, hurried down from Rhodesia to Matjesfontein, patrolled the Sutherland District, where they were part of a defensive line from Sutherland to Clanwilliam, preventing the junction of Hertzog and Kritzinger, and protecting Cape Town.

Following De Wet's escape the area south of the Orange was subject to actions by minor guerrilla leaders from the Orange Free State as well as Cape rebels. Kritzinger and his commandants Scheepers, Fouche and Malan caused panic and disruption. Scheepers captured a detachment near Cradock. Kritzinger brought in more leaders including Lotter, Myburgh, van Reenan and Lategan. Following a bombardment, the Victorian Imperial Bushmen assaulted a position held by Malan's commando, forced Kritzinger back to the Zuurberg, north-east of Steynsburg, and operated in the Queenstown Dordrecht District before their departure for home.

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10 H W Wilson, *After Pretoria*, Vol III, p280; D Reitz, op cit, p297.
11 Wilson, op cit, Vol III, p 298.
12 *The Times History*, op cit, Vol V, p 143.

They were replaced by 2nd Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen, who drove Scheepers out of the Cradock District. Kritzinger captured Jamestown in June, the Tasmanians climbing the Stormberg Range in the snow. Then with Gorringe's Flying Column, without wheeled transport, they harassed Myburgh and Malan. In their year in the Cape, the Tasmanians ranged from Carnarvon to Barkly East.

The British troops in Cape Colony, under General French from June 1901, were able to be transferred rapidly in reaction to the sudden moves of the Boers, and the commandos were suffering severely in the drives and raids. Lotter was captured in September and Scheepers in October. Both were executed. Kritzinger was captured in December. A new force under General Smuts had crossed into Cape Colony in September and headed west, capturing the 17th Lancers at Modderfontein, but being driven away from the area of railways, to pose a new threat to Cape Town before heading north to invest O'okiep in the far north-west Cape in April 1902. French sent a column by ship to Port Nolloth to effect its relief and, when Smuts was recalled to attend the peace conference, the campaign in Cape Colony was virtually ended.

Also in September, General Botha had begun his planned invasion of Natal, and Australian units were rushed by rail to the far south-eastern Transvaal to bar his progress. From the Middelburg area came the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles and the 5th-6th Western Australian Mounted Infantry, and from the Free State came the 5th and 6th Queensland Imperial Bushmen to thwart him in the mountains. Botha annihilated Gough's force at Blood River Poort, but was rebuffed in attacks on Forts Itala and Prospect, and decided to abandon his invasion attempt, to the relief of the colonists.

VI

It may be wondered how the major Boer leaders were so often able to escape the pursuing columns: There are several explanations. The Boers were fighting in familiar territory, they had the benefit of local guides and the assistance of an intelligence network of natives and kinfolk, including sympathisers in British territory. They were more skilled at handling ox-convoys and were adept at mounting rearguards. They were saved on occasion by British lack of intelligence, by atrocious weather and by sheer good luck. When freed of transport the British columns matched them and captured several leaders. As one Australian Colonel said, '...when the Kelly gang were at large in Victoria four men were able to defy the whole Colony for eighteen months, [so it was] not difficult to see how the Boers were able to keep up the struggle for so long ...'.[13]

The guerrilla phase of the Boer War was highlighted with serious disasters to both sides but Hertzog, Kritzinger and De Wet had been driven out of Cape Colony, and Botha away from Natal. In all these strategic moves, as well as in operations in the republics, Australians had played an important part, and instead of writing down their achievements as 'the messier events of the [last] eighteen months', or stating that their commonest actions were 'looting Boer farms, etc', it seems fairer to remember that their ability at tailing the Boers helped secure the British colonies, and that without them the war would have been longer and costlier.

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[13] Peter Trew, *The Boer War Generals*, Sutton, UK, 1999 pp 13, 189; *Argus*, 6 Aug 1901.

'Everything on its Belly'—Feeding the First AIF Problems and Solutions of Australian Army Rationing and Catering in the First World War[1]

Graham Wilson

'An army trains, fights and does everything on its belly!'
Lieutenant R L Andrews, Chief Messing Officer, AIF, 1919

Napoleon Bonaparte is credited with having said: 'An army marches on its stomach.' Tired, trite, but true. But still very hackneyed. Fortunately, in researching this paper, I came across the quote given above, taken from a letter by an obscure officer of the AIF to the author of the medical volumes of the Official History. While Lieutenant Andrews' comment might be unrefined, it is true, to the point and far more sincere than the rather hypocritical statement attributed to Bonaparte.

What has that to do with this paper? Well, everything really. It is designed to illustrate the point that, of all things, food is the most important thing to the soldier in the field. It has been demonstrated time and again that soldiers will fight on in the most desperate situations, so long as they have something to eat. As an example, in the dying days of the American Civil War, the ragged remnants of the Confederate Army retreating from Richmond turned and fought a savage engagement against overwhelming Union odds at the Battle of Sayler's Creek on 6 April 1865. When the Confederate soldiers ran out of ammunition they fought on with bayonets, clubbed rifles and bare fists, some units even resorted to throwing rocks at the Yankees. The very next day, however, these same troops meekly laid down their arms and surrendered. Why? Because they were starving. And while their commanders could hold out the hope of reaching Lee's forces around Appomatox, they couldn't promise that there would be any food there.

If we go back even further, to the 14th and 15th centuries say, we find that the campaigning season, especially in Europe, coincided with the harvest season. Why? Because that's when food was available in relative abundance along the line of march to feed troops—and heaven help the poor peasant producers of the food who happened to be on that line of march!

When Henry V of England was preparing his army for his campaign into France in 1415 there was no way he could have hidden his intentions from Phillip of France's spies. Even had he been able to conceal his purely military preparations, French agents would have noted that the wheat and rye crops were being bought up by the Crown, that the price of beef and pork had gone up and that milk could not be obtained anywhere. Why? Because these items were being turned into field rations—bread, sausage, cheese—for the great cross Channel adventure. Note the timing of the operation also. Henry landed in France in late August, the end of the harvest. Not only did he take the fruits of England's harvest with him, as a good 15th century field commander he intended to live off the French harvest as well. The French, of course, did their best to deny these resources to him and in the end it was hunger, along with disease of course, which almost destroyed his expedition.

To refer back to Napoleon, whether or not the famous quote about an army marching on its stomach was actually said by Bonaparte I cannot say. I will say, however, that if Bonaparte did

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[1] A Paper Presented to the 2000 Biennial Seminar of the Military Historical Society of Australia 9 -12 June 2000

say that, then it smacks of the rankest hypocrisy. As anyone with any knowledge of the logistic effort of Napoleon's army will tell you, the most that the Empire provided for its sons was a loaf of bread and a litre of wine per day. Everything else had to be obtained by the troops themselves by requisition—a polite word for rapine, loot and pillage. Later, in the Peninsular Campaign, it was Wellington, Napoleon's great foe, who in fact paid meticulous attention to the feeding of his troops.

So, all of this goes to prove the point that food is very important to soldiers. It also brings us to the point of this paper—an examination of the feeding of the Australian Imperial Force in the First World War.

Background

In order to understand the magnitude of the problem facing the Australian Army at the outbreak of the First World War, it is necessary to put the subject into an historical context. Prior to the outbreak of the Great War, feeding of soldiers in Australia had been a relatively simple business. To feed its troops, the colonial British garrison had in the early days followed the time honoured method of issuing bulk rations to individual messes and then leaving it up to the men to prepare and serve the food themselves. Although this sounds rather rudimentary, it worked reasonably well. The system later became a bit more sophisticated with the building of permanent cookhouses at the various barracks around Australia. The men's rations were then prepared in the cookhouses in bulk by permanently or semi-permanently appointed cooks and issued out to the various messes. When the British left and defence became a local responsibility, the cookhouses were taken over by the small permanent military establishments in each colony and used to prepare food for the troops of the garrisons.[2]

It was a different story for the part time militia and volunteers. When these troops went into camp for their annual training period rations were procured and distributed by part time Army Service Corps units and cooking was done in the field, over trench fires and prepared by companies. Again, while this sounds pretty basic, it must not be forgotten that the maximum period in camp was 16 days and the rationing and cooking facilities were really quite adequate. More than adequate according to some people: in 1884, Major General French specifically forbade the preparation of food by company messes in the Queensland volunteer forces as he believed that it made the men lazy and did not allow them to become trained in the 'arts' of field cooking![3]

These practices carried over into the Commonwealth forces following Federation and this was basically the scheme at the outbreak of the Great War. That is, for the small permanent forces food was prepared in the cookhouses attached to the barracks and forts and distributed to the various barrack messes. Rations were procured by the small full time ASC detachments in each state and prepared by permanently appointed cooks. Quite often these cooks were men with previous cooking experience and were recruited specifically to carry out catering duties. For the militia, when they went into camp the rations were obtained and distributed by part time ASC detachments and cooked in company messes over trench fires in dixies. In some cases the system was refined a bit by having the cooking done by civilian cooks hired for the duration of the camp.[4]

This system was more than suitable for the military forces of the Commonwealth prior to the outbreak of the war. With Australia's entry into the war, and the decision to recruit a large

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[2] Lindsay, Neville, 1991 *Equal to the Task Volume I The Royal Australian Army Service Corps*, Historia Publications, Brisbane, p.354.
[3] ibid.
[4] ibid.

overseas expeditionary force, the system immediately fell apart. With tens of thousands of troops in permanent camps, sometimes for months at a stretch, the small existing catering capacity was overwhelmed and the system of having the men themselves cook their rations out of doors over trench fires was simply not adequate to the task.

The problems were quite overwhelming. In the first place, there weren't enough qualified supply troops available to procure and distribute the rations. Even when the rations arrived, in the early days there was no one to cook them, nowhere to cook them, nothing to cook them in, nothing to serve them with, nothing to sit down to eat them off and nothing to eat them from or with!

The problem fell into three categories, namely feeding the troops: in camp in Australia; in transit by sea from and to Australia; and in the field. Each of these problems presented its own unique circumstances and problems.

Training Camps in Australia

With the outbreak of the war, major training camps were set up in all states—at Enoggera in Queensland; at Liverpool, Menangle and Richmond in New South Wales; at Broadmeadows, Bendigo and Seymour in Victoria; at Mitcham in South Australia; at Blackboy Hill in Western Australia; and at Claremont in Tasmania. Into these camps marched the thousands of first enthusiastic volunteers for the AIF. These men needed to be armed, clothed, housed and, above all else, fed. In the early days, as a number of histories of the AIF record, feeding was not all it should be.

Cooks

In the first place, there were no cooks. Units were expected to solve this problem by appointing cooks from within their own ranks. This wasn't always successful. In some cases units were lucky enough to find in their ranks men with cooking experience, gained in shearing sheds, in railway lunch rooms or in that hardest and most demanding of cookery schools, the merchant navy. More often than not, however, there were no experienced men and commanding officers called for volunteers or they just appointed likely, or as often as not unlikely, candidates.

Some units obtained volunteers for the cookhouse by making the cooking a rotational job and excusing those on cookhouse duty from all other duties, drills or fatigues. This did not always work out as well as expected. First, very few men possessed even the most basic culinary skills and often the results of their labours were less than desirable. Secondly, many viewed the cookhouse duty as simply an avenue to get out of harder work. For instance, the unit history of the 2nd Battalion records the case of group of 'cooks' who volunteered for the duty when they learned that one of the perks of the job was unrestricted access to the wet canteen during working hours. These men were in the habit of pooling their money and buying a dixie of beer which they dipped into liberally as they went about their cooking duties. The results were apparently what might be expected.[5]

The other expedient, that of appointing men to the cookhouse, was generally even less of a success. Armies being armies and officers and NCOs being officers and NCOs, when the call came out for men for the cookhouse, invariably the dirtiest, slowest, clumsiest and laziest were picked for the job. Although some men picked in this way did their best and even became a success, in the main the culinary results of this process were what would be expected. Units, of course, had no one to blame but themselves.

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[5] Taylor, F W & Cusack, T A, 1942, *Nulli Secundus A History of the Second Battalion, AIF 1914-1919*. Second Battalion Committee, Sydney.

In some units, messing was devolved to company or below and the cooking duties shared among the men of the sub-unit on a rotational basis. While this worked well enough when the 'cooks' on duty had some rudimentary skill, the system fell apart when the next poor incumbent didn't possess any skills. For example, the history of the 11th Battalion records the travails of Private Bettson of the Machine-Gun Section who was adjudged 'the worst cook in the world.' Little sympathy was apparently shown for the hapless Bettson since the history records that 'when his turn of cookhouse came he used up all his pay buying ready-cooked food for the boys. His life might have been in danger otherwise.'[6]

Complaints in the early days were widespread, vociferous and bitter. The military authorities, to their credit, quickly saw the need and did their best to meet it by appointing qualified cooks on the scale of one sergeant cook to every 1,500 men under instruction and one corporal cook to each cookhouse or kitchen in use.[7] These men were required to possess a recognised certificate of cookery if possible. If not, they had to be able to produce evidence of their experience and competence. In addition to the corporal cook, in due course one private, gunner or sapper was required to be provided to each kitchen or cookhouse on a two week rotation. This latter soldier was basically a cook's assistant although he was supposed to be under instruction. The theory was that the practice would provide a pool of 'trained' and experienced men to serve as cooks with each overseas draft. It seems to have worked, but was far from satisfactory. With the best will in the world, often the most that a 'trainee cook' learned in his two week rotation was how to boil the tea water without burning it!

Later in the war, strenuous efforts would be made to establish an AIF cookery school, both in the UK and in the Middle East. Despite the best of effort, however, this came to nought. The best that could be arranged was a limited number of places at British schools for selected AIF members. An interesting series of letters and notes exists which deal with AIF attendance at a British Army cookery school in Alexandria, Egypt, which was run by a civilian lady, a Miss Marion Higgins. One could perhaps wonder how this lady coped with Australians. However, by the tone and content of her letters to Lady Godley, Miss Higgins seems to have been an archetypal British Imperial lady who, while developing an affection for the Anzacs, was not prepared to take a single ounce of nonsense from them.[8] The kind of person Australian soldiers react readily and favourably to.

