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Military Historical Society of Australia
PO Box 5030, Garran, ACT 2605.
email: webmaster@mhsa.org.au



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THE ORGANISATION OF THE IMPERIAL CAMEL BRIGADE, 1916-1918

Colonel Jim Underwood (Retd)

The 1st Brigade, Imperial Camel Corps – more commonly known as the Imperial Camel Brigade – was raised on 13 December 1916 under the command of Brigadier General Clement Leslie Smith VC MC¹. The Brigade concentrated at Mazar on the north coast of the Sinai Peninsula on 19 December, and on the following day advanced to El Arish where it was attached to the Anzac Mounted Division. The Imperial Camel Brigade had its baptism of fire as a brigade formation at the Battle of Magdhaba on 23 December 1916 – only four days after being concentrated and 10 days after being raised.²

While the actions of the Imperial Camel Brigade are referred to in official and private accounts of the Sinai and Palestine campaigns, little has been published on its structure. The aim of this paper is to examine the Brigade organisation as it evolved over the period from its raising in December 1916 until its disbandment in June 1918. Part 1 of the paper records the organisational changes that took place in the Brigade during its existence. Part 2 which will appear in the March 2004 *Sabretache* will take a closer look at the establishments of the units that formed the Brigade.

PART 1

Brigade Organisation – December 1916

The initial organisation of the Brigade was:³

Brigade Headquarters

1st (Anzac) Camel Battalion

2nd (Imperial) Camel Battalion

3rd (Anzac) Camel Battalion

No.1 Mountain Battery, Hong Kong & Singapore, Royal Garrison Artillery

26th (Camel) Machine Gun Squadron, Machine Gun Corps

Section, 2/1st (Cheshire) Field Company, Royal Engineers (TF)

Signal Section, Royal Engineers

¹ Australian War Memorial – AWM4 Item 11/12/1 – War Diary Headquarters Imperial Camel Brigade 13 December 1916. The dates of specific events in some published accounts of the Imperial Camel Corps are at variance with the dates used in this paper (and with one another). Where possible, dates used in the paper are taken from contemporary Official Records.

² Australian War Memorial – AWM224 Item MSS42 – Imperial Camel Brigade – Short History compiled by Captain R Hall in 1919, p. 1. Captain Hall was the Staff Captain on Headquarters, Imperial Camel Brigade when the Brigade was disbanded in July 1918. He also wrote a book on his experience in the Imperial Camel Corps: *The Desert Hath Pearls*, Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1975.

³ Australian War Memorial – AWM4 Items 11/12/1 and 11/12/2 – War Diary Headquarters Imperial Camel Brigade December 1916 and January 1917.



Temp/Brig-General Clement Leslie Smith VC MC
General Office Commanding 1st Brigade, Imperial Camel Corps
(AWM B00191)

Wireless Section, Royal Engineers

Section, 1/1st Welsh Field Ambulance (TF)

Detachment, Army Service Corps

Detachment, Camel Transport Corps⁴

Detachment, Egyptian Labour Corps

The two Territorial Force (TF) units were on loan from the 53rd (Welsh) Infantry Division (TF) which was then garrisoning the Suez Canal Defences. The detachments from the Army Service Corps, the Camel Transport Corps and the Egyptian Labour Corps were ad hoc units for which there were no proper establishments.

The strength of the Brigade was approximately 2,800. It was capable of putting into the firing line, after providing "camel holders": 1,800 rifles, 36 Lewis light machine guns, eight Maxim medium machine guns and six 10 pounder pack mountain guns.⁵

Raising of Independent Camel Companies - 1916

The main combat elements of the Brigade – the Camel Battalions – were formed from the independent Camel Companies that had been raised from January 1916 onwards to combat the pro-Turkish Senussi tribesmen who were threatening the Nile Valley from the Libyan Desert. During its existence, the Imperial Camel Corps raised 18 Camel Companies – 10 Australian, six British and two New Zealand.

The first four Camel Companies, filled by Australian infantrymen from the First and Second Divisions, Australian Imperial Force (AIF), marched into the British Army's Camel Corps School at Abbassia near Cairo in the last week of January 1916. All four Companies were in the field on operations against the Senussi before the end of March 1916.⁶ Also in January 1916, the permanent staff of the former Camel Corps School were absorbed into a new Headquarters, Imperial Camel Corps under command of Major C L Smith VC MC.⁷

In March 1916, it was decided to increase the Camel Corps by six Companies with personnel drawn from various British Territorial Infantry and Yeomanry units then in Egypt. In June, approval was given for five additional Companies. The personnel for the four additional Australian Companies were provided from the Anzac Mounted Division and Light Horse reinforcements in Egypt. The fifth Company was raised from the New Zealand Mounted Rifles. Subsequently, in the first half of 1917 two more Australian Companies and a further New Zealand Company were raised from the same sources.

Provisional Camel Battalion

In late July 1916, as part of the British preparations for the forthcoming Battle of Romani, four Camel Companies that had been operating in the Western Desert of Egypt against the Senussi threat, were formed into a provisional Camel Battalion for operations east of the Suez Canal. This provisional Battalion formed part of now Lieutenant Colonel C L Smith's "Mobile

⁴ Attached to the Brigade as a temporary smallarms Ammunition Column. It consisted of 59 camels and 23 Egyptian drivers. Australian War Memorial – AWM4 Item 11/12/2 – *War Diary Headquarters Imperial Camel Brigade January 1917*.

⁵ Hall, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

⁶ Australian War Memorial – AWM45 Item 12/36 PART 1 – *Report on Organisation and Formation of the Imperial Camel Corps, 1916* dated 31 December 1916.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Column" which operated on the extreme right flank of the British advance eastwards after the Battle of Romani (4-5 August 1916). The Column was engaged in several clashes with the Turkish left flank guard as it tried to envelop the open desert flank of the withdrawing Turkish force. The main combat elements of the "Mobile Column" were the 11th Australian Light Horse Regiment, the City of London Yeomanry (Rough Riders) and the provisional Camel Battalion.⁸ During these operations the Camel Battalion consisted of three British Companies and one Australian Company.

An ever-changing provisional Camel Battalion saw action during the early months of the British advance from Romani to El Arish. Imperial Camel Corps operations included participation in the raid on Mazar (15-17 September 1916), the attack on Maghara (13-15 October 1916) and wide-ranging patrols in the Sinai Desert on the southern flank of the British advance towards Palestine.



Brig-General Smith VC MC tells his officers that the imperial Camel Corps is to be disbanded and reformed as Light Horse. Left to Right Maj Stocker, Brigade Major, Brig-General Smith VC MC, GOC, Lt Rex Hall ADC to the GOC, Colonel Langley CO 1st (Anzac) Camel Battalion (AWM J06063)

⁸ *Sir Archibald Murray's Despatches (June 1916-June 1917) – Second Despatch*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1920; pp.60-61.

Raising of Regular Camel Battalions

In September 1916, approval was given to form regular Camel Battalions and most of the independent Companies were redeployed from the Western Desert to the Sinai to man these units. The 1st Battalion was raised on 9 September; the 2nd Battalion on 4 November and the 3rd Battalion in early December. Although the Imperial Camel Brigade was formally established on 13 December 1916, the allocation of Companies to Battalions remained flexible for some months. This may be illustrated by reference to the changing composition of the 1st Camel Battalion in Table 1 below.

Table 1. CHANGING COMPOSITION OF THE 1st CAMEL BATTALION

Aug 1916	-	Provisional Camel Battalion – Smith’s Mobile Column
		No.4 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.5 Camel Company (British)
		No.9 Camel Company (British)
		No.10 Camel Company (British)
09 Sep 1916	-	1st Camel Battalion formed
		No.4 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.5 Camel Company (British)
		No.6 Camel Company (British)
		No.7 Camel Company (British)
13 Dec 1916	-	Formation of the Imperial Camel Brigade
		No.3 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.4 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.7 Camel Company (British)
		No.12 Camel Company (Australian)
26 Dec 1916	-	After Battle of Magdhaba
		No.1 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.3 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.4 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.15 Camel Company (New Zealand)
Late Mar 1917-		Final Organisation – After First Battle of Gaza
		No.1 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.2 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.3 Camel Company (Australian)
		No.4 Camel Company (Australian)

Brigade Augmentation

In the first half of 1917, the Imperial Camel Brigade took on a more formal structure and the ad hoc and “on loan” units initially included in the formation were replaced by units with authorised establishments.

In January 1917, the 1/1st Scottish Horse Mounted Field Ambulance replaced the section of the 1/1st Welsh Field Ambulance that was on loan from the 53rd (Welsh) Infantry Division. This was an improvement in medical support to the Imperial Camel Brigade. The Welsh Field Ambulance was an Infantry Division Field Ambulance and its stretcher bearers were not mounted. Furthermore, only one section of the Welsh Field Ambulance had been allotted to the Brigade. This had proved inadequate during the attack on Maghaba when the Brigade had suffered 27 wounded. The Scottish Horse Field Ambulance was at least a mounted unit; but its organisation was designed to support a Cavalry Brigade of about 2,000 personnel not a Camel Infantry Brigade of some 3,000 personnel capable of operating away from established lines of communication.

In February 1917, the Imperial Camel Corps Mobile Veterinary Section joined the Brigade. This was a purpose designed veterinary section catering for sick, injured and wounded camels. Prior to its arrival, veterinary support in the Brigade was very basic consisting of a single Veterinary Sergeant in each Camel Company.

In March 1917, the 10th Field Troop, Royal Engineers replaced the section of the 2/1st (Cheshire) Field Company on loan from the 53rd (Welsh) Division. This, too, was a significant enhancement. The section of Cheshire engineers had been drawn from an Infantry Division and it lacked the mobility to support the Camel Brigade. The 10th Field Troop was specifically raised and equipped to support the Imperial Camel Brigade. Importantly, the new Troop had a significant capacity to develop water supplies; a capability lacking in the Cheshire's section.

In May 1917, the newly raised 4th (Anzac) Camel Battalion joined the Brigade. From this time onwards, it was usual for three Camel Battalions to operate forward with the Brigade while the fourth Battalion was rested in the Suez Canal Defences. At the same time, four of the six British Camel Companies formed the 2nd (Imperial) Camel Battalion while two Companies were rested or patrolled in the Western Desert where the restless Senussi remained a dormant threat.

Also in the first half of 1917, the ad hoc administrative detachments were replaced by properly established units raised specifically to support the Imperial Camel Brigade. The Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Train replaced the Army Service Corps detachment. The Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Ammunition Column replaced the temporary Ammunition Column provided by the Camel Transport Corps. The Imperial Camel Brigade Signal Section replaced the wireless and cable sections at Brigade Headquarters. The Imperial Camel Brigade Ordnance Section was also formed. At the same time there were significant changes to No.1 Mountain Battery and the 26th Machine Gun Squadron.

