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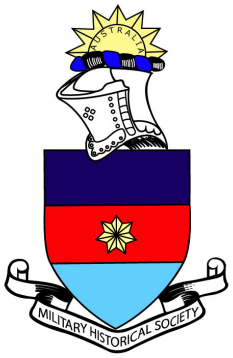

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'RUBBERY FIGURES': THE PUZZLE OF THE NUMBER OF AANS ON ACTIVE SERVICE IN WW1

Dr Kirsty Harris

Australian female nurses from all states nursed overseas during World War I (WW1). But how many nurses actually served as part of the AIF? Historians often quote the official medical war historian for WW1, A G Butler, as stating that 2139 nurses served overseas in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS). This reference comes from Volume III of his three volume *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services*.1 Most published secondary sources on Australian military nurses such as those by Jan Bassett, Rupert Goodman, Marianne Barker and Ruth Rae cite this number.2 So do many government and military websites including the Australian War Memorial (AWM).3 However, is the number correct? This paper investigates the work done by researchers on just who was in the AANS, the conclusions drawn and the proffered total figures. It also explores the author's journey to developing the most complete list of AANS nurses on active service to date. As a result, a new database shows almost 2500 AIF nurses' names and demonstrates the breadth of the AANS's military postings and consequent military experience. It also reveals that a number of nurses were quite mobile, serving with more than one allied nursing service.4

One might ask does it matter how many women were with the AIF overseas in the Great War. Out of more than 300,000 Australians who served, does a few more (or less) really mean anything? The answer, especially for researchers, is a resounding yes. Identifying individual AANS, as Ruth Rae states, is important so that appropriate attribution came be made of their contribution.5 More nurses mean possibly more sources of information, and therefore more wartime experiences to tap. This is important information given the war became a watershed for Australian professional nurses. Additional nursing numbers may mean that the 3477 nurses of World War 2 do not overshadow all those who served with the First AIF.6 More nurses might be an explanation for more lives saved and more bodies repaired in Australian hospitals. And more nurses may partly explain the excellent reputation that the AIF nurses had for their resourcefulness and determination, particularly

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1 AG Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-1918*, Volume III - Special Problems and Services, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1943, p 543.

2 See Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches - Australian Army Nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War*, Oxford University Press Australia, Melbourne, 1992, p 95; Rupert Goodman, *Our War Nurses: the history of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps, 1902-1988*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1988, p 109; Marianne Barker, *Nightingales in the Mud - The Digger Sisters of the Great War 1914-1918*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1989, p 4; Ruth Rae, *Scarlet Poppies – the army experience of Australian nurses during World War One*, Monograph No. 2, The College of Nursing, Burwood, NSW, 2004, p 21.

3 For example, www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/nurses/ww1.asp; www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww1/anecdotes/casualty.html; www.defence.gov.au/fr/publications/chronology.pdf; www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0446b.htm; www.nursing.edu.au/pdf/AustWW1_Nurse_Leaders_Missing_in_Action.doc, all accessed October 2006.

4 At least fifty-four nurses transferred to or from the AANS during the war.

5 Ruth Rae, 'Jessie Tomlins: An Australian Army Nurse – World War One', PhD thesis, Faculty of Nursing, University of Sydney, 2000, p 96.

6 KS Inglis, *Sacred Places* – War Memorials in the Australian Landscape, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p 365.

with British and other allied doctors and surgeons.[7] So, were there more AIF nurses than Butler's usual number? The answer – from a large number of sources – is yes.

The National Archives of Australia (NAA) in Canberra holds all surviving personal files for WW1 personnel.[8] The RecordSearch catalogue actually lists 2207 files for those AANS who served overseas, and many more for those on home service in Australia. Three nurses have two B2455 files. Another eight have had their WW1 file included in their World War 2 file as they went on to serve their country a second time. Files do exist for AIF nurses from South Australia who travelled by train to Fremantle and Melbourne to assist with influenza nursing in 1918-19 and these may be included in Butler's total. However, these nurses should be part of home service figures. So again, this number is higher than Butler's usually quoted figure. It also means that at least seventy-nine personal files are missing.

There is some indication that officials anxious to preserve the AANS's image expunged some nurses' records. The WW1 section at the NAA believes that they have files of nurses probably not counted in official figures due to pregnancy outside of marriage, and suicide. However, as I have reviewed all listed files, if this is the case, the NAA RecordSearch catalogue does not list them. Bassett supports this theory writing, 'Nurses who were caught transgressing the accepted moral codes sometimes simply disappeared from the records, making any estimate of their numbers very difficult'.[9]

Butler numbers

In another volume of the official medical history, Butler reveals a higher number of nurses, listing 2286 AANS as serving overseas.[10] He carefully lists the nurses' postings: General Hospitals 326; Reinforcements February 1915-April 1916 340; Convalescent Depot (Harefield) 58; Hospital ships (& Transport Corps) 102; Sea Transport Sections and Special Staff 57; and General Reinforcements 1403. Therefore, there already are an extra 147 names than the usual total.

Butler also identifies 130 nurses who originally 'enlisted' with the AANS and whom the Australian Government then transferred to the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS, known as the QAs) Reserve at the request of the British government.[11] As one nurse refused to go, only 129 nurses ended up as transferees to this Service.[12] However, in his Volume II table, Butler indicates that 136 nurses were enlisted in Australia for the QAIMNS.[13] In most B2455s of these women, enlisting officers have not completed the enlistment paperwork for the AANS. A complete list of these QA enlistees is available from Central Army Records Office (CARO) Melbourne.[14]

Another misunderstanding is the use of the term 'R.A.M.C.' when referring to nurses in the QAIMNS. Some researchers have translated this term as meaning Royal Australian Medical

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7 CEW Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Volume VI, Angus & Robertson Ltd, Canberra, 1942, p 1078.

8 Called B2455 files.

9 Bassett, pp 80-81 citing Miss Conyers in AWM 3DRL 251, Fetherston papers, bundle IV, item 7 (ii of xiii).

10 AG Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-1918*, Volume II - The Western Front, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1940, p 829. Statement showing numbers of A.A.M.C. Units and Personnel embarked from Australia for service in the A.I.F.

11 Butler, Vol I, p 544.

12 AWM41 662, Report of Director General, Medical Services, Australia, Regarding trained nurses in Australia, 8 December 1916, p 3; Army Nursing Services, Australian Imperial Force, Extracts from Regulations and Orders, Seniority List (up to October 1917) lists 129 'Nurses Selected for R.A.M.C.'.

13 Butler, Vol II, p 829.

14 AWM27 373/12 also lists all the names of those transferred to the British service. See also *Una*, 30 May 1917, p 83.

Corps instead of its true meaning, Royal Army Medical Corps, part of the British Army. Thus, those who have interpreted this term incorrectly have allocated British nurses to Australian figures.

There are discrepancies within both primary and secondary sources as to the actual number of nurses who participated in the war. This is largely due to the absence of military serial numbers for nurses; the fact that nurses generally used each other's surnames in their letters, diaries and professional journals; and the lack of official documentation for all nurses in state and national archives for this period. Researchers have said that nurses who served in the AANS Reserve prior to the war and afterwards were in the 'AANS', with no other qualifier. For example, Lindley Deacon uses the figure 2692 for all Australian nurses in WW1, the sum of adding 2139 AANS, 130 QA nurses who were ex-AANS, and 423 Home Service nurses.[15] Officially, the authorities denoted nurses who served solely on home service as in the AANS AMF – Australian Military Force and nurses who served overseas as AANS AIF; however, some historians have often omitted or have misunderstood the AMF nomenclature.[16]

Some researchers have included members of the Tropical Force and the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) to New Guinea in figures for the AANS. However, as Butler points out, these were separate services. Some AANS did first serve with the Tropical Force in 1914 before taking a discharge and then enlisting in the AANS or QAs. Others served in the AANS and later joined the AN&MEF.

Nominal rolls

Researchers have not yet found a complete official nominal roll in Australia although historians have searched.[17] It is not certain that one ever existed. However, both CARO Melbourne and the AWM hold four gazetted seniority lists covering various periods within 1915-1918, and these provide many AANS names.[18]

The most regularly cited list, '1914-1918 War Australian Army Nursing Service nominal roll', shows the names of only 1805 members of the AANS who served overseas.[19] The first entry on this handwritten document, kept in a ring binder, is Staff Nurse Linda Acres. Bassett has used this roll to illustrate points in *Guns and Brooches* but the low number of AANS could be misleading, for example, the percentage of those who married during the war is given as 108 (or 5.98 per cent).[20] My AANS database shows 179 nurses resigning for marriage while they were overseas, plus another three who were already married – Amy Curtis, who resigned in 1915, and Mary Kennedy and Marion Croll who married medical officers on active service and did not resign.

CARO Melbourne also holds half a nominal roll (A-Ki) that appears likely to be the one Butler used to calculate his 2286 nurses. This is a typed document headed 'Nominal Roll of Australian Army Nursing Service, Australian Imperial Force' and the first entry is of Staff Nurse Vera Abbott. The total of nurses listed in this document is 1009. Neither CARO nor

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15 Lindley A. Deacon, *Beyond the Call – the story of Australia's First World War nurses with further chapters relative to the war*, privately published, Launceston, Tasmania, 1999, p v. It is likely that he used the website www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/womeninaction that also uses this figure and cites its source as the Department of Defence.

16 B2455 files list both AANS AIF service and AANS AMF service.

17 Barker, p 7. Also Butler, Vol III, p 566fn.

18 The seniority lists are for: August 1915, up to October 1917, October 1917, and January 1918.

19 Bassett, p 95 citing CARO, Melbourne, '1914-1918 War Australian Army Nursing Service nominal roll'. I counted 1806 names.

20 Bassett, p 95.

the AWM holds the second half of the database.[21] Compared with the database above, for A-Ki there are 834 names, already a discrepancy of 175 nurses. Both databases list similar information: rank, surname, Christian names, birthplace, place of joining, date of joining, date of embarkation and disposal.

There is evidence of one unknown administrator numbering the nurses' files as they returned to Australia, possibly with the intention of calculating a total at the end of the war. Many of the NAA B2455 files carry an AANS record number such as S0001 or N12. Out of 2207 files, some 1083 have these identifying numbers, the highest being S1212 and N150. Cleverly, the 'N' numbers relate to nurses who took discharges in England or resigned their appointments overseas, thus indicating that they found at least 150 AANS who did this. However, it seems that this administrator gave up the task before all nurses had returned. In addition, some files have the same number, indicating the difficulty of allocating numbers to nurses arriving and remaining in different states.

More recent calculations

The Department of Defence's website, used as an official source, indicates that it was 'at least' 2139 AANS personnel who served overseas, leaving us to guess how many more nurses exist.[22] Contemporary historians mention various figures. Bassett says 2500 'or so' in *Guns and Brooches* but there is no indication of where this comes from as she repeats Butler's 2139/130 figures later in the book.[23] She also states that Victorian nurses made up a very large proportion of the AANS although 'exact figures are difficult to establish. An *Age* article of 1929 claimed that: 'Out of 2000 fully qualified nurses who volunteered from Australia, 1007 were from Victoria. Of this number 850 and 5 masseuses were sent on active service'.[24] Thus, it is obvious that newspapers also 'invented' figures. Bruce Scates and Raelene Francis also use the figure of 2500 nurses but at least they are including all nurses who overseas served from Australia.[25] Historian Ken Inglis says 'about 2300' women had gone to the war in the AANS and appears to have calculated this by adding 2130 and 130.[26]

Much research has occurred to try to identify all those nurses who did serve overseas. Four secondary sources publish lists of WW1 nurses. Marianne Barker, Ruth Rae and Neil Smith identify all but thirty-seven of the AANS with B2455 files.[27] While publications such as Ruth Rae's *Scarlet Poppies* claim higher figures, like other historians, she includes 2270 names of nurses from all allied services who served overseas and multiple entries for the same AANS nurse.[28] Her roll of nurses also includes those who worked for the Red Cross, not seen as a military nursing service. Rae also doubts the number of Australian nurses whom the government transferred to the QAIMNS Reserve and identifies some nurses with misspelt names as new entries.

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21 The AWM does hold AWM27 373/26 that contains a roughly alphabetized list of nurses' initials and surnames followed by the name of a ship and date of embarkation.

22 www.defence.gov.au/fr/publications/chronology.pdf accessed June 2007.

23 Bassett, pp 2, 95.

24 Bassett, p 97 citing Melbourne *Age*, 24 April 1929.

25 Bruce Scates and Raelene Frances, *Women and the Great War*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1997, pp 4-5.

26 Inglis, p 185.

27 Neil C. Smith, *The Australian Army Nursing Service – A Short History with World War One Nominal Roll and Award Citations*, Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications, Melbourne, 1996.

28 Rae, *Scarlet Poppies*, p 56.

Mervyn Collins, an interested volunteer at the AWM, created another list of AANS nurses in 1995. Titled *An alphabetical listing, embarkation nominal roll of nurses who went overseas with the AIF in World War I, 1914-1918*, Collins used the typed up AWM8 Embarkation Rolls and found 2198 names.[29] However, while updating his amended list of 2172 names in 2005, the author discovered significant numbers of nurses who, for example, embarked in Fremantle and whose names were not in the Rolls. Presumably, this was due to compilation in Melbourne and inadvertent omission of these names. One complication was the fact that so many nurses actually departed Australia more than once during the war; some of these multiple departures are noted, others are not. The embarkation lists also do not show those who transferred from the British nursing service to the AANS, some ward assistants and masseuses.

Neil Smith's text on the AANS does not indicate which of the CARO references he uses to compile his list of 2203 names.[30] He states that he obtained the extra 200 names 'from a variety of official records, and many are clearly part of the contingents and reinforcement [sic] who served with British Hospitals in India'. Again, confusion is obvious between the numbers of nurses who embarked more than once, and his text has multiple entries for the same nurse. Some nurses who served only on Home Service are also included.

Latest findings

Through extensive primary research at the NAA, the author has compiled a new comprehensive list, revealing 2303 confirmed as being in the AANS overseas, a figure that includes 14 ward assistants, 1 stewardess/seamstress and the masseuses who served under the banner of the AANS.[31] Appendix L of the author's history thesis on the AANS at the University of Melbourne shows an extract from the database.[32] In addition to the 2303 confirmed AANS, some primary data exists for another 195 nurses as possibly having overseas service with the AANS, giving 2498 names. However, without official documentation or further primary sources, more research is required to establish their bona fides. This work must include both British and Australian military archives as such a large percentage of the AANS served in British hospitals and on British ships. This new figure is consistent with an article in the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses Association journal *Una*, which after the war quoted a 'return complied by the Defence authorities' stating, 'no fewer than 2,379 nurses embarked from Australia'. *The Leader* newspaper in Melbourne also used the same figures in 'Magnificent Story of the Australian Army Nurses' in 1931.[33]

Other new databases available from the author reveal the names of about 720 other trained Australian nurses and masseuses who served overseas with other allied services in addition to the AANS. These databases list Australian trained nurses and masseuses serving in the Tropical Force and Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force to New Guinea, the British QAIMNS and British Territorial Force Nursing Service, Red Cross, New Zealand Army Nursing Service, South Africa Military Nursing Service; Scottish Women's Hospitals; St Johns Ambulance; Australian Massage Service, and other organisations such

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29 Mervyn Collins, *An alphabetical listing, embarkation nominal roll of nurses who went overseas with the AIF in World War I, 1914-1918*, AWM, 1995 (revised 2001). Merv Collins and Kirsty Harris updated this listing in 2005.