Equipment

At the outbreak of the war, excluding existing fixed facilities, the basic cooking implements were the 'Kettle, Camp, Oval 12 Quart' or 'dixie' and the Soyer stove.

Dixies have been around since before the Crimean War and are merely a refinement of the cast iron cooking pots Wellington's men used in the Peninsular. The refinement consists largely in the shape. Unlike Wellington's round bottomed iron pots or kettles, the dixie was oval and flat bottomed which allowed dixies to be easily stacked for storage and transportation. The lid could also be used as a frying pan or baking tray. Readers will have seen one or both of the movies dealing with the Second Zulu War, *Zulu* or the later *Zulu Dawn* and may have noticed dixies in use in the movies. This was not an anachronism as dixies were really used that long ago (and even earlier). Dixies, which could be either placed over trench fires to cook in the field or on the

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[6] Belford, Captain Walter C, MA, 1940 *'Legs Eleven' Being the Story of the 11 th Battalion AIF in the Great War of 1914-1918,* Imperial Printing Company, Perth, p 11.

[7] Mullett, Albert J. (by authority), 1918(?) *Report Upon the Department of Defence From the First of July 1914, Until the Thirtieth of June, 1917.* Government Printer, Melbourne, p. 278.

[8] AWM 25, 877/2. Letter from Miss Marion Higgins to Lady Godley.

hot plate of a stove, were a very, very useful piece of kit. So useful in fact that they are still in use today in the Australian Army.

The other basic item of cooking equipment was the Soyer Stove. If for no other reason that it is an historically fascinating story, it is worthwhile to digress at this point and talk about the inventor of the Soyer Stove, Monsieur Alexis Soyer, and his marvellous brainchild. Soyer was a French chef who was working as executive chef at an exclusive London club in 1855 at the time of the Crimean War when he read a newspaper account of the debacle in the hospital kitchens at Scutari. On learning of the appalling culinary situation at Scutari, he travelled to the Crimea at his own expense to provide catering assistance to the hospital kitchens. He was so successful there that he was asked to expand his work to include the whole expeditionary force and in fact became, if I might coin a phrase, the 'Florence Nightingale of the field kitchens.'[9]

Apart from his excellent work in improving the standard of both hospital and field cooking, Soyer's main claim to fame was the famous stove which bears his name. When he was interviewed by Lord Panmure prior to departing for the Crimea, Soyer had been asked if he could improve army cooking equipment. Could he? 'Mais oui! Certainment!' He scribbled down a design for a portable field stove on the back of an envelope and took it to a firm of stove-makers who provided him with a model on a scale of one inch to the foot within 48 hours. He demonstrated his model to the Duke of Cambridge who was so impressed that he ordered a number of stoves to be made up forthwith and despatched to the Crimea.

Soyer's marvellous invention could cook meals for 120 men at a time and used one tenth of the fuel required for dixies on trench fires cooking for an equivalent number. Moreover, his stove was designed to be easily transportable: two stoves could be carried on one pack mule, each load including one day's supply of fuel packed inside the stoves. The stove was a brilliant design. At its first demonstration at the end of August 1855 in the Crimea, Soyer produced a palatable meal for 800 people cooked in 10 stoves, using only army rations.[10]

The two main items of cooking equipment for the Australian Army at the outbreak of the war were the dixie and the Soyer Stove. The authorised scale of issue for these items was one dixie per eight officers and men and one Soyer Stove per 300 men or three stoves per battalion, light horse regiment or field artillery brigade, as well as one stove per officer's and sergeant's mess.

However, official records of the Commonwealth Department of Defence reveal that in August 1914 the Army had on hand 14,000 dixies and no Soyer Stoves apart from a small number on issue to officer's and sergeant's messes in garrisons and fortresses.[11] That number of dixies while sufficient for 112,000 men, and was nowhere near enough for the combined needs of the AIF, the Permanent Forces and the militia, which of course continued to serve in the defence of Australia while the AIF served overseas. To put the problem into some sort of perspective, at the approved scale of issue of one dixie per eight officers and men, the AIF would eventually need almost 8,000 dixies for its infantry battalions alone. When all other units—machine gun companies, pioneer battalions, light horse regiments, camel battalions, field artillery brigades, medium artillery brigades, siege artillery brigades, engineer companies (field and signal), ASC companies, AFC squadrons, trench mortar batteries, field ambulances, casualty clearing stations,

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[9] Soyer, Alexis, 1875 *A Culinary Campaign.* Also quoted in Hicks.

[10] It is worth noting that Soyer's design was so brilliant that Soyer Stoves remain on issue in the Australian Army to this day—believe it or not. Although they have now been relegated to the humble role of boiling water for cleaning dixies and mess tins, as recently as 10 years ago the author was served a meal which had been prepared in a Soyer Stove and the longevity of this piece of equipment is quite remarkable.

[11] Mullett, op. cit., p. 245.

field hospitals, general hospitals, convalescent depots, training depots, the list goes on and on—are taken into account, the problem becomes a bit clearer!

As if not having enough dixies to go around was bad enough, to add to the problem soldiers not only have to have food cooked for them, once it is placed in front of them, they need to have something to eat the food off and with. In August 1914 the Australian Army held no stocks of tables, no plates, bowls or cups and a grand total of 2,000 sets of cutlery, ie, 2,000 each of knives, forks and spoons.[12] This raises the intriguing question of how the pre-war army went about feeding more than 2,000 men in camp at any one time. From various references it would appear that militiamen were required to turn up at camp with their own set of 'eating irons' in their packs. The 2,000 sets held by the army appear to have been on issue to permanent units or in store. As to what the troops ate off, while the permanent troops certainly had tables in their barracks and messes, for the militia it seems that they sat on the ground or on the floor of their tent and that was their table. That was for the enlisted personnel anyway. Militia officers and NCOs seemed usually to have eaten at tables which were hired for the duration of the camp.

This absence of the most basic catering items caused problems in the early days of the AIF. The unit history of one battalion records that the commanding officer, a wily pre-war militiaman, marched into camp with 25 sets of cutlery in his trunk. These were used to feed the troops in shifts until proper stocks arrived. The war establishment of an infantry battalion was 1,022 officers and men which divided by 25 equates to 41 separate sittings for each meal—things must have been a bit tense around the mess hall at meal times!

To the credit of the various sections of the Army and the Defence Department involved in setting up the AIF, enormous effort was expended in the early stages of the war to overcome these deficiencies, and by the middle of 1915 at the latest, all of the training camps had been equipped with sufficient kitchens to provide for numbers in camp and either proper dining huts or at least dining tables in the barrack huts had been provided for the men to eat at. Similarly, Australian industry had risen to the challenge and a number of manufacturers were churning out enough supplies of cups, bowls, plates, knives, forks, spoons etc to meet the demand.

The food

There is a strongly held belief that the AIF fought the First World War on an unvaried diet of bully beef, biscuits and black tea. Nothing could be further from the truth. This myth has grown up, probably, as a result of the stories and reminiscences of the soldiers themselves. Although quite a varied diet was provided for the troops, based on the contemporary British Army (1910) ration scale, the food served in front line was of course based around bully beef and biscuits as these were the combat rations of the day. The dreary monotony of bully beef day in and day out for at least one meal of the day doubtless stuck in men's minds and it is what they remembered after the war and what they told the home folks about. So the myth has grown up. Table 1 shows the army ration scale which was adopted for the AIF.

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[12] ibid.

Commodity	Amount	Scale of issue	Remarks
Bread	1¼ lb (570 gm)	Per man per day	Or biscuit 1 lb (450 gm)
Fresh meat	1½ lb (680 gm)	"	Or preserved meat, salt meat or salt fish 1 lb (450 gm)
Coffee	¾ oz (21 gm)	"	
Pepper	1/32 oz (0.89 gm)	"	
Mixed vegetables (fresh)	8 oz (275 gm)	"	Or dried vegetables 2 oz (57 gm)
Cheese	3 oz (85.05 gm)	"	
Potatoes	1 lb (450 gm)	"	
Sugar	3 oz (85.05 gm)	"	
Salt	½ oz (15 gm)	"	
Tea	¼ oz (7 gm)	"	
Jam	¼ lb (113 gm)	"	
Flour	½ lb (275 gm)	Per man per week	In lieu of fat, bones &c., now sold
Rice	½ lb (275 gm)	"	
Curry	1 oz	"	

Table 1: AIF Standard Ration Scale—World War One (Source—Mullett)

Although the ration scale certainly lacks the wide variety of a modern diet it was more than adequate. The scale was copied from the British Army and had last been modified (by the British) in 1910. It provided for an energy output of 4,000 calories per man per day.[13] As it turned out, for various reasons that wasn't enough and caused a number of problems, especially in the British Army, later in the war (but that's another story). Suffice it to say that this scale of rations was vastly more varied than the bully beef and dog bikkies of myth and legend.

Procurement of rations was the responsibility of the Army Service Corps. ASC companies in each military district were responsible for purchasing rations from local suppliers then conveying and distributing them to the various camp quartermasters who in turn issued rations out to units for preparation in the cookhouses and kitchens. At the outbreak of the war the small existing permanent ASC establishment and the slightly larger militia ASC establishment were severely taxed in meeting the demands of the rapidly expanding AIF. Clearly, they were over-stretched. Not only were the number of personnel available for the task insufficient, the problem quickly became worse as officers and men left both the Permanent Force and Militia ASC companies to join the AIF. This drain was particularly acute in the case of officers who were all highly skilled and experienced men and the Army was hard put to replace them.[14]

In 1917 the daily requirement for rations in the AIF training camps in Australia in 1917 was as shown in Table 2.

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[13] Butler, Colonel A G, DSO, VD, BA, MB, ChB (Camb), 1930 *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services, Vol I, Gallipoli, Palestine & New Guinea*, Australian War Memorial, Melbourne, p 52. Also quoted in Mullett, pp 276-278.

[14] Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

Commodity	Amount	Remarks
Bread	77,500 lb	Equivalent to 62,000 rations
Fresh meat	93,000 lb	"
Potatoes	62,000 lb	"
Biscuit	62,000 lb	"
Vegetables	31,000 lb	"
Jam	15,000 lb	"
Sugar	12,000 lb	"
Cheese	12,000 lb	"
Bacon	7,750 lb	"
Coffee	3,000 lb	"
Salt	2,000 lb	"
Tea	2,000 lb	"
Pepper	120 lb	"
Flour	4,500 lb	Equivalent to ½ lb per man per week
Rice	4,500 lb	"
Curry	550 lb	Equivalent to 1 oz per man per week

Table 2: AIF Daily Ration Requirement—Troops in Training (Australia) (Source—Mullett)

As can be seen, it was quite a shopping list. In addition to rations for the troops, the AIF was required to obtain and transport on a daily basis 35 tons of oaten chaff, 15 tons of oats and 10 tons of bran as forage for its horses.[15] The bulk of the Australian Army's transport at the time was animal transport and thus all of the supplies listed in the table had to be collected, carted and delivered by horse drawn wagon and of course the horses had to be fed. But this hurdle, like all of the others, was eventually overcome, and by the end of 1915 the supply of rations in Australia was running quite smoothly.

Quality and types of rations available varied from time to time and place to place but records indicate that the Army went to great lengths to ensure as high a standard as possible for rations. Once they got to the cookhouse of course, it could be a different matter for the various reasons already discussed. But while the end product may not have been all that was desired, at least the thought was there, as Table 3 shows.

Taken from the official report of the Department of Defence for 1917, Table 3 shows the menus for the soldiers messes in an AIF training camp in Australia at that time. The variety of food on offer was a far cry from bully beef, biscuits and tea, even if the food selections in some cases appear a bit idiosyncratic to the modern eye (curry and rice followed by chops and mashed potatoes for breakfast)! The selections shown here were, of course, the ideal and who knows what the end result hitting the mess table was.

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[15] Mullett, op. cit., p. 278.

Day	Breakfast	Dinner	Tea	Supper
Sunday	Dry hash, chops, gravy and mashed potatoes, bread, jam, tea, coffee	Roast mutton, gravy, boiled onions and potatoes, apples and custard, tea	Bread, jam, tea	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Monday	Curry and rice, fried chops, gravy and mashed potatoes, bread, jam, tea, coffee	Boiled mutton and onion sauce, mashed potatoes, plum pudding and sauce, tea	Stewed apples and rice with milk, jam, bread, tea	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Tuesday	Irish stew, fried steak and gravy, boiled potatoes, fried onions, bread, jam, tea, coffee	Roast beef, carrots, turnips, marrow, potatoes, stewed peaches and rice, tea	Rice broth, jam, bread, tea	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Wednesday	Curry and rice, fried chops and gravy, mashed potatoes, bread, jam, tea, coffee	Roast mutton and gravy, potatoes, date pudding and sauce, tea	Stewed peaches with milk, jam, bread, tea	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Thursday	Haricot stew, fried steak and gravy, boiled potatoes, fried onions, bread, jam, tea, coffee	Roast beef and gravy, carrots, turnips, potatoes, plum pudding and sauce, tea	Stewed apples and rice with milk, jam, bread, tea	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Friday	Curry and rice, fried chops, potatoes, bread, jam, tea, coffee	Roast mutton, potatoes, onions, stewed apricots with rice and milk, tea	Vegetable soup, jam, bread, tea	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Saturday	Irish stew, fried steak and gravy, mashed potatoes and onions, bread, jam, tea, coffee	Roast beef and gravy, roast potatoes, date pudding and sauce, tea	Bread, jam, tea	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa

Table 3: Sample Weekly Menu — AIF Training Camp Australia (Source—Mullett)

Nevertheless, provision of food in the camps was not always of the best standard and continued to cause trouble. Indeed, one of the causes of the famous Liverpool riots of 1916 was the poor quality of food provided in the camps at Holsworthy, Ingleburn and Casula. One thing which particularly angered the men was the fact that German internees in the internment camp at Holsworthy received better food than they did. To the credit of the military authorities, these complaints were addressed and while the quality of the food never approached the level of haute cuisine, it certainly did eventually improve enough to remove it as a major possible cause of unrest. It is noteworthy that the authorities soon realised that men might in fact still be hungry at the end of the day, even after consuming the munificent Army fare. To provide for this contingency, the Army followed the lead of the British Army, paying the troops an allowance of one shilling and ninepence per day on top of their standard pay to allow them to purchase additional food from the dry canteen or other outlets.[16] Unfortunately, there are no figures

[16] ibid., op. cit., p. 370.

available to indicate how many men spent their allowance of food and how many headed straight for the wet canteen.