No.1 Mountain Battery, Hong Kong & Singapore, Royal Garrison Artillery. This Battery was manned by British and Indian officers and Sikh and Indian Muslim other ranks. The other ranks were recruited in Hong Kong and Singapore mainly from ex-Indian Army regulars residing in these two colonies. Despite its title, there were no Chinese in the unit. The Battery was equipped with horses and mules when it fought in the Western Desert against the Senussi in the first half of 1916; but in June 1916 it was converted to camel transport. It was initially equipped with six 10-pounder BL pack mountain guns. This gun had been introduced into the British inventory in 1901 but it was obsolete by European standards. It used an old-fashioned three-piece breech mechanism. There was no recoil system. The gun leaped and bucked when it fired. It was even known to topple over when fired on uneven ground. The gun's calibre was 2.75 inches and the standard projectile weighed 10 pounds. Its maximum range was 6,000 yards with percussion or 3,700 yards with time fuse. In early 1917, the Battery was re-equipped

with an improved gun – the Ordnance BL Mark I calibre 2.75 inches. This new gun had a maximum range of 5,600 yards for shrapnel and 5,800 yards for high explosive. Two of the older 10-pounder mountain guns were retained as rudimentary anti-aircraft guns although the gun detachments relied on the expediency of throwing their greatcoats over the guns to camouflage them from prying German aircraft.⁹ No camouflage nets were provided.

With the limited range of its guns, the Battery had to fight from a position well forward in both attack and defence. Its personnel were highly regarded for their bravery in action and professionalism. Within the Brigade, the Battery was affectionately known as the “Bing Boys” on account of the high pitched plaintive noise made by the discharge of the mountain gun.

26th (Camel) Machine Gun Squadron. The history of the Machine Gun Squadron is somewhat obscure. No unit War Diaries have been located in Australia or the United Kingdom. There are also discrepancies between various published works and official records regarding the title of the Brigade’s machine gun unit and its parent unit. During its existence this unit apparently underwent a number of name changes. The Brigade machine gun unit appears to have been established initially in Egypt as the 26th (Scottish Horse) Squadron, Machine Gun Corps in October 1916. The parent unit was the 1/3rd Scottish Horse – a Yeomanry regiment that had fought dismounted at Gallipoli as part of the 2nd Mounted Division. After the evacuation of Gallipoli, the Regiment was sent to Egypt where it became part of the 1st Dismounted Brigade.¹⁰

Whether the Scottish Horse machine gun unit was originally a horsed unit or camel mounted has not been determined. No record has been located of the unit undertaking camel training at Abbassia in October 1916 or at any other time. However, the 26th (Camel) Machine Gun Squadron was on the Imperial Camel Brigade’s order of battle when it was raised in December 1916. To add another wrinkle to the problem, the history of the New Zealand Camel Companies - *With the Cameliers in Palestine* by John Robertson - states that the 26th (Camel) Machine Gun Squadron was formed from the machine gun sections of three Scottish Yeomanry regiments that had fought at Gallipoli – the Scottish Horse plus the Lanarkshire Yeomanry and the Ayrshire Yeomanry.¹¹

Initially, the 26th Machine Gun Squadron was armed with eight Maxim machine guns that had apparently seen hard service at Gallipoli. (The normal allotment of guns to a machine gun squadron was 12 guns.) In the first quarter of 1917, the Machine Gun Squadron was re-equipped with eight Vickers medium machine guns and about the same time the unit was re-titled the 265th Machine Gun Company. In some contemporary documents the unit is also referred to simply as the Imperial Camel Brigade Machine Gun Company.¹²

Australian Camel Field Ambulance. When the Imperial Camel Brigade was raised in December 1916, Headquarters Egyptian Expeditionary Force approached the Australian Government, through AIF headquarters in Egypt, to provide the personnel for a camel-mounted Field Ambulance to support the Brigade.¹³ The Australian Government approved the request

⁹ *Order of Battle of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force*, 26 July 1917, p. 7.

¹⁰ Correspondence with the Machine Gun Corps Old Comrades Association, United Kingdom, 22 February 2002.

¹¹ John Robertson, *With the Cameliers in Palestine*, Dunedin, NZ: A H & A W Reed, 1938; p. 26. On page 25 there is a photograph of the Scottish machine gunners on parade with their camels.

¹² For example, see *Australian Imperial Force Order No 874* dated 27 September 1917.

¹³ Colonel R M Downes, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the World War of 1914-1918*, Volume 1 Part II *The Campaign in Sinai and Palestine*, Melbourne: Australian War Memorial, 1930, p. 269 and National Archives of Australia – A11803/1 Item 1817/89/151.

but advised that it would be several months before the unit became operational. It was agreed that the officers and senior NCOs would be drawn from Australian medical units then serving in Egypt; while the bulk of the other ranks personnel would be sent to Egypt after completing their initial military and medical training in Australia. The officers and NCOs would join the Australian contingent when it arrived in Egypt. Until the Australian Camel Field Ambulance became operational, medical support was provided by the two British Army Territorial Force units indicated above – the 1/1st Welsh Field Ambulance and later the 1/1st Scottish Horse Mounted Field Ambulance.

Meanwhile in Australia, in late January 1917, 93 other ranks commenced their military and medical training at Seymour, Victoria. This contingent departed Australia on 10 May 1917 on HMAT *Boorara* and arrived in Egypt on 19 June. Here they were joined by six officers, one warrant officer and 13 senior NCOs. The Ambulance commenced camel training on 29 July 1917 and this was completed within three weeks. On 18 August, the unit entrained at Cairo and moved to the Palestine front that was then facing the Turkish Gaza-Beersheba defensive line. On 20 August 1917, the Australian Camel Field Ambulance replaced the 1/1st Scottish Horse Mounted Field Ambulance in the Imperial Camel Brigade. However, for a period, 30 members of the Scottish Horse Field Ambulance remained attached to the Camel Field Ambulance as the Australian establishment did not initially include the necessary drivers and artificers – saddler, farrier, wheelwright – to man the wheeled vehicles issued to the Ambulance. The original Australian concept was that the whole Ambulance would rely solely on camels for transport and medical evacuation. With the advance of the British force into southern Palestine, the terrain proved more suitable for the use of wheeled vehicles and those held by the Scottish Horse Field Ambulance were taken over and retained by the Australian Camel Field Ambulance.

97th Australian Dental Unit. This unit, consisting of one officer, two sergeants and one private, was attached to the Australian Camel Field Ambulance from 1 September 1917. Prior to the attachment of this dental unit, there had been no dental support in the Imperial Camel Brigade since its raising in December 1916. The only dental equipment carried in the Brigade was a set of forceps carried by the Battalion and Field Ambulance medical officers. Extractions were done without any local or general anaesthetic. Considerable dental work was required prior to the third Battle of Gaza to make the Brigade dentally fit.¹⁴ (It is interesting to note that dentures were only provided if the soldier had insufficient teeth to masticate the Army ration.)

Brigade Organisation – December 1917

By the end of 1917 the order of battle of the Imperial Camel Brigade had settled down into the organisation that it was to retain until its disbandment in June 1918:

Brigade Headquarters

1st (Anzac) Camel Battalion

2nd (Imperial) Camel Battalion

3rd (Anzac) Camel Battalion

4th (Anzac) Camel Battalion

No.1 Mountain Battery, Hong Kong & Singapore, Royal Artillery

¹⁴ Australian War Memorial – AWM224 MSS279: *Australian Camel Field Ambulance*. Narrative by Major G S Shipway dated 26 May 1919.

265th Machine Gun Company, Machine Gun Corps
10th (Camel) Field Troop, Royal Engineers
Brigade Signal Section, Royal Engineers
Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Train
Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Ammunition Column
Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Ordnance Section
Australian Camel Field Ambulance
97th Australian Dental Unit
Imperial Camel Corps Mobile Veterinary Section



Surafend, Palestine July 1918. The mock burial of the 1st Battalion, Imperial Camel Corps after the announcement that the unit would be disbanded and reformed as the 14th Australian Light Horse. The men are walking behind a camel saddle on a stretcher draped with the Union Jack. The two front ranks and solemnly presenting arms. (AWM J05703)

Disbandment of the Imperial Camel Brigade

By mid-1918 the British advance into Palestine had moved into country which was increasingly unsuitable for camel operations. The rugged nature of the Judean Hills and the cold, wet winter of 1917-1918 caused an excessive number of camel casualties. In early June, the decision was

made to convert the Australian and New Zealand Camel Companies to horsed units.¹⁵ Personnel from the 1st Camel Battalion were used to form the 14th Australian Light Horse Regiment; while the 3rd Camel Battalion formed the 15th Australian Light Horse Regiment. These two Regiments, together with a French colonial cavalry regiment – *Regiment Mixte de Marche de Cavalerie* – formed the main combat units of the newly raised 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade. (The French cavalry regiment consisted of North African troops – two squadrons of *Spahis* and two squadrons of *Chasseurs d'Afrique*.)

The two New Zealand Camel Companies were used to raise the 2nd New Zealand Machine Gun Squadron that supported the 5th Light Horse Brigade.¹⁶ At the same time, the Australian Camel Field Ambulance was converted to a mounted brigade field ambulance and re-titled 5th Australian Light Horse Field Ambulance, also supporting the 5th Light Horse Brigade. Personnel from the 4th Camel Battalion were used to bolster the number of troops in the 14th and 15th Light Horse Regiments as a number of personnel in the 1st and 3rd Camel Battalions returned to their original units.

The six British Camel Companies were retained until 1919; mainly for patrolling the lines of communication and the Sinai Desert. The last two British Companies were not disbanded until June 1919 but personnel strengths were progressively run down. There was one last hurrah for the Imperial Camel Corps. No.7 and No.10 (British) Camel Companies were detached to the Hejaz from July to September 1918 to assist Colonel T E Lawrence and his Arab army in its attacks against the Damascus-Medina railway east of Aqaba. The majority of the camels of the Imperial Camel Corps also found their way to the Hejaz. Some 2,000 riding camels and 1,000 baggage camels were transferred to Lawrence for use by his Arab army in its advance to Damascus.

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Members Wants

Syd Wigzell, 17 Royal Street, Alexandra Hills, Qld 4161 is seeking the following publications:

- Major C H B Pridham, *Superiority of Fire*, published 1945 probably in London
- Australian military pamphlet on the rifle (SMLE) published in 1946 and containing a forward or introduction by General Sir Thomas Blamey.

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¹⁵ Australian War Memorial – AWM25 Item 157/1 – *Headquarters Imperial Camel Brigade Preliminary Instruction dated 10 June 1918 and Headquarters Imperial Camel Brigade Re-organisation Order No1 dated 16 June 1918.*

¹⁶ Major J H Luxford, *With the Machine Gunners in France and Palestine. The Official History of the New Zealand Machine Gun Corps in the Great World War 1914-1918*, Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, 1923, p. 225.