30 Smith refers on p 3 to early Army Record Office data which 'listed only 1995 ladies'.

31 Those who served as ward assistants were not nurses. Florence Raines served as the one seamstress (see NAA B2455 F.L. Raines).

32 Kirsty Harris, 'Not just 'routine nursing': the roles and skills of the Australian Army Nursing Service during World War I', PhD thesis, History Department, The University of Melbourne, 2006.

33 'Army Nursing Service' in *Una*, 30 Jul 1919, p 138; 'Magnificent Story of the Australian Army Nurses' in *The Leader*, Melbourne, 2 May 1931, p 42.

as YMCA, Free French Corps, Volunteer Aid Detachment nurses/workers who served overseas, and the Australian Volunteer Hospital, France.

The compilation of these figures – 2498 AANS and at least 720 nurses in other services – suggests that nearly as many Australian nurses served overseas in WW1 as in World War 2, a point not previously emphasised.[34]

The future

Butler notes that the Australian Matron-in-Chief in England kept no records after the war. However, there should be papers for Matron E. Tracy Richardson, the Australian Matron-in-Chief, based in Melbourne from 1916. Unfortunately, a search at the NAA Melbourne reveals no listings for Matron Richardson. According to nursing historian Wing Commander Maxine Dahl, these were stored at Directorate of Nursing Services - Army, Canberra in the 1990s but are no longer there.

In conclusion, this article seeks to correct the historical record. Official publications should at least upgrade their figures to Butler's greater figure of 2286, thus bringing the additional nurses to light out of the archives until such time that researchers can confirm the 2498 names. In this way, the contribution of all who served is finally acknowledged, and the breadth of their experiences more fully understood.

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34 Bassett, p 112.

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HADES' HENCHMEN

AN ABRIDGED HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN TUNNELLING COMPANIES IN FRANCE & BELGIUM: 1916 – 1919

Damien Finlayson[1]

Just over ninety years have elapsed since the Australian troopship HMAT Ulysses left Australian waters with its manifest of men and equipment belonging to the Australian Mining Corps. In the interim, very little has been written about the daughter units of the corps and the men that served in them. Indeed, as is now the case of all the Australian units that served on the Western Front, all those men have now died taking their First World War memories to their graves. It has been left to others to reconstruct events of the First World War from whatever snippets of information that can be gathered. Until now, in the case of the Australian Tunnelling Companies, sources of information about them had been disseminated across a variety of archives with hints of their operations appearing as tantalizing glimpses in a number of old books.

Just over ninety years have elapsed since the Australian troopship HMAT *Ulysses* left Australian waters with its manifest of men and equipment belonging to the Australian Mining Corps. In the interim, very little has been written about the daughter units of the corps and the men that served in them. Indeed, as is now the case of all the Australian units that served on the Western Front, all those men have now died taking their First World War memories to their graves. It has been left to others to reconstruct events of the First World War from whatever snippets of information that can be gathered. Until now, in the case of the Australian Tunnelling Companies, sources of information about them had been disseminated across a variety of archives with hints of their operations appearing as tantalizing glimpses in a number of old books.

What follows is an abridged summary of events into the service of the daughter companies of the Australian Mining Corps in the First World. It has taken several years of research to uncover the full picture of where and why these special units operated on the Western Front.

Even before the middle of 1915 when the first stirrings of the idea for Australian miners to use their special skills on the Western Front, ten specially formed British tunnelling companies had arrived and were working below the front lines at a number of key positions along the British sector of the western front. The first locality they took root was the loathsome Hill 60, in the southern edge of the Ypres Salient. The brainchild for the British tunnelling companies was an engineering contractor, John Norton-Griffiths. His men had been digging sewer tunnels through heavy clay using a very successful technique called 'clay-kicking' and he saw no reason why it could not be used successfully in the war. He put up a proposal to Horatio Kitchener in early 1915 and it was pounced upon. The first of twenty-five British tunnelling companies soon came into existence.

The idea that Australian miners could offer that same service in the war, especially as the first contingent of Australian infantry divisions found themselves relying on the sanctuary of an underground existence in the cliffs of Anzac Cove, came to fruition mostly through the work of two university academics, Professors Ernest Skeats of Melbourne University and Professor

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1 The events described briefly in this article are summarized from a forthcoming book by the author entitled '*Crumps & Camouflets*', currently in its pre-publication phase with the Australian Army History Unit, Canberra. The book will contain over 100 photographs, some previously unavailable, and 40 maps.

William Tannett Edgeworth David[2] of Sydney University. It was Edgeworth David, who not only became the driving force in the formation of a special 'Mining Battalion', or as it more grandly became known, the 'Australian Mining Corps', but he became one of its number. The nucleus for this new corps formed in September 1915 and over the next five months, men with special skills in mining, drilling, surveying and mine engineering were redirected from recruitment stations to Sydney were training was carried out at Casula, on the western outskirts of Sydney. Professional mining engineers were directed to the engineering officer's training school at Moore Park, Sydney.

By early February 1916, the corps had assembled in Sydney and prepared for departure to the war. Its commanding officer was Lt Col Albert Fewtrell[3]. By this time, the 1st and 2nd Australian Infantry Divisions had been evacuated from Gallipoli and were back in Egypt undergoing reconstruction under General Sir William Birdwood. Birdwood was keen that the engineering skills concentrated in the new unit be used in the formation of pioneer battalions for the Australian divisions being formed in Egypt. Fortunately, this did not eventuate.

On 20 February 1916, the contingent of 1,300 officers and men of the Australian Mining Corps boarded HMAT Ulysses at Woolloomooloo, Sydney and steamed through the Heads of Sydney Harbour. The corps consisted of a HQ and three companies, each made up of around fourteen officers and three hundred and seventy other ranks. The ship sailed via Melbourne to Fremantle, where it arrived on 7 March. Although the ship left the quayside the following afternoon, it failed to reach the harbour entrance. As it made way for an incoming ship, the Ulysses struck an uncharted rock and had to be evacuated until temporary repairs could be effected. While repair work was underway, the corps was accommodated at Blackboy Hill Camp. On 1 April the ship again made a bid for the open ocean. This time it succeeded and the corps was on its way to France. After berthing briefly in Alexandria to change ships, then Malta, the corps finally arrived in Marseilles on 5 May. The men immediately entrained and journeyed to Hazebrouck, arriving on the morning of 8 May 1916.

When the corps arrived at Hazebrouck, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd companies were under the command of Capt James Henry[4], Capt Edric Mulligan[5] and Lt Leslie Coulter[6] respectively. At Hazebrouck however, the men received a shock. By early 1916, the business of tunnelling and mining on the Western Front was highly organized. Mining was so important that a separate and distinct command structure had been developed. At its head and based at GHQ, was the Inspector of Mines, Brig Gen Robert Harvey RE. Reporting to him were his Controllers of Mines, one in each of the British Armies and each solely responsible for tunnelling company operations within his army sector. All operational matters were at the behest of the Controllers of Mines (CoM). The tunnelling companies reported directly to their relevant army CoM and worked in close co-operation with the front-line infantry commanders garrisoning their mining sectors.

The 'corps' structure of the Australian Mining Corps was inconsistent with the British mining & tunnelling company military hierarchy, and it had no option but to conform to the system. Almost

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2 Sir William Tannett Edgeworth David KBE, CMG, DSO. Attached Aust. Min. Corps 1915 – 1916. Attached GHQ 1916 – 1919. University Professor of Sydney New South Wales. Born St Fagans, Wales 1858. Died 1934.

3 Lt Col Albert Fewtrell DSO. Commanded Aust. Min. Corps 1915 – 1916. Commanded ANZAC Light Railways 1916 – 1917. Civil Engineer of Neutral Bay, Sydney. Born Chester, United Kingdom 1885. Served in WWII as Maj Gen. Died 1950.

4 Maj James Douglas Henry OBE, DSO. Commanded 1st ATC 1916 – Nov 1917. Mining Engineer of Indooroopilly, Queensland. Born Claremont Queensland 1881. Died, date unknown.

5 Maj Edric Noel Mulligan DSO, CdeG. Commanded 2nd ATC 1916 – 1919. Mining Engineer of Double Bay, Sydney. Born Sydney, New South Wales, 1886. Died 1932.

6 Maj Leslie Jack Coulter DSO. Commanded 3rd ATC 1916 – June 1917. Mining Engineer of Claremont Tasmania, Born – Ballarat Victoria, 1889. Killed in action July 1917.

immediately therefore, the Australian Mining Corps disintegrated into its individual companies and they embarked on independent lives. By the end of May, the corps' HQ had all but disappeared, its senior officers left and assumed positions in other Australian units, its rankers filled positions within the tunnelling companies or the spin-off unit formed from the technical support arm of the corps, and what later became known as the Australian Electrical and Mechanical Mining and Boring Company (AE&MM&B Coy or as it became more familiarly known, the Alphabet Company).

With the exception of the Alphabet company, the tunnelling companies dispersed from Hazebrouck into their different mining sectors in the third week of May 1916. The 1st and 2nd companies were initially allotted to the British Second Army, in whose sector Hazebrouck fell. The 1st ATC assumed operations in the Ploegsteert (colloquially known as Plug Street) region north of the Lys River outside Armentières. Some of the men were also sent to gain experience with the 3rd Canadian Tunnelling Company at Hill 60.

The 2nd ATC assumed an area extending southwards from the Lys River to a small salient at Cordonnerie Farm outside Fromelles. The 3rd ATC assumed control of the British mine systems along the front immediately south the of the 2nd ATC, a front extending from infamous Sugarloaf Salient at Fromelles to the Boar's Head Salient outside Richebourg l'Avoue. Although the latter two Australian Tunnelling Companies were in line adjacent to each other, they were in different army sectors with the 3rd ATC assigned to the First Army where its northern flank joined the Second Army opposite the Sugarloaf Salient.

The mining systems the companies took over were already well established and initially their work was mostly confined to mime system maintenance and 'defensive' mining, that is, listening and intercepting German mining activity. In addition to mining, the men also commenced the activity that would remain a constant task through the war, dugout construction. Within days of taking up their positions, the companies began to suffer battle casualties. On 18 May 1916, 764 Sapper Sam Sproat[7], 2nd ATC, was the first man to be killed in action. Just over one month later the 1st ATC's Lt Arthur Smith[8] became the first of the eleven serving Australian tunnelling company officers to loose their lives in the war.

Around the time Arthur Smith was killed, a fellow officer from the 1st ATC was awarded the first of the many medals of gallantry won by the tunnelling companies. Lt Oliver Woodward[9] was given the task of destroying a troublesome German machine gun nest firing from the cellar of the ruins of a house, known as the 'Red House' in no man's land just outside the remains of the village of le Tourqet. Using a mobile charge, he achieved the daring task in the company of Sgt 110 Hugh Fraser[10] and Sapper 192 George Morris[11]. Oliver Woodward won the MC for his part in the raid. It was the first of three MCs won by this officer, an achievement shared by only three other Australian officers in the First World War.

The first major action involving the Australian tunnelling companies was the disastrous Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916. Immediately prior to the Australian 32nd infantry battalion (5th

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7 Sapper 764 Samuel Sproat. 1st ATC. Coal Miner of Dunedin, New Zealand. Born Carlyle, United Kingdom 1881. Killed in action May 1916.

8 Lt Arthur Percival Smith. 1st ATC. Engineer of Camberwell Victoria. Born St Arnaud Victoria 1878. Killed in action June 1916.

9 Capt Oliver Holmes Woodward MC and two bars. 1st ATC. Mining Engineer and metallurgist of Mt Morgan, Queensland. Born Tenterfield, New South Wales, 1885. Died 1966.

10 Lt Hugh Fraser DCM. 1st ATC 1915 – 1917, 3rd Fld Coy Eng. 1918. Kangaroo shooter of South Brisbane, Queensland. Born Forbes New South Wales, 1887. Killed in action May 1918.

11 Sgt 192 George Hudson Morris MSM. 1st ATC. Labourer of Bundaberg, Queensland. Born Bundaberg Queensland 1886. Died date unknown.

Australian Division) attacking from its position in the Cordonnerie Farm Salient, the 2nd ATC at detonated a mine below no man's land. At 520 kg of ammonal, this was to be the company's largest recorded mine of the war. The objective was to use the mine crater's earthen rim to shield the attacking Australian infantry from enfilading German gunfire from the north-east direction.

Meanwhile nearby, opposite the Sugarloaf and just south of it in the Red Lamp Salient, the 3rd ATC undertook four 'push-piping' operations from the front line trenches, to create instantaneous communication trenches for the elements of the attacking British 61st and 36th Divisions. This process involved jacking explosive-filled pipes through the soil just below the surface under no man's land and, in the last moments before zero hour, detonating them. These operations were only partially successful due to the leads becoming damaged by shellfire during the operations, in spite of desperate attempts to reconnect the leads under heavy shell and gun fire. While the infantry suffered terribly in the short battle, especially the Australian 5th Division which was severely mauled, the tunnellers emerged with only a few casualties. Seven men were wounded included Maj Lesile Coulter the CO of the 3rd ATC and his 2ic, Capt Alexander Sanderson[12]. In recognition of the severity of the danger the men were exposed to during the push-piping operations, one DSO, one MC, three DCMs and one MM were awarded to the Australian tunnellers involved.

For much of the remainder of 1916, the tunnelling companies enjoyed the opportunity of acclimatizing to their roles, honing trench warfare survival skills and the skills of their wartime role as sub-terrain guardians to the "poor bloody infantry". Mostly their time was committed to listening duties in the shallow mining systems, repairing and maintaining mine systems and the construction of dugouts. Defensive mining was undertaken sporadically when German digging threatened. In the Cordonnerie Salient mine system, records show that between 13 August and 1 October 1916 the 2 ATC blew eight small camouflets below no man's land in the vicinity of the 19 July mine crater, where the front lines were less than 100 m apart.

During autumn of 1916, 1 ATC was engaged on the construction of one of the largest dugouts in the British held sector of the front. 'The Catacombs' or as it was known to the tunnellers, 'Wallangarra' dugout was excavated below Hill 63 in Ploegsteert Wood. The Australian tunnellers worked on it during September and October 1916. Once complete, it could accommodate a full battalion of infantry (over 1 000 officers and men). Such was its magnitude, the dugout was officially opened on 1 November 1916 by the GOC the British Second Army, General Sir Herbert Plumer, with an entourage of staff and lesser generals from his army.

In late August 1916, three more Australian tunnelling companies arrived in France after spending six weeks at Perham Downs camp in England. The 4th, 5th and 6th Australian Tunnelling Companies had been raised in Australia while the first three companies were making final plans to embark. Their existence of the 4th – 6th companies was to be short lived. Upon their arrival in France they were amalgamated into the three established companies. The 4th dissolved into the 1st ATC, the 5th into the 2nd and the 6th into the 3rd. This event effectively doubled the establishment of the three older companies. The commanding officers of the recently arrived companies found themselves redundant and they were soon re-assigned to other Australian pioneer or field company units.

Early November 1916 saw two tunnelling companies move to new operations. The 1st ATC took over mining operations from the 3rd Canadian Tunnelling Company at Hill 60 in the southern edge of the Ypres Salient; one of the most infamous places on the Western Front. The 3rd ATC

12 Maj Alexander Sanderson DSO, MC and bar. Commanded 3rd ATC 1917 – 1919. Civil and Mining Engineer of Claremont, Western Australia. Born Oamaru, New Zealand, 1881. Died, date unknown.

moved south to assumed operations in the Hill 70 mining system at Loos, the village after which the disastrous battle of September-October 1915 is named.