Rationing on Sea Transports

Once a man was trained the next part of his soldier's journey was the trip overseas. This of course was by ship and the Army found this yet another hurdle to be overcome. Prior to the Great War, Australia's only real experience of trooping was in the Boer War. In that conflict voyages to South Africa were via normal merchant vessels and the passage was often paid by the troops out of their own pockets. On the voyage, food was provided by the shipping company as part of the passage fare and what you saw (and paid for) was what you got. This fairly amateurish approach was obviously not acceptable to the Australian government or the AIF and some other system had to be found.

Nevertheless, when Australia despatched its very first overseas expeditionary force of the War—the AN&MEF to German New Guinea in 1914—the force was carried on chartered merchant ship, the *Berrima,* and the troops[17] were fed by the ship's staff as part of the passage contract. This was very early days, however, and was in any case a one off event.

When plans were drawn up for the dispatch of the first contingents of the AIF overseas, various methods of rationing and feeding the troops on the transports were examined and rejected. In the end, some lateral thinker at Army HQ hit on the novel idea of asking the Navy, based on the logic that since the Navy fed servicemen at sea all the time, then they probably knew something about it! As a result of this and following discussions at Departmental level, an agreement was made between the Departments of the Navy and Defence whereby rationing in transports was placed in the highly capable hands of Fleet Paymaster Treacy, Director of Naval Stores and Victualling. Paymaster Treacy drew up a ration scale based on a combination of the Navy and Army scales and then, by some arcane means known only to paymasters, arrived at the magical figure of one shilling and fourpence per man per day as the cost of rations on sea transports. This was the amount written into hiring contracts and was the amount the shipping companies were told they were allowed to spend to cover the cost of feeding troops in transit. The scale arrived at is interesting in its comparisons. The Navy, for instance, used the Admiralty ration scale which allowed 12 ounces of meat per man per day but as Table 1 above shows, the Army allowance was 20 ounces. Paymaster Treacy originally specified the Admiralty allowance in his scale but the AIF would have none of it and the final sea transport scale allowed 20 ounces per man.[18]

The system as laid down was that out of their per capita allowance, the shipping companies purchased rations for the voyage through their normal supply channels. These rations were inspected by officers of the Australian Army Veterinary Corps and officials of the various State health boards prior to loading. As far as can be ascertained the highest standards of quality were generally maintained, at least in the later stages of the war. (Some problems with quality in the earlier voyages are mentioned below.) One curious item concerns ox liver, which had long been a staple of ship's stores. Under inspection by State health officer and AAVC officers, so many shipments of ox liver were found to be infested with hydatid cysts and flukes that the item was excluded from the ration scale.[19]

The shipping companies at first stated that they would be unable to provide messing on Paymaster Treacy's scale at less than two shillings and sixpence per man per day. Treacy,

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[17] Including the author's grandfather, AB H J Wilson, Queensland Division, RANR.
[18] Tregarthen, Neville, (no date) *Sea Transport of the AIF.*, Naval Transport Branch, Melbourne, p 20. See also Butler, p 38.
[19] ibid., p. 23.

however, was not to be moved and the price stayed at one shilling and fourpence although later it would be raised to one shilling and sixpence and finally to one shilling and tenpence due to increases in the cost of basic foodstuffs. These rates for privates and corporals. The rate for sergeants and warrant officers was three shillings and threepence while for officers it was six shillings per day. These latter scales were never increased. There were various qualifications, of course. If, for example, the vessel chartered was not equipped or supplied with refrigeration, resulting in a need for live meat supplies to be carried, or if the total number of men to be fed was less than 120 (thus 'spoiling the average'), an additional sum of fivepence per head was paid to cover the cost of forage and wages, etc, of slaughtermen and butchers. This was later increased, in line with the per capita costs mentioned above, to elevenpence and then to one shilling and twopence.[20]

Once aboard ship, rations would be prepared by either ship's cooks assisted by cooks from units in transit or by the unit cooks only, depending on the size and type of ship and the cooking facilities available. Table 4 lists representative menus for troops aboard a contracted transport vessel. This was a 'rotational menu' with the first selections listed being served on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, the second list of selections being served on Monday and Friday and the third list of selections being served on Wednesday and Saturday.[21] Presumably, a new rotation would be prepared for the following week but that of course would depend on the variety of rations available and the skills of the catering staff.

Breakfast	Dinner	Tea	Supper
Porridge, mutton chops, bread, butter, jam, tea, coffee, milk, marmalade, sugar	Soup, roast or boiled meat, fresh or preserved vegetables, potatoes, stewed prunes and rice	Hot pot or similar dish, cold meat, potatoes, jam, bread, butter, milk, tea, sugar	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Porridge, grilled steak and onions, bread, butter, jam, marmalade, milk, tea, coffee	Soup, stewed rabbits, potatoes, vegetables, golden pudding and sauce	Cold corned beef, pickles, jam, bread, butter, milk, tea, sugar	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa
Porridge, liver or eggs, bacon, bread, butter, jam, tea, marmalade, milk, sugar	Barley broth, boiled mutton, potatoes, vegetables, plum pudding and sauce	Cold corned beef, pickles, jam, bread, butter, currant buns, milk, tea, sugar	Biscuits, cheese, tea or cocoa

Table 4: Sample Menu—AIF Troop Transports (Source—Mullett)

As with the food in the training camps, while the quality of the basic rations supplied on transports was generally quite high, what finally hit the mess table greatly depended on the quality of the cooks and their facilities. There were a number of incidents throughout the war when members of the AIF protested about the quality of the food served aboard transports. For example, the diary of Sergeant Murphy, Cook Sergeant of the 1st Battalion aboard the transport *Afric* contains a couple of very illuminating entries. On 28 October 1914 he wrote, 'Meat condemned at midday meal.' Then on 4 November 1914 he wrote, 'B Company throws food overboard.' Although this was very early in the war, these sorts of complaints popped up

[20] ibid.
[21] ibid. p 20.

throughout the war and indeed Murphy, who was invalided back to Australia in 1916, records personal complaints about the rations on his return voyage.[22] These types of incidents were investigated and where possible real problems were rectified. But problems remained for the whole war. Largely these resulted from the requirement of the shipping companies to provide rations to a scale using what they always saw as an inadequate per capita allowance, along with varying standards of cooks and facilities. Probably the most that can be said is that everyone did the best they could. One thing that helped was the dry canteens operated aboard the ships by the Regimental Institute where troops could purchase additional food items if they wished.

Hospital Ships

The Australian government chartered and fitted out several merchant vessels during the war as hospital ships. Detailed and fairly prescriptive contracts were drawn up by the government, in this case its agent the Naval Shipping Board, and contracting owners were expected to adhere to them strictly. Contracts specified that all cooking, baking, butchering and stewarding was to be done by the crew and specified that each ship hired and fitted out must include in the crew, '3 cooks, 1 scullery boy, 2 washerwomen, 1 butcher.'[23] In addition to the staff to prepare, cook and serve the food, the owners were contractually obligated to provide, 'all utensils, &c., required for messing and cooking'. To cover this expense, contracts allowed a per capita rate at the time of fit out of 20 shillings per man for the first 100; 17 shillings per man for the next 100; and 15 shillings per man for all others above 200. The contracts also provided, with no logic explained, 'two shillings and sixpence in addition for each man berthed on a deck without side lights.'[24]

Rationing was based on a standard requirement of 500 invalids for 100 days, plus the requirements of the embarked medical staff. Medical authorities devised four diets which were authorised for use on the ships. Diet No. 1 was the so-called 'Milk' diet; Diet No. 2 was the 'Beef Tea' diet; Diet No. 3 was the 'Chicken' diet; and Diet No. 4 was the 'Ordinary' diet. As with the normal rationing on troopships, owners were allowed a specific sum within which they were to provide the rations for the diet. These sums ranged from one shilling per man per day for the Milk diet to a (relatively) whopping three shillings per day for the Chicken diet. Owners were required to embark sufficient stores to provide 4,000 Diet No. 1, 4,000 Diet No. 2, 2,000 Diet No. 3 and 20,000 Diet No. 4 (30,000 rations in total).[25]

The list of ration items required to be embarked for purely medical use, ie, convalescent diets etc, referred to as 'medical comforts', included such things as ale (1,440 bottles), brandy (300 bottles), champagne (300 pints), stout (1,440 bottles) and port wine (450 bottles), as well as such things as arrowroot (120 lbs) calves foot jelly (300 pints), sago (60 lbs) and tapioca (60 lbs). It should be noted that the alcohol listed were strictly medicinal items. Provision of alcohol to or consumption of alcohol by medical staff or patients was strictly prohibited except on the signed prescription of the Senior Medical Officer.[26]

As with rationing on normal transports, while an ideal situation was specified by regulation and contract, who knows what the end result being placed in front of patients and staff really was. But, it cannot be denied that the military authorities certainly tried to do their best by the troops.

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[22] Murphy, SGTMAJ T., 1917, extracts from diary quoted in *ANZAC Commemorative*, RSA, Sydney.
[23] Tregarthem, op cit, p 97.
[24] ibid, p 24.
[25] ibid, p 97 & p 99.
[26] ibid, pp 98-99.

At the Front

Once the voyage, good, bad or indifferent, was over, the troops were in the field and this is where the real problems of feeding began. There were three main theatres of service: German New Guinea (the so-called 'Tropical Force'); the Middle East (including Gallipoli); the Western Front.

The Tropical Force

After the successful capture of German New Guinea, the Australian Government decided to maintain a specially raised garrison to bolster the military administration of the colony. This garrison, based on an infantry battalion with a small support element, was called the Tropical Force. At the time, there was very little European type food grown in New Guinea and rations for the Tropical Force were sent from Australia. The ration scale authorised for the Tropical Force is shown in Table 5.

Commodity	Amount	Scale of issue	Remarks
Bread	11oz lb (680 gm)	Per man per day	Or flour or biscuit 1 lb
Bacon	2 oz (57 gm)	"	
Coffee	½ oz (15 gm)	"	
Mixed Vegetables	8 oz (226 gm)	"	Or tinned fish 3 oz (85 gm) or dried vegetables 2 oz (57gm)
Cheese	2 oz (57 gm)	"	
Potatoes	1 lb (450 gm)	"	
Sugar	3 oz (85 gm)	"	
Salt	½ oz (15 gm)	"	
Tea	½ oz (15 gm)	"	
Jam	¼ lb (110 gm)	"	Or 3 oz (85 gm) dried fruit three days per week
Tinned fish (salmon or herring)	In proportion	"	To be substituted for vegetables if none available

Table 5: Standard Ration Scale—Tropical Force (Source—Mullett)

The tropical ration scale varied little from the standard scale shown at Table 1. The only real deviations were the lack of an allowance of fresh meat, offset by tinned fish; an allowance of bacon; slightly more coffee; and no cheese. How this ration was arrived at is a mystery as no record of the decision making process has been unearthed. One interesting point about the scale is that when vegetables were shipped to New Guinea, 10% above the scale was shipped to allow for wastage en route. As with the AIF, members of the Tropical Force were paid a daily additional ration allowance and the Regimental Institute operated a dry canteen at Rabaul.[27]

In addition to the white troops of the Tropical Force, the military government in New Guinea employed a large number of local police and labourers who were rationed at the expense of the Defence Department. The ration scale for these local personnel is shown at Table 6.

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[27] Mullett, op cit, pp 279-280.

Commodity	Amount	Scale of issue	Remarks
Rice	10 lb (4.5 kg)	Per man per week	
Biscuit	3 lb (1.35 kg)	"	
Meat	2 lb (0.91 kg)	"	Or tinned fish to be issued in lieu
Sugar	1 lb (450 gm)	"	
Tea	1 oz (28 gm)	"	
Tobacco	3 sticks	"	
Soap	¼ lb (11 gm)		
Matches	1 box	"	

Table 6: 'Native' Ration Scale—Tropical Force (Source—Mullett)

This scale was arrived at by the simple expedient of adopting the existing scale authorised for Papuans employed by the Administration in that territory.[28] Unlike the white troops of the Tropical Force, the local personnel were not paid an additional ration allowance. Even if they had been, the mores of the time were such that they would not have been permitted to use the dry canteen, let alone the wet canteen!

The Middle East

Service in the desert in Egypt prior to and following the Gallipoli Campaign, provided some interesting problems for feeding the troops. First, many items easily obtainable in Australia were not so easy to come by in Egypt, if not totally impossible. The members of the AIF found themselves eating a lot more rice and preserved vegetables than they had in Australia or on the ships out. Secondly, scarcity of water coupled with an abundance of flies led to health and sanitation problems. The ever present sand also caused problems, rendering food that might not have been totally palatable in the first place even less appealing.[29] Still, the Army did its best. The field bakery units had their first appearance in Egypt and began to produce fresh bread and rolls for the Australian units, using the ubiquitous Aldershot Ovens. Proper mess buts and kitchens were eventually built, helping to cut down the amount of sand in the food as well as keeping out the flies. This latter benefit was coupled with a vigorous hygiene campaign designed both to teach correct hygiene discipline to the troops and to destroy the problem at the source.