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The Northern Territory's first Long Service Medal

Paul A Rosenzweig¹

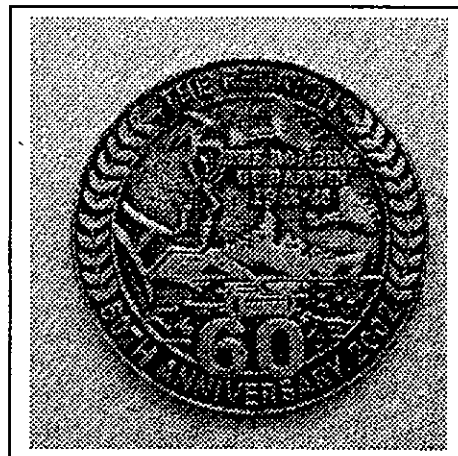
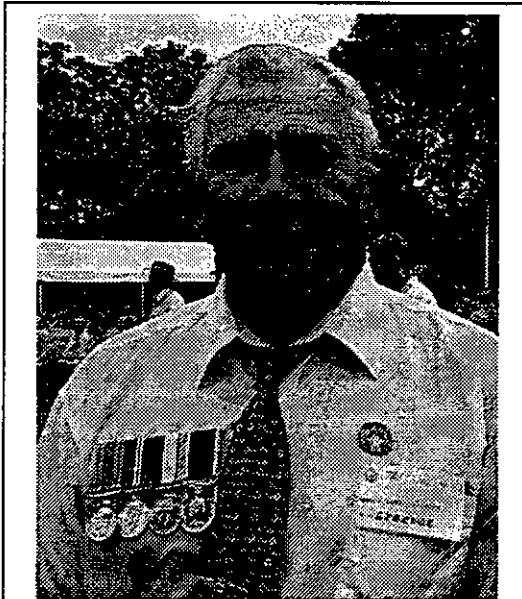
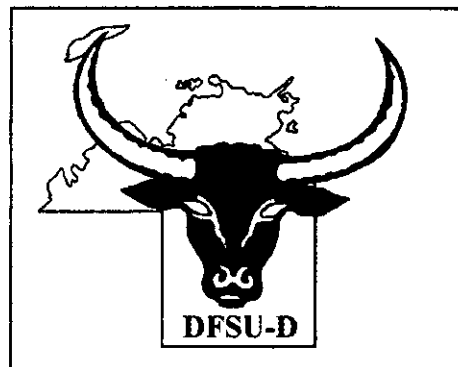
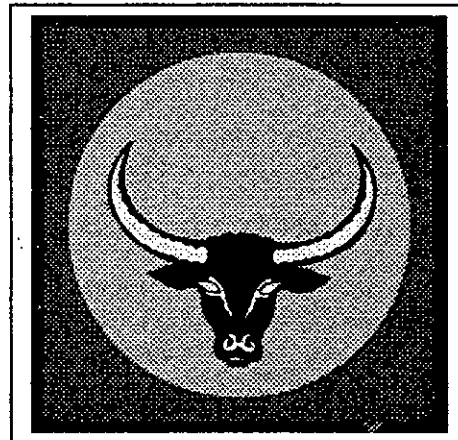
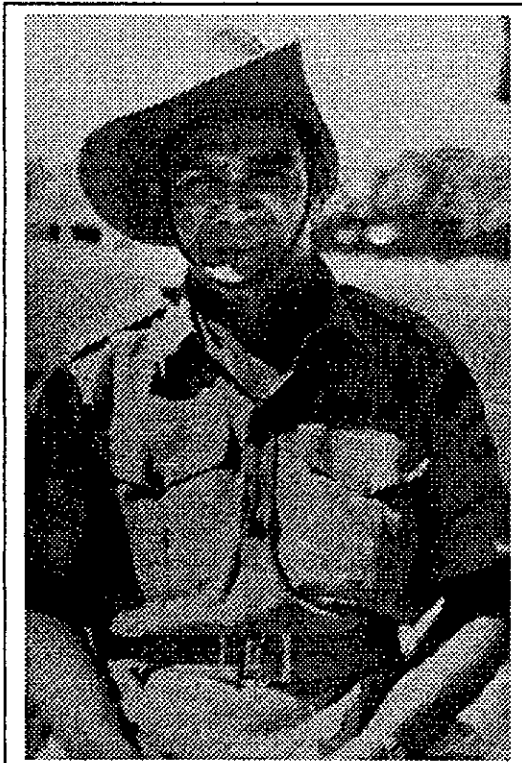
Dick Butler was a prominent Northern Territory sportsman and was, for some 18 years, Head Gardener at Government House in Darwin. His life encompassed almost every aspect of Top End history, from Kahlin Compound to the Bombing of Darwin and Cyclone Tracy. In addition, he was a soldier for 23 years, with the unique distinction of being the first to earn the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for service performed solely in the Northern Territory.

Dick Butler was born in Katherine in 1908 to a Wugularri/Jawoyn Aboriginal and a European father, George Butler. With his two brothers, Ta-Digin and Merengbet, like so many of their era, Dick was taken away and brought to Darwin as a baby to be raised in Kahlin Compound. As a young lad, he was fortunate enough to secure the position of 'horse-boy', grooming and watering the horses of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, in their stables which stood where the Darwin Hospital was later established. He was then houseboy for the Government Secretary, Colonel Charles Barnett-Storey, while he subsequently worked as a bucket-boy on the Katherine-Larrimah extension of the railway line. Like the noted Charlie Talbot, Butler was also a capable boxer and trainer, and an established lightweight champion in his own right, and was particularly renowned for his performance in an illegal bare-fisted 'grudge' fight against Timmy Angeles in the Darwin Botanic Gardens in 1929, in the area where the rock pond is today, although they remained good friends for the rest of their lives.

At Christ Church Cathedral on 1 July 1931, Dick married Louisa Fanny Spain, daughter of Anastasio Petro Spain and his wife Fanny (nee Chapman). Louisa was a niece of Catalino Spain, an employee of the Commonwealth Railways who worked at the Darwin wharf. On 19 February 1942, he was one of the labourers of No.3 Gang attending to the passenger ship MV *Neptuna*, a vessel of 6,000 tonnes loaded with explosives and depth charges, and was killed during the first Japanese bombing raid on Darwin on that morning.

Keen to defend his country, Dick Butler enlisted in 1939 and served as a Gunner in the Darwin Mobile Force (DMF), serving with a number of others from the Northern Territory of Aboriginal descent including Willy McClennen, Samuel ('Smiler') Fejo, Juma ('Jim') Fejo, Stewart Kurnoth, Bill Muir and Victor Williams. Raised in Liverpool, NSW in November 1938, the Darwin Mobile Force had arrived in Darwin on 28 March 1939, establishing itself in the disused Vestey's Meatworks overlooking the harbour. It comprised artillerymen tasked with providing mobile protection for the Headquarters of the Army in the Northern Territory, known then as the 7th Military District, which was established as an independent command in October 1939 (the military presence in Darwin had until that time been administered by the headquarters of the 1st Military District in Brisbane). The DMF gunners were armed with 18-pounders, 3-inch mortars and medium machine-guns, and there was also a rifle group giving

¹ Paul Rosenzweig was Aide to the Administrator of the Northern Territory, 1991-97, and Executive Officer of Wildlife Management International Pty Ltd, 1997-99. He has a Master of Arts in Southeast Asian Studies, and is a member of the Military Historical Society of Australia, the Naval Historical Society of Australia, and the Historical Society of the Northern Territory. He has published three books on military history and biography - most recently, the regimental history of the North West Mobile Force, *Ever Vigilant*.



Top: Gunner Dick Butler (*circa* 1950s) wearing the insignia of Northern Territory Command on his shoulders.

Bottom: Lionel Butler at the Darwin evacuees' reunion, 19 February 2002, wearing a replica set of his father's medals and the 60th anniversary commemorative badge.

Top: Vehicle sign of Northern Territory Command/7th Military District, featuring the buffalo head insignia.

Middle: Logo of DFSU-D.

Bottom: Commemorative badge for the Bombing of Darwin 60th anniversary, 19 February 2002.

the unit a surveillance capability, with the additional responsible for guarding the Naval fuel tanks.

This Naval Oil Fuel Installation was a strategic asset which had been a long time in coming to Darwin. In 1891, an Imperial Defence Commission had recommended that a naval coaling facility be located in Palmerston, as Darwin was then known, to help counter the perceived threat from Russia but this facility was instead sited at Thursday Island². After the Northern Territory came under Commonwealth control in 1911, the Fisher Government brought Admiral Sir Reginald Henderson to Australia, who again recommended that a naval base be established in Port Darwin, as did Lord Jellicoe in 1919, but this Far Eastern base was instead established at Singapore. Darwin was identified to be a supporting base, and with Australian and imperial navies converting from coal to oil fuel, Vice-Admiral Sir William Clarkson RAN proposed that oil storage tanks be built in Darwin. Over a five-year period, nine tanks (each of 8,000 tons capacity) were built – the first six were completed by 1934, and the remainder by 1941 (capable of holding a total of 62,401 tons of oil). To defend these above-ground storage tanks were coastal guns and the small military garrison of the DMF.

Under the command of Captain Francis, Dick Butler's band of Aboriginal coastwatchers were based at Peewee Camp at East Point and called themselves 'the Australian Black Watch'. The 'Black Watch' comprised members of mixed racial backgrounds, their common bond being their dark skin colour, from which they drew their title³. The DMF was reorganised in September 1940 and renamed the Darwin Infantry Battalion, although in November 1941 this was absorbed into the 19th Battalion which was given AIF status. Butler was on duty at the Naval Oil Fuel Installation and narrowly missed death at the time of the first Japanese raid, and was witness to all subsequent raids. In addition to the Defence, War and Australian Service Medals, the battalion's members were also eligible for the Returned From Active Service badge even though many, like Dick Butler, had only served within Australia.

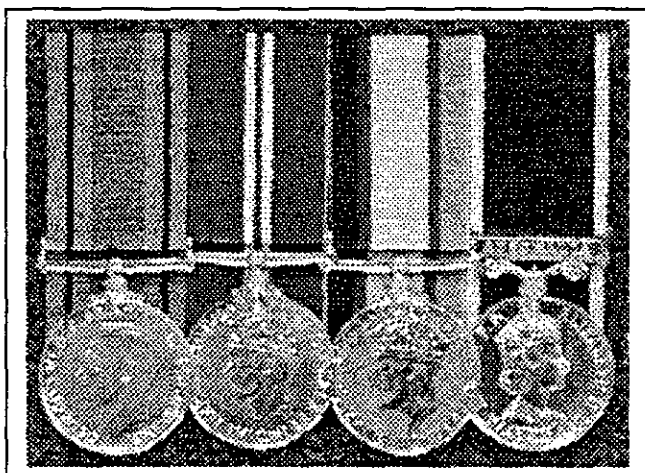
On 12 December 1941, the Northern Territory Administrator had received a cipher message from the Prime Minister's Department informing him that Cabinet had approved the immediate evacuation of women and children from Darwin. The cipher also advised that the Army and Navy would give all possible assistance. Four days later the first party of women and children were evacuated. Butler's wife Louisa and their four children, plus Louisa's mother Fanny Spain, were amongst the many who were evacuated from Darwin over the ensuing weeks. It was not until June 1948 that they returned to the Top End, living in a 'Sidney Williams' house at Salonika, where Dick Butler ran a boxing camp, training such locals as Reggie McLennan, Jimmy Fejo, Fred Bush, Ponyo Cubillo and William Clarke, later a heavyweight champion of the Northern Territory.