The 1st ATC established its headquarters at Ridge Camp outside the rest town of Poperinghe (affectionately known as Pop) while its advanced billets were established in the ramparts near the Lille Gate in Ypres. At Hill 60 the 1st ATC took over the task of protecting two enormous mines placed 30 metres below ground by the Canadian tunnellers. Known as the 'Hill 60' and 'Caterpillar' mines, they were two of was to be a group of twenty-two massive mines laid by the allied tunnelling companies in great secrecy over a period of many months, below the German front line where the Germans overlooked the British along the edge of the Messines Ridge. The mines had a combined payload of around 1,000,000 lbs of high explosives. They were placed at intervals in an arc along the western edge of the ridge extending over a distance of 14 kilometres from Hill 60 to Ploegsteert Wood. When the 1st ATC arrived, the company had the task of protecting their two mine chambers from detection by the opposing German tunnellers. The three-level mining system at Hill 60 was in poor shape and the Australians set about improving drainage and ventilation in the system as well as embarking on a program of expansion of the deep mine galleries. The company commenced its tour of duty in one of the active sections of the front and which the following months was subjected to regular, heavy German minenwerfer (trench mortar) bombardments.

At Loos, the 3rd ATC relieved the British 258th Tun Coy RE of the extensive Hill 70 mining system at Loos. Its camp and headquarters were established in Bracquemont, a satellite suburb of the town of Noeux-les-Mines. Unbeknown to the company at the time, this was to be their home for the next two years. The company had barely familiarized itself with its new mining system, when disaster struck. In the early hours of the morning of 27 November 1916, the Germans detonated a deep camouflet[13] in the 'Black Watch' mine system, just as the Australian tunnellers were charging their own camouflet. The blast killed twenty sappers, including Sgt 1364 Macklain Kerby[14] DCM and a further nine men were gassed. Lt Oscar Howie[15] won the Military Cross for his initiative in the rescue attempts made following the explosion. This single act of hostility on 27 November resulted in the greatest loss of life experienced by an Australian tunnelling company during the whole war.

With the arrival of winter 1916-1917, the shallow mine systems along the 2nd ATC front became waterlogged and many were allowed to fill and were abandoned. The mine system at Cordonnerie Farm was also abandoned and in late January 1917, the company moved its operations northward to 'The Bluff', another infamous point on the Western Front where the Ypres-Comines Canal cuts through the Messines Ridge. Here, the company undertook listening duties and among other works, assisted its neighbouring tunnelling company, the 1st ATC, in dugout construction works. Like the 1st ATC, the 2nd ATC established its HQ camp outside Poperinghe.

Easter Monday April 9, 1917 was memorable in the history of the Australian tunnelling companies for two reasons. On the 1st ATC front at Hill 60, the Germans embarked on one of their largest raids of 1917 for the purpose of locating and destroying mine shafts. After a heavy artillery bombardment, a raiding party of up to 500 Germans managed to break into the British lines. The attack resulted in the permanent loss of a portion of the shallow mine system at Hill 60

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13 An explosive charge designed to destroy enemy underground workings, without forming a crater at ground surface.

14 Sgt 1364 Macklain James Kerby DCM. 3rd ATC. Engineer of Richmond, Victoria. Born Ballarat ,Victoria, 1886. Killed in action 27 November 1916.

15 Lt Oscar Roy Howie MC. 3rd ATC. Mining Engineer of Collie, West Australia . Born McLaren Vale, South Australia, 1886. Died, date unknown.

and the capture of five Australian tunnellers. More importantly, the Germans recovered a cutting of 'blue clay' the deep Yprian clay in which the massive mines were placed, thereby advertising to the German, that the allies had extended their mining system at Hill 60 to greater depths that the German miners. This propelled the Germans to search for the deep mines and it almost resulted in their discovery.

Easter Monday 1917 was also the start of the Battle of Arras, instigated by the British. The battle frontage extended southwards from Lens, the city just to the south of Loos where the 3rd ATC was in action. By the end of the battle, the German front line had been pushed eastward by as much as 50 km. It so happened that the hinge point between the pre-battle British front line and the post-battle front line, lay directly over number 1 shaft in the 3rd ATC's mine gallery at Loos. While the company was not required to use its tunnelling skills for the battle, its men were involved in carrying ammunition to front line British units and repairing roads across the old no man's land. One road, leading into the village of Liévin is named 'Australian Road' on official British trench maps of the time, in recognition of the work of the 3rd ATC during the battle.

As the Battle of Arras still waged, the 1st ATC at Hill 60 suffered its highest single day of casualties on 25 April, the second anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. Three of its officers and nine other ranks were killed instantly when an explosion ripped through the front line officer's dugout and an adjacent dugout. The published explanation for the blast attributes the blast to the testing of a faulty detonator. The testing method, using a weak electric current passed though a live detonator, was standard practice, however on this occasion the detonator exploded, presumably while it was still buried in its 25 kilogram, high explosive priming charge. An alternative and more likely explanation was reported by the on-duty mine rescue officer, Lt Robert Clinton[16], who was asked by his CO to investigate the explosion. He concluded that the cause was a direct hit from a minenwerfer ('minnie') bombardment that was being directed on the front line at the time. To further add to the tragedy, a sapper[17] in the search and rescue party become tangled in wreckage and died from gas inhalation before he could be extricated.

Soon after the Battle of Arras, the British embarked in the Battle of Messines. In the pre-dawn of 7 June 1917, the culmination of almost eighteen months of work by tens of thousands of British, Australian and Canadian tunnellers came to fruition with the detonating of nineteen of the massive mines that had been buried below the German front lies on the Messines Ridge. Within the span of just three minutes, 425 tonnes of high explosives vaporised below the ridge and the effect was overwhelming to both the onlooking British troops and the poor Germans who were garrisoning the frontline trenches. Capt Oliver Woodward of the 1st ATC threw the two electric switches for the northernmost two mines, Hill 60 and The Caterpillar and 56 tonnes of explosives that made up the two mines when up in unison. Such was the overwhelming effect of the mines, the attacking British barely lost a man in the attack. Many British were able to calmly walk across and through the German lines without any opposition. Sadly, at Hill 60 alone, the two mines reportedly killed over 680 German officers and other ranks. A detailed account of the experiences of the 1st ATC at Hill 60 is covered in Appendix 1 of Charles Bean's Official History of Australia in the War 1914 – 1918, Volume IV.

The British victory that morning was the most complete up until that point of the war. Unfortunately, the unexpected successes of the morning were later squandered as the Germans recovered and responded. In spite of this, the concept of the mines of Messines was without

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16 Capt Robert Adam Clinton MC. 1 ATC 1916 – June 1918. 2nd Fld Coy Eng June 1918 - 1919. Mining Engineer of Charters Towers. Born Ballarat, Victoria 1879. Died 1936.

17 2nd Corporal 216 John William Saxton. 1 ATC. Blacksmith striker. Born Nottingham, England 1893. Killed in action, 25 April 1917.

doubt, one of the most bold and audacious ideas adopted by the British high command in the war and its successful implementation is certainly a lasting tribute to the men who lived and died underground to ensure its success.

He blowing of the great mines at Messines effectively spelt the death knell for military mining along the British sector of the Western Front and the tunnelling companies commenced their new roles in the war.

Soon after the mines of Messines were blown, the 1st ATC commenced dugout construction and road building in the Messines/Wytschaete area and established its HQ in a new camp purpose built by its own men at Dranoutre. One of the dugout complexes the company commenced work on was in the Spanbroekmolen Mine Crater, one of the biggest craters created on 7 June 1917. This, along with several other now water-filled craters, still exists.

At the end of June the 2nd ATC was transferred to the Belgian Coast to prepare for another secretive British offensive that had been planned to meet up with expected British advances made during the forthcoming Third Battle of Ypres. Known as 'Operation Hush', the British were to make a coastal landing behind the German lines near Middelkerke, with the intention of firstly knocking out the German U-boat ports at Ostend and Zeebrugge, then rolling the German line back towards the south east. The 2nd ATC was one of half a dozen Allied tunnelling companies sent to the coast with the British XV Corps. It's new sector was at the seaside village of Nieuport Bains where the Yser Canal flows into the North Sea. The Australians were the first 'British' soldiers to arrive in that sector. The focus of Australian tunnellers attention was the dunes where the two front lines met on the northern side of the Yser canal. Mines were to be placed below two large dunes on the German front line and blow at the start Operation Hush. Access to the front was via three pontoon bridges across the canal.

All was going well, until 10 July, when the Germans, sensing that preparations for a British offensive where underway, launched their own attack aided by the first use of Mustard Gas in the war. The attack caught the British totally unawares and by the end of the day, they had suffered over 3,000 casualties, mostly prisoners. The three pontoon bridges at Nieuport Bains were destroyed by artillery early in the day, trapping all the men on the northern side of the canal. Forty-one tunnellers and one officer[18] from the 3rd ATC were captured. Only a handful of tunnellers escaped by swimming across the canal. One of those was Sapper 2432 James O'Connell[19]. He had earlier been wounded in the head by a bullet and was then severely burnt by a flame-thrower. As his injuries were being tended in an advanced dugout, his blight was explained. He got up and made his way to the canal and swam to the southern bank to relative safety. Hearing the cried of a man struggling in the water, he returned to the canal and dragged the man to the bank. He then collapsed from his wounds and exhaustion. His story was recalled in a British newspaper. A note in his unit's war diary suggests he was recommended for the Victoria Cross, however there is no other record of the recommendation. He was however, awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal with citation. July 10, 1917 was a setback for Operation Hush. History now tells us, the operation did not eventuate, the reason being the failure in the Third Battle of Ypres after 31 July 1917 to advance beyond the confines of the Ypres Salient.

As the 2nd ATC was establishing itself on the Belgian Coast, the 3rd ATC was experiencing its own dramas. On 28 June 1917 June, a party of tunnellers from the 3rd ATC accompanied a large

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18 2Lt Walter Mortensen. 2nd ATC. Mining Engineer of Mt Morgan, Queensland. Born Mt Perry, Queensland, 1888. Died, date unknown.

19 Sapper 2432 James O'Connell DCM. 2nd ATC. Labourer of Woolwich, New South Wales. Born Lismore, New South Wales, 1888. Died 1963.

raiding party made of two companies from the British 18th Brigade at Loos. The tunnellers' task was to locate and destroy German mine shafts and dugouts. The party was to be lead by Capt Alexander Sanderson but the company's CO, Maj Leslie Coulter DSO, elected at the last moment to join the raid. The raid itself was successful, three mine shafts and two deep dugouts were destroyed, but in a moment of exuberance just before the tunnellers were to return to their lines, Maj Coulter and his batman, Sapper 1283 Frank Griffin[20] were shot and killed by a sniper. After this date, Capt Alex Sanderson assumed command of the 3rd ATC for the remainder of the war.

Two weeks after the death of Leslie Coulter, the German miners at Hill 70, blew among the last of their mines of the war along the British sector of the front. The resulting crater was named Coulter Crater in honour of the widely respected, deceased Australian tunnelling officer. In response, the Australian tunnellers went on the offensive and within days had broken into the German mining system, capturing 235 m of opposing galleries. Finally, on 27 July 1917, the Australian tunnellers blew their last and one of their biggest camouflets of the war, a 10,000 lb 'maximum' camouflet. By that time, the German mining threat had all but evaporated and the 3rd ATC, like its two sister companies, embarked on new roles. Two weeks after blowing its last camouflet at Hill 70, the Canadian Corps captured the hill and push back the Germans lines back down the eastern slope of the hill. Two detachments of tunnellers accompanied the Canadian infantry, identifying and checking captured dugouts and posts. Work on that occasion resulted in the 3rd ATC being awarded two Military Crosses and one Military Medal.

The first of the series of battles that made up the Third Battle of Ypres (now commonly referred to as Passchendaele) commenced on 31 July 1917. During the first month of the battle, the 1st ATC continued its work around Messines. In the first week of September, it was transferred to the Ypres Salient to assist in the preparations for the Battle of Menin Road, on the front to be occupied by the ANZAC I. The company focused on expanding the deep dugout system in the Hooge Crater and over a two week period the company excavated five inclined stairways through the crater wall to a depth of 25 feet (7.5 meters) and constructed over 80 meters of connected corridor and dugout rooms. On the eve of the battle, 19 September, the company handed over the dugout system to the headquarters of the 2nd and 3rd Brigades, Australian 1st Division. During the dugout construction phase, 13 men from the company were killed or died of wounds, six of those on the evening of 18 September when the lorry they had been riding in was hit by a shell at Hellfire Corner.

After the Battle of Menin road, the company supplied men to assist in clearing dugouts during the Battle of Polygon wood while the remaining men commenced constructing dugouts across the ground being gradually won by the infantry as they approached Passchendaele village. A group of sappers under Lt Walter Whettam[21] worked for two days to seal the eastern entrances to the old German dugout system that lay within the 'Butte' in Polygon Wood after its capture by the Australian 5th Division. Such was the danger of working conditions experienced by the party, Lt Whettam was awarded the Military Cross and the Military Medal was awarded to two sappers.

Through the autumn of 1917, the all Australian tunnelling companies were therefore mostly engaged on dugout constructions works. At Loos, following the capture of Hill 70, the 3rd ATC's operational front was extended northwards to cover the extensive, interconnected tunnel

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20 Sapper 1283 Frank Griffin. 3rd ATC. Labourer of Werribee, Victoria. Born Dublin, Ireland, 1883. Killed in action, 28 July 1917.

21 Lt Walter John Whettam MC. 4th & 1st ATC. Civil Engineer of St Leonards, Sydney. Born Weymouth UK, 1884. Died 1942.

complexes opposite the villages of Hulluch and Cite St Elie on the southern flank of the Hohenzollern Redoubt. Here, the company embarked on an extended period of dugout construction and maintenance in the tunnels in the sector.

As the Third Battle of Ypres wound down in November 1917, the 1st and 3rd ATCs were settling into their winter routines in the Ypres Salient and near Loos respectively. The 2nd ATC on the other hand found itself on the move, this time to join the British Third Army on another battle front, Cambrai. The company left the Belgian coast on 18 November, two days before the battle commenced and arrived on 26 November and temporarily established its camp in Havringcourt Wood. Snow was falling as the men immediately set to work repairing roads and digging support lines for the British infantry. Initial successes in breaking through the Hindenburg Line using the largest attack of tanks in the war to that time were tempered when a German counter-offensive forced the British to make a limited withdrawal. The final battle of 1917 ended in the first week of December.

The British High Command recognised that the Germans would mount an offensive in the coming spring and one of the most likely places for the offensive was against the Cambrai front. Consequently, through the winter months, the 2nd ATC was engaged on ambitious construction program across the whole Cambrai Salient, mostly dugouts and gun emplacements for Royal Artillery batteries and a series of battalion headquarters. By Christmas, a more permanent camp had been constructed for the company on the edge of a village, Ytres. One of the more unusual demands placed on the company included converting local village catacombs into accommodation and subways for the infantry.