One cause of dissatisfaction for the Australians was the ration scale. The British command insisted that the newly arrived AIF units be taken off their existing ration scale and placed on the same so-called 'Army of Occupation' ration scale as the British troops.[30] This scale, see Table 7, was markedly less generous than the AIF standard scale and caused a lot of resentment. To offset the problem, the Australian government allowed an extra sixpence per day per man to the existing ration cost to permit extra food to be purchased. This brought the scale for the Australians back to where it had been originally and this, when coupled with the existing daily extra ration allowance paid to the troops, alleviated the problem. Why the British authorities could not have left the Australians on their own scale in the first place is a mystery.

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[28] ibid, p 280.
[29] Butler, op cit, pp 52-53.
[30] ibid, p 52.

Commodity	Amount	Scale of issue	Remarks
Meat	1 lb (450 gm)	Per man per day	
Bacon	4 oz (113 gm)	"	
Cheese	3 oz (85.05 gm)	"	
Bread	1 lb (450 gm)	"	Or flour 1 lb or biscuit 1½ lb
Vegetables	½ lb (225 gm)	"	
Potatoes	¾ lb (337 gm)	"	
Sugar	3 oz (85 gm)	"	
Jam	½ lb (113 gm)	"	
Tea	5/8 oz (18 gm)	"	
Salt	½ oz (15 gm)	"	
Pepper	1/36 oz (0.79 gm)	"	
Mustard	1/20 oz (1.42 gm)	"	

Table 7: Standard Ration Scale - British Army of Occupation Egypt (Source—Butler)

Gallipoli

On 25 April 1915, the 1st Australian Division went ashore at Gallipoli and the Anzac Legend was born. But on the Gallipoli Peninsula, in between storming the Nek and repelling Turkish attacks at Quinn's Post etc, how and what did the Anzacs eat? In answering this question, we get a bit closer to the reality of the bully beef and biscuits myth. The special conditions of service on the Gallipoli Peninsula meant that for a great deal of the time the men did exist on these staples. There were several reasons for this. First, bully beef and biscuits were easy to supply and store. Secondly, they were relatively easy to cook if you had the time and facilities—it doesn't take much cooking talent to slice up some bully beef and fry it in the lid of a dixie. Thirdly, they could be eaten cold if necessary—a vital point when lighting a fire could easily draw unwanted enemy attention.

The second point—ease of preparation—is interesting. Unit cooks certainly went ashore at Gallipoli but do not seem to have done much cooking for the troops. Such cooking as they did was restricted to cooking for the officers and sometimes sergeant's messes. Their contribution to the feeding the men seems generally to have been restricted to the provision of hot tea, and often just hot water for the making of tea. The men were thrown very much on their own culinary resources. Some fared quite well. Private A J Summerfield wrote to his mother on 9 June 1915:

> 'I get plenty to eat, and I make our tinned meat up in several ways so I do not get sick of it. I make it up into mince-meat, cut it up fine with onions and put thyme in it. The thyme grows wild around here. The tinned meat goes alright as a stew with some onions. Another way is to fry it, but I do not care much for it fried. I have porridge for breakfast. It is made out of biscuit crumbs. The boys are always hammering away at a bag on the ground with a stick. The bag contains biscuits, which are broken up very fine and used as oatmeal. It does not go down too bad! I use the very fine crumbs as flour when I make mince-meat. One day I made a sea-pie, the pastry being made of very fine biscuit crumbs. We have bacon, cheese, jam, bully-beef and biscuits issued each day—also a few onions.'[31]

Summerfield was obviously a competent and self reliant person and he does not seem to have been the exception. On the other hand of course, there were doubtless large numbers of men whose culinary skills never rose above the level of slicing some bully beef and putting it on a biscuit. As to what the men had to work with, the ration scale for Gallipoli is shown in Table 8.

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[31] Breed, Florence (ed), 1993 *From Gallipoli With Love. Letters from the Anzacs of the Wimmera*, History and Natural History Group of the MLA Society, Donald, Victoria, p 141.

Commodity	Amount	Scale of issue	Remarks
Preserved Meat	12 oz (340 gm)	Per man per day	
Biscuit	1¼ lb (570 gm)	"	
Bacon	4 oz (110 gm)		
Cheese	3 oz (85.05 gm)		
Onions	8 oz (225 gm)		Or potatoes 8 oz (225 gm) and onions 4 oz (110 gm)
Tea	5/8 oz (17 gm)		
Jam	¼ lb (110 gm)		
Sugar	3 oz (85.05 gm)		
Salt	½ oz (15 gm)		
Pepper	1/36 oz (0.79 gm)		
Mustard	1/20 oz (1.42 gm)		
Lime Juice	1/10 gill		Not to be issued when potatoes or onions available for issue
Rum	½ gill		When available
Tobacco	2 oz (57 gm)	Per man per week	Not to exceed

Table 8: A&NZ Corps Ration Scale - May 1915 (Gallipoli) (Source—Butler)

From the second week in May, the basic staples listed in the table were supplemented with occasional issues of fresh meat, potatoes and onions. In the very first days of the campaign, which were fairly cool and climatically pleasant, the rations provided were quite adequate and the troops ate them with no complaint. As the campaign dragged on and the days got hotter, the rations issued rapidly became distasteful. For example, the Australians very quickly sickened of the British cheese issued to them and more often than not threw it away. On 26 August 1915, Sapper Victor Willey of the 2nd Field Company wrote to his parents, 'It would not be so bad if we could get some decent food, but we get nothing but bully beef and biscuits as hard as bricks.'[32]

Attempts to vary the diet often backfired. For example, the Australian government, at some expense and trouble arranged for frozen Australian meat to be transported to the Peninsula. The authorities were mortified to learn in due course that the units totally rejected the meat. Unfortunately, the Australian authorities, out of touch with the realities of life on the Peninsula, did not seem to realise that by the time the meat got to the company cooks, it was either flyblown or putrescent or, more often than not, both. Potatoes ceased to be issued at the end of July due to the 'prohibitive cost' of supplying them, a decision that greatly angered the troops as the potatoes had helped to stretch and vary the monotonous bully beef. As the campaign wore on and the supply situation worsened, a scale of 'equivalents' was established to allow for supply of additional quantities of more easily obtainable, transportable, storable items in lieu of standard items. Thus, from 18 June 1915, the scale authorised 6 oz preserved meat or 10 oz fresh meat or 4 oz golden syrup or 3 oz cheese as equivalent to 4 oz jam. From 6 July 1915, 4 oz rice, 4 oz jam, 4 oz golden syrup, 3 oz cheese, 6 oz preserved meat, 10 oz fresh meat or 4 oz dried fruit were all stated as equivalent to each other.

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32 ibid, p 199.

The only ration supplement the troops never tired of was bread. It is not generally realised that from the end of the first week of June 1915 the Australians on Gallipoli received an issue of freshly baked bread every second day. This bread was baked on the island of Imbros by the 1st Australian Field Bakery. The Field Bakery had spent a frustrating three weeks on Imbros employed as military police as MEF high command was unable to envisage a use for them. It was all the more galling to the unit, misemployed as they were, to watch the French field bakery set up and begin producing a stream of freshly baked loaves and rolls for the French expeditionary corps within a matter of days. Eventually, sanity prevailed and the unit was allowed to set up its ovens and begin baking bread and rolls, which were then carried to the Peninsula by ship and lighter for issue to the Anzacs.[33] Unfortunately, while the authorised ration was one full loaf per man every second day, wastage and theft en route meant that the ration normally amounted to half a loaf every second or third day. Nevertheless, the troops greatly appreciated the variety that bread offered. On 2 October 1915, Lance Corporal W A Mann, 29th Battalion, wrote to his sister, 'We know the value of bread here and I would give anything for the stuff we used to throw away. We get it about twice a week.'[34]

The monotony of the diet was matched by its dietetic inadequacy. These problems could not even be relieved by the expedient of allowing the men to spend their additional ration allowance in the dry canteen on additional food items to supplement their diet—there was no canteen! The medical situation on the Peninsula rapidly deteriorated to levels that can only be described as catastrophic. One of the major contributing factors to this was the men's diet and cooking facilities. The food supplied was inadequate for the climate and the job. The conditions for preparing, serving and consuming the food, which could at the very best be described as primitive, were a prime breeding ground for sickness and disease. One of the problems was the disposal of food scraps and waste. The orders were for all waste to be buried. No burning was carried out due to enemy activity. Invariably food waste was not properly buried or was even simply thrown over the trench parapet, becoming a breeding ground for flies who carried their pathogens to food being prepared or eaten, and so the cycle continued.[35]

The rations also contributed to a high incidence of dental disease and complaints, ranging from teeth or dental plates being broken on Army biscuits to severe oral infections caused by a combination of vitamin deficiency and damage to the gums and lips from the rations consumed. Dental casualties were a major cause of concern for the ANZAC authorities as this was not a problem they had foreseen, the Australians at least. There were two New Zealand dental officers at ANZAC, who quickly became swamped with patients, and no Australians (none official at least). There were a number of dentists and dental mechanics in the ranks of the AIF who had enlisted in the fighting arms or medical units as there was no dental unit for them to enlist into and a number of these men carried their instruments and tools with them, doing their best to alleviate the dental problems of the Force.[36]

To be fair, higher authority did its best. Responding to pleas from medical officers, strenuous efforts were made to provide invalid food such as farinaceous biscuits and eggs. But despite the best efforts, demand always outstripped supply, to the point where in some units eggs were handed straight to the medical officer and only issued out on his prescription! At one stage over

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[33] Butler, op cit, p 243.
[34] Donelly, Robert, 1997 *Black Over Blue The 25th Battalion At War 1915-1918, USQ* Press, Toowoomba.
[35] ibid, pp 233-238.
[36] ibid, p 244 and pp 361-362.

10% of ANZAC Corps serving on the Peninsula were officially being prescribed invalid diets but there was never enough of the right food items to go around.[37]

There was no canteen at Gallipoli and thus nowhere for the troops to procure additional food, especially delicacies such as sweets, biscuits, chocolates and the like. This need was recognised and much staff effort was expended by the higher echelons in the ANZAC Corps in an attempt to obtain shipments of 'canteen stores' for sale to the troops but these came largely to nothing. While this was going on, however, the Australian Comforts Fund, through quite herculean effort, managed to deliver a large shipment of luxury food items to the Peninsula in October. 'Luxury' is a relative term as the consignment largely consisted of such fairly mundane items as tinned and dried fruit, jam, sweets, tinned tomatoes, chocolates, plain cakes and biscuits. Nevertheless, the shipment was greatly appreciated as it allowed the troops to vary their diet slightly just for a day or two. Needless to say, the shipment sold out within less than a day.[38]

The YMCA operated its own bakery on Imbros where it produced cakes and rolls which were then sent to Gallipoli where, believe it or not, the YMCA operated a coffee stall and reading room on the beach at ANZAC Cove! The efforts of this organisation were also greatly appreciated by the troops.

Despite the generally best efforts of the military hierarchy, the supply and rationing system on Gallipoli left a great deal to be desired and it was all for the best that the Australians were withdrawn from the Peninsula at the end of 1915. The appalling effect of the rations on the troops can be judged by the fact that following the evacuation the physical condition of the troops was so poor that the Director of Medical Services AIF ordered that all men who had served on Gallipoli be allowed an extra pound of bread and an extra pound of meat per man per day. This 'above scale' allowance continued for some months until the men regained their strength and health.[39]

Palestine and Syria

From Gallipoli, while the bulk of the AIF was to go to Europe to fight on the Western Front, the major part of the AIF's mounted troops remained to fight in the deserts and hills of Palestine and Syria. The feeding of the AIF in the Middle East provided yet more problems for the Army authorities. The major problems were the scarcity of water and the mobility of the campaign which made the supply of food to the troops difficult. In many cases, during long desert operations, the light horsemen and cameleers of the Desert Mounted Corps were forced to subsist on the old fall back staples of bully beef, biscuits and tea. Once again, however, it would be totally invalid to accept this at face value as a vindication of the old myth. Bully beef and biscuits were issued for operations as they were the combat rations of the day. Despite the problems of supply the troops *did not* have to subsist on them forever. Field bakeries, both Australian and British, provided abundant fresh (or nearly fresh) bread for the troops. Fresh meat, as well as rice, flour, vegetables, etc, were provided whenever possible. In the field these were prepared by the squadron cooks in dixies over trench fires or in makeshift field ovens and distributed by troop and squadron messes for consumption. In addition to normal supplies provided through the Army logistics system, local purchase was used to obtain meat, flour, bread, fruit and vegetables from the local population. Cooked by the unit cooks, these provided a welcome variation to the diet, especially when on long operations.[40]

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[37] ibid, p 249.
[38] Bowden, Samuel H., 1921(?) *ACF. The History of the-Australian Comforts Fund,* Scotow and Presswell, Sydney, p 78.
[39] Butler, op. cit., p. 598.
[40] Lindsay, op cit, pp 354-355.