After the war, Butler applied and was accepted for service in the Permanent Military Forces, and he continued to serve in Darwin with Northern Territory Command with the rank of Gunner until 1961. During World War 2, the 7th Military District had been replaced by Northern Territory Force (1942-46), which had assumed responsibility for the area from the Kimberley to Mount Isa, and that part of the Northern Territory north of Alice Springs. The 7th Military District was again established in the Northern Territory in 1946 but during the 1950s and 1960s it was redesignated Northern Territory Command.

² *The Northern Territory Times and Government Gazette*, 24 July 1891.

³ It was not comprised solely of Larrakia Aboriginals, as is suggested by the commemorative plaque in Darwin's Smith Street Mall.

During this time, when Army formation insignia were worn on the uniform, the insignia of Northern Territory Command was a black buffalo head, within a yellow circle on a green square. For decades, the water buffalo has been the emblem of the Northern Territory – symbolising the Territory's remoteness, rugged independence and traditional links with the Asian region. The stylised buffalo head is to be found throughout the heraldry, iconography and marketing symbology of Darwin and the Northern Territory, from business logos to official crests. The traditional 'Darwin Stubby', for example, had a buffalo head in relief as an intrinsic part of the bottle. The Northern Territory Command shoulder patch was worn on the upper sleeve of each shoulder, and can clearly be seen in a contemporary photograph of Gunner Dick Butler. By 1961, Dick Butler had attained the distinction of being the first soldier to earn the Australian Regular Army Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for service completely within the 7th Military District.



The medals of Gunner Dick Butler (1908-1987)

On taking discharge from the Army in 1961, Dick Butler was employed by Parks and Gardens, succeeding Charlie Talbot as Head Gardener at Government House in Darwin. He first worked for the Honourable Roger Nott, 8th Administrator of the NT, a shearer turned farmer and grazier and then ALP Member for Liverpool Plains in the NSW Legislative Assembly (1941-61). Butler had two busy years in the gardens, as he prepared for the visit by Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, who visited Darwin in March 1963 - the first visit to the Northern Territory by a reigning monarch. Butler's gardens provided the perfect backdrop to a Royal dinner party hosted by His Honour the Administrator and Mrs Nott on 17 March, with two bands in attendance, the Pacific Islands Regiment Band and the Royal Papuan and New Guinea Constabulary Band.

One of Butler's tasks during his early years at Government House, which had been carried out by gardeners for decades gone by, was the ritual watering of the drive-ways and carriage-loop to keep the dust down. While most of Darwin's dusty streets had been sealed between 1938 and 1941, the Government House carriage-loop and driveway were not sealed over with bitumen until the late 1960s. Dick Butler is readily recalled for his impromptu performances with the mouth organ, particularly during corroborees held in the Botanic Gardens.

After nearly eighteen years as Head Gardener at Government House, Dick Butler finally retired in 1978. At this time the Administrator was Mr John England ED CMG, who had seen military service as a volunteer citizen-soldier with the Australian Garrison Artillery (1929-34), 15 LHR (1935) and 6 LHR (1934 and 1936-41), and the AMF from 23 June 1941 (1st Anti-Aircraft Brigade, and commanding the 110th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment from 2 February 1942). England was particularly noted however, for his command of the 52nd and then the 2/3rd Composite Anti-

Aircraft Regiments in Dutch New Guinea and on Borneo, in which capacity he was Commander North East Borneo Force in October 1945, overseeing 'Sandakan Force', one of five forces accepting the surrender of the Japanese in northern Borneo. In recognition of Dick Butler's long service at Government House, His Honour the Administrator and Mrs England hosted a party to mark his retirement, and he received gifts from both the Administrator and his Parks and Gardens colleagues. He was later invited back as a guest at the official reception held annually to commemorate The Queen's Birthday.

Dick Butler died in Darwin on 24 August 1987. He had come to be so well respected while he was Head Gardener that, on the morning of 28 August, his funeral cortege detoured *en route* to Darwin General Cemetery in Jingili and the hearse was driven to the gates of Government House. The gardeners and those staff who had known Dick lined up outside the front gate, and the House Manager Mr Jim Farrell placed a wreath on the coffin on behalf of all the staff of Government House. Friends and family were especially pleased at this tribute to a man who had spent so many years, through the terms of five Administrators, maintaining the lush tropical garden in perfect order, which established Government House as a Territory landmark and had led to the award of a Civic Commendation on 30 June 1982.

A Territorian in every sense of the word, Butler had grown up in difficult times made harder by his part-Aboriginality. He struggled through life at Kahlin, the Depression and the 1937 cyclone. His early life certainly toughened him and made him a notable boxer and football player (with Vesteys, later the Buffaloes) while the Government Secretary, a retired Army Colonel, had undoubtedly directed Dick towards a military career. He had suffered personal tragedy at the time of Cyclone Tracy when his wife Louisa was killed, and her name is commemorated on a memorial plaque outside the Darwin City Council offices which was unveiled by The Queen on 26 March 1977 during Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee tour.

Dick Butler was a life member of the NT Football League and Darwin Football Club, and a member of both the RSL and the Royal Australian Artillery Association. He had lived for many years at the old East Point camp and, together with Vic Williams, was one of the founders of the East Point military museum. He was survived by his ten children, 24 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. His name is today commemorated by Butler Place running off the Stuart Highway in Darwin's outer suburbs, and a display of Dick Butler's service medals and photographs was donated to Government House in Darwin by his family in December 1993.

In November 1999, Deployed Force Support Unit-Darwin (DFSU-D) was raised to support Combined Task Force 645, the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET)⁴. DFSU-D was raised to receive, process and train Australian individuals to facilitate their effective deployment on Operation Warden. From the very beginning, the logo of DFSU-D was based on the old Northern Command insignia as worn by Dick Butler, the water buffalo head. Following the transition to a UN peace-keeping force, DFSU-D continued to conduct force preparation of individuals, units and United Nations Military Observers deploying for service with the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), and then with the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) following East Timorese independence. In late 2001, DFSU-D was redesignated as Force Preparation Squadron-Darwin (FPS-D). The logo of DFSU-D, and then of FPS-D, incorporated the head of a water buffalo superimposed over an outline of the Northern Territory and Kimberley region of Western Australia.

⁴ See 'Deployed Force Support Unit-Darwin'. *The Australian Reservist*, November 2000, pp.24-26; 'Deployed Force Support Unit-Darwin: Transformational Management'. in *The Australian Army in Profile, Centenary Edition 2000*, Directorate of Public Affairs-Army, pp.130-131.

The water buffalo has long symbolised Northern Territory Command and the 7th Military District (now Northern Command) and the Northern Territory, in which the forward mounting base for Timor operations was established. It also represents a tangible link with the nearby South East Asian region, and the upward sweep of the buffalo's right horn graphically represents the operational deployment of Australian force elements to East Timor. A photograph of Dick Butler in uniform, wearing the Northern Territory Command shoulder insignia, was displayed in the foyer of the FPS-D headquarters in Darwin, demonstrating the origins of the water buffalo insignia in the insignia of Northern Territory Command. In further recognition of these links, a replica set of Dick Butler's service medals was given to FPS-D, for display on long-term loan, by his family in June 2001.

The Butler military heritage was perpetuated by Dick and Louisa's fifth child, their fourth son, Arthur Wallace Butler. The older Butler boys had served in the CMF after WW2 and underwent training at Peewee Camp near East Point, but later Arthur travelled to Queensland and put his age up to enlist in the Army. He ultimately served in South Vietnam with the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in 1967-68, and a period portrait of Butler is in the collection of the Australian War Memorial, showing him as a fit, muscled soldier compared to the skinny boy he had been before leaving Darwin. When a younger sister first saw Arthur on his return from Vietnam she asked, "Who's this fat man who looks like a Malaysian?". 'Darkie' Butler later participated with Reg Saunders in the travelling exhibition 'Too Dark for the Light Horse' which displayed aspects of Aboriginal service in the Australian Defence Force.

On 19 February 2002, four of Dick Butler's surviving children gathered in Darwin where a combined service was held. Firstly, there was a public ceremony at the Cenotaph to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first Japanese raids on Darwin. Former Governor-General Sir Zelman Cowen spoke of the two Japanese air attacks on 19 February 1942 which, "brought war to the Australian mainland for the first time"⁵ – attacks which were responsible for 292 known deaths⁶. Other speakers, with political correctness, spoke of the actions of "the enemy" on that fateful day – only Zelman Cowen who, as a young Naval officer, had himself been present in Darwin in February 1942 referred more specifically to the bombing raids conducted by the Japanese and what their intent was believed to be. There are those who would say that much of the Territory's economic growth since 1945 could be seen to have 'risen from the ashes' of the devastation of those first Japanese raids, calling to nominate 19 February as a public holiday for the Northern Territory. Concurrently with this commemoration, there was a reunion of those evacuated from Darwin at the end of 1941 and early 1942. Dick Butler's two sons, Lionel and David, each proudly wore the Evacuee Reunion badge to represent their childhood evacuation from Darwin, while just as proudly they wore a replica set of their father's medals to recognise his service under enemy fire in the defence of Darwin and Australia.

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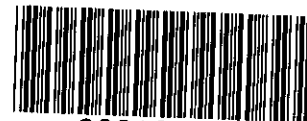
Butler family photograph album and papers, and information kindly provided by Miss Diana Butler (Darwin) and other family members.

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⁵ The Rt Hon Sir Zelman Cowen AK GCMG GCVO QC DCL, address for the commemoration service at the Darwin Cenotaph, 19 February 2002.

⁶ Rosenzweig, P A (1995) Darwin 1942: a reassessment of the first raid casualties. *Sabretache*, XXXVII (April/June): 3-15.

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200401967

The Relevance of Miscellany Administrative, Support and Logistic Units of the AIF a postscript

Graham Wilson

Introduction

In July 1918, the following Australian support, logistic and administration units were part of the Australian Corps on the Western Front:¹

- 3rd (Army), 6th (Army) and 12th (Army) Field Artillery Brigade Ammunition Columns
- 3rd (Army), 6th (Army) and 12th (Army) Field Artillery Brigade Park Sections
- Australian Corps Troops Engineers
- 1st Army Troops Company
- Australian Corps Wireless Section
- Australian Corps Signals Company
- Australian Corps Topographical Section
- Australian Corps Workshops
- 98th and 99th Dental Units
- Australian Corps Salvage Section
- Australian Corps Mechanical Transport Column (1st - 6th MT Coy)
- Australian Corps Sanitary Section
- 1st Employment Company

In the United Kingdom, the AIF had the following miscellaneous units:

- AIF Administrative HQ
- Australian Motor Transport Service
- AIF Kit Store
- AIF War Chest Club
- Australian Red Cross Organisation (attached to AIF)
- Australian Army Ordnance Corps (portion)
- Australian Army Service Corps (portion)
- Australian Army Postal Corps (portion)
- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Auxiliary Hospitals

HQ AIF Depots UK:

- 1st Training Brigade (1st, 2nd and Pioneer Training Battalions)

¹ The original paper was presented to the 2002 Biannual Conference of the Military Historical Society of Australia, held at Canberra from 4 - 6 October 2002 and was printed in the March 2003 edition of *Sabretache*.