Meanwhile during winter on the Loos front, the 3rd ATC started one of its largest projects, the construction of a tunnel, what later became known as the Hythe Tunnel, connecting its old front line mine gallery system with the new front line trenches lying on the eastern slopes of Hill 70. Infantry moving along Hythe Alley, the main communication trench that passed over Hill 70 to the front, were exposed to German observation. A subway below the hill was therefore proposed and work commenced in January 1918. During surveying work for the tunnel in January 1918, one of the 3rd ATC's most dynamic subalterns, Lt Hugh Russel MC, was killed in action.

Evidence that a German offensive was in the offing became evident to the men of the 2nd ATC during the latter part of February 1918. The Germans embarked on a campaign of softening up the British and the number of high explosive and mustard gas shells being fired into the Cambrai Salient increased noticeably towards the end of the month. The impact on the 2nd ATC, many of whose men were working in exposed conditions right across the salient, was dramatic. On 25 and 26 February, 51 Australian tunnellers were hospitalized with gas poisoning. Over the weeks leading up to 21 March 1918, the intensity of the German artillery fire into the salient further increased with a proportionate increase in the use of mustard gas shells. Between 12 and 15 March 1918, it has been estimated that around 110,000 gas shells were fired into the V Corps area. On 12 March, 76 men from No 3 section and 54 attached infantry became gas shells casualties while working near the village of Trescault. By the eve of the German attack on 22 March, the 2nd ATC had almost one third of its establishment hospitalized through gas poisoning.

The German spring offensive opened on 21 March 1918 and the brunt of the offensive along the British sector was felt by the divisions holding the Cambrai Salient. By the following day, the overwhelming number of German troops, spear-headed by storm-troops, overran the British defences. So commenced the now famous British retirement across the old Somme battlefields, fighting rear-guard actions as they moved westward. The 2nd ATC was one of the many 'British' units caught up in the retirement. At 4:15 am on 23 March the company was ordered to evacuate

its camp at Ytres. Over the next five days, the company marched westward to Querrieu via Rocquigny, Longueval, Pozières, Aveluy and Mailly-Maillet. Once at Querrieu, the weary company was thrown into constructing lines of defensive works in the southern sector of what was known as the 'GHQ Defence Line' between the Ancre River and the Amiens - Albert road. As the Australian tunnellers set to work, the first of the Australian infantry divisions, the 3rd and 4th Divisions were arriving in the same sector after being hurried south to assist with the defence of Amiens. This was the first time in fifteen months the 2nd ATC had worked in the same sector as an Australian infantry division.

While the British retirement across the Somme battlefields was still occurring, the 1st ATC in the Ypres Salient was, at short notice ordered to leave its operations and proceed southward. Following the Third Battle of Ypres, the 1st ATC was engaged on a program of dugout construction. This work saw the company stretched across the salient, from the 'Halfway House' dugout between Zillebeke and Hellfire Corner, to the 'Dash' dugout opposite Tyne Cot cemetery. Like its sister company, the 1st ATC was assigned the task of constructing a new line of trenches except this time along the northern extent of the GHQ Defence Line, in the British VI Corps sector. On 29 March, the company arrived in the village of Saulty, 12 kilometres south-west of Arras and immediately set to work digging of six kilometres of new trenches. By the time this task was completed on 6 April, the threat of the German offensive against the British Third and Fifth Armies was diminishing and the company commenced a phase of construction works, mostly machine-gun emplacements across the rear of the Third Army area. This work was to occupy the company for the following two months. The move from the Ypres Salient spared the 1st ATC the fate of 2nd ATC. Not long after leaving, most of the ground over which the company had been working during winter was lost to the Germans as their spring offensive extended northwards.

On 9 April 1918, the second thrust of the German spring offensive was made against the allied line near Fromelles. A Portuguese division took the initial onslaught and soon crumbled allowing the Germans to roll back the British lines towards Armentières in the north and Givenchy on the La Bassée Canal to the south. At the time, a detachment of 38 men from the 3rd ATC under Lts Neil Campbell[22] and John Dow[23] was constructing machine-gun positions in and around Armentières. Such was the seriousness of the situation and the ensuing confusion that followed, the detachment as placed in the front line to act as infantry alongside elements of the British 34th Division outside Erquinghem-sur-Lys. It was at Erquinghem, that Neil Campbell was killed in action while going to seek confirmation of an order for his men to retire. After his death, John Dow took command and over the course of the following five days, the unit fell back through Armentières to Strazeele and at times taking rear-guard positions attached to the 12th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment. By that time, the Australian 1st Division had arrived at nearby Hazebrouck to reinforce the divisions in the area and had established headquarters in nearby Pradelles. The exhausted tunnellers were transferred to the 1st Division's engineers and once there, contact with the 3rd ATC headquarters was re-established. Lorries were dispatched from and the men returned to their own unit's headquarters.

The southern hinge of the German offensive on the Lys front fell at Givenchy on the La Bassée canal. Givenchy had been the site of heavy fighting over the years of British occupation of that part of the sector. No-man's land in front of the shattered village was scarred with a mass of huge

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22 Lt Neil Campbell, 10 Aus. Light Horse Regt. 1914 – 1915. 3 ATC 1917 – 1918. Mining Engineer of Adelaide South Australia. Born Blackwood, South Australia, 1882. Wounded in action Gallipoli, 29 May 1915. Killed in action, 10 April 1918.

23 Lt John Dow. 3 ATC. Mine Surveyor of Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Born, St Kilda Victoria, 1882. Died, date unknown.

mine craters but in spite of the destruction of the place, it was a heavily fortified British position with a series of 'keeps' connected by long tunnels. The underground power supply, lighting and ventilation was maintained by sappers from the ubiquitous AE&MM&B Coy. The German advance saw the British positions at Givenchy overrun on 18 April but the village was reclaimed the following day after intense fighting. Cpl 1306 John Nancarrow[24] had been with the detachment of men from the AE&MM&B Coy at Givenchy since June 1916. Earlier, he had been awarded a DCM for his efforts in keeping the galleries at Givenchy free of water after pumps had been smashed. He, with four others from the company were in the Givenchy tunnels mending wires and motors when the Germans overran the position and the five Australians were taken prisoner. For his initiative and devotion to duty on the 18 April, John Nancarrow was awarded a bar to his DCM.

In the sector south of Givenchy, the 3rd ATC suffered the effects of the German attack on the Lys front when the area from the La Bassée Canal to Vermelles was subjected to days of unrelenting gas shelling. Over the three days commencing 8 April, the 3rd ATC suffered 43 cases of gas shell poisoning from the two sections working near Vermelles. Fortunately, no cases were fatal.

After the German offensive had ground to a halt along the British sector and attention was turned to attack the French on the Aisne, the British divisions had time to regroup, plan and prepare to go on the offensive. This took place during June and July 1918, as recently arrived American divisions began to swell the number of Allied divisions on the Western Front. By mid April, the Australian Corps had relieved the British VII Corps between the Somme and Ancre Rivers. The 2nd ATC had been assigned the job of preparing for demolition and guarding, all the bridges over the Ancre and Somme rivers in the corps area. The explosive charges were finally removed from all the bridges once the Allied advance commenced in August.

While the German offensive towards Amiens lost most of its thunder at the end of March, in April efforts were made by the Germans to capture the town of Villers-Bretonneux on the ridge above the Somme River. From there they would be in a position to directly overlook Amiens. The assault against the town which took place on 24 April was driven back the following day by three British divisions and the Australian 5th Division. While the tunnelling companies were not directly involved in the battle, the 2nd ATC suffered as a consequence in the artillery bombardments that blanketed much of the rearward areas before and after the battle. A several sappers guarding mined bridge crossings were killed when the bridges were targeted. The company billets in Querrieu was shelled, so much so that the company was eventually forced to move to the Allonville Wood, 2 kilometres west from Querrieu.

During May, June and July 1918, the 1st and 2nd ATCs continued with the construction of defensive emplacements on and around the GHQ Defence Line. By the end of May the Australian Corps had come into formation under General Monash and held the front between the Somme and Ancre Rivers. At the end of June, the 1st ATC moved down to billets at Rivery, a suburb of Amiens and for the first time in over 12 months, the two Australian tunnelling companies, through not working alongside each other, were at least working within a few kilometres of each other and would continue to do so for the following four months.

On 8 August, the Allied thrust against the Germans commenced. The British Fourth Army was the first to move. It straddled the Somme River and comprised the Canadian, Australian and British III Corps. The result of that first day, the day famously referred to by Eric Ludendorff as

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24 Cpl 1306 John Nancarrow DCM and bar. AE&MM&B Coy 1916 – 1919. Fitter of Kalgoorlie WA, Born Halfwhistle, Northumberland, England, 1890. Died 1947.

'Black Day of the German Army' is now part of military history. Four days prior to the advance, the 2nd ATC camp moved to Bois de l'Abbe just outside Villers-Bretonneux. The two tunnelling companies were ordered to provide parties of sappers to accompany the advancing Australian divisional engineers in the attack, to inspect captured dugouts for suitability to act as headquarter dugouts and check them for mines and booby traps. The two parties from the 2nd ATC, each comprising and officer, three NCOs and 12 sappers, were assigned to field companies of the Australian 5th Division and two parties were assigned to the Australian 2nd Division. Similarly, four parties of tunnellers from the 1st ATC advanced with the Australian 3rd and 4th Divisions.

The Fourth Army juggernaut which carried with it two of the three Australian tunnelling companies, pushed its way eastwards across southern Picardie through August and September. The Somme was crossed and the ancient fortified town of Péronne recaptured on 5 September. By September 19, the army faced the Hindenburg Line. The Australian Corps sector found itself facing the line at Bellicourt. On the 24 September, two divisions, the 29th and 30th of the American II Corps, joined the Australian divisions to form a joint corps. On 29 September, the Americans lead the assault on the Main Hindenburg Line with Australian 3rd and 5th Divisions in support. In the approach to the Hindenburg Line, the 1st and 2nd Australian tunnelling companies were assigned the task of maintaining forward roads. The main roads were assigned codenames, "Black", "Blue", "Red" and "Yellow". During the attack on the Hindenburg Line, joint Australian-American Corps had a two division front. On the north facing the distant village of Bony was the 27th American Division with 3rd Australian Division in support. The 1st ATC had the responsibility of clearing and maintaining the "Yellow" and "Blue" roads on the northern divisional front. On the southern , 30th American & 5th Australian division front, the 2nd ATC was responsible for the "Black" and "Red" roads that passed through and around Bellicourt. The storming of the Hindenburg Line that commenced on 29 September was not completed in the Fourth Army front until 3 October, due to delays on taking Bony. The 29 September was however, the most torrid day of the battle. One quarter of the Military Crosses won by officers of the 1st ATC and half of those won by officers of the 2nd ATC in the whole war were won for actions on 29 September 1918. Capt Oliver Woodward of the 1st ATC won a bar to his Military Cross. Ten Military Medals were award to men of the 2nd ATC for action on 29 September. Over the 29 and 30 September, the two Australian tunnelling companies suffered seventy-three casualties including six men who were killed or died of wounds.

Within days, the last of the action of the Australian infantry took place with the capture of Montbrehain on 5 October by the Australian 6th Infantry Brigade. The Australian Corps was withdrawn and the Americans assumed control of the corps area. The two Australian tunnelling companies continued to move eastward and work with the Americans until 16 October when the 2nd ATC left the area for a rest camp at Friville-Escarbotin on the French coast. The 1st ATC elected to remain on duty. By 21 October the Germans on the Fourth Army front has been pushed back to the Sambre-Oise canal and it was here that the Americans II Corps left for rest, replaced by the British IX Corps. On 4 November, the canal was stormed. At the locks outside the village of Rejet-le-Beaulieu, a party of 98 officers and sappers under Capt Oliver Woodward had the task of erecting a heavy vehicle bridge over the canal in the hours following the British attack. This was achieved at a cost of four men killed and five wounded. Oliver Woodward won a 2nd bar to his Military Cross making him only one of four officers in the AIF to be awarded three Military Medals. Fourteen other officers and other ranks were awarded medals for

gallantry. The action at Rejet-le-Beaulieu by the 1st ATC on 4 November 1918 was the last involving an Australian army unit in the war. After the crossing of the canal, the company continued to pursue the retreating Germans with the British IX Corps. It was still in action on 11 November when Armistice was signed.

On 25 September 1918, the first signs that the Germans were retreating became apparent on the British I Corp's (Fifth Army) front. In anticipation of a German retreat, the 3rd ATC had been asked to prepare six investigation parties to accompany the vanguard advancing British divisions on the I Corps front and search for booby traps, mines, explosives and inspect dugouts, buildings and other reoccupied infrastructure. By 4 October, the village of La Bassée had been deserted of Germans. Soon the British 15th (Scottish) and 16th Divisions were in pursuit of the Germans with their embedded Australian investigation parties. The British divisions crossed Haute Deule Canal, with the assistance of the 3rd ATC which constructed bridges at Pont a Maudit and Meurchin and by 23 October were in Belgian territory looking across the flooded Scheldt River just south of Tournai. On 19 October that the headquarters of the 3rd ATC finally left its camp at Bracqemont, the fist time since establishing to take up operations in the I Corps area almost two years earlier. On 9 November, the Scheldt River was crossed and the British advance became rapid, covering over twenty kilometres by the time Armistice was announced two days later. Men from the tunnelling company investigation parties were by this time almost fifty kilometres in advance of their company headquarters. Like its sister companies, the 3rd ATC was rewarded for many acts of gallantry during the German retreat. During September and October the company was awarded five Military Crosses and a Distinguished Conduct Medal.

The war ended with the 3rd ATC having spent its entire tour of duty in France without a rest out of the line and without serving with another Australian unit.

Immediately after Armistice was declared, the Australian tunnelling companies concentrated on locating and rendering harmless abandoned ammunition, explosives, booby traps and mines in the areas around Tournai (3rd ATC) and Charleroi (1st & 2nd ATCs). They then turned their attention to repairing local infrastructure, mostly bridges in their respective areas, until the process of repatriation whittled away their numbers. By June 1919, all except those men who had applied to remain in France or Belgium on non-military employment, had left the war zone and were either in England or en-route for Australia and the units ceased to exist.

Of those served with the three Australian tunnelling companies and the AE&MM&B Coy between 1916 and 1919, the bodies of 322 men who died while on the establishment of those units lie scattered below the soil of France, Belgium, Germany and England. The names of 20 men are listed on either the Menin Gate and Villers-Bretonneux memorials to the missing. A further 11 men died in Australia during or immediately after the war and one is buried in South Africa. There are others like Lt Hugh Fraser DCM and Major Norman Macrea[25] who were killed or died in the service of other Australian units after being initially attached to Australian tunnelling units. Hugh Fraser won his DCM while serving with the 1st ATC.

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25 Maj Norman Macrea. Adjutant AMC Feb – June 1916. Adj. & QM ANZAC Entrench. Btn Jun - Aug 1916, 4th Pioneer Btn Aug 1916 – 1917. Surveyor/engineer of Sydney. Born St Andrews, Scotland 1885. Killed in Action 7 October 1917.

Each unit had a distinguished war record. With the disbandment of the daughter companies of the Australian Mining Corps came time to reflect on the magnificent achievements of the unpretentious men who took at least some part. The list of honours awarded to the men who passed through the units is one yardstick for measuring the mettle of the men who worked in these units and the list is impressive:

Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) - 2

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) - 1

Distinguished Service Orders (DSO) - 8

Distinguished Conduct Medals (DCM)[26] - 30

Military Crosses (MC)[27] - 47

Military Medals (MM) - 77

Meritorious Service Medals (MSM) - 27

Foreign Awards - 10

Forty-four individuals were mentioned in dispatches by army commanders on 54 occasions of which three officers were each mentioned in dispatches on three separate occasions.