The sand was a problem that never went away and all reminiscences of the campaign that mention food also mention the ubiquitous sand! Even worse was the problem of dust. The fine, light, powdery dust of the Jordan Valley in particular, easily stirred up by the passage of a single horseman, was a constant irritant and in fact, besides getting into the men's food, was major cause of depression. There was little, unfortunately, that the authorities could do about this problem.[41] The flies, which had been the cause of so much sickness on Gallipoli, were nowhere near the problem in the desert, despite being just as prevalent. As the units were mobile they were not forced to live with their own refuse as they had on the Peninsula. Added to this was the fact that medical authorities fought a relentless war against the flies for the entire campaign and officers and NCOs rigidly enforced hygiene instructions designed to cut down the fly problem.[42]

Water was a constant problem and Middle East Force, of which Desert Mounted Corps was an element, expended vast amounts of energy and resources in an attempt to provide an adequate and ensured supply of water. British and Australian engineers bored wells, erected tanks, repaired aqueducts, constructed pipelines, laid tramways and light rail lines to transport water tanks and established distillation plants in the struggle to keep water up to the troops. Transport units conveyed water across the desert in carts, on trucks and wagons, on trams and light trains, or on the backs of camels.[43] With all this, there never seemed to be enough. Scarcity of water often predicated the type of food the men consumed since, even when water was too short for proper meals to be prepared, so long as there was enough water to brew a mug of tea to wash everything down with, bully beef and biscuits would suffice. Both of the AIF's largest battles of the campaign, Romani and Beersheba, were fought for the control of wells. Failure at Beersheba could have cost the campaign—it certainly would have been a major setback and many men and horses would have died.

Despite numerous difficulties of supply and despite the fact that circumstances forced the Australians to subsist for long periods on the old BB&B, which was a cause of much dissatisfaction, the feeding of the Australian troops in Egypt, Palestine and Syria does not appear to have caused any great problems. Sickness was a constant problem for the Desert Mounted Corps but this was, for the most part, due to the harsh climate and difficult campaigning. Food was certainly a cause, but a minor rather than a major one. It is notable that the rate of sickness went up when the units were stationary rather than moving on operations.

The Western Front

Service on the Western Front and in the UK was something of a military culture shock for the first Australians to arrive. Their experience of war to date had been the desert and Gallipoli campaigns. Arriving in England or France they found themselves part of a large modern army with well established systems of supply, transport and support and they had to fit themselves into this vast machine. First efforts were not entirely successful. As bizarre as it might sound, some commanding officers continued the practice of individual messing, which had been the norm on Gallipoli. This quickly led to waste and dissatisfaction. In their defence, these officers really didn't know any better. Often they were former militiamen whose only experience of feeding troops pre-war had been the annual camps. The experience gained at these camps had been reinforced and apparently vindicated by service on Gallipoli. Basically, they were just carrying on as normal. They were very quickly brought into line and the pattern of feeding the troops centrally from the unit kitchens was soon established. The unit cooks finally came into their own on the Western Front.

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41 Butler, op cit, pp 704-705.
42 ibid, p 52.
43 ibid, p 598.

In the UK and on the Continent, the Australian troops were once again back on their old ration scale and this time the scale could actually be provided. Australian Army Service Corps (the ASC) units responsible for procuring, transporting and delivering rations quickly integrated themselves into the British system and rations began flowing to the units. To meet the demands for both the supply and preparation of rations, an AIF ASC Depot was established at Parkhouse in the UK. This depot was originally responsible simply for training ASC reinforcements and passing them along to units in the field. Later, the Depot became more closely involved in the actual logistics of providing rations. In August 1917, Lieutenant P G H Summers was appointed as Instructor of Cookery for the AIF.[44] This appointment, unfortunately, did not result in the establishment of an AIF cookery school. Lieutenant Summers' brief appears to have been that of inspection and supervision only. He may have had a role in processing and facilitating AIF attendance at British schools, but this is speculation. Efforts to improve AIF cookery and messing did eventually result in the appointment of several 'Chief Messing Officers.' One of these was Lieutenant Andrews who was originally appointed Chief Messing Officer No. 1 Command Depot, Perham Downs, on 26 January, 1917. He was appointed Chief Messing Officer for the AIF in February 1918.[45] In June 1918, a variation to the establishment of divisional headquarters was approved which allowed for 'the addition of a Sergeant Instructor in Cookery.'[46]

The AIF depots and training bases in the UK all had more or less permanent kitchens and dining facilities attached to them. This, coupled with the proximity to ports and access to a sophisticated transport network for supply, meant that troops in England ate reasonably well. Troops in the UK could also find plenty of places to spend their one and ninepence per day extra ration allowance.

It was not quite the same story on the Continent. First, the troops in Europe, especially those actually in the front lines, were at the very end of a very long supply chain. Often for some items, such as Australian beef and mutton, the supply line stretched all the way back to Australia. Given this fact, the ASC did an excellent job in ensuring that rations reached unit kitchens.

Rations for the AIF were either purchased locally or arrived in Europe at either Southampton or Harfleur. At both of these ports detachments of the ASC's Australian Sea Transport Service were responsible for identifying AIF stores and supplies and directing them to the correct destination via the supply rail head in France.[47] At the rail head, the Australian Railhead Supply Section, another ASC unit, managed the transfer of the rations to the corps and divisional transport elements. Prior to March 1918, transfer of supplies and rations was to the Divisional Transport Columns. The transport units of the divisions had consisted of the transport column and ammunition sub-park. The divisional transport column was responsible for the transport of rations and general stores while the ammunition sub-park was responsible for the transport, storage and issue of ammunition. Both of these elements were equipped with a mix of motorised and horse drawn transport, the majority being horse drawn. In March 1918, a major reorganisation of the AIF saw two elements combined into single all purpose transport units of the Australian Corps MT Column. The Corps MT Column was made up of six MT Companies numbered, fairly obviously, 1 to 6. There was one MT Company per division while the 6th MT Company was responsible for the transport of Corps supplies and stores.[48]

From the Railhead Supply Detachment, the Divisional Transport Column and then, after the 1918 reorganisation, the Divisional MT Company, transported the rations, along with other

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44 Lindsay, op cit, p 355.
45 AWM 25 487/6, memo to DMS, 'Information on the Messing Department by R L Andrews, Chief Messing Officer, AIF.'
46 AIFO 1253 'Estabs. DIV HQ', DAG AIF., 36/466 of 1 June 1918.
47 Lindsay, op cit, p 220.
48 op cit, pp 220-221.

supplies, down to the Divisional Train. At the Train, the rations were handed over the Depot Units of Supply (the DUS). There were five of these ASC units for each division. It appears that the allocation was basically one DUS per brigade, one for the divisional artillery and one for the remained of the division. The DUS distributed rations to individual units in accordance with the ration scale and unit ration returns.[49] Rations distributed, both in the UK and in France and Belgium, included fresh meat and fresh bread. The bulk of the fresh meat forwarded to AIF units was slaughtered and prepared by the Australian Field Butcheries while the AIF's fresh bread was baked by the Australian Field Bakeries. Although both of these units were nominally subordinated to parent divisions (eg, the order of battle of the 1st Australian Division included the 1st Australian Field Butchery and the 1st Australian Field Bakery) in practice these units were grouped together in and around Rouen, located either in civilian facilities or in purpose built installations. This grouping allowed the Australian bakeries and butcheries to achieve excellent economies of scale and indeed they became so efficient and proficient that they were utilised to supply a large number of British units in addition to the AIF.[50]

From the DUS, rations went to the units where they were handed over to the Quartermaster and his staff. The QM and his assistants managed the issue of the bulk rations to sub-unit kitchens and cookhouses and it was here, at the company and battery level, almost at the very end of the food chain (pardon the pun) that the rations were turned, for better or for worse, into meals for the troops. Depending on the nature of operations and the current employment of the units, meals would be cooked in static cookhouses located at the unit billets; in a forward position near the troops, possibly a rail cutting or a quarry; or, if necessary, on the move. Wherever it was carried out and whether it was static or on the move, almost all cooking was done in the mobile kitchens which had been issued to the AIF from early 1916 on the scale of four per battalion sized unit. These cookers were, in theory, capable of producing a hot meal and tea for a company sized unit within one and a half hours and were specifically designed to be used on the move. The trick to achieving this was to get the fire going in the fire box, throw the ingredients for a stew into one pot and tea into another, hitch up the horses and head off to meet up with the company, battery or whatever somewhere down the road.

The life of a cook in the Great War was not a particularly easy one. A very good book on the subject written after the war by a man who as a youngster had served as a cook in the British Army with the London Scottish illustrates this very well. His tale reveals that it was common practice for the cooks to set off on a move up to four hours, or even more, before the rest of the unit did just so the troops could have a hot meal or at least a mug of tea when they reached the end of their march. Then, when the troops were bedding down, the cooks would either have to clean out the cooker and get ready for the next meal or, in the worst and often more common case, head off again on another trek in order to have a meal and hot cup of tea ready for the troops at the end of the next leg of the move. The cooks slept either in snatches waiting for the unit to catch up with them or took turns sleeping, if possible, on the cooker as it trundled and lurched across the countryside.

The Australian divisions, although they certainly had their share of moves, were not nearly as mobile as was the norm for British divisions but it is certain that they would have had similar tales about the endless round of cooking, moving, cooking, moving again. One mention that has been turned up occurs in the diary of Cook Sergeant Murphy of the 1st Battalion (mentioned above). Murphy recorded that when his battalion was ordered to proceed on operational service from Egypt to Gallipoli on 4 April 1915, he and the unit cooks left Mena Camp at midnight the

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[49] ibid.
[50] ibid. Also Bean, p 126.

previous night so they could be in place to serve the unit a hot meal when they arrived at the rail head in the morning.[51]

Not all cooks had to feed troops on the move of course. The method of feeding the troops of the AIF on the Western Front depended very much on the type of unit. Headquarters and support units were generally far enough from the front lines to enjoy reasonably static facilities, comparable to those in the United Kingdom and troops of these units would more often than not be fed a hot meal three times a day, to be eaten in proper, or as near as practicable proper, dining facilities. For instance, the menu for the soldier's mess of the 3rd Australian Division Base Depot for 12 December 1917 lists the following items: Breakfast—fried rissoles, pork and beans, bread, butter, tea; Dinner (lunch)—boiled beef, cabbage, mashed potatoes, rice custard, bread, tea; Tea—bread, butter, cheese, jam, tea.[52]

For the fighting units, the infantry battalions, the artillery brigades, the engineers and the others, is was a different story. When, what, where and how these units were fed depended on what they were doing. On the Western Front, the AIF, as with the rest of the British Army, followed an unrelenting round of a period, from one to four weeks usually, in the front line trenches, followed by a period in support to the rear of the front line, followed by a period in reserve or 'resting' (so called), and then the cycle repeated itself. If a unit was resting or in reserve, the three hot meals a day served from company or battery kitchens would apply. The cooks would be roused out at 4 am or earlier, depending on the time of year, to start the fires in the cookers or stoves to give the men a breakfast which might consist of bacon, chops or sausages, porridge, bread, jam and tea. Lunch, if the troops were in the billets, would be a stew or perhaps a roast and vegetables or boiled meat and potatoes, as well as soup, bread, jam and tea. If the troops were out in the field on an extended training exercise or a fatigue such as road mending, they would be issued dry rations such as bully beef, jam, bread and biscuits before they left. They would also be given an issue of tea and sugar to make a brew or, if they were relatively close to the billets, a transport wagon might take out a dixie of hot tea for them. The evening meal would be fairly light and would probably consist of soup, perhaps some cold meat with pickles, bread, jam and tea. The cooks usually served a late supper of tea or cocoa with bread and jam just before lights out. In reserve, the men also generally had good opportunities to spend their extra ration allowance in various outlets, the famous *estaminets,* dotted around the countryside and in the small towns and villages that were intact.

In support, the system varied in that the meals were prepared at the company or battery kitchen and carried forward in hot boxes—wooden boxes insulated with straw and holding two metal containers for food or hot liquids. Added to the hot boxes would be sacks or sand bags containing bread or biscuits. This would usually be done three times a day. The fare would not differ very much from that in the billets. The main difference was that it was delivered to the support trenches and eaten there. The cooks would usually do their best to ensure that a hot drink was also sent up in the evening.

The final stage in the food chain was the forward trenches, the front line. It was here that the feeding of the troops became a truly difficult task. The main problem was that no movement to or from the forward trenches could be carried out in the daylight hours and thus a hot meal could not be carried forward for the midday meal. In the front line trenches, the days were reversed with all major activity being carried out at night, the daytime being used for small chores and for getting what rest possible. As night fell, both sides would begin to hear the sound of iron shod wheels on cobblestones as unit transport wagons brought the rations forward. The wagons would

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[51] Murphy, op cit.
[52] AWM 25, 221/9

carry hot boxes with the night's meal, usually a stew, along with hot tea and the other sundries such as biscuits, bread, jam etc. The wagons would also usually carry forward the food for the next day's midday meal and this would consist of tins of preserved meat—bully beef or the much favoured Machonicie's Stew—bread, biscuits, jam and an issue of tea and sugar. Along with the tea and sugar came the water in tins and an issue of hard coal or charcoal for heating the water for tea. Coal or charcoal was issued as it gave off little smoke and thus wouldn't give the user's position away. That was the theory anyway. Apparently it didn't always work, as the history of the 37th Battalion records that the cookhouse of the battalion's D Company (located in the forward trenches) was destroyed by shell or mortar fire twice soon after the battalion first entered the line, even though coke was being used. A decision to relocate the cookhouse more sensibly to the reserve trenches was apparently roundly applauded by the cooks![53]

Platoons were fed in rotation, the meal being served into mess tins and panniers. The rations for the next day's lunch might be issued out to platoon sergeants at this time or might just as likely be held at company headquarters for issue the next morning at breakfast. Again, if at all possible, and sometimes it wasn't despite the best will in the world, the cooks would do their utmost to arrange for a hot drink of tea or cocoa to be carried forward for the men later in the night. It should be noted that for all the vilification heaped on the them, most memoirs and remembrances, which mention the cooks do so with warmth and affection. The cooks did their best for the men in the trenches and the men knew this and appreciated it. After the meal, the day's (night's) work began with carrying parties, wiring parties, line laying parties, trench repair parties, patrol, sentries, all the various intricate elements of trench warfare going about their business. The night's work would end about an hour before first light when the whole front line, both sides, would stand to fully armed and equipped, lining the parapets waiting for an attack.