- 2nd Training Brigade (5th, 6th, 9th and 10th Training Battalions)
- 3rd Training Brigade (12th, 13th, 14th and 15th Training Battalions)
- Overseas Training Brigade
- Artillery Training Depot
- Cyclist Training Company
- Engineer Training Depot (Field Section)
- Engineer Training Depot (Signal Section)
- Infantry Training Depot
- Light Horse Training Depot
- MG Training Depot
- Australian Army Medical Corps Training Depot
- Railway Training Depot
- Reserve Artillery Brigade
- Reserve Artillery Park
- Australian Army Service Corps Training Depot
- Siege Artillery Brigade Depot
- Australian Army Veterinary Corps Training Depot
- 1st Flying Wing:
 1. 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th (Training) Squadrons
 2. 1st and 2nd Two Squadron Station
 3. 1st Aeroplane Repair Section
 4. AFC Hospital
- Australian Army Provost Corps (portion)
- AIF Detention Barracks
- Australian Army Dental Corps (portion)
- Dental Stores Depot
- 1st Dermatological Hospital
- Base Depot of Medical Stores
- 2nd Area Gas School
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Command Depots

Miscellaneous units in France included:

- 1st - 5th Field Bakeries
- 1st - 5th Field Butcheries
- 1st - 25th Depot Units of Supply
- Infantry Base Depot
- General Base Depot
- Australian Corps Artillery School
- Australian Corps Trench Mortar School
- Australian Electrical and Mechanical Mining and Boring Company
- Australian Railway Operating Group:
 1. 1st, 2nd & 3rd (Light) Railway Operating Company

2. 4th, 5th & 6th (Broad Gauge) Railway Operating Company

- 1st, 2nd & 3rd General Hospital
- 1st, 2nd & 3rd Casualty Clearing Station
- Australian Army Dental Corps (portion)
- 1st Railhead Supply Detachment
- 1st Veterinary Hospital
- 1st Veterinary Evacuation Station
- Australian Reinforcement Camp
- Australian Corps School of Instruction
- Australian Army Ordnance Corps (portion)
- Australian Army Pay Corps (portion)
- Australian Pay Office, Boulogne
- Australian Base Pay Office, Rouen
- Australian Army Postal Corps (portion)
- Australian Army Provost Corps (portion)
- 1st Convalescent Depot
- Australian Section, 3rd Echelon, British Expeditionary Force

Not to be forgotten of course were the Australians in the Middle East who were supported by:

- Australian HQ Cairo
- Anzac Training Centre and Details Camp
- Anzac Mounted Division Training Regiment
- 14th and 15th Light Horse Training Squadrons
- Engineer Training Depot (Field Section)
- Engineer Training Depot (Signal Section)
- Machine Gun Training Depot
- Australian Army Service Corps Training Depot
- Australian Army Medical Corps Training Depot
- Australian Army Veterinary Corps Training Depot
- D Field Troop and Bridging Section
- Australian Remount Depot
- Australian Army Pay Corps (portion)
- Australian Army Postal Corps (portion)
- Australian Army Ordnance Corps (portion)
- Anzac Provost Corps (Egyptian Section)
- Australian Section, 3rd Echelon, Egyptian Expeditionary Force
- 14th General Hospital
- 2nd Stationary Hospital
- Anzac Field Laboratory
- Australian Depot Stores

This is an enormous list and helps to illustrate, hopefully, the extent of the often neglected support effort of the AIF. While admittedly many of these units were quite small, Dental Units for example had a strength of one officer and three other ranks, it is still an impressive list.

One point that has been raised by some commentators, in particular Lindsay, is an observation that a number of Australian logistic or support units were unnecessary. Lindsay notes that from early March 1918 a number of the DUS were "lent for extended periods to work for British units." He notes for example that 1st DUS was employed as 1st Army Purchasing Board, 5th DUS operated the 4th Base Stores Depot and 19th DUS operated the 3rd BSD Forage Depot.² Lindsay and others infer that if these units could be released for such tasks, then what was the need for them?

These commentators miss several vital points. First, it is unlikely that the units would have been deployed as they were unless they actually were needed. It must be remembered that by the last year of the war the British manpower pool had all but dried up. Men (and boys) who would have been rejected by any recruiting sergeant in 1914 or 1915 were swept up in the draft and fed into the fighting machine. But while the most crying need of the BEF was always for more and more bayonets in the trenches, the logistic effort could not be ignored, neglected or run down.³ The BEF was constantly engaged in a precarious balancing match between the needs of the fighting "teeth" and the logistic "tail." Thus it welcomed the additional support of the Australian units.

Secondly, commentators miss the point of the high number of B Class men who were employed in the support, logistic and administrative units, especially later in the war. There were a high number of instructors, for example, in the various schools who had been classed as unfit for front line service but who could still give valuable service in supporting the army in the field. Similarly, the 1st Employment Company (517 all ranks) was composed entirely of B Class men.⁴ Thus, the "unnecessary" units provided useful employment for a number of medically below standard men, thereby releasing more fit men for the front.

Finally, Lindsay and others ignore the fact that several of the AIF's senior officers, notably Monash and White, had their eyes firmly on the post-war development of the Australian Army. They were determined to ensure that a large pool of officers and men with experience in all areas of military operations and administration would be available to be called on when reforming the Australian Army. Never again would the Australian Army have to turn to the pages of the *New Zealand Military Journal* to find out details for raising a new unit!⁵

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² Lindsay, Neville, 1991 *Equal to the Task Volume 1 The Royal Australian Army Service Corps*, Historia Publications, Kenmore, p. 221.

³ Macksey, Kenneth, 1989 *For Want of a Nail The Impact on War of Logistics and Communications*, pp. 72-73.

⁴ Lindsay, op. cit., p.461.

⁵ see original paper published in the March 2003 edition of Sabretache at pages 60-61 where it was noted that when the AIF set about establishing the logistic and supply units for the 1st Division, while it was known that, amongst other things, an "ammunition park" and a "supply column" were required, no one had much of an idea of the duties or probable tasks of these mysterious units. The officers appointed to raise and command the two units eventually discovered an article in the *New Zealand Military Journal* that gave them enough guidance to get on with the job!

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200401968

AN IRISH LIFE IN AUSTRIAN SERVICE: General Thomas von Plunket 1716-1779¹

Jean Main

There were numerous officers of Irish descent serving in the Imperial Austrian Army during the 18th century and beyond and among these was Thomas von Plunket who was born in 1716 at Castle Plunket, County Roscommon, a son of John Plunket and Bridget Fitzgerald.² He entered the service of the Imperial Austrian Army in 1728 when he was only twelve years old and remained in its service until his death in 1779 at Liege in present-day Belgium.

What is known of his military career:

Very little could be ascertained about Thomas von Plunket's early military career but it is known that he fought against the Turks and in the war of the Spanish Succession and that in March 1743 he was promoted to Lt. Colonel and Adjutant-General to the Army in the (Austrian) Netherlands.³

In 1846/47 he took part in the invasion of Provence as Field Marshall von Browne's Adjutant-General and on 28 December 1746 he was promoted to Colonel while serving in Italy. At that time an unnamed contemporary described him as one who possessed "a particular talent for setting off things in a plausible light!"⁴ When, as a result of political events during this campaign, there arose the question of 2,500 Austrian prisoners held in Genoa, Plunket was sent under a flag of truce to the city in October to negotiate their release, not very successfully, again due to political maneuverings. Because of the withdrawal from Italy of many of Browne's units Plunket was later sent to London to see whether funds could be made available for the fitting out of an artillery train to help bolster Browne's forces.⁵ Plunket was promoted to Major General (Obrist-Feldwachtmeister) on 16 March 1753.

During the Seven Years War (1756-1763)⁶, on 18 June 1757 in a battle near Kolin,⁷ he commanded a Brigade consisting of Infantry Regiments Deutschmeister (later No.4), Botta d'Adorono (later No. 12) and Ludwig Markgraf von Baden Baden (later No. 23). During the battle the Regiments Deutschmeister and Baden were forced to retire. Plunket remained at the head of Regiment Botta which, however, had run out of ammunition. He then distinguished himself by standing fast against the enemy with bayonets drawn until the other two regiments were able to return to the line. With the aid of a further detachment of cavalry he was then able to decisively rout the enemy resulting in the withdrawal of Prussian forces from Bohemia. For

¹ In correspondence of the day, mostly carried out in French, he is sometimes referred to as "General Blonquet".

² The peerage of Ireland: or a genealogical history of the present nobility of that Kingdom, etc, by John Lodge, revised, enlarged and continued by Mervyn Archdall, James Moore, Dublin, 1789, Vol. VI, p. 165.

³ Direktionsakt No.529 of 1890, Kriegsarchiv, Vienna, Austria.

⁴ The wild Goose and the Eagle: the Life of Field Marshall von Browne, 1706-1767 by Christopher Duffy, London, 1964.

⁵ The wild Goose and the Eagle: the Life of Field Marshall von Browne, 1706-1767 op.cit.

⁶ This war was fought between Austria, Russia and France on the one hand and an expansionist Prussia led by Frederick the Great on the other. It ended with the Peace of Hubertusburg in 1763.

⁷ More or less west of Prague in what is now the Czech Republic.

this feat of arms he was rewarded with the Knights Cross of the Order of Maria Theresia, an Order that had only been instituted on 13 May of that year⁸. The award was dated 4 December 1758.

During the further course of the Seven Years War, Plunket, who was promoted to Field Marshall-Lieutenant on 9 February 1759, continued to perform keen and valiant service. June, July, August and September 1760 found Plunket in Russian General Soltikoff's Headquarters at or near Posen (now called Poznan in Poland). He fulfilled the role of Austrian emissary and his role was to urge Soltikoff into action against the Prussians, something the latter was most disinclined to undertake despite acknowledging that he had received Orders to do so from the Russian court.⁹

On a number of occasions during this war Plunket also commanded detached Corps whereby, particularly in July 1762, he gained much honour when, due to his strategic position on the hills near Humdorf in Bohemia, he prevented the Prussian General Kleist from any further advances. The latter had entered Bohemia with superior forces, via Einsiedl and Dux and Plunket was able to save large areas of the countryside from extortion and plunder.¹⁰

On 12 March 1763 Field Marshall-Lieutenant Plunket became proprietor of Infantry Regiment Friedrich Markgraf von Bayreuth (later No.41), as well as being engaged in service in the (Austrian) Netherlands. The regiment recruited mainly in Bavaria and Franconia but there was a significant Irish element amongst its officers. This is also the year in which he was promoted to the rank of Master of the Ordnance (Feldzeugmeister).