The Australian tunnelling companies and their support unit, the "Alphabet" company, had unique roles in Australian military history. They reported to a British chain of command on operational matters yet their administration was via the AIF. They worked without rest for extended periods of time and in the case of the 3rd ATC, without a rest, in the same sector of front line yet worked right along their assigned sector. They worked more closely with English, Scottish, Welsh and Canadian infantry units than Australian units and with the exception of the Somme Offensive, they had played a role in all the major Allied offensives on the British Western Front between July 1916 and November 1918. A party of eight Australian tunnellers even marched across the German border in December 1918. They were subjected to the same terrors of front line trench warfare as the infantry yet they compounded this by entering a world of terror underground to which the infantry was largely ignorant and civilian populations, totally ignorant.

They could rightly have claimed to be the true Australian 'diggers' of the First World War.

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26 including a bar awarded to Cpl 1306 Jack Nancarrow

27 including a bar awarded to Maj Alexander Sanderson DSO, and two bars awarded to Capt Oliver Woodward.

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AN ASPIRATIONAL ARMY: AUSTRALIAN PLANNING FOR A CITIZEN FORCES DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE BEFORE 1920

Jean Bou[1]

This brief article will revisit the early development of the Australian Army and, drawing on new evidence, reveal that contrary to the generally accepted historical view, the establishment of citizen force divisions was being contemplated well before 1920.

Introduction

The history of Australia's citizen land forces was for many years a forlorn topic, almost forgotten in the push to examine the Australian contribution to wars, large and small. In the last fifteen years or so this has, thankfully, begun to change and a number of historians have made a contribution to our understanding of Australian citizen soldiers and the military institutions they were part of. Indeed whilst there are interpretational differences, some of which will be outlined below and one of which, John Mordike's, will be disputed, much of the broader organisational narrative has already taken on something of an established air. Recent research, however, reveals that at least one aspect of the early history of the citizen forces, that the first divisional structure was not contemplated until 1920 in light of the experience gained with the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF), is not in fact entirely accurate. As this article will show there was a clear intention for the Commonwealth, later Australian, Military Forces to form divisions from the brigades which already existed, even before the outbreak of the First World War.[2] A development which, despite being a small episode in the army's history, deserves to be understood.

Divisions – what do we think we know?

The claim that divisions were being considered as an evolutionary organisational step before the First World War in not a new one by any means, but thus far the evidence provided has been decidedly thin or, in some cases, the assertions made to that effect have reflected earnestness rather than scholarship. Given the lack of good evidence it is, therefore, not terribly surprising that the most recent scholarly works regarding the development of the Australian Army have not made any claims about a divisional organisation for the militia being considered before 1920. Al Palazzo's 2001 organisational history of the army makes no mention of it before going on to outline the deliberations and decisions made about army organisation, including divisions, in the years immediately after

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2 The author would like to thank Dr Al Palazzo, Dr Craig Wilcox, Dr John Connor and Professor Jeffrey Grey for their views on the new evidence used in this article.

the First World War.[3] Jeffrey Grey's institutional history of the army published in the same year similarly pays the idea no attention.[4]

Others have been more forthcoming, however. A 1963 article by George Vazenry in the *Australian Army Journal* baldly states that a divisional structure was created for the militia during the First World War but it is clear that, whatever evidence he may have drawn on, he overstated his case. There is no extant evidence to support the assertion that militia divisions were formed during this period.[5] Craig Wilcox mentions the prospect of the formation of divisions during the introduction of the Universal Training scheme in his book on citizen soldiering, *For Hearths and Homes*, but does not elaborate.[6]

The historian which has made the most of whatever thinking there may have been about militia divisions before 1920, however, is John Mordike in his book, *An Army for a Nation*. Mordike makes no specific claims about any scheme for a divisional organisation, but when considering the 1910 memorandum by Field Marshal Lord Kitchener on Australian defence, he conflates his analysis of that report with his views on imperial agendas to conclude that Kitchener intended any Australian divisions would be commanded by British officers.[7] Mordike's views on British officers and Australian divisions (militia or otherwise) are, however, seemingly based only on suppositions made from his reading of Kitchener's memorandum.[8] He concludes that because Kitchener made no clear provision for Australians to reach ranks higher than colonel (who then commanded brigades) and made no explicit allowance for any formations higher than a brigade, then any divisions which might be raised had to be commanded by British officers because that was the only source for such officers. That Kitchener's memorandum makes no mention of a divisional structure, or that no other evidence is produced to support his argument that divisional command would go to British officers does not appear to have swayed Mordike in reaching this conclusion. He appears also to have completely missed that provision was made for officers to be promoted to ranks higher than colonel in Australia through the agency of 'special appointments.'[9]

In arguing that imperialist plots were at play and that any Australian divisions would go to British commanders Mordike has, in this case, clearly gone beyond what the evidence he presented would support. The idea that a divisional structure was being considered is not,

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3 Albert Palazzo, *The Australian Army: a history of its organisation* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 48-76.

4 Jeffrey Grey, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume 1: The Australian Army* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 22-80.

5 Sergeant G.R. Vazenry, 'Reorganisation: The Australian Military Force 1800-1962', *Australian Army Journal* 165, February 1963, pp. 40-41.

6 Craig Wilcox, *For Hearths and Homes: Citizen Soldiering in Australia 1854-1945* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998), p. 62. The thesis on which his book is partly based also makes mention of divisions but, like his book, skims over the matter, Craig Wilcox, 'Australia's Citizen Army', PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1993, pp. 331-332.; see also Craig Wilcox, 'Defending Australia 1914-1918', Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey, *1918: Defining Victory, Proceedings Chief of Army's History Conference 1998* (Canberra: Army History Unit, 1998), p. 177.

7 John Mordike, *An Army for a Nation: A history of Australian Military Developments 1880-1914* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), p. 259.

8 Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, pp. 229-230 & 290-291.

9 Military Board deliberations on the rates of pay for the permanent forces under the new defence scheme, for example, made it clear that whilst no rates of pay had been established for ranks higher than colonel, this was only 'because such officers would hold special appointments.' In this case the immediate matter was the pay of senior officers holding administrative appointments, such as on the Military Board, but the principle was obviously extant and presumably extendable. Pay of Permanent Forces, Item 1905/2/475, 4 July 1911, Military Board Proceedings, NAA: A2653, 1908/1911. That Australia had produced a major-general of its own, John Hoad, also does not seem to have concerned him.

however, so far fetched. Kitchener's memorandum set out a force organisation in which, if it were followed, there would be:

21 brigades of 4 battalions each – 84 battalions of infantry

28 regiments of light horse

49 four gun field batteries

7 four gun heavy and howitzer batteries

7 communications companies, and

14 field companies of engineers[10]

To anyone familiar with army organisation it does not take much imagination or mental arithmetic to quickly realise that such a force could be rearranged to create up to seven light horse brigades (themselves perhaps in divisions) and seven infantry divisions, each properly supported by the then correct proportions of artillery, divisional cavalry, engineers and signallers.[11] If Kitchener or his supporting officers had such a step in mind in 1910, however, it was only an implied one and, as mentioned above, his report is silent on the raising of divisions.[12]

New evidence, however, reveals that it was not long before the Australian military authorities did begin to consider forming divisions from the brigades they were already working on.

Divisions – what we should know.

The creation of brigades in Australia had been mooted as far back as 1890 when an inspecting British officer, Major-General J. Bevan Edwards, had proposed the creation of a field force which included brigades that would be drawn from the various colonies.[13] The 1893 creation of the Mounted Brigade in New South Wales was probably the first attempt in Australia to create a formation that was, theoretically at least, more than a mere administrative arrangement and it included artillery, engineers and elements of the service corps.[14] The same man that created this formation, Major-General (later Sir) Edward Hutton, ensured that a brigade structure (though subjected to subsequent adjustments after 1906) was adopted by the new Commonwealth Military Forces when he became its first General Officer Commanding after federation.[15] Whilst Edwards had mentioned the possibility of divisions in his field force plans, no steps in this direction had been taken by any colonial or immediate post-federation military authorities. In the years between Kitchener's visit and the outbreak of the First World War, however, there was a significant

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10 Memorandum on the Defence of Australia by Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener of Kartoum NAA A1194, 45.30/27801, p. 6. Also available in *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, 1910, Vol II, no. 8.

11 One can only speculate as to whether Mordike made this calculation.

12 Kitchener was accompanied on his visit and tour by the British staff officer Colonel George Kirkpatrick, who would later be made a local Major-General and the Inspector-General of the Commonwealth Military Forces. Much of the organisational planning and groundwork for what Kitchener later included in his report had been done before his visit by Colonel (later Lieutenant-General) J.G. Legge, as well as other members of the Military Board.

13 Memorandum on the Proposed Organisation of the Military Forces of the Australian Colonies, Serial 11, Correspondence Relating to the Inspection of the Military Forces of the Australasian Colonies By Major-General J. Bevan Edwards, Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1890, Volume 49, p. 22.

14 Jean Bou, 'The Evolution and Development of the Australian Light Horse, 1860-1945', PhD thesis, UNSW@ADFA, 2005, pp. 57-59.

15 Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, pp. 27-39; and Craig A.J. Stockings, *The Making and Breaking of the Post-Federation Australian Army, 1901-09* (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2007), pp. 23-27.

change to the nation's military organisation which seems to have prompted the consideration of such a step.

The adoption of a nationwide compulsory military service system in mid-1912, in the form of the Universal Training scheme, which would ultimately see every able-bodied male British subject in the country serve in the cadets and militia from the age of 12 to 26 years, meant that Australia's military organisation was to expand dramatically.[16] Such an expansion was presumably seen as an organisational opportunity and in that same year the military authorities released a set of war establishments that expressly facilitated the creation of divisions. Under it the light horse was not to progress beyond a brigade organisation but a generic infantry wartime divisional structure was set out. Each of these was to consist of three infantry brigades, two squadrons of light horse as divisional mounted troops, divisional artillery of three field batteries plus a howitzer or heavy battery, divisional engineers (including signallers), a divisional train and three field ambulances.[17] When the decision was made to create such an establishment is, so far, unknown, as is the particulars of why such a step was taken.[18] That such a decision should be taken, however, is not all that surprising. The division was the next step on the organisational ladder, had perhaps been implicit in Kitchener's memorandum, and whilst key questions about commanders and staffs to control such formations would no doubt require attention, was a logical progression. That the Australian military had been progressively adopting the organisational templates of the British Army following the Imperial Conferences of 1907, 1909 and 1911 was probably also of some import.

This organisation was merely a theoretical one so long as the country was at peace, but it was not long before moves were made to create something more permanent. Just weeks before the outbreak of the First World War, on 1 July 1914, the Military Board met to consider, among other things, a proposal titled the 'Ultimate Organisation of the Commonwealth Military Forces'. Based on a memorandum prepared by the Director of Military Operations, Major C.B.B. White, and submitted by the Chief of the General Staff, Brigadier J.M. Gordon, it stated that as the division was the 'approved military organization for the Empire...its adoption is therefore recommended.' Recognising the problems in creating higher formations in an army of militia neophytes in which brigades were perhaps still more theoretical than real, the submission nevertheless went on to propose the nominal establishment of a 'Field Army' of three light horse brigades and two infantry divisions to be drawn from the 2nd and 3rd Military Districts (essentially New South Wales and Victoria). District Field Forces, which in the 1st and 4th Military Districts (Queensland and South Australia) included under strength infantry divisions, were also be to established in the smaller states.

In considering such an idea the issue of command was necessarily of some import but, contrary to Mordike's assertions, there was no suggestion that British officers would be imported to fill the appointments. Instead it was recommended that the commanders and their divisional staffs be appointed from the ranks of the Australian permanent forces by reorganising the already existing military district headquarters. In conclusion the

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16 The scheme was based in amendments made to the Defence Act in 1909 and the structure that Kitchener had outlined in his report of 1910. The senior cadet element of the scheme had commenced in mid-1911 and the volunteer and part-paid (militia) units converted to the new scheme in mid-1912.

17 War Establishments of the Australian Military Forces, 1912, NAA: A1194, 22.14/6970.

18 This plan seems to have had its genesis at least as early as 1911 as the Military Board, considering proposals on the organisation of the forces, set out then that the new war establishments would come into effect in 1912-1913, and that the forces would approach full strength under them by 1914-1915. Minutes of Military Board Meeting, 15 September 1911, Military Board Proceedings, NAA: A2653, 1908/1911.

submission recommended that this structure be adopted as the basis for planning until 1920.[19] The Military Board approved the principles of the submission and directed that the Chief of the General Staff and Adjutant-General begin work on creating the new divisional staffs. Whatever happened thereafter is not known and it is probable that any planning that may have commenced was overtaken by the outbreak of war; at least in the short term.

Yet the matter did not disappear and in April 1915 new tables of peace and war establishments were produced and issued which, going further than the Military Board had intended the year before, allowed, this time as part of the peace establishment, for the 'provisional' creation of two light horse divisions and six infantry divisions. The headquarters for each being allocated as such:

1st Light Horse Division – 2nd Military District
2nd Light Horse Division – 3rd Military District
1st Division – 1st Military District
2nd Division – 2nd Military District
3rd Division – 2nd Military District
4th Division – 3rd Military District
5th Division – 3rd Military District
6th Division – 4th Military District[20]

The supporting tables for these formations were detailed and the organisation of all arms in relation to the divisional structure was set out. Every field unit in the military establishment, including units which did not yet exist but which were to be raised as Universal Training progressed, were allocated to brigades and then divisions.[21] Similar tables were thereafter released again in 1916, 1918 and 1919.[22]

There is no evidence that these tables of organisation were ever acted upon, indeed such a development would have been impossible during the war years. Despite early undertakings to maintain the militia and senior cadets alongside the Australian Imperial Force, even by mid-1915 this was proving increasingly difficult. By late 1915 there was only sufficient permanent staff available to maintain basic administrative functions. At the same time militia unit command was frequently being passed to officers as low as captain, and brigades were being commanded by majors.[23] Citizen force unit training was also repeatedly disrupted, even suspended, for periods during the war. Anyone who may have been deemed suitable to command a division before the war, permanent or citizen force, was now overseas and the idea that the resource and manpower starved militia could be arranged into divisions can only be described as fantastic.

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19 Ultimate organisation of the Commonwealth Military Forces, minutes of Military Board meeting, 1 July 1914, Military Board Proceedings, NAA: A2653, 1914. The district commanders were to be made the new divisional commanders and their district staffs would form the nucleus of the divisional staffs.

20 The location of military districts did not conform directly to state boundaries but was close enough that the following is representative of the period under discussion: 1 MD – Queensland; 2 MD – NSW; 3 MD – Victoria; 4 MD – South Australia; 5 MD – Western Australia; 6 MD – Tasmania.

21 Tables of Peace Organization and Establishments 1915-16, issued with Military Order 245, 1915, NAA: A1194, 21.20/6895. The cover of the tables is in fact in error and they were actually issued with Military Order 244, 27 April 1915.

22 Tables of Peace Organization and Establishments, 1916-17, issued with Military Order 176, 1916, NAA: A1194, 21.20/6896; Tables of Peace Organization and Establishments, issued with Military Order 575, 1918, NAA A1194, 21.20/6897; Tables of Peace Organization and Establishments, 1919-20, issued with Military Order 463, 1919, NAA: A1194, 21.20/6898.