While the night's work had been going on in the trenches, to the rear the cooks would have been cleaning up after the evening meal and getting ready to cook, serve and send out breakfast. In the European summer, this meant getting up at 3am to cook breakfast and put it in the hot boxes and dixies for carriage forward. Some time before stand to, carrying parties would have been sent back to the support lines to collect the morning meal, usually handing over the empty containers from the previous night's meal. Breakfast would be served in the trenches after stand down. It might consist of bacon, sausages, chops or even bully beef rissoles with bread or biscuits and jam, washed down with hot, sweet tea. Occasionally the cooks would contrive to send up hot porridge as well. This was always welcome as it was very filling. At the morning meal, the platoon sergeant would issue out the cold rations for the midday if this not had been done the previous night and the men would go about their daytime routine.

For lunch, the troops were usually left to their own devices and although a number of reminiscences note that some men went to great lengths to cook themselves some sort of a hot meal based on bully beef or tinned stew heated over whatever fire could be contrived, most men were content to wolf down cold meat and biscuits with, if possible, another mug of the inevitable tea. Here again is seen the genesis of the bully beef and biscuits myth. The time which stuck most in the minds of the veterans after the war was the time in the trenches and what stuck in so many of their minds was the memory of the bully beef and biscuits they consumed for at least one meal a day on most days. The fact that this fare was varied as much as possible with proper cooked meals could not detract apparently from the strength of the remembered enforced diet of tinned meat and army biscuits and the myth has grown up largely from this.[54] As early as 1915,

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53 McNicol, N G, 1936, *The THIRTY-SEVENTH History of the Thirty-Seventh Battalion AIF*, Modern Printing Company, Melbourne, pp 47-48.

54 Bean, C E W, 1929, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18 Vol. III, The AIF in France 1916*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, p 126.

apparently in reaction to reports from medical officers on Gallipoli concerning the detrimental effects of the rations on men's health, the medical fraternity in Australia called for more attention to be paid to soldier's diets. In a leading article in the main Australian medical journal of the day, doctors demanded a change in the food for soldiers on Gallipoli. The article stated that the 'ration is of such a character as to become nauseating'.[55] The article paid particular attention to the psychological affect of an unvaried diet on men confined to unhygienic trenches and subject to unhealthy conditions. Unfortunately, the medical authorities were possibly not as aware of the problems facing the military authorities on Gallipoli as they could have been and their pleas can be seen as slightly unrealistic. On the other hand, the article is a clear example of the very real concern felt for the welfare of Australian soldiers in the First World War, specifically in the area of feeding.

What the soldier of the AIF carried (or was supposed to carry) into battle to sustain him in the fight is shown in Table 9.

Commodity	Amount
Preserved meat	1 lb (450 gm)
Biscuit	12 oz (360 gm)
Tea	5/8 oz (18 gm)
Sugar	2 oz (60 gm)
Salt	½ oz (15 gm)
Cheese	1 oz (30 gm)
Meat extract (2 cubes)	1 oz (30 gm)

Table 9: Iron Ration (Emergency Ration for Consumption in the Field)
(Source—Haythornthwaite)

This is the so called iron ration. It was designed to sustain a man in the field for 24 hours in extremis. The ration was not provided for the man to eat at his discretion. Regulations stipulated that a soldier was not supposed to touch his iron ration except in emergency and even then he was supposed to have the permission of an officer. The theory was that as the troops moved forward in an advance the divisional train would push supplies, including rations, forward to keep up with the advance. Thus operational plans always included a detailed administration annex where the plans for the provision of hot meals were laid out in enormous detail. These plans, however, seldom came to fruition and more often than not the men were forced to fall back on their iron rations. Quite often men might have no more than their 24 hour iron ration to sustain them for up to three days, sometimes even longer, until they either got back to their own lines or the supply system caught up with them. Nevertheless, many personal memoirs of the AIF recall 'going over the top' with the voluminous pockets of the Australian blouse stuffed with extra tins of bully beef and packets of biscuit, 'just in case.'

It was after large scale operations that the cooks came into their own as one of the major morale boosting factors of the army. Whatever else had happened, as the exhausted, filthy and famished remnants of units staggered out of the line they would know that the unit cooks would have a hot meal and a goodly supply of scalding hot tea waiting at the billets. One of the arts of the quartermaster was to be able to assess how many men would survive an operation and to cater accordingly. Quite often, of course, they got it wrong, usually over feeding. This must have been a terribly sad sight for the cooks as they saw how few men sometimes had survived to sit down to eat the meal they had prepared.

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[55] Anonymous, 1915 'The Army Ration', *The Medical Journal of Australia*, October, p. 421.

The pattern of obtaining the rations and feeding of the troops became well established throughout 1916 and 1917 and into the early part of 1918. The efficiency of the sea transport service and the British military railway system, coupled with reorganisations and rationalisations in Australian transport meant that by the end of 1917/early 1918, the flow of rations to the units forward went very smoothly. When the rations reached the units, the quartermaster and cooking staff were well versed in the needs of their particular jobs and the provision of meals and rations to the front line troops was managed as well as times and conditions would allow. There were problems, there were complaints, there were administrative foul ups, but, these tended to be the exception, rather than the rule. Much has been made by various commentators of the fact that soldiers in reserve or resting tended to go out of their way to seek out non-military food outlets. While it is almost inevitable that some of these forays were forced on soldiers by inadequate unit feeding, the author's research, plus his own not inconsiderable military experience, lead him to the conclusion that in general the haunting of *estaminets* was more a case of soldiers wanting a change of scenery, a break from the military environment, and even a change in the style of cooking rather than any great problems with the military rationing and feeding system itself.

Some Miscellaneous Thoughts

Ration Accounting

It is a common misconception among many soldiers, even those of long experience, that the food just appears on the mess table, apparently by magic. Since the appearance of the food is magical, it obviously doesn't cost anything. This of course is not so. Every bite of food consumed by the AIF was paid for by the Australian government and every penny spent on feeding the troops had to be accounted for. After some early trial and error, the AIF settled on a composite ration accounting system. This system consisted of the 'commuted ration' (70% of the daily total ration) and 'field allowance' (30%). The commuted ration was that portion purchased directly by the government and consisted of 12 oz meat, 16 oz bread, 2 oz bacon, 2 oz sugar, ¾ oz tea and ¼ oz salt. This was the basic staple ration and the actual purchasing element, referred to as the 'commuted ration allowance' was 5½d per man per day (later raised to 6½d—see below). Field allowance was designed to allow catering officers to purchase the additional ration items authorised in order to bring the daily ration scale up to the total authorised level.[56]

Field allowance, which was not, despite the title part of the soldier's pay, was set at 5½d per man per day. The money was drawn by quartermasters or messing officers from the Staff Paymaster and used to purchase rations through the canteen system. The amount drawn was calculated from unit ration returns. In 1917, the War Office set up the Navy and Army Canteen Board (NACB) and directed that field allowance was to be paid to the board for purchase of rations. Unfortunately, the War Office further directed that the NACB was to rebate 10% of the cash paid to it back to units to be spent on 'entertainment and comforts', not rations. This practice infuriated Andrews who saw it as taking food out of the men's mouths, however well intentioned the idea.[57]

Andrews was further angered by memos from the War Office at the end of 1917 which encouraged units to return a portion of the field allowance at the end of each monthly messing period, to be paid into Public Funds. This practice inevitably led to competition between units to see who could return the most funds and of course the men's rations suffered. Andrews stated to

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[56] AWM 25 487/6, Andrews memo, op cit.
[57] ibid.

Colonel Butler that he never returned any money, either as Messing Officer No. 1 Command Depot or as Chief Messing Officer AIF.[58]

Meticulous records were kept by messing officers to ensure that the government got its proper money's worth. A letter from the catering officer of B Sub Depot to the Adjutant of No. 2 Australian Command Depot at Tidworth illustrates this well. The letter contained the 'Monthly Messing Report for Month of October' (1918) and went into extraordinary detail. It recorded that for the messing period 47,773 men were rationed and that this included three separate drafts, totalling 772 men, which marched out of the depot for embarkation to Australia. The letter also recorded that the men of the march out drafts 'carried the unexpired portion of the day's rations on their person, which consisted of the following: 2 Meat Pies, 1 Jam Roll, ¼ lb. Cheese, 3 ozs biscuits, 1 Ham Sandwich, 1 Margarine Sandwich.'[59]

In a memo to Colonel Butler of the Medical Service in 1919, Lieutenant Andrews included an annex which listed the entitlement to commuted ration allowance for AIF depots in the UK for the period June 1916 to December 1918. This remarkable document reveals that a total of 31,201,887 commuted ration payments were authorised over the period. The highest monthly figure was 1,924,613 claims for March 1917 while the highest daily average figure for messing strength was 55, 652 for April 1917. The total amount spent by the Australian government on feeding its troops for the period covered was £740,299/12/7.[60] In this modern computer age, it is almost unbelievable that such vast yet precise figures could be managed totally manually and it says a lot for the staff skills of the AIF.

Shortages

A particular problem for the AIF in the last year and a half of the war was that of ration shortages. Shortages of ration commodities affected the whole BEF from mid-1917 onwards. These shortages were caused by a combination of three main factors. First, simple supply and demand: the huge numbers of men in the field on the Western Front, as well as troops at home and the civilian population had to be fed and this put enormous strains on existing sources of supply. Secondly, both 1917 and 1918 saw relatively poor harvests in those areas of France and Belgium not held by the Germans. Finally, the German U-boat campaign began to bite into British shipping from May 1917 onwards.[61] A related cause of shortages for the fighting troops at the front, one which plagued the AIF, indeed all armies, for the whole war, was that of loss of stores due to pilfering or damage resulting from incorrect storage and transport. Shortages of basic commodities hit the AIF particularly hard early in 1918. Lieutenant Andrews reported that the period April to November 1918 represented the 'period of lowest rationing' for the AIF. In a table appended to a report entitled 'Information on the Messing Department', he noted that the average daily calorific value of the AIF ration reached an all time low of 3,264 calories per man per day in April. Scarcity of vegetables from local sources coupled with the German U-boat campaign were stated as the cause. The caloric value of the ration did not in fact show a marked increase until November 1918, when, obviously, the U-boat campaign was stopped.[62]

This figure, 3,264 calories, is slightly misleading. It reflects the total calorie figure when both the commuted ration and the field allowance were taken into account. Combined, these should have

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58 ibid.
59 AWM 221/9 (829), letter from Lt C E Clark, OIC Messing B Sub Depot No. 2 Aust Comd Depot (Tidworth UK), 7 November 1918.
60 AWM 25 351/14. Letter from Lieutenant Andrews to Colonel Butler dated 9 July 1919—'Memo by Lt Andrews Chief Messing Officer to AIF'.
61 Hicks, Brigadier Sir C Stanton, 1972, *Who Called The Cook A Bastard?*, Keyline Press, Sydney, p 72.
62 AWM 25 487/6.

totalled 4,000 calories (+/-) so it can be seen that the AIF's rations had suffered markedly. In his report, Andrews notes that, from the Australian point of view, the most serious shortage was meat. In February 1918, the fresh portion of the meat ration for the BEF, and thus the AIF, was cut from 12 oz to 10 oz. This was cut again in April to 8 oz, while at the same time the sugar ration was cut from 2 oz to 1½ oz and the tea ration from 5/8 oz to 3/8 oz. Additional cheese was issued in lieu along with fish. First, the Australians loathed the British cheese and refused to eat it. Secondly, Australians at the time were not a nation of fish eaters and resented having their meat ration replaced with fish, especially unfamiliar North Sea varieties such as cod, hake and skate. Complaints were so bitter and loud that AIF HQ made strong representations to the War Office to have the Australian meat ration restored. The War Office gave in to Australian pressure in May 1918 and increased the fresh meat ration for Australians to either 10 oz meat plus 2 oz fresh mince or 12 oz mince. In addition, the Australian government authorised the increase of field allowance from 5½d. to 6½d. to allow 'additional offal to be bought.'[63] While there is no record of how the increase in the Australian meat ration was achieved, it is presumed to have been done at the expense of British units.

Shortages of vegetables also affected the AIF. Andrews noted in his report that vegetables were 'very scarce' from April to August 1918.[64] He later went on to note that some of the shortfall was eventually made up by unit gardens. Such shortages were apparently not new. As far back as 16 May 1917, DA&QMG 1st ANZAC Corps had written to HQ 5th Division on the subject of 'shortage of green vegetables.' This particular letter went on to offer the 'helpful' suggestion that dandelion leaves could be substituted. In a very earnest tone, the letter advised that 'French troops and people make great use of [it] which grows profusely in this area at this time of year.' The letter went on to suggest various methods of preparing the leaves for eating and requested a trial be carried out and report a forwarded. Unfortunately, no record has been found so far of the results of any such trial but such results would undoubtedly make interesting reading.[65]

Even earlier than this, shortages of potatoes occurred in 1916. This was particularly keenly felt as potatoes were, along with meat and bread, the staple most appreciated by the Australians. Once again, earnest efforts were made to compensate. This time it was chestnuts! A letter from 5th Army to formations (including Australians) under command advised that successful experiments had been carried out at the 5th Army School of Cookery at Estapols which showed that chestnuts could be used to either supplement or replace potatoes. A list of methods for preparing and serving the chestnuts which was appended to the letter does little to stir the taste buds![66]

Waste

One method of dealing with shortages is waste management. Any large organisation feeding large groups of people on a regular basis faces the problem of waste and how to control or harness it. Lieutenant Andrews noted in a letter to Colonel Butler that 'economy of waste was a matter that required most careful consideration.[67] By 1916, the vast waste incurred by the British Army, both in the UK and on the Continent, led the government to establish an organisation known as National Waste Products Ltd., a government enterprise which established depots near all major camps. Their job was to recover and process all waste matter, with a particular emphasis on paper, cardboard, string, rope, twine, bones and fat. Contractors paid the

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63 ibid.
64 ibid.
65 AWM 221/6
66 ibid.
67 AWM 25 351/14, op cit.

government between 38/- to 142/- per cwt of waste, depending on the type and quality.[68] One area of waste control in which the AIF was almost manic was the recovery of fat as 'dripping.' Surviving memos, notes and reports consistently mention the campaign to recover dripping. As early as March 1915, a Court of Enquiry at Mena Camp found that the 'cooking department' of an Australian unit had 'made much pecuniary profit from the sale of fat—both dripping and fresh—which might have been used for cooking purposes to the advantage of the men.'[69] Later, in France, Belgium and the UK, a special AIF form called the 'Unit Dripping Account' was created. This form was rendered to superior HQ as a return each month and contained columns for such vital points as 'Amount saved', '1st class', '2nd class', 'Issued as extra', 'Issued to cooks', 'Sold' and 'On hand'. Since this was an army form, there was of course also a column for 'Remarks.'[70] Cooks were supposed to produce half to one ounce of dripping for every ration of meat issued to them.[71] Economy in the all important matter of dripping was apparently later encouraged by the payment of ½d per pound for every pound of recovered dripping sent back to brigade or division. The regimental history of the 12th Battalion records that some units resorted to using dead horses to provide dripping, not, as it might be imagined, to collect their ½d per pound, but in order to avoid the wrath of higher authority. The history records that: 'A Divisional Return was issued every month and often accompanied by a curt note stating 'that the Divisional Commander notices, with regret, that your unit has only forwarded — lbs. of fat (or paper or cardboard) to the DADOS during the month. Please explain.'[72] Important stuff dripping!