On 17 March 1766, Plunket and his regiment were stationed at or near Brussels but early in June he and his regiment set out for Bohemia where he was to be "employed" and it was then not expected that his regiment would return to that city.¹¹

March 1768 found Plunket stationed in Linz in Upper Austria and he was promised a command in Antwerp should a vacancy occur. In the following year Plunket was in Vienna where he remained until May 1770.

In the meantime on 27 November 1769 approval was given for Plunket's appointment from 1 May 1770 as Commander of the Citadel of Antwerp (without the title of Governor as long as the incumbent Governor, General Baron von Salm-Salm was living). However Baron von Salm-Salm died early in February of that year so that on 9 May 1770 Plunket's appointment as both Governor and Commander of the Citadel at Antwerp and its subsidiary fortifications was confirmed. In consequence of this appointment he had to relinquish both his income as proprietor of a regiment and the position of proprietor itself.

Plunket arrived in Antwerp on or about 29 June 1770 and as was the custom, he was greeted at the posting station by a procession of coaches carrying the Mayor of the city and its aldermen who were preceded by ushers carrying jugs of wine. The next day, at the Citadel, he was met by the officers of the garrison with torches alight and by the most prominent inhabitants, who accompanied him to the parish church where the Te Deum was sung during repeated salvos from a cannon.¹²

⁸ *Die Militaer-Maria-Theresien Orden und seine Mitglieder* by Dr. Jaromir Hirtenfeld, Vienna, 1857, pp.62-63.

⁹ *Geschichte Maria Theresia's* by Alfred Ritter von Arneth, Braumueller, Vienna, 1863-1876, Vol.IV.

¹⁰ *Direktionsakt No.529 of 1890*, op.cit.

¹¹ *Collectanea Hibernica: sources for Irish History*, Vol. XI, p. 56.

¹² *De Kronijk van Antwerpen Van 1770-1819*, Vol. I, by van der Straelen.

Thomas von Plunket served as Governor and Commander at Antwerp, dealing with a restive population, until his death. He died at Liege on 20 January 1779.

Personal Life

Thomas von Plunket was married to Mary D'Alton, a sister of General Count Edward D'Alton, also in the Austrian service. When and where the marriage took place is not known but Mary is believed to have been born at Grenanstown, county Tipperary, a daughter of Peter D'Alton.

As far as it has been possible to discover the couple had 9 children, 4 sons and 5 daughters. The eldest son became a Dominican while the three others followed military pursuits. One, whose godmother had been Empress Maria Theresia herself¹³, was to die of wounds received during the storming of Belgrade in 1789, another was killed by a sniper's bullet in 1799 during the second battle for Zurich.

Mary died on 19 October 1778. An entry in the records of the Parish of St. Phillippe says that "having taken all the last rites and sacraments of the church, (she) died in this citadel on the 19th day of October (1778) and on the 22nd of that month was buried in the mausoleum of the English monastery in this town"¹⁴

There is more detail about her death in the Chronicles of Antwerp from 1776 to 1819. Here we are told that "her body was on 22 inst. (October 1778) transferred to the Church of the English Carmelites in Hopland here where she wished to be buried and where one can read the following epitaph, in the English language, beneath the armorial bearings, engraved in silver, fastened on black velvet and hanging next to the altar, ad com Epistolae, it reads thus:

Near this place lies the body of Dame
Mary Plunkett born Dalton Lady.
Of the starry cross, wife to his
Excellency Tomas Plunkett Chamberlain
to their imperial majesties knight
of the military order of Marie Therese
Lieutenant General of their imperial
Majesties armies and gouvernour of the
Citadel of Antwerp and so on.
She exchanged this life for a better the 19th October 1778

On 26 October the Chronicles tell us that her funeral rites had been held in the church of the Citadel.¹⁵

Plunket himself died only three months later, on 20 January 1779. He died at Liege, apparently while visiting some of his children who were at school in that city. His death is recorded in the Parish of St Christophe in the city of Liege and merely says that "he was interred with the English nuns on the payment for this right of 18 florins (aged) 66 years".¹⁶

At the time of his death the ages of his children ranged from 19 years down to only 9 and he appointed their uncle, Count Edward D'Alton as their guardian. He had left an estate of 5770 florins which was to be divided equally among them.¹⁷

¹³ *Collectanea Hibernica: sources for Irish history*, Vol. .X, 1967.

¹⁴ Ville Anvers, Paroisse St. Phillippe, entry of death.

¹⁵ *De Kronijk van Antwerpen van 1770-1819*, op.cit.

¹⁶ Ville de Liege, Paroisse St. Christophe, entry of death, 20 January 1779.

¹⁷ *Direktionsakt No.460 of 1931*, Kriegsarchiv, Vienna, Austria.

Almost a year to the day his replacement arrived from Brussels to be similarly greeted by a procession consisting of the mayor and aldermen, etc. etc.

There is still a street called Hopland in Antwerp but the Citadel that had been built in 1568, has long since gone, only Kasteel (Castle) Street indicates the area in the south of the city where the Citadel once stood.

With reference to the nobility of Thomas von Plunket, it would seem that as a Knight of the Military Order of Maria Theresia and in accordance with the statutes of the Order, he was entitled to apply for the issue of a Patent of Nobility as Baron at no cost to himself. However, he did not apply and for this reason his name does not appear in the k.u.k. Austrian Register of Nobles. Without such an application and in accordance with the statutes he was only entitled to a Knighthood. Neither he himself, nor contemporary documents refer to him as Count but only as "von". His sons, however, called themselves Counts and were referred to as such in documentation.¹⁸

Some observations:

The 18th century is likely to have been the high point of Irish officers in the service of Imperial Austria. The best known is probably Count Franz Moritz Lacy (1725-1801) who had a brilliant career in the Austrian service and who received the Grand Cross of the Order of Maria Theresia in 1758.

To show the great esteem in which Irishmen were held, when on St. Patrick's Day, 1766, the Spanish Ambassador to the court (himself of Irish descent) gave "a grand entertainment in honour of the day", all who attended are said to have worn a cross in honour of St. Patrick and "so did the whole of the court". Not surprisingly among the principal officers of State and "persons of condition" who attended, were the Irish officers Count Lacy, by then a Field-Marshal and President of the Council of War, and Generals O'Donnell, McGuire, O'Kelly, Browne, Plunket and McEligot.¹⁹

Thomas von Plunket's life illustrates well the opportunities then open to Irish-born officers in the military service of Imperial Austria.

It is well-known that other Irishmen served in other armies on the continent. Most readers probably best know of those who followed the exiled James II to France, but they could be found almost everywhere and as early as the 1500s. However, after the Napoleonic Wars the hire of foreign soldiers faded away – Europe had become a different place.

¹⁸ *Direktionsact No. 529 of 1890, op.cit.*

¹⁹ *History of the Irish Brigades in the service of France: from the revolution in Great Britain and Ireland under James II, to the revolution in France under Louis XVI* by John Cornelius O'Callaghan, Cameron and Ferguson, Glasgow, 1870.

George Cross gazetted for Iraq

Anthony Staunton



200401969

The Ministry of Defence announced on 30 October 2003 more than 300 honours for servicemen and women who served on Operation Telic, the British contribution to the war in Iraq. They included a George Cross, awarded to Trooper Christopher Finney of the Blues and Royals.



Trooper Christopher Finney GC

After his troop of Scimitar armoured vehicles was struck by US A-10s in Iraq in a friendly fire attack, Trooper Chris Finney risked his life pulling his colleague Andy Tudball from the turret of his burning tank. He then returned to the burning Scimitar, full of fuel and ammunition to radio in a situation report to his commanding officer. He was carrying Cpl Tudball to safety when the A-10 aircraft made a second pass, firing their multi-barrel GAU-8A 30mm cannon at the British patrol, this time seriously injuring him. Nonetheless, he went to rescue a crewman trapped in another tank but he was unable to pull him out of his burning turret before the intense heat drove him back.

On 28 March 2003, D Squadron Household Cavalry Regiment were probing forward along the Shatt Al Arab waterway, north of Basrah, some thirty kilometres ahead of the main force of 16 Air Assault Brigade. In exposed desert, their mission was to find and interdict the numerically vastly superior, and better equipped, Iraqi 6th Armoured Division.

Chris Finney's squadron of Scimitar armoured reconnaissance vehicles crossed the al-Hammar canal at first light on the morning of March 27, a week into the war in Iraq.

His citation for the GC reads in full:

Trooper Finney, a young armoured vehicle driver with less than a year's service, was driving the leading Scimitar vehicle of his troop, which had been at the forefront of action against enemy armour for several hours. In the early afternoon, the two leading vehicles paused beside a levee to allow the troop leader to assess fully the situation in front. Without warning, they were engaged by a pair of Coalition Forces ground attack aircraft. Both vehicles were hit and caught fire, and ammunition began exploding inside the turrets. Trooper Finney managed to get out of his driving position and was on the way towards cover when he noticed that his vehicle's gunner was trapped in the turret. He then climbed onto the fiercely burning vehicle, at the same time placing himself at risk from enemy fire, as well as fire from the aircraft should they return. Despite the smoke and flames and exploding ammunition, he managed to haul out the injured gunner, get him off the vehicle, and move him to a safer position not far away, where he bandaged his wounds.

The troop officer, in the other Scimitar, had been wounded and there were no senior ranks to take control. Despite his relative inexperience, the shock of the attack and the all-too-obvious risk to himself, Trooper Finney recognised the need to inform his headquarters of the situation. He therefore

broke cover, returned to his vehicle which was still burning, and calmly and concisely sent a lucid situation report by radio. He then returned to the injured gunner and began helping him towards a Spartan vehicle of the Royal Engineers which had moved forward to assist.

At this point, Trooper Finney noticed that both the aircraft were lining up for a second attack. Notwithstanding the impending danger, he continued to help his injured comrade towards the safety of the Spartan vehicle. Both aircraft fired their cannon and Trooper Finney was wounded in the buttocks and legs, and the gunner in the head. Despite his wounds, Trooper Finney succeeded in getting the gunner to the waiting Spartan. Then, seeing that the driver of the second Scimitar was still in the burning vehicle, Trooper Finney determined to rescue him as well. Despite his wounds and the continuing danger from exploding ammunition, he valiantly attempted to climb up onto the vehicle, but was beaten back by the combination of heat, smoke and exploding ammunition. He collapsed exhausted a short distance from the vehicle, and was recovered by the crew of the Royal Engineers' Spartan.

During these attacks and their horrifying aftermath, Trooper Finney displayed clear-headed courage and devotion to his comrades which was out of all proportion to his age and experience. Acting with complete disregard for his own safety even when wounded, his bravery was of the highest order throughout.

His parents gave the following statement:

Chris has been interested in the Army from an early age, and while we were surprised when he decided to join, we have always been extremely proud of him and his achievements. The award of the George Cross does not in any way alter the pride that we, as parents, feel for our son. However, after the anxiety of seeing him depart for the Gulf, return, and recover from his injuries, we could not be more delighted for him that his courage and determination has attracted such spectacular recognition.