23 Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, pp. 71-75; and Bou, 'Evolution and Development of the Australian Light Horse, pp. 224-226.

Whether these plans had any effect on post-war deliberations about the future structure of the nation's army is another matter. The 1920 committee into the defence of Australia chaired by Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel also proposed the creation of a Field Army based on divisions which was, outwardly at least, quite similar to the organisation first set out in the establishments of 1915. It advocated the establishment of two cavalry divisions and four, expandable to six, infantry divisions.[24] Chauvel and two of the committee's other members, C.B.B. White and J.G. Legge, had all held key high level administrative appointments in Australia before or during the war when these divisional proposals were under consideration. Chauvel had been Adjutant-General from 1911 until his despatch to London in 1914. White had of course prepared the divisional scheme presented to the Military Board in 1914, and it is extremely unlikely that Legge, as twice the Chief of the General Staff during the war, would not have been aware of the subsequent organisational tables first promulgated in 1915.[25] Ultimately, however, there is no clear evidence to link the 1920 plan with any that may have preceded it and, however likely that there may have been an influence, it remains a matter of conjecture as to whether more than wartime experience with the AIF was part of their thinking.

Conclusion

Taken in perspective these deliberations and plans regarding the formation of citizen force divisions before 1920 are little more than historical 'small beer' in regard to the army's development. But that is not say they should be overlooked. It is clear that the nation's military authorities thought that a divisional organisation was a suitable one, even for a militia army, well before the First World War and took steps to realise that goal. The introduction of the Universal Training scheme was the means by which that goal could be achieved. Such developments deserve to be recognised. It is also entirely possible that the plans had a genuine influence on post-war defence deliberations. Moreover it is evident that under the plans presented in 1914 the commanders who would be appointed to these divisions were not, as has been claimed, to be British officers, but Australian permanent officers. Organisational matters aside, whether there is any underlying nationalist significance to this final decision is moot, and it seems worthwhile to wonder that in an army frequently riven by discord between citizen and permanent soldiers (a situation already in evidence before the First World War) whether it is perhaps just another episode in that often sorry tale.

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24 Report on the Military Defence of Australia, by a Conference of Senior Officers of the Australian Military Forces, 1920, Volumes 1 and 2. AWM1, 20/7.

25 Legge was CGS 1 August 1914-19 May 1915, and again 1 October 1917-31 May 1920.

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MILITARY HISTORY SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE ACADEMY 2007 PRIZE ESSAY

CITIZEN ARMIES: THE LOCOMOTIVE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Nathan James Frank Williams[1]

The statement "[p]rofessional militaries have generally proven superior to citizen armies" appears to be self evident. After all, the making of war is a technical skill akin to engineering or medicine, and as with these vocations, proficiency is gained only through training and experience. Few of us would feel comfortable being operated on by a surgeon who had only been hastily schooled in the rudiments of medicine because there was a sudden demand for doctors which could not be fulfilled by a professional cadre. And yet this situation is tantamount to the employment of citizen armies during wartime. Professional militaries have time and time again shown their supremacy on the battlefield, and for this reason are often assumed to be 'superior'. However, an army's worth must not be determined solely by its prowess on the battlefield, but all of the benefits it brings to the state it represents. Therefore, it is short-sighted to evaluate the merit of an army solely on territorial aggrandisement or the effectiveness with which it provides security from external threats; these are but two, albeit the most obvious, products of an army but not the only ones. State stability, prosperity and longevity is, as often as not, determined by the internal socio-political factors, and it is on this front that citizen armies emerge as superior to their professional counterparts. In particular this essay will examine the concept of citizen armies as a precursor and vanguard of liberal democracy.

Before proceeding, it is pertinent to clarify two points. Firstly, this is not an essay arguing the case for militarism. War is not in and of itself good. Regardless of any positive side-effects of war, such as instilling courage and honour in its participants, the pain and suffering caused by war always outweighs the good. The benefits which this essay refers to as a result of citizen armies simply refers to the marginal benefits which citizen armies provide over professional militaries. Secondly, for the purpose of this essay, a 'citizen army' is one in which the 'rank and file' is composed from the civilian population who are not permanently serving professional soldiers. They normally pursue another vocation and are called upon to react to a given event or serve a short tenure through conscription or national service. Such citizen armies may be supported by a small core of professionals, generally officers, but the majority of the fighting men (and, in some cases, women) must be derived from the civilian population. Furthermore, citizen armies are "military institutions in which these conscripts and military reservists are citizens rather than 'mere subjects'".[2]

The Peloponnesian War which pitted the very model of a professional army of the classical era, Sparta against the citizen forces of Athens, the world's first democracy, provides a valuable case for comparison. On face value, Sparta won the war (albeit with help from the Persians). Athens had imposed upon it the rule of 'the thirty tyrants', and was deprived of its naval fleet and city walls. It would never again return to its former might following the war. But it is arguable whether or not Sparta's military triumph was worth the negative externalities that maintaining a

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1 Officer Cadet Williams of the New Zealand Army was presented with his prize at the ADFA Graduation ceremony by Federal President Major Robert Morrison. He also received the Chief of Army Prize.

2 M. Janowitz, 'Military institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies' in *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 185-204 (1976), p. 186

standing army brought with it. Maintenance of the famed army shaped every facet of Spartan society. It was a state with one all consuming focus, the result of which was a militarised society that was "savage and inefficient"[3], not to mention inherently unstable. Spartiate males' ability to devote their life to the military was sustained solely through the labour of enslaved helots. It was only through terror and brutal repression that the minority Spartiates were able to keep the helots loyal. According to Archer, "Sparta lived on the edge of a volcano. Any serious defeat anywhere might produce a helot revolt, which would threaten the economic basis of many Spartiates and the social structure of Sparta."[4] Thebes recognised this structural weakness and, following their victory in the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC, they freed many helots while others rebelled against their former masters. Simultaneously, neighbouring states formed an anti-Spartan coalition and abolished the Peloponnesian league, a symbol of Spartan hegemony, shattering Spartan prestige forever.[5] Like its hold over the majority of its own people, Sparta's influence over its allies was contingent on fear of punitive military action for disloyalty.

In contrast, prior to the war Athens was progressive and democratic. Although the Athenian system also exploited slaves and was not 'democratic' in the sense that we now understand democracy – it did not practice universal franchise, and office holders were men of upper class - it certainly was far more inclusive and just than the Spartan system. Athens had more than twenty thousand citizen troops, whereas Sparta never fielded more than ten thousand, including non-citizen *perioeci*.[6] As a democratic state it made sense that, as each citizen voted to go to war, they should also fill the ranks of the military. Coker states, "democracy gave every man a stake in the success of the city, and the same could be said of success in the field"[7]. The same is true for the reverse; the existence of the citizen army gave every man a stake in democracy. The *ekklesia*, or assembly, was run as a direct democracy, as opposed to representative democracy, whereby every man who had completed military training as an *ephebos* was entitled to vote on any issue which passed through the *ekklesia*. Men fought only for causes which they themselves voted for and, as they themselves may have to fight, wars were not entered into capriciously.

"There is a great difference between us and our opponents, in our attitude towards military security." Pericles states in his famous funeral oration,

> Our city is open to the world, we have no periodical deportations in order to prevent people observing or finding out secrets which might be of military advantage to the enemy. This is because we rely, not on secret weapons, but on our own real courage and loyalty... the Spartans, from their earliest boyhood, are submitted to the most laborious training in courage; we pass our lives without all these restrictions, and yet are just as ready to face the same dangers as they are... fix your eyes everyday on the greatness of Athens... and [you will] fall in love with her. When you realize her greatness, then reflect that what made her great was men with a spirit of adventure, men who knew their duty, men who were ashamed to fall below a certain standard.[8]

To summarise Pericles' circumlocution, he believes Athens is a superior state in which to live because the citizen army allows men to live a life outside the constraints and hardships of military life. Moreover, he refers to the creation of civic virtue needed to effectively run a democratic state. By serving in the army, each citizen has shown the utmost loyalty to the state and that he values the whole above the part. Unlike in Sparta, after these traits have been demonstrated, and in times of peace, these men of calibre are reintegrated into

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3 C. Archer, et al., *World History of Warfare*, (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2002) p. 63
4 *Ibid.*
5 *Ibid.*
6 *Ibid.*, p. 62-3
7 C. Coker, *Waging War without Warriors*, (Lynee Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2002) p. 26
8 Pericles, "Pericles' Funeral Oration" in Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans R. Warner, (Penguin Classics, London, 1972), pp. 143-151

regular, civil society, where bellicosity is not their sole profession. In describing his futuristic utopian democracy in the book *Starship troopers,* R.A. Heinlein excellently articulates the way in which Athenians perceived their own political system and duty to the state: "Under our system every voter and office holder is a man who has demonstrated through voluntary and difficult service that he places the welfare of the group ahead of personal advantage"[9]. When asked what differentiates a soldier from a civilian morally, Heinlein's character answers: "The difference... lies in the field of civic virtue. A soldier accepts responsibility for the safety of the body politic of which he is a member, defending it, if need be, with his life. The civilian does not."[10] For this reason it was necessary that all who had the vote also served as a soldier.

In Athens, the citizen army was an essential part of instilling traits within the citizenry which were favourable to the preservation and effective operation of democracy. Two thousand years later the role of citizen armies in the building of democracy had evolved from an important ingredient in maintaining democracy to a catalyst of its implementation. The French and American revolutions were both incidences in which civilians, resolute for self-determination, formed themselves into an organised fighting force and defeated a professional standing army. Because the general citizenry had fought and sacrificed so much to free themselves from the grasp of their respective monarchies, they would settle for nothing less than a political system in which they had a voice. Janowitz states,

> The legitimacy of the revolutionary movements and the political democracies they sought to establish rested on the assertion that citizens had been armed and had demonstrated their loyalty through military service. Military service emerged as a hallmark of citizenship and citizenship as the hallmark of a political democracy.[11]

Writings from contemporary political philosophers praising the citizen army as a vehicle for democracy flourished during this period including Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, Guibert, Servan and Rousseau, many of whom referred to classical Greek and Roman societies as a model to be aspired to. Echoing the sentiments of Pericles two millennia prior, Rousseau stated "Every citizen should be a soldier by duty, no citizen should be a soldier by trade. This was the military system of the Romans... and this should be the military system of every free state"[12]. This however was not solely the abstract musings of the intelligentsia. A pamphlet from the revolutionary forces in France trumpeted, "we are citizens first and soldiers second... We belong to the Fatherland and not to the Nobles, we are Frenchmen and not slaves"[13]. This thinking set in place an important prerequisite for democracy: what the French called *ĕgalitaire*, or egalitarianism. Until this time the aristocracy held a monopoly on military vocations[14]. Rank was allocated according to social status and officers were not referred to by their rank but by their aristocratic title. However the citizen army of the French revolutionary forces allocated rank according to merit. The military was no longer a tool through which the elites could protect their lofty positions and maintain the status quo. It was now took its rightful place as subordinate to the democratic civilian government. "The citizen army which made use of civilian

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9 R. A. Heinlein, *Starship troopers*, (Berkley Publishing Group, New York, 1959) p. 182
10 R. A. Heinlein, *Starship troopers*, (Berkley Publishing Group, New York, 1959) p. 26
11 M. Janowitz, 'Military institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies' in *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 185-204 (1976), p. 191
12 J. J. Rousseau cited in D. A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 2007) p. 79
13 D. A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 2007), p. 100
14 D. A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 2007), p. 99

reservists was not only an instrument of nationalism but a device for political control of the military professionals."[15]

Service in a citizen army became an essential criterion for becoming a true "citizen". It broke down class barriers and developed political and legal equality – all necessary prerequisites for democracy. It was for this reason that African-Americans pressed to be conscripted on an equal basis and integrated into the US forces serving in Vietnam.[16] These ideas of equality and devotion to the state laid the basis for integration of African-Americans into, and the liberalisation of, democracy. Janowitz asserts, "[t]he duties and obligations of the armed citizen set the framework for the concept of the electorate in civil society.[17]

One may argue that in the present day there is no place for citizen armies in democratized states. The increasingly technical nature of weapons and the subsequent decreasing size of forces lends itself to professional standing armies rather than citizen armies with a lower level of training[18]. This may be true for conventional warfare, but the democratizing influence of citizen armies certainly makes them preferable to professional armies in the sphere of low intensity peace keeping and operations seeking 'regime change' to a democratic system. The end of the cold war has seen such operations proliferate. Between 1948 and 1992 the total number of peacekeepers who had served under the UN banner was 57095; in 1992 and 1993 alone 103080 UN troops were deployed on 9 missions[19]. Peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations have become a major part of the job description for the armed forces of modern states. However, many scholars believe war-fighting and peacekeeping are separate, if not mutually exclusive skill-sets.[20] Possumato notes, referring to the American army engaged in recent peacekeeping operations, "Army doctrine and training is focused on how to fight and win wars, not on how to keep peace."[21]

As the Westphalian paradigm of state sovereignty ceases to be absolute and becomes contingent on the provision of basic human rights by the state, the role for other, democratic states to assist in the implementation of democracy increases. In this capacity, citizen armies are superior to their professional counterparts. Professional military personnel are imbrued with a war-fighting mentality which is exasperated by the fact that volunteer-based, professional armies generally attract a certain demographic; predominantly rightwing, conservative[22] males[23]. This is reinforced by the inevitable imposition of a thorough militaristic indoctrination inherent in a long-term career in the armed forces. When striving to build a liberal, democratic society it makes sense to have those who live in a liberal and free society building it, rather than those who live in the skewed, authoritarian and decidedly undemocratic environment of the military.