On 15 July 1918, an inspection of kitchens of HQ 108 US Engineer Regiment (attached Australian Corps) by Sergeant B W David, Instructor in Catering Australian Corps Troops, while generally complimentary, unfortunately found the Americans lacking in the area of dripping. Sergeant David noted in his report that in the matter of 'surplus dripping', he had to explain 'the necessity for economy in this line.'[73] Perhaps the best example of the AIF's fixation with dripping, however, is found in a letter from DAQMG 1st ANZAC Corps to HQ 5th Australian Division. The letter refers to an inspection visit of the kitchens of 15th Australian Infantry Brigade by the 'OIC Catering 1st ANZAC Corps.' In his report to Corps, which is appended to the letter, the inspecting officer wrote the following: '...at the Machine Gun Company of this Brigade, I was rather received by the OC in a hostile way and spoken to in an impertinent manner. There, no fat of any kind was saved and the way the cooks, OC and officer (sic) received my instructions led me to understand that my room was more desired than my presence. One of the OC's remarks was that he did not know anything about saving fat and did not want to. I would suggest that for his special benefit, a letter should be sent, acquainting him of the fact that fat is really as much a necessity as his unit.'[74] So there!

Conclusion

The First World War was the Australian Army's, indeed the Department of Defence's and also Australia's, first big logistic challenge. The achievement of Australia, located at the literal ends of the earth, with a small population, little heavy industry and a largely agrarian economy, in raising, despatching, supplying and maintaining a major overseas expeditionary force for over

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[68] AWM 25 487/6, op cit.
[69] AWM 25 229/1. Proceedings of a 'Court of Enquiry into Irregularities at Mena Camp.'
[70] AWM 25 221/9 (829), op cit.
[71] AWM 25 221/6, op cit., letter, '2nd Anzac No. 2635/13Q of 13 December 1916.'
[72] Newton, L M, 1925, *The Story of the TWELFTH A Record of the 12th Battalion AIF During the Great War of 1914-1918,* 12th Battalion Association, Hobart, p 506.
[73] AWM 25 221/10.
[74] AWM 351/14, op cit.

four years cannot be in any way under stressed. It truly was a magnificent achievement. While most commentators with any knowledge of Australia's effort in the Great War will readily acknowledge this, it is doubtful if many have ever given any thought to the challenges faced and overcome by the Army and Department in feeding the Australian soldier during the war.

As with most other aspects of the raising, dispatch and maintenance of the AIF, the feeding of the army was never without its problems. Men did go hungry; shortages were suffered; irregularities did occur; preparation, cooking and serving were often of a poor standard. Yet, despite all this, and from a very shaky start, by the end of the war, the AIF was served by a sophisticated ration supply system and a catering department (for want of a better word) which, while by no means perfect, generally did the best it could at all times. The Australian Imperial Force may not necessarily have been the best fed army in the world at the time (although the boast was made) but it certainly fared better than most other armies during the war. As often is the case, much of the credit for this must go to a few individuals who did their utmost, often in the face of extreme institutional intransigence or inertia, to ensure that the soldier's welfare came first. High on the list of these must always be Colonel Butler of the medical service and the still somewhat shadowy Lieutenant Andrews, Chief Messing Officer. Their efforts deserve to be remembered.

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Not all sources listed have been specifically cited in the text of the paper. All sources listed, however, were consulted and all provided information and background and 'flavour'. Even if not specifically cited, all of the sources helped to make the finished product and thus I have chosen to list them. Of particular interest and help were the primary sources credited to the Australian War Memorial. The amount of material held in the AWM 25 file series was quite overwhelming and the assistance of the staff of the Research Centre was, as always, phenomenal.

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Vivian Statham, nee Bullwinkel—Eulogy at State Funeral, St Georges Cathedral, Perth, Monday 10 July 2000

The Hon Bruce Scott, MP, Minister For Veterans Affairs

As we are gathered here to dwell upon the passing of Vivian Statham, we must surely feel ourselves diminished. A unique Australian has been taken from us and whether we were friend or acquaintance, colleague or distant admirer, each one of us is poorer for her passing.

However, by choosing instead to dwell upon the life of Vivian Statham, of Sister Bullwinkel, we are not diminished but enriched. I have no doubt that she would wish us to use this occasion, not for sad and sombre reflection of what has gone, but in celebration for what will remain - the memory of an extraordinary woman and an example which will sustain Australians for all time. With a flash of those wonderful eyes and the awesome authority of Matron and Lieutenant Colonel combined, she would compel us instead to dwell upon her true legacy—the countless bodies healed by her care, the hearts inspired by her courage, the souls uplifted by her compassion. In many ways what made Vivian remarkable was that throughout her long and distinguished life she refused to acknowledge that she was special. She no doubt questioned why she survived the sinking of the *Vyner Brooke* when other nurses, when many of her friends and colleagues, died amid the chaos and carnage on its decks or beneath the churning waters which awaited them.

She must often have wondered why she alone of the 22 nurses who had struggled ashore on Radji Beach survived the horror of the Banka Island massacre. Why, as all marched into the sea with heads held high and knowing full well what was to happen to them, she alone was spared. She must have queried why during three and a half years of hateful imprisonment, of tending others as they perished through malnutrition or inadequate medical care or disease, why she survived to return home. But those of us who had the privilege and honour to be in her company and to spend time with her know that these were private matters. Throughout a life crowded with friendships, a life dedicated to the service of others, throughout a life directed towards the common good, Vivian Statham was happy as one amongst equals.

Indeed in many ways, she did mirror the experience of her entire generation—a generation born for peace, intended to live in a world made safe and secure by the 'war to end all wars' but with tragic irony, destined to fight a second, more terrible war. By coincidence, she was born only a few hours before the last boats glided silently away from the Gallipoli shore. No-one can have imagined how great a contribution Vivian would herself make to the Anzac legend begun there. Her childhood, like those of her contemporaries, was full of constant reminders of war's legacy—the broken bodies of veterans and the broken hearts of the bereaved.

Her decision in young adulthood amid the thin years of the depression to choose nursing as her profession may well have been prompted by those images, by the desire to ease suffering. And when war clouds formed, like hundreds of thousands of other young Australians, she stepped forward in defence of this nation and civilisation itself.

We can also see Vivian Statham's care for the sick and the injured and the infirm, in a nursing career spanning 42 years as representative of every nurse, in war and in peace, in the past and in

the present. She exemplified the many and varied virtues of this noble profession—perseverance and compassion, selflessness, teamwork and technical expertise—sheer goodness. The capacity to balance the hard reality of medical treatment with the gentle art of patient care. These are rare and wonderful qualities. Vivian Statham never ceased to display them and never ceased to champion the cause for the wider recognition of nursing staff within the community.

We are honoured to have with us today four exceptional Australians who shared these virtues and the long years of captivity with Sister Bullwinkel—Florence Syer, Wilma Young, Jessie Hookway and Pat Darling. In celebrating Vivian's life, today is a day to illuminate the experience of every prisoner of war and to recognise the vast well of determination and unity, resourcefulness and strength each possessed. We are blessed as a nation by their example. We are blessed also to have in rare individuals such as Vivian Statham, people whose lives, whose deeds and whose words embody the very essence of our national character. In her no nonsense approach to adversity, in her humility, in her willingness to sustain others at great personal cost, with her great capacity for love and friendship, for forgiveness, Vivian Statham served and will serve as a role model for all Australians.

And yet, although distinctly Australian, although personifying others of her generation and her profession, although exemplifying all those who faced long and brutal captivity, and despite that refusal to believe herself worthy of special treatment, today we gather to honour a person who was simply unique.

Vivian Statham—the beloved Sister Bullwinkel—will live on in the hearts of all Australians long after this day. A grateful nation gives thanks for a life lived in the service of others. I can think of no more fitting way to conclude than by quoting lines from the Captives Hymn, which we have heard this morning, that special hymn first sung by women prisoners of war in July 1942 and thereafter every Sunday until their release three years later:

May the day of freedom dawn,
Peace and justice be reborn.
Grant that nations loving Thee
O'er the world may brothers be,
Cleansed by suffering, know rebirth,
See Thy kingdom come on Earth.
The day of freedom did dawn.

Vivian Statham did much to ensure that it dawned clear and bright for us all.

Book Review

Russell Mehan, *An Unrewarded Hero*, Westralian Publishers, 17 Cador Court, Carine, WA 6020, 104 pp with maps and photographs, $21.90 plus $2.50 postage and handling (inc GST)

This tribute to Lieutenant Alan Haddy, one of the 2/16th Australian Infantry Battalion's finest soldiers was conceived over a number of years by Russell Mehan.[1] It tells the story of a frontline soldier who was seemingly quite ordinary but, in fact, was extraordinary, which gives proof to the thoughts that any man who goes into combat becomes a special person.

The writer sets the tone of the book early in the piece when writing about cowardice. The suggestion is made that no man has the right of comment unless they have been there. When reading any military history, I usually look at the preface, the foreword and bibliography, and the quotations at the start of each chapter. This usually gives a foretaste of what is to come. The end result did not disappoint.

Many military biographies are written on the assumption that the reader has a strong military background, but in this book details are simplified. In fact the author lets those who were involved tell the story. Lyn Macdonald took the same approach when she wrote her many books about the First World War and set standards for military writing that would be hard to emulate. Russell and Lyn share a common feeling in that they have enormous respect for the people they write about, and this shows through.

The author wanted the reader, who had perhaps limited knowledge of warfare, to be able to enjoy it without an excess of military jargon. He writes with a restrained but dedicated passion. That Alan Haddy was deserving of a decoration for gallantry is not in doubt, but as Queen Elizabeth said in 1956 at the Centenary of the Victoria Cross:

> 'Far beyond this gallant company of brave men there is a multitude who have served their country well in war. Some of them have performed unrecorded deeds of supreme merit for which they have no reward.'

In this case, while Lt Alan Haddy was never decorated, his name will be for evermore enshrined in the public eye because of this book.

—Peter Bamforth

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[1] Russell Mehan is President of the MHSA (WA Branch) and Hon secretary of the 2/16th Association. While he has no active service, he has a strong background of army culture. His father served in the 2/14th Field Regiment in Darwin, New Guinea and New Britain, and his grandfather, Lieutenant Jack Mehan, served in the First World War and was awarded he Military Cross.

Around the Water Cart

by 'Joe Furphy'

Among the material recently made available at Australian Archives Sydney office is a box of lantern-slides produced by Wing Commander (later Sir Lawrence) Wackett's unit at Cockatoo Island Dockyard between 1924 and 1928. They appear to relate to the construction of aircraft and may have been used for promotional purposes. (*Memento,* National Archives of Australia, January 2000).

Shirley and Trevor McIvor of Queensland have produced a CD-ROM, *Queensland War Memorials and Tributes*, which has pays homage to our servicemen from the Boer to the Gulf War. It facilitates family research and searches for special categories, tributes, Queensland prisoners of war, etc. Order from T & S McIvor, 27 Maker St, Toowoomba, Queensland, 4350. $A45. (*International Arms and Militaria Collector,* No 19, received May 2000).

The *Victorian Historical Journal*, June 1999 has an interesting article by Nancy McConnan, taken from the letters of Walter McConnan of the 8th Light Horse Regiment during service at Gallipoli and in the Middle East. McConnan was one of only 39 of the original 500 members who returned to Australia with the regiment in August 1919. The article includes a photograph of all ranks of C Squadron, 8th LH, taken at Broadmeadows in 1914 or 1915.

When the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance was envisaged and designed in Victoria in 1922, the major argument was whether the memorial should be a non-utilitarian monument or a utilitarian project such as a hospital, a home for war widows or another worthy project. New ideas that came forward included Dame Nellie Melba's idea of a tower with a carillon of bells, an adaptation of the Taj Mahal, a palace of Art, a hall of fame, an Eiffel-style tower at least 122 metres high and a model of Mont St Quentin. Utilitarian proposals included a bridge over the Yarra River, the conversion of Federal Parliament House in Melbourne (now the Victorian Parliament's House) into a picture galley and war museum or the rebuilding of a slum area of Melbourne. The foundation stone of the present building was laid on Armistice Day 1927 and the building dedicated on 11 November 1934. In June 1933, the Lone Pine had been planted close to the memorial. This was grown from a cone brought home by a soldier of the 24th Battalion whose aunt planted the seeds in her Warrnambool garden. The tree now shades the sculpture of Simpson and his donkey. Trees reproduced from cones dropped from the Lone Pine were supplied to Legacy Clubs throughout Australia and one is still thriving at Government House in Canberra. (*The Shrine of Remembrance,* by Peter Isaacson, published in *Victorian Historical Journal*, June 1999).