--oOo--

Two Cross of Valour awards for Bali

Anthony Staunton

Two West Australian men, Timothy Britten and Richard Joyes, were awarded the Cross of Valour for their efforts to rescue those in the Sari club. They become the fourth and fifth recipients of the Cross of Valour since its inception as part of the Australian honours system in 1975.

Both men ran towards the bomb site and fought their way through intense flames to help rescue the wounded and carry them to safety. They were among 37 people to receive bravery awards for their actions that night, and a further 162 people from all walks of life to receive honours following the bombing. These included 52 members of the department of Foreign Affairs and two members of AusAid. 32 departmental officers from Canberra and the Australian embassy in Jakarta were dispatched to Bali within hours of the bombing to supplement the Consulate in Bali. Their role was to assist grieving families in the agonising task of locating and identifying victims.

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Military Supervision of Convict Work Gangs. Part IV

The British Garrison in Australia 1788-1841

THE GREAT ROADS

Clem Sargent

The Great South Road

'In the year 1827, the road to Argyle was by the old Cowpasture road to the bridge at Camden. From there it turned south-easterly through the estates of John Macarthur (now Camden park), until the modern road from Menangle to Picton was reached. The line of this road was practically followed until the Stonequarry creek at Picton was crossed. Thence it proceeded southerly, crossing the Bargo river, until Lupton's inn was reached. The road then trended south-westerly through Bargo brush; and, passing about two miles to the east of the modern town of Mittagong, the range was ascended about a mile and a half to the east of the hill, now known as the Gib or Gibraltar, but called by the natives Bowrell. The road then went directly to the crossing of the Wingecarribee river at Bong Bong, and from thence virtually followed the present road *via* Moss Vale, Sutton Forest and Jumping rock to the crossing at Barber's creek, where the Argyle proper was considered to commence.'¹

Up to 1829 there had been little military activity in the general area of the Great South Road. In May 1826 Captain Bishop, 40th Regiment, with a subaltern and 30 men had been ordered from Sydney to the Argyle to 'act in conjunction' with the local magistrate following the killing by natives of two stockmen, one of whom was believed to have attempted to take away the wife of one of the natives. No details of the outcome of the deployment have been found.² A detachment of the 39th Regiment, one subaltern, one NCO and 12 men, was stationed at Bong Bong at the crossing of the Wingecarribee River from March 1829 and a barracks built there, probably bark huts. Surveys for land grants were carried out at Bong Bong at that time, including eight 80 acre blocks for the settlement of NSW Royal Veterans. The site of the military station is now marked by an obelisk on the eastern side of the Bowral to Moss Vale road, close to the existing bridge over the Wingecarribee. Detachments of the same strength from the 39th, 17th and 4th regiments continued to be stationed at Bong Bong until 1834.³

In June 1829 Major Edmund Lockyer, in charge of roads and bridges, in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, reported that his road gangs were at Barbers Creek (Tallong) and sought directions for further development of the South Road. His request was passed to the Surveyor General, Thomas Mitchell, for advice and he, in characteristic fashion, decided to examine the entire existing line of the road. Mitchell's aims were to shorten the road, avoiding steep ascents and difficult river crossings. It is interesting that his first line from Campbelltown followed closely the route of the later developed southern railway line but Governor Darling did not agree that new roads should be opened up where

¹ HRA Vol XIII p. 853.

² Bourke to Earl Bathurst, 6 May 1826, HRA I, Vol 12, pp. 270-1.

³ James J Jervis, 1937, 'The Wingecarribee and Southern Highlands District', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceeding*, Sydney, Vol XXIII, Part IV, pp. 247-300; WO 17, Monthly Returns.

existing ones would suffice and consequently road travellers on the South Road, which became known in 1928 as the Hume Highway, were faced with the route through Camden and across the difficult Razorback Range to Picton until the development of Highway 31 freeway superseded it.

Mitchell's other major realignment occurred at Mittagong. To avoid the crossing of the range at Mittagong and the swampy crossing of the Wingecarribee at Bong Bong the route was diverted to the west at Mittagong, to more easily cross the Wingecarribee at Berrima, where Mitchell reported that 'the site is good for a township or village, the scenery pleasing, water flowing and in great abundance'.⁴ At the same time as he had been tasked to examine the route of the south road Mitchell was also tasked to select the final location for Goulburn and to survey the layout of the proposed township, again providing blocks for resettlement of veterans, this time members of the Royal Staff Corps. The allotments were situated in the area of the present Goulburn Gaol and it became known as the 'Soldiers Flat'.⁵

The detachment of the 17th Regiment stationed at Bong Bong disappeared from the Monthly Returns in 1834 and the following year a detachment of the 50th was reported at Berrima.

By January 1833 the location and lay-out of Goulburn had been approved and the survey of the Great South Road completed. There was an increase in activity along the length of the road; by March 1831 the strength of the detachment at Liverpool had been raised to a sergeant and 14 men of the 57th Regiment but in April 1833 it was increased to a subaltern, Ensign J D Territt with a sergeant and 20 men of the 4th, replaced in July 1834 by Lieutenant Bentley, one sergeant and 18 men of the 50th regiment. In 1835 Captain Montgomery, 50th, with one sergeant and 15 men, commanded at Liverpool, responsible also for a sergeant and 19 men with the Lansdowne Bridge party, and a detachment of the same strength at Georges River.

Lansdowne Bridge, designed, and the construction supervised by David Lennox, significantly upgraded Sydney-Liverpool communications. The bridge was opened on Australia Day, 1836 by governor Bourke, with the bands of the 4th and 50th Regiments playing at the opening.

By 1835 there were convict work parties employed on the length of the road from Liverpool to Marulan. At the Razorback Range, in the Bargo Brush, Mittagong and at Black Bob's Creek, 7.5 miles (12 km) south of Berrima the road parties were out of irons and unguarded. At Berrima and further south stockades had been established for ironed gangs. The Berrima stockade was sited on the south side of the Wingecarribee, the present-day location of the Roman Catholic Church. The Wingello stockade was not at the locality of Wingello, on the old road from Bong Bong to Lake Bathurst, but on Mitchell's line for the South Road to Goulburn, at approximately 3 miles (5 km) south of Uringalla Creek and 5 miles (8km) north of Marulan.⁶

⁴ Col Sir T L Mitchell, *Report on Roads in New South Wales*, Sydney, 1856, p. 20.

⁵ Ransome T Wyatt, *the History of Goulburn*, Sydney, Lansdowne Press, 1972, p. 40

⁶ WO 17/2315-2330 , Monthly Returns; Monthly Report Of Work Of Roads and Ironed Gangs for the Month of August 1835, SRNSW 4/4772/2B f46; James Jervis ASTC, FRAHS, *A History Of The Berrima District 1798-1973*, Library of Australian History, North Sydney, 1973, p.32; conversation author/Linda Emery, Exeter 2003.

At Berrima the guard detachment was commanded by Ensign Richard Waddy, 50th Regiment with one sergeant and 25 men. Waddy had been appointed an Assistant Police Magistrate and wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 29 July 1835 requesting copies of the Government Gazettes and the Acts of the Legislative Council be forwarded to him to enable him to carry out his duties as magistrate.

Waddy's posting to, at that time, a remote and isolated station, away from any senior guidance, was typical of the service frequently imposed on young, inexperienced officers, leading Lieutenant Colonel Henry Breton, 4th Regiment, in his evidence to the British Parliamentary Select Committee on Transportation in reply to a question asking him to enlarge on a previous statement that the nature of the service was ruinous to the officers as well as men, to respond:

'I will not say ruinous to the officers; I think injurious in a certain degree to the young men The officers are sent away with detachments completely away from the regiments; perhaps young officers; they are without society ; it may be , not a soul to speak to; then some of them take to keeping women, and get into scrapes in that way; taking the regiments generally, I think that the system of sending the young officers, before they learn their duty, away into the country, is very likely to be injurious to them'.⁷

Waddy spent only one year in the isolation of the Berrima station guarding ironed gangs employed in road making and quarrying rock for the construction of the court house and goal. It seems that the service there was not injurious to the young ensign; he went on to serve with the 50th in India where the regiment fought on the Sutlej campaign of the 1st Sikh War and later, promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, commanded the 50th in the Crimea. In recognition of his service there Waddy was created a Companion of the Order of the Bath, a Knight of the Legion of Honour, and awarded, in addition to the Crimean War Medal, the Sardinian and Medijie Medals. He commanded the 50th again in the New Zealand War, serving on the Staff with promotion to Acting Brigadier-General and promotion to Major-General in 1868. Waddy died in 1881 and a monument to his memory is in Canterbury Cathedral. It was a worthy, soldierly record for Berrima's first military commander.⁸

The Berrima stockade was guarded by detachments of the 50th Regiment until 1837 when Lieutenant Horatio Gulston of the 90th took over with another subaltern, two sergeants and 29 men. The 90th remained at Berrima for only one year as it does not appear in the Monthly Returns for 1839 when the Court House and Gaol were completed. The gaol was quickly put to use but, due to the escape of convicted bushranger prisoners, in late 1840 a detachment of the 28th Regiment, Ensign Ablin, one sergeant and 23 men were sent from Sydney to provide security at the goal. They were replaced by a detachment of similar strength from the 99th Regiment in 1843. this detachment, commanded by Captain Gall, remained there for only one year; it was the last detachment to serve at Berrima.⁹

The next stockade, known as the Wingello stockade, was not located at the village of Wingello, which is on the Old South Road from Bong Bong to Lake Bathurst, but on Mitchell's line for the South Road to Goulburn, at approximately 3 miles (5 km) south of

⁷ British Parliamentary Papers 1837-38, Vol 22, p.139.

⁸ Colonel Fyler, *History Of The 50th Or (The Queens Own Regiment)* London, Chapman and Hall Ltd, 1895.

⁹ James Jervis, op cit, p. 34; WO17/2328.

Uringalla Creek and 5 miles (8km) north of Marulan.¹⁰ The stockade site is off the eastern side of the current Hume Highway, at a truck stop and is on the head waters of Uringalla Creek; there is nothing to mark the site, now completely cleared and stone from the stockade is believed to have been used in the construction of the Roman Catholic Church in Marulan.¹¹

The 50th Regiment from 1835 to 1838 also provided the guard for the Wingello stockade. Lieutenant Bentley commanded the detachment of two sergeants and between 22 and 34 men for the three years. The detachment was not replaced in 1838. The baptisms of two children of members of the 50th at Wingello are recorded at the Heber Chapel, Cobbitty. Mary, daughter of No 350 Private James Ward, was baptised on 2 February 1835, and William, son of No 626 Private Thomas Powell, on 7 November 1837. Both soldiers had arrived on the transport *Hoogly* on 24 November 1834 and appear to have been almost immediately sent to the Wingello stockade. The practice of deploying newly-arrived troops immediately in small detachments in charge of ironed gangs in remote stations was recognised as harmful to the service and morale of the regiments. The Regimental History of the 80th Regiment, in the Colony from 1837 to 1845, records:

No more depressing duty could be found for a Regiment than this guarding of convicts or more calculated to destroy the discipline of a Corps. As the vessels arrived from Europe with their cargoes of convicted felons, the Military Guard (generally composed of young soldiers, drafts for the regiment) was sent out into the interior in charge of road gangs, without having seen, or been seen, by the major part of the officers of their Regiment. These guards, with few exceptions, were commanded by young officers without experience, and who, for want of other sources of amusement, gladly availed themselves of the society of such of the settlers who casually fell in their way, and as was only natural, insensibly acquired their habits.¹²

As Bentley's was the first guard detachment at Wingello it could be that they marched there as escort of the ironed gang to be employed on that section of the road. It is a matter of conjecture how the pregnant Mrs Wade would have coped with the journey from Sydney to the stockade site; if she had been lucky, she may have ridden on one of the baggage wagons.