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15 M. Janowitz, 'Military institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies' in *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 185-204 (1976), p. 191

16 *Ibid.*, p. 192

17 *Ibid.*, p. 200

18 B. Alexander, *How wars are won*, (Crown publishers, New York, 2002), Introduction

19 N. Macqueen, *The United Nations since 1945: Peacekeeping and the Cold War* (Longman, London, 1999) p.125-7

20 M. E. Koltko-Rivera, et al. 'The peacekeeper: How the role of the modern soldier has changed and how that affects workload' in D.A. Vincenzi, M. Mouloua, and P.A. Hancock, (Eds.), *Human performance, situation awareness and automation: Current research and trends* (Erlbaum, Mahwah, 2004), pp. 231-234

21 D. P. Possumato, *Should the U.S. Army establish a peacekeeping training center?* (Carlyle Barracks, PA, U.S. Army War College, 1999), pp. 1-2

22 K. Singleton, 'Democrats hope Citadel visit helps reputation on defense', *Augusta Chronicle*, 22 July 2007

23 New Zealand Government, Career Services: Defence Quick Facts, 2004, (last accessed 30 Sep 07) http://www.careers.govt.nz/default.aspx?id0=20104&id1=33B56F3C-EA04-4FC2-9786-C8A009D7A7AD

The economist Adam Smith criticised citizen armies, what he terms 'militia', because "[i]n militia, the character of the labourer, artificer, or tradesman predominates over that of a soldier: in a standing army, that of a soldier predominates."[24] However, Alexis De Tocqueville saw the retention of a civil character for what it was: a virtue, and certainly one that was conducive for democracy. Tocqueville perceived citizen forces as the only military system compatible with democracy and therefore refers to the citizen army as the "democratic army". He states

> Among democratic nations the private soldiers remain most like civilians: upon them the habits of the nation have the firmest hold, and the public opinion, most influence. It is by the instrumentality of the private soldiers especially that it may be possible to infuse into a democratic army the love of freedom and the respect of rights if these principles have once been successfully inculcated on the people at large.[25]

Segal and Tiggle have written about how this gulf still exists between professional and citizen military forces, and in particular they examine citizen soldiers', in this case army reserve troops, attitude to peace operations. In general their findings are very favourable towards army reserves serving on such operations. Their paper[26] highlights three areas in which citizen soldiers are better suited to peace operations than professional soldiers. Firstly, reserves normally only serve on operations which they have volunteered for[27] as opposed to professional soldiers who are deployed regardless of their personal feelings about a specific mission. This means that reserves tend to believe in the cause behind the mission and therefore engage in their role with greater enthusiasm. Furthermore, they are less motivated by career factors. Secondly, more reserves believe that the mission could be achieved without using weapons[28]. This once again is testament to the 'war-fighting' mentality which permeates in the professional military, whereby every problem can be solved at the barrel of a gun; a dangerous misconception on a peacekeeping operation. Thirdly, reserves tended to perceive themselves as impartial "disinterested participants" whereas professional soldiers predominantly believed they were deployed solely to serve the national interest.[29]

Friedrich Engels wrote, "[c]ontrary to appearance compulsory military service surpasses general franchise as a democratic agency".[30] In many cases over history this has proven accurate. In ancient Athens, one first had to prove his civic virtue through military service before he was enfranchised. As a result Athenian democracy and society as a whole was the most progressive of any of the city states. So advanced was Athens that it lay the tradition which modern civilised states now emulate. Certainly Sparta defeated Athens on the battlefield, but Sparta was inherently politically unstable and was also soon defeated. For the duration of the life of each state, Athens enjoyed an equality and liberalism unimagined by Sparta. The citizen armies of the French and American revolutionaries in the 18th century, relegated the army to its rightful place as subordinate to the people, and instilled the enlightenment principles of equality, liberalism and self-determination into its population. In both of these cases, citizen armies served their state to a greater extent than a

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24 A. Smith, *The wealth of nations*, (Dutton, New York, 1910), p. 660
25 A. D. Tocqueville, 'On War, Society, and the Military', in L. Bramson and G. Goethals (eds), *War: studies from psychology sociology anthropology* (Basic Books, New York, 1968), p. 335
26 D. R. Segal and R. B. Tiggle, 'Attitudes of citizen-soldiers toward military missions in the post-Cold War World' in *Armed Forces and Society;* Spring 1997; 23, 3; pp. 373-390
27 *Ibid.*, p. 375
28 *Ibid.*, p. 382
29 *Ibid.*, p. 383
30 M. Janowitz, 'Military institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies' in Armed Forces & Society, Vol. 2, No. 2, 185-204 (1976), 186

professional army possibly could have. Currently, as globalisation erodes the concept of state sovereignty, the experience of liberal democracies can be used to great effect in conflict-riven, developing countries, particularly on peace keeping missions. The lessons learnt by developed nations in their own democratising process years ago are still best exported by their original teachers: the citizen army. The citizen army, with its liberal outlook and democratic underpinning is far superior for peacekeeping operations and the implementation of democracy than its professional equivalent.

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A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES' SACRIFICE

Clem Davis

I had occasion to be visiting a friend in at Yarram in west Gippsland recently and noticed on the War Memorial in the town that there were three soldiers listed with the same surname from World War 1 and three soldiers with the same surname from World War 2. The surnames were different. The two sets of names intrigued me so I did some research on the two families. The further I studied the families the more interesting I found their stories.

World War 1

The three World War 1 soldiers had the surname Appleyard and were two brothers and a cousin. The Appleyard family appears to have moved into west Gippsland from Tasmania in the late 1840's and settled as farmers. The father, Peter, had been a convict who had been transported to Hobart for stealing four ducks. He married twice, having four sons from his first marriage (Alfred Henry, William, George and Arthur) and two daughters and one son from his second marriage (Clara, Thomas John and Mary-Jane). Arthur had ten children of whom two served in World War 1 with one being killed. Alfred Henry also had ten children, however only one, Alfred Henry enlisted. He did not serve overseas and in fact put his age down to 36 to enlist (he was born in 1872). George ended up with 15 children (his wife, Jane, died at the ripe old age of 85). Of the 15 children, six sons signed up with the AIF in World War 1, of whom five served overseas and two died. The sixth son, Ernest, was discharged after his mother wrote a letter to the army requesting his discharge as he was needed on the farm. Her letter finished with the plea that as she had five sons already serving overseas, of whom two had already been wounded, she considered her family had done their bit for the country. A seventh son joined the navy in 1921 at the age of 13. The half brother Thomas John married in 1886 and subsequently moved to WA. He had five children and all three boys enlisted and served overseas and all returned to Australia.

Appleyard Family

Name	Enlistment Date	Stated Age on Enlistment	Unit (Service No.)	Comment
Charles Courtney Sgt (b 1881)	15/7/15	28y 10m	23rd Bn (3751)	Married. Wounded 6/11/16 DOW 15/11/16 Awarded MM at Pozieres
Ernest (b 1885)	1/3/16	30y 11m	22nd Bn (2456)	Did not serve O/S Discharged on family grounds
William Gordon (b 1886). Pte	3/9/14	26y	9th Bn (865)	Joined in Queensland. Served at Gallipoli. Wounded 20/8/16 DOW. 24/8/16
Allen Richard (b 1892). Gnr	28/7/15	22y 8m	9th LH/1st FAB (1783)	Wounded 25/10/17 & 3/10/18 RTA. Discharged 28/3/20
Darcy James (b 1894). Pte	12/8/15	21y 6m	23rd Bn (4027)	Wounded 28/7/16 RTA. Discharged 13/9/19
Leopold Arthur (b 1895) Driver	9/6/15	19y 10m	8th LH (1125)	RTA. Discharged 6/10/19
Edgar John (b 1889). Trooper	15/10/14	23y 10m	8th LH (609)	Gallipoli 16/5/15. Wounded 19/4/17. DOW 2/8/17 Egypt. Cousin

Appleyard Family cont

Name	Enlistment Date	Stated Age on Enlistment	Unit (Service No.)	Comment
Francis Horatio (b1883). S/Sgt	18/8/14	22y 8m	2FCE/AAOC (152)	Gallipoli/England. RTA. Discharged 16/3/18. Defective vision. Cousin
Thomas Lytton (b 1887) Sapper	19/8/14	30y 11m	1 FCE (28)	RTA Discharged 2/8/17 Cousin Served as Thomas Lytton
Gustavis Meredith (b 1889)	15/2/16	26y 10m	28th Bn (4664)	Wounded 11/11/16. RTA Discharged 15/3/19. Cousin
Albert John (b 1891)	16/6/15	24y	12th Bn/52nd Bn (2608)	Wounded S/Shock 9/8/16 Wounded 7/6/17. RTA Discharged 12/5/18. Cousin
Alfred Henry (b 1872)	1/1/16	36y	HQ Royal Park	Discharged Med unfit 30/6/16. Home service 10/7/16. Cousin

World War 2

The three World War 2 soldiers were three brothers named Willis. It was unusual for three brothers to die during World War 2 although some families suffered greater losses. There may have been other cousins, but they did not enlist from Yarram. Both Allan and Herbert died on the Burma Thailand Railway. Their parents were John and Violet and they had 12 children. Two other brothers enlisted but did not serve overseas. As an interesting side, one of the daughters married an Appleyard.

Willis Family

Name	Enlistment Date	Stated Age on Enlistment	Unit (Service No.)	Comment
George James (b 1912)	8/7/41	29	2/24th Bn (VX59174)	Died of Wounds 25/10/42 Egypt
Herbert Roy (b 1913)	2/4/41	28	1st Coy AASC att 2nd Coy (VX52574)	POW Died of Illness 23/1/44 Burma
Joseph Leonard (b 1915)	16/7/41	26	CMF (V401537)	Survived
Keith Walden (b 1918)	5/1/40 8/8/41	22	CMF/RAE (V126148) AIF (VX61291)	Survived Discharged 23/9/41
Allen Frederick (b 1919)	1/4/41	22	1 Coy AASC (VX52509)	POW Died of Illness 29/6/43 Malaya

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CEYLON VOLUNTEERS IN WORLD WAR 1

Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe[1]

The service of Ceylon volunteers, both British colonists resident in Ceylon and Ceylonese, who served in all major frontline theatres, have not previously received adequate public recognition. This article illustrates some aspects of Ceylon's military involvement in preserving the integrity of the British Empire during the First World War.

Ceylon at War

To people familiar with the period encompassing Ceylon during the First World War the unprecedented growth of Ceylonese nationalism unleashed as a result of the 1915 riots is well known. Evidently, to the Ceylonese, notably the Sinhalese, the watershed 1915 riots eclipsed the significance of the First World War, which Armand de Souza illustrated: "When a Sinhalese meets a Sinhalese today, it is not of the war, not of the death of Kitchener, of the battle of Verdun ... that he talks, but simply of the events of last June..."

Even as the memories of the most decorated Ceylonese volunteers faded in the post-First World War years, the memory of Captain EH Pedris of the local Colombo Town Guard (CTG) who was executed by the British on 8 July 1915 was vividly remembered, as exemplified by Sir Oliver Goonetilike: "I told Senators that every time I passed Echelon Square in the heart of Colombo I thought of the sad fate that befell young EH Pedris, son of a wealthy businessman. He enrolled in the Town Guard of which I was myself a member. When a mob gathered and became unruly near his business concern, he fired two shots in the air. The Governor, Sir Robert Chalmers, panicked and handed over full authority to the military, who disapproved of Pedris conduct. He was taken to Echelon Square where his helmet was knocked off his head and his shirt and epaulettes were stripped. He was unceremoniously drummed out and taken into custody. His father sent a great lawyer of the time, Mr. HJC Pereira, to plead with the Governor. Mr. Pedris was willing to pay his son's weight in gold, but the Governor's reply was: 'I shall kill, I shall kill, I shall kill.' Young Pedris was shot and his grief-stricken parents were not even allowed to have the dead body of their child." In the post-independence era a statue of EH Pedris was erected to honour his death.

In the upper and middle class circles of Ceylonese society, western cultural traditions, Christianity and Empire were respected, and conviction for the war effort was largely steadfast. Institutions such as the Dutch Burgher Union (DBU), Colombo Club and the socially exclusive English medium schools, avidly supported the war effort throughout its duration. In light of this when war was declared, apart from British colonists, it was the Ceylonese upper and middle

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class stratum, especially the Burgher community, which held a mixed sense of adventurism and loyalty to the British Empire. These were often the central motivational factors for enlistment for Ceylon volunteers, which a former student of St. Thomas' College, Colombo recalled: "I well remember the outbreak of the war ...100 boys in the Fifth Form and above, wanted to enlist at once, and two boys, ran away to India in order to enlist. Several Old Boys went. The general feeling was that there was a great and glorious adventure going on, and it was a pity we were too young to share in it. No idea of the tremendous issues involved entered our minds." In addition, a former pupil of Royal College, Company Sergeant Major RR Anderson who enlisted in the Inland Water Transport, Royal Engineers and deployed in France, confirmed: "This is a great experience, one I wouldn't have missed for anything. Things are a bit hard at times, and I don't think I should be particularly sorry to see the end of war; but whilst the war is on I'd rather be here than anywhere else." While in Greece, KA Chunchie of Kingswood College, Kandy affirmed: "I am happy to let you know that I'm 'up the line' at last, though it is only Salonika! I'm the first Ceylonese, and dear old Kingswood to the fore again. I visited every one of the graves, and spent a few minutes with the brave and noble lads who have gone under in maintaining the honour, glory, and splendour of the Empire."

Although the strain of war caused economic hardship as portrayed in Kumari Jayawardena's article, *Economic and Political Factors in the 1915 Riots*, the island escaped the wider wrath of conflict by its geographic isolation from the nearest frontline. The closest known enemy military activity was an unconfirmed sighting of the German raider *Emden* near Hambantota. Although the *Emden* was sunk on 9 November 1914, it was responsible, along with another German raider *Wolf*, for seriously harassing allied shipping activity in the Indian Ocean.

Unlike India, which mobilised over 1.5 million troops in the First World War, Ceylon's military impact was not of great consequence in the broader scheme. Ostensibly, the island's geo-strategic location for shipping and its highly regarded tea and rubber resources were of greater value in supporting Britain's war effort. Indeed, the beginning of hostilities revived Ceylon's geo-strategic position when convoys and transports of Australian, British, Indian, New Zealand and even Russian troops transited through the ports of Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee en route to Africa, Asia Minor, Europe and the Middle East. Ceylon also served as a place of leave, especially in 1917 and 1918 when numerous British officers took respite from the Mesopotamian theatre.

In Ceylon measures were taken by Governor Robert Chalmers (c.1913-1916) to mobilise the Ceylon Defence Force (CDF), the island's local militia, and position the colony on a war footing. In December 1916, eligible European males resident in Ceylon, between 18 and 41 years, were conscripted into the CDF. Although the CDF was primarily designed as an auxiliary force for the colony's internal security, there were several efforts made by some of its units to form contingents for overseas service, most of which were unsuccessful. For instance, the Ceylon Mounted Rifles (CMR), a unit that held considerable prestige in the CDF and consisted of the island's British mercantile and planting elite, offered a Squadron at the outset of war but was rejected. Furthermore, in November 1914 the Ceylon Light Infantry (CLI) also made an ill-fated attempt at offering to assemble a contingent of 100 volunteers.

Kandy-Colombo Route March

The one-time principal of Trinity College, Reverend AG Fraser, known for his fervent support of British imperialism, organised a large group of mainly Ceylonese volunteers made up of former students to participate in a route march. The aim of the enterprise was to demonstrate to the British authorities the martial value of Trinity College and its loyalty to the Empire. The objective was to march 110 kilomteres from Kandy to Victoria Bridge, Colombo. The route

march took place on 26 November 1914 and was completed in 38 hours and 30 minutes. CP Jayawardene, who later became a Colonel in the CDF, wrote about his experience in his article *Reminiscences of a Route March from Kandy to Colombo*: "The rain had made the road slimy and our feet kept slipping at every step; but we kept going each helping the other along. We reached Victoria Bridge at 6:30am. This was our last halt. The CLI Guard at the bridge presented arms as we marched past. This made us square our shoulders even more! We tried to give the impression that we had just started on a march and we fairly succeeded in doing so." Although the contingent was rejected by Governor Chalmers, many of the participants later managed to enlist in British Army formations through individual funding arrangements such as the 'Times Fund', 'Passage Fund' and the 'One Day's Pay Fund'. Some of these participants such as Richard Aluvihare, DB Seneviratne, A Halangoda, PD Pelpola, James Loos son of Hermann Loos and Roy Ondatjie to name but a few, later fought in the most internecine battles on the Western Front. The ardent Reverend Fraser himself left for England in 1916 and joined the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). He subsequently became Chaplain of the Forces and was present at the Third Battle of Ypres (also known as the Battle of Passchendaele) and the Battle of Cambrai. He was twice gassed and invalided out of the army in 1918.