From his *Bookshelf* section in *International Arms and Militaria Collector Bulletin* No 19b comes a report from our Queensland Branch Secretary, Syd Wigzell on 'Grenades and Their Uses', a manual compiled by 'Lt Col Law' and issued (so Syd believes) to the AIF in about 1916. It provides an insight into early British and Australian grenade types and trench raiding tactics. Among the improvised grenades covered are the Jam-tin, the Welsh Berry and the Russell Boomerang grenade (?!). Mechanical devices used to lob grenades are also covered; these include the trench catapult, which was a 50-lb, 12ft-long, winch-cocked, rubber-band-powered thrower with a range of 150 yards. The reprint by Rick Landers, PO Box 3082, Dural, NSW, 2158 is in paperback, 116pp, with k28 b&w illustrations. Price about A15 plus p&p and possibly GST.

Incidentally, Arms and Militaria Press (Ian Skennerton) have recently revised their publication arrangements and will now issue quarterly bulletins in a small format (eg, 19b mentioned above) and each year will issue a top-quality 150-page, thread-sewn, square-back annual (Notice in *Collector Magazine Bulletin 19b,* received May 2000)

Our good friend Sgt Jason Logue reports in *Army* 31 August 2000 that the Web site 'Anzac Steel' is worth a look, particularly for those interested in armour and armoured vehicle (and the modelling of them). With the recent demise of the tank museum's site, there is a large hole in Australia's web-based

military heritage and *Anzac Steel* will help to fill that gap. There are articles on the US M3 series in RAAC use through to features on the Leopard and ASLAV. Paul Handel is the site's main contributor and Shane Abdoo (who prepared the dioramas at the Puckapunyal Tank Museum) caters for those interested in armour modelling. (*Army Newspaper*, 31 August 2000).

Two officers of *The Queens Own Corps of Guides* are credited with introducing 'khaki' (Persian for 'dust colour') to our various armies. Lt (afterwards Lt Gen Sir) Harry Lumsden and his 2iC Lt W Hodson of the Bengal Fusiliers (later the founder of the famous 'Hodson's Horse (4th Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers) adopted khaki for the Guides because of the terrain of the rocky mountains and plains of North West India. It was introduced as a working dress in 1861 and became the official service dress in India. Clothing was dyed khaki regimentally, using whatever pigment was available - tea, coffee, mud, curry powder. The spinners of Manchester invented fast-dyed khaki and patented it in 1884. For the reconquest of the Sudan 1897-98, all the troops were dressed in khaki uniforms. The Americans adopted it in the early 1900s, Japan in 1905, French Colonial Forces in 1910 and the Belgian and Spanish Armies in 1919. (*RUSI (Qld) Bulletin*, March 2000, from a contribution by Major Gil Western, MC).

Despite the increased lethality and accuracy of weapons, the rate at which soldiers actually kill the enemy has not increased significantly. Lt Col Grossman, a US Army psychologist, and the author of *On Killing - The Psychological cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* says the average firing rate was incredibly low in (American) Civil War Battles...the killing *potential* of the average Civil War regiment was anywhere from 500 to 1000 men per minute. The *actual* killing rate was only one or two men per minute per regiment ('The Battle Tactics of the American Civil War': author Griffith, NFD) Grossman reports that at the Battle of Gettysburg, of the 27,000 muskets picked up after the battle from the dead and dying, 90% were loaded. Since it took 95% of a soldier's time to load his musket and only 5% to fire it, this is a clear anomaly. But even more amazing is that of the thousands of loaded muskets, more than half had *multiple* loads in the barrel. S L A Marshall, in his battlefield studies during WW2, discovered that only 15 to 20 per cent of individual riflemen actually fired at the enemy. Grossman says, 'from a military perspective, a 15% firing rate among riflemen is like a 15% literacy rate among librarians'. (*Army Magazine* [Australia], No 42, March 2000).

Dr Richard John Gatling is best remembered for the machine gun that bears his name. The reliability of that multi-barrelled weapon was quite phenomenal. During three days of tests in October 1873, one hundred thousand rounds were fired from an 1865 model, using the gravity feed drum magazine. At Karlsruhe in 1869, one hundred riflemen armed with the Prussian needle gun hit a target 6 feet high and 72 feet long 196 times out of 721 shots in one minute. In the same time, at a similar target, a 0.5in Gatling gun scored 216 hits out of 246 shots. (*Albury-Wodonga Branch Newsletter*, No 3/2000, May 2000). And to bring that closer to home, Sgt J Land of the Royal Australian Infantry Corps Museum, Singleton, NSW is in the process of restoring and conserving the 1871 Gatling gun in the museum. It was completely repainted in a shade of Brunswick green some 30 years ago. He would like to know what the original colours were. He would also like to have any information about this gun's service in Australia. It has a very low serial number, No 36. Those listed in 'Report of the Military Committee of Inquiry 1901' were four guns in Victoria with numbers 4138-4141 inclusive. Can any member help him with information? (*International Arms and Militaria Collector* Magazine No 19 received May 2000).

Located within the Rookwood Necropolis (the largest cemetery complex in the Southern Hemisphere), the Sydney /War Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing is Australia's largest war cemetery and memorial. This cemetery has the only Stone of Remembrance in an Australian War Cemetery. It contains 734 war graves and the Memorial to the Missing honours 751 dead. A further 199 names of men and women of the Armed Forces whose remains were cremated appear on the Cremation Memorial. In all, the Office of Australian War Graves maintains 11,416 war graves. Of these, approximately half are in war cemeteries and the remainder is distributed among some 900 civil cemeteries throughout the nation. There are also memorials to 1032 missing personnel. The German

military cemetery at Tatura, Victoria and the Japanese War Cemetery contain, respectively, the graves of 250 and 523 war dead of our one-time adversaries. (*War Cemeteries within Australia,* Brochure issued by the Office of Australian War Graves, June 1998).

Congratulation to our Victorian Branch member, Anthony McAleer for finalising and publishing the incomplete work 'My Boys' of Mrs Aeneas Gunn (author of 'We of the Never Never'). Anthony's work on her now-published record of the service personnel from the Monbulk area of Victoria is a valuable contribution to Australian history in general and military history in particular. (*Despatches*, Quarterly Newsletter of the Victorian Branch, No 3, June 2000).

The Victorian Branch Newsletter also draws our attention to an important date in 2001. The Australian War Memorial Field Day and Open Night will be conducted on the weekend closest to Australia Day 2001. The focus will be on a century of Australian military history from the Boer War (stretched to include the Sudan Campaign) to the modern day and will involve reenactment groups, static and moving displays.

Want to know about Imperial Honours and Awards to Australians from 1901 to the present day? Try www.itsanhonour.gov.au *(Despatches, June 2000).*

The Society of Australian Genealogists recently obtained three volumes of the series 'Index to news items, obituaries and photographs of World War II Tasmanian Servicemen and women published in the Launceston (Tasmania) newspaper 'The Examiner''. This index covers the period 23 September 1939 to 30 June 1943. The compiler, Mrs Wendy Knolle, has continued to index the items in this paper to 31 December 1945, but has been unable to publish the later work. It is deposited with the State Library of Tasmania (Reference Section). The earlier three volumes are available at the SAG Library, 24 Kent St, Sydney, NSW. *(Descent,* Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists, June 2000).

I mentioned earlier the Society of Australian Genealogists Library in Sydney. Recently lodged and accessioned at the headquarters at Rumsey Hall, 24 Kent St, Sydney are 'Regimental Indexes 1806, volume 4: 5th, 6th and 7th Regiments of Foot, 1st & 2nd Battalions' on microfiche. (*Descent,* June 2000).

The Cape Barren Island War Memorial, erected in 1937, was rededicated on Anzac Day 2000, honouring the service of the island's Aboriginal veterans. The island is at the western end of Bass Strait and the memorial has now been updated to include the names of 27 veterans from WW2 to Vietnam. All names recorded are those of Tasmanian Aboriginal men. Of the then 180 Cape Barren Islanders, 21 volunteered for service in WW1; six gave their lives. (*Vetaffairs,* Department of Veterans' Affairs, June 2000).

Frank Urban of 11 Bellevue Drive, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444 has notified the Society of the publication of his book 'Somme Anzac Digger', a biography of Walter Elkington MC, 20th Bn AIF. The book is available from the author at $A15, including p&p and GST. (*Intrep,* ACT Branch Monthly Newsletter, August 2000).

The George Cross (GC) was instituted on 24 September 1940 at the personal instigation of King George VI, who wished to establish an award to recognise civilian or non-combat gallantry of a level equivalent to a combat award of the VC. To date, 398 awards have been made, 154 as direct awards and the remainder as 'translations', that is previous awards being exchanged for the GC (112 Empire Gallantry Medals, 64 Albert Medals and 68 Edward Medals). The most recent award was to Sergeant S C Guthrie, New Zealand Police, Dunedin on 13 November 1990 (London Gazette 18th February 1992). Eleven awards of the GC have been made to women - 4 direct awards, 3 translations of the EGM and 4 translations of the AM. Three of the four direct awards were posthumous - Ensign Violette Szabo, WTS and SOE (1945); Assistant Section Officer Noor Inayat-Khan, WAAF and SOE (1945) and Miss B J Harrison, Air Stewardess, BOAC (1968). (*Intrep,* ACT Branch Monthly Newsletter, August 2000).

Graham Wilson, our 'serene and indefatigable' Federal and ACT Branch Secretary (the adjectives are taken from the Presidential Citation to 3 RAR for Kapyong - and are *very* difficult to say: **Joe**) has a particular interest in AIF Cyclist Units. He would love to hear from anyone with information on their employment in the First AIF. Contact him c/- PO Box 30 Garran, ACT, 2605 or at his work address: AIO, R7-5, Russell Offices, Canberra, ACT, 2600). (Free plug!).

Which Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the Ypres Salient holds the most number of Australians? Tyne Cot holds the most Australian dead: 1,368, not counting burials listed as 'Known unto God'. As for the cemetery holding the least number of Australians, the honours are shared between Godezonne Farm, Hyde Park Corner, Mont Noir, Ploegsteert Wood and Reninghelst Churchyard Extension, all of which contain a single Australian. The lone Australian buried in Reninghelst Churchyard Extension is Fr Michael Bergin SJ MC, the Irish-born Jesuit priest who served as Catholic Chaplain to the 5th Light Horse on Gallipoli and 13th Brigade on the Western Front. (See Graham Wilson and Joe Crumlin's article 'Trooper Bergin SJ' for more detail on the fascinating story of this Trooper/Chaplain 4th Class. *Sabretache,* October-December 1997,p3: **Joe.**) (*Intrep,* ACT Branch Monthly Newsletter, August 2000).

WA Branch member Ian Gill is seeking assistance for a book he is writing on all members of the 11th Bn First AIF who were decorated (from VC to MID). Can anyone help with letters, photos, diaries, unit or personal records, or references to publications? Contact Ian via the WA Branch Secretary (address on second-last page of *Sabretache).*

Any member with information on VX38315 Private T W Curry, 1st AA BDGE Coy (sic) AASC, 2nd AIF? Les May of 20 Chamberlain Ave, Clarence Gardens, South Australia, 5039 has his Australian Soldier's Pocket Book and is looking for the owner or interested relatives. Ring (08) 8297 5982 (*Vetaffairs,* June 2000).

Les Mcfadzen of 6 Ackworth Place, Alexandra Hills, Queensland, 4161 is looking for information on the 4th Queensland Contingent Imperial Bushmen; also on the disbanded African Veterans Association and their involvement in the Boer War. Call Les on (07) 3824 0825 (*Vetaffairs,* June 2000).

And one for our Navel (Naval)-oriented members. National Archives has a comprehensive guide 'Cockatoo Island Dockyard: A Guide to the Records'. It describes the records in the Archives collection documenting the dockyard's history, facilities, ships, aircraft and fast boats. It also covers docking and launching records, administrative records, photographs and lots of design and engineering information. $10 (plus postage and now possibly plus GST) from Archives by phoning (02) 6212 3609 or through any Archives office. (*Memento,* Bulletin of National Archives of Australia, May 2000).

In *Water Cart* of June 2000, I mentioned R F Hadlow's interest in variants of the Australian GS horse-drawn wagon. Mr W A Palmer of Wandin North, Victoria has now written to *Vetaffairs* to say that he believes he was the only wheelwright to serve in WW2 in the SW Pacific. He was a member of 1st Australian Pack Transport Company, made up of horsemen from every State and was responsible for servicing the unit's horse-drawn vehicles. Among these was a square box-type wagon with two wheels. Two horses drew it, one ridden. A second wagon could be hooked on behind the first one. The unit's main task was to use packhorses to carry all sorts of goods mainly around the Kokoda Track area. (*Vetaffairs*, June 2000).

From the *Newsletter* of the Queensland Branch for May-June 2000 comes news of a publication by Branch member Mr Dave Radford. He has recorded his pre-WW2 and WW2 service for posterity in 'The 9th Bn, AMF (The Moreton Regiment) in WW2: The Memories of an 'Original' 1939 to 1945'. Dave fought at Milne Bay as 2IC of C Company 9th Bn and was Company Commander of B Company on Bougainville. Copies from D Radford, phone (07) 3379 2603.

MHSA Branch Office Bearers

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	Padbury WA 6025	
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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.

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Elizabeth Topperwien
Editor

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