The last stockade to be established and garrisoned on the Great South Road was the Towrang Stockade on the creek of that name which crosses the existing Hume Highway approximately thirteen kilometres north of Goulburn. The stockade site is off the north-bound lane of the highway, opposite the 'Derrick VC' Rest Area. There is a dirt run-off from the northern lane about 500 metres north of the turn-off to Towrang Village and a stile across the fence gives access to the site. On the slope to the creek an excavation, which has been restored by the Goulburn Historical Society, is said to have been the powder magazine. At the bottom of the slope and across the creek are three gravestones from the stockade period. The grave of Private John Moxey of the 80th Regiment, was the subject of an article by Colonel Don Goldsmith in *Sabretache*, Vol IX No4, April 1967. The other graves are of Elizabeth Whittiker [sic] and Mary Brown, aged four years and one month.

¹⁰ WO 17/2315-2330, Monthly Returns; Monthly Report Of Work Of Roads and Ironed Gangs for the Month of August 1835, SRNSW 4/4772/2B f46; James Jervis ASTC, FRAHS, *A History Of The Berrima District 1798-1973*, Library of Australian History, North Sydney, 1973, p.32.

¹¹ Maureen Eddy, *Marulan, a unique heritage*, Marulan, 1985, p. 1-33; WO 12/6127-6130.

¹² James P Jones, *A History of the South Staffordshire Regiment (1705-1923)*. Wolverhampton, 1923, Whitehead Brothers, p. 54.-55.

A detachment at Towrang first appeared in the Monthly Returns (WO 17) in 1838 – Lieutenant Rinaldo Scheberras, 80th Regiment with two sergeants and 28 Rank and File. The strength was increased to 35 R & F in 1839. Scheberras was replaced by a Ensign Curnow and a detachment of the 28th in February 1840. Scheberras was to go on to India with the 80th when it left New South Wales and having been promoted to the rank of captain, was killed at the Battle of Ferozeshah in 1845. Curnow's sojourn at Towrang was short, a detachment of two sergeants and 41 Rank and File, commanded by Lieutenant Tyssen, 80th Regiment, returned to Towrang in August of that year, relieved in turn by Lieutenant Cookson in 2842 and Lieutenant Gorman in 1843.

The Monthly Return for January 1844 shows only one Rank and File at Towrang, and the station disappears from the returns in 1845. The single soldier could not be identified from a check of the Regimental Muster Roll; it seems likely that he may have been left there as a caretaker pending the disposal of stores at the stockade.¹³

One interesting relic of the work of the convict gangs at Towrang is situated at the rear of the 'Derrick VC' Rest Area on the south-bound lane of the current Hume Highway. This is a stone bridge or culvert at the crossing of Towrang Creek by the old line of the Hume Highway. It is named on the TOWRANG 1/25000 map as "Lennox Bridge" but the New South Wales Road Transport Authority notice at the bridge states that the title can not be confirmed. It certainly has the characteristics of a Lennox design but by the date of construction 1839, there were many experienced, Lennox-trained bridge builders working with the road gangs. Unfortunately the parapets have been removed; perhaps these stones have provided material for the construction of one of the older Goulburn buildings, similar to the Wingello Stockade.

Whoever he was, the lone soldier of the 80th Regiment at Towrang in 1844 appears to have been the last man of the garrison regiments employed on the construction of the Great South Road.

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17TH LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT 1830 - 1836

Clem Sargent

Green Tigers

The Colonial Lilywhites

1688	Raised as Colonel Richard's Regiment.
1751	Designated 17 th Regiment.
1757-1766	N America and W Indies.
1767-1775	England.

¹³ WO12/8485.



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¹³ WO12/8485.

1782	Titled 17 th . (The Leicestershire) Regiment.
1775-1785	N America.
1786-1793	England., Ireland, service as Marines.
1794-1798	W Indies.
1799	England.
1800-1801	Mediterranean.
1801-1804	Ireland.
1805-1823	India.
1823-1830	England.

In New South Wales

2 March 1830	First det disembarked Port Jackson.
8 February 1831	HQ arrived, located initially at Parramatta.
17 March	HQ moves to Sydney.
26 March 1831	Last Det arrives.
March 1831	Detachment to Moreton Bay, relieving Detachment 57 th Regt.
June 1833	Detachments at Van Diemens Land, Moreton Bay, Cox's River, Emu Plains, Newcastle, Port Macquarie, Bathurst, Windsor, Liverpool, Port Stephens, Bong Bong, Wellington Valley, Longbottom, Mounted Police.
1834	Road-making ironed gangs supervised by officers in charge of guard detachments because of unsatisfactory performance by Convict Superintendents.
December 1835	Detachment relieved at Moreton by 4 th Regt.
4 March 1836	HQ embarked for India, relieved by 28 th Regt.
11 October 1836	Last detachment embarked Sydney.

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200401972

The Victoria Cross Society website is at www.victoriacrosssociety.com The October 2003 edition covered three Australian VCs, one each from the Boer War, World War I and World War II. The contents included:

The unveiling and dedication of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Memorial
 The Anglo-Persian War 1856-57. The Indian Army's first VCs. Part One
 "Ulundi" Beresford VC
 Paul Aloysius Kenna VC DSO ADC - Omdurman VC Part 2
Australia's First Winner of The Victoria Cross
 VC who was once a convict.
 Sergeant David Finlay - The Silent VC
 Lance-Corporal Fred Fisher - Canada's first WWI VC
Hero of Messines - Private John Carroll VC
 George Gabriel Coury VC - Part 2
 The Victoria Cross under the hammer - Michael Naxton and the Sotheby's Auctions
We can turn 'em back! The life and death of Bruce Kingsbury VC
 Fred Tilston VC

Anthony.Staunton@pcug.org.au

Australian Flying Corps attack on Baghdad

Barry Clissold

He had volunteered to destroy communication lines in the rear of Turkish positions but disaster struck Captain Tom White, Australian Flying Corps, as he landed his sluggish Farman aircraft on the outskirts of Baghdad. He landed in the centre of an enemy outpost and in the process had struck a telegraph pole, severely damaging his aircraft. In an ensuing fire fight and a failed attempt to take off White, and his observer, Captain F Yeats-Brown, Indian Army, became prisoners-of-war of the Turks on 13 November 1915.

White was initially held prisoner in Baghdad and his three weeks in hospital included a week's solitary confinement for not satisfactorily answering questions during his interrogations. He spent several months at Mosul, *where treatment of prisoners was very bad*, before being moved to Afion kara Hissar for more than two years with an initial six week's solitary confinement on arrival as Turkish punishment for the attempted escape of three Coalition naval officers. The dull routine of prison life was relieved by study, amongst others things, of the Russian language.

With thoughts of escape to Russia, White faked an ankle injury to obtain a passage to Constantinople for a Turkish medical examination. From there he escaped, with a false Russian passport, on a Ukrainian steamer to Odessa on 6 October 1918. As a possible way to escape from Russia to join British forces in Siberia, he considered *an offer to join the Russian Volunteer Army to fight the Bolsheviks*. Fate, however, intervened and escaping firstly by ship to Bulgaria, then Macedonia and finally Greece. White's war came to an end. Ten year later, in 1928, he published his wartime memoir as *Guests of the Unspeakable*.

The adventurous pilot returned to Australia and was discharged on 6 January 1920 having been decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross and twice mentioned in dispatches. Politics now became his first interest.

White was elected to Federal Parliament in 1929. He held the Victorian seat of Balaclava for 22 years from 1929 to 1951 first for the National Party, from 1931 for the United Australia Party and from 1944 for the Liberal Party. He was Minister for Trade and Customs in the Lyons Government from 1933 until his resignation for the ministry in late 1938. In 1940 he transferred to the Citizen Air force. Obtaining leave from Parliament he served full time with the RAAF in Australia and England before being demobilised in 1944 as honorary group captain. He resumed his parliamentary duties and with the election of the Menzies Government in 1949 became Minister for Air and Civil Aviation. White was appointed High Commissioner in London in 1951 and was knighted in 1952. He died in 1957 aged 69.

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Forlorn Hope

*(The Sharpe Companion, Mark Adkin, Harper Collins Publishers 1998.
Reproduced with permission of the publishers).*

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "forlorn hope" as "a desperate enterprise" and gives its origin as the Dutch phrase "verloren hoop" – a lost troop. The phrase was well known to veterans of the Peninsular Wars!

The "Forlorn Hope", usually referred to as "The Hope", always led the assault on a fortress and was a party of about 25-30 soldiers led by a subaltern and a couple of sergeants, to draw the enemy fire. They were the first into the breach and, usually, the first to die. It was a post of the utmost honour and there was seldom a lack of volunteers. If the officer survived, he was virtually sure of promotion; the sergeants could normally expect battlefield commissions; the soldiers got nothing. One of those who volunteered at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo and again at Badajoz was Edward Costello of the 95th. He described the selection procedure: 'On the eve of the storming of a fortress, the breaches etc being all ready, captains of companies, on their private parages, give the men to understand that such and such a place is to be taken by storm. Every man then who wishes to volunteer to head the stormers (the Forlorn Hope was in front of the stormers) steps forward to the front and his name is immediately taken down by the officer'. The attacking columns on the two breaches at Ciudad Rodrigo were composed according to the tactical teaching of the time. First, engineers and a covering party; next 'The Hope', followed by the stormers and then the bulk of the attacking battalions, one after the other.

In the 95th, at San Sebastian in July 1813, only two volunteers were needed for "The Hope" from each company, but many more stepped forward. Lots were drawn to find the 'lucky' men – Ptes Royston and Ryan. They were offered 20 pounds to exchange places but refused. At about this time survivors of 'The Hope' from Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz were recognised in the 52nd Regiment by a badge of laurel with the letters VC (Valiant Stormer) underneath. This was worn on the right arm but it was a commanding officer's award, not given outside this regiment. The French were more generous. Such volunteers, 'enfants perdu' (lost children) were usually commissioned and received the Legion of Honour, which obliged their comrades to salute them.

Private Burke of the 95th survived 'The Hope' at Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz and San Sebastian only to be mortally wounded at Quatre Bras in the Waterloo campaign.

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