Ceylon Contingents Overseas

Paradoxically, not all proposals to offer troops were declined. As a compromise the colony authorised the raising of at least three specially selected troop contingents for overseas service; two in 1914 and one in 1917. The first contingent to head overseas was the Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps (CPRC), the CDF's second most prominent unit. The unit, composed chiefly of British planters, formed a contingent company on 3 September 1914 of eight officers and 221 other ranks led by Major John Hall-Brown. On 27 October 1914 the force was shipped from Ceylon on the SS *Worcestershire* to Port Said, Egypt. While in Egypt, the unit was soon attached to the 1st Battalion Wellington Regiment as a part of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) and deployed at Khubri and Port Tewfik as garrison troops in defence of the Suez Canal area until March 1915.

In April 1915, while Anzac troops were organised in Egypt for the amphibious invasion of mainland Turkey, over 100 members of the CPRC contingent company were given officer commissions in the British and British-Indian Army. Subsequently, the remaining segment of the CPRC, somewhere between 80-129 troops, was attached to the Anzac Corps as a bodyguard and escort to staff at Corps Headquarters including Lieutenant General William Birdwood, later Field Marshall Lord Birdwood, its General Officer Commanding. From this point on they were referred to as the 'Bodyguard'. Birdwood fondly described the CPRC: "I have an excellent guard of Ceylon Planters who are such a nice lot of fellows." The CPRC contingent landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula between 25 April and 1 May 1915 at the Ari Burnu beachhead, later known as Anzac Cove. The CPRC stayed for the duration of the campaign until the beachhead was evacuated in December 1915. Records indicate that three CPRC bodyguards were killed at Anzac Cove.

Following the Gallipoli campaign the CPRC contingent was disbanded and nearly all the CPRC bodyguards were again given officer commissions and absorbed into the British Army and its auxiliary formations. After the Gallipoli campaign, the former members of the disbanded CPRC contingent sustained heavy losses with five out of the eight officers and 69 out of the 221 other ranks killed. J Hall-Brown who subsequently served with the 10th Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment) was also killed in July 1916.

Also in 1914, following the departure of the CPRC contingent, Captain PH Milward led another small force of Ceylon volunteers - between 76-100 troops for overseas service - composed of

British mercantile and planting elite affiliated with the CMR and CPRC. The 'Milward Contingent' embarked from Ceylon on the SS 'Derbyshire' on 18 November 1914. PH Milward who joined the 7th Battalion Rifle Brigade was killed in action in December 1915.

The next contingent to follow was the mainly Ceylonese composed Ceylon Sanitary Company (Cey. San. Coy.), led by Major FN Holden. The company-sized unit was attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) in Mesopotamia from about July 1917 until 1919. After the war some of the Ceylonese soldiers deployed permanently settled in Mesopotamia, now Iraq.

Accordingly, by 1917 the *Times of Ceylon* estimated that 1,250 Ceylon volunteers had enlisted for overseas service. At least 351 Ceylon volunteers signed up while in England and another 438 enlisted on their own account. In addition, the 'Times Fund' facilitated the expenses for 156 Ceylon volunteers to enlist overseas. From the various available nominal rolls of honour consulted it appears there were minor concentrations of Ceylon volunteers in the RAMC (apart from the Cey. San. Coy.), Kings Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC), Middlesex Regiment, Coldstream Guards, Royal Fusiliers, Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) and the Royal Engineers, Inland Water Transport.

It also appears that the Passage Fund facilitated the overseas transfer of a significant percentage of Ceylonese volunteers. Clearly, the vast bulk of Ceylonese volunteers who enlisted were from Christian backgrounds. Furthermore, according to statistics of the selected colleges analysed in Table 1: 'Ethnic Composition of Ceylon Volunteers', Ceylonese volunteers amounted to 71% or 235. Although, they were less than 1% of Ceylon's population at the time, Burghers accounted for 79% or 186 of Ceylonese volunteers. The majority ethnic group in Ceylon, the Sinhalese, amounted to 17% or 41; while the minority Ceylon Tamils, alongside Malays and Colombo Chettis, equalled around 3% or 8. Many of these volunteers served and fought in the most gruesome battles and campaigns of the First World War, and recorded their extraordinary experiences in letters and memoirs.

Table 1

Ethnic Composition of Ceylon Volunteers (1914-1918)

College	British/ European	Burgher	Colombo Chetti	Malay	Sinhalese	Tamil	Enlisted
Royal	15	68	-	-	5	-	88
St. Thomas	28	43	-	-	15	-	86
Kingswood	25	50	1	2	6	-	84
Trinity	27	25	-	-	15	5	72
Total	95	186	1	2	41	5	330

Note on Tables: Though largely accurate, for tables one and two, the figures calculated represent an approximate computation. There were some volunteers who had attended several of the colleges listed, which meant their names were printed on other college nominal rolls. Hence, a margin of inaccuracy for estimations would be limited to 5% or less. No information was available on other colleges affiliated to the CCB, such as Wesley and Richmond etc.

Sources: *The History of Royal College (1931); 100 Years Cadeting: Trinity College Kandy (1990); The Story of Kingswood (1934); A History of St. Thomas' College (1937)* and other sources.

Frontline Experiences

It is a little known fact that numerous Ceylon volunteers fought in some of the bloodiest battles and campaigns of the First World War. For instance, on the Gallipoli Peninsula at Cape Helles on 25 April 1915, a Ceylon volunteer in the Royal Munster Fusiliers recalled the extremely bloody 'V' beach landing: "This was pure slaughter, but on they came, boat after boat and down the gangways went the troops on the 'Clyde' led by their valiant officers, all to meet the same fate. It was an inspiring although ghastly sight, never to be forgotten, to see the magnificent Dublins and Munsters force the landing on that small formidable stretch of beach, dominated at point blank range by the enfilading Turkish fire. ...where was the glory of war? Men who had spent their lifetime training as soldiers piteously mowed down as they stormed that beach mostly without exchanging a shot."

Also at Gallipoli, on the hills off the Suvla Bay beachhead near Teke Tepe, John Still, who enlisted in the 6 Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment, wrote in his book, *A Prisoner in Turkey*, that his Battalion: "reached the highest point and the furthest point that British forces from Suvla Bay were destined to reach." John Still was captured by Turks and remained a prisoner of war reminiscing about Ceylon until the war ended. Some time after the war John Still became the President of the Ceylon Planters Association (CPA).

In June 1915 Sergeant WE Keyt of the British Columbia Horse wrote, "The draft I came out with had hardly been in France a day, when we were in the most desperate fighting I have seen so far. The 24th of May will never be forgotten by me. You will have some idea of the intensity of the fighting when I tell you we lost over 359 out of 800. Men all around me were knocked to pieces by a terrific artillery bombardment." WE Keyt was later offered a commission and was awarded the Military Cross for bravery on Hill 70 in France.

The sinking of the troop transport, SS *Ville de la Ciotat* on Christmas Eve 1915 was perhaps Ceylon's most catastrophic loss of life in combat, in a single day, throughout the entire war, especially for the Ceylonese. The incident claimed the lives of 14 Ceylon volunteers (six Sinhalese, five Burghers, two Englishmen and one Tamil) and was referred to in *The History of Royal College*: "The 9 December, 1915, will live long in the memory of the Ceylonese. It was the day on which *Ville de la Ciotat* sailed away with the largest number of students to take part in the War... It was a scene of joy and tears." However, 16 days later on 24 December, tragedy struck the SS *Ville de la Ciotat* which had 46 Ceylon volunteers (25 Burghers, ten Sinhalese, five Europeans, three Tamils and three Malays) on board on its way from Port Said to Marseilles, when it was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine in the Mediterranean Sea.

Carl Arndt, a survivor of the event, who later enlisted in the 24th Battalion Middlesex Regiment, recalled: "...when a deafening noise just below, told us that we were torpedoed. Our fat steward dropped the plates, and was the first to run upstairs, but Tyler stood at the bottom, and stayed what would have been a panic, 'Steady, boys, steady, keep your heads.' We passed up quite orderly and calmly got up to the deck to our boats. We had been drilled and knew where to go. My boat was No.1, but when I got up to it, I found it crowded with some of the Lascar crew. I put on my life belt and had just time to jump into the boat, as it was being lowered. But our boat was being badly launched, and since the ship was moving, it was being dashed against the sides of the ship. I knew the end would come. Our boat not only went to matchwood, but it also upset No. 3 boat, and that too got smashed. Three other of our boys went down with me, and never came up. When I came up, I found a boat above me, but a dive down and up again sideways found me on top gasping for breath. I was dashed past No. 5 boat, they could not save me, I was going so fast. I prayed and committed my soul to God. I then found a Lascar in straits, and by luck we picked up an oar, and both of us stuck to it. But he was pretty exhausted and drowned

before me - I was too far gone to help him. I then swam up to a plank. Then you came before me. I saw you getting ready for carols. It was half past ten in that cold numbing water, and in Ceylon half past two. Two boats passed me, but could not pick me up. I was fearfully cold, and to add to it I was wearing my nine pounder boots. I knew I could stick on to the plank, but the cramp was getting me all over, my fingers were losing their grasp, and I had to call out for help. I fought myself for being a coward. I called out again but to no purpose. I then kept quiet and finally gave up my soul to God. I forget everything then, I didn't know what happened, until I was picked up after being an hour in the water. It was a miracle. Thirty of us were saved, twenty of whom were picked up in the water. Fourteen of us lost their lives. Well, an English boat picked us up within four hours of these events, and we were soon made cosy and happy." It is ironic that later in the war, Carl Ardnt yet again survived another ordeal on his way back from Europe to Ceylon when the ship he was on was reportedly torpedoed again in the Mediterranean.

In the distant theatre of Mesopotamia, Private Walter De Moor, who in 1916 enlisted in the Royal West Surrey Regiment, recollected the irony of his first combat experience: "It put me in mind of one of those big field days we had in camp at Diyatalawa plus some shells tearing over our heads."

Lieutenant Basil Arthur Horsfall of St. Thomas' College was one of three Ceylon volunteers awarded the British Empire's highest gallantry medal, the Victoria Cross. His senior officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rickman described the event: "In the action fought on 26 and 27 March, 1918, the Battalion was holding the ridge between Ablainzeville and Moyeuneville... The enemy attacked very heavily. Your son was commanding the left platoon of my left company. The next battalion prolonged the line towards Moyeuneville, and were driven off the ridge, but your son continued to hold the position. I received a message from him saying that he had been driven back, but that he was counter-attacking; which he most successfully did, driving the enemy back, and gaining his objective, he being wounded severely at the time... Throughout the day, very heavy fighting was continued: twice your son left his position, but each time he counter-attacked driving the enemy back. He held his ground though his company had lost 135 out of 180 engaged. In the evening, when both my flanks were driven in on my headquarters, I sent written instructions to your son to retire to the line Ayette... During the retirement he was unfortunately killed close to the ridge which he had so gallantly held for two days. His body had to be left where he fell, and the ridge has been in the possession of the enemy ever since. But his splendid example and devotion to duty undoubtedly saved a very critical situation."

Private Kruger Van Sanden of the KRRC, who served on the Western Front was captured and interned as a Prisoner of War (POW) in Germany until the war's end. He later found that his brother, Private Harry G. Van Sanden, who served with him in the 11 battalion KRRC in the same incident he was captured, was not wounded but killed in September, 1917 at Ypres. Kruger later described what happened: "About poor Harry's death, it is very sad indeed. When we went over the top to capture the German 'pill-boxes,' he was about ten yards away from me, right in front of the machine gun, and I saw him topple over, being hit in the head. The stretcher-bearer shouted out to me, he got a 'Blighty,' and I was jolly glad to see him go away in the stretcher to the aid-post."

These comprehensible interpretations demonstrate the amazing and varied experiences of Ceylon's volunteers at the frontline. Arguably, for a small colony its record of service to the British Empire transpired to be an interesting one.

Ceylon's War Effort

Throughout the war the CDF served as a useful manpower reserve to the British Empire. Practically every CDF unit had participants who either enlisted in the selected contingents sent

overseas, or on an individual basis. The Ceylon Medical Corps (CMC) is credited with 19 volunteers; the Ceylon Garrison Artillery (CGA) with 100; the CLI with 145 and the CMR with roughly 200 volunteers. However, the seemingly largest manpower contribution from any CDF unit derived from the CPRC, which provided between 800-1000 commissioned officers to the British Army and its other auxiliary armed forces.

Unlike most other colonies of the Empire, close to 50% of Ceylon's volunteers were commissioned as officers during the war. Most of the volunteers, including the Ceylonese, came from educated upper and middle class backgrounds. They tended to have previous affiliation to the Ceylon Cadet Battalion the feeder unit to the CDF; military experience in the British Army; and or were associated to a CDF formation.

Other social institutions such as the Dutch Burgher Union (DBU) recorded 140 of its members who served. Throughout the entire war, combined estimates plateau around 2,000-2,500 Ceylon volunteers who served overseas. Unfortunately, the available nominal rolls of honour have considerable overlap with names. Therefore, in absence of conclusive information, the cumulative figure needs to be more thoroughly researched and quantified.

Although cumulative and precise casualty statistics on Ceylon's volunteers are difficult to locate, of the 1,250 Ceylon volunteers estimated by the *Times of Ceylon* in 1917, there were 105 fatalities (84 killed in action; 21 died of wounds), 114 wounded and 18 who were either missing or POWs. Moreover, from the figures shown in Table 2: 'College Affiliation, Enlistment & Casualties of Ceylon Volunteers', out of 330 Ceylon volunteers who enlisted from the four English medium schools analyzed, a ratio of 1:3 or 30% were casualties.

Table 2:

College Affiliation, Enlistment and Casualties of Ceylon Volunteers (1914-1918)

College	Enlisted	Fatalities	Wounded	POWs
Royal	88	5	13	3
St. Thomas	86	14	na	na
Kingswood	84	13	15	na
Trinity	72	13	18	2
Total	330	45	46	5

The elite Colombo Club recorded 18 members killed. While the CPA estimated 127 of its members were killed. Many of these planters were affiliated to CDF units, principally the CMR and CPRC. It is believed that the CPRC suffered overall losses of 80 killed and 99 wounded in the First World War, according to its one-time Commanding Officer, Colonel TY Wright (c.1904-1912).

Many Ceylon volunteers received decorations for their services during the First World War. This was especially the case for soldiers affiliated with the CPRC, which had an estimated 100 decorations awarded, including a Victoria Cross. From the four colleges analysed in Table 2, at least 79 Ceylon volunteers were awarded decorations for exemplary service and gallantry. However, that figure is likely to be much higher, perhaps closer to the margin of one hundred and fifty, as the lists analysed have insufficient detail about their service records.

Exclusive of Basil Horsfall, at least another two Ceylon volunteers were awarded the Victoria Cross. The first recipient was awarded this honour in a highly controversial action. Second Lieutenant GRD Moor of the 2nd Battalion Hampshire Regiment who on the 6 June 1915 at the Battle of Krithia Vineyard at Cape Helles, prevented tired British troops from routing in the face of a Turkish infantry attack, by shooting dead four of his own soldiers and stabilizing the line in his area. However, this incident was only generically described in *The London Gazette,* No. 29240, dated 24 July 1915: "For most conspicuous bravery and resource on 5 June 1915, during operations south of Krithia, Dardenelles. When a detachment of his battalion on his left, which had lost all its officers, was rapidly retiring before a heavy Turkish attack, Second Lieutenant Moor, immediately grasping the danger to the remainder of the line, dashed back some 200 yards, stemmed the retirement, led back the men, and recaptured the lost trench. This young officer, who only joined the army in October, 1914, by his personal bravery and presence of mind, saved a dangerous situation." Later in the war he was awarded the Military Cross and Bar before he died of pneumonia on 3 November 1918, eight days prior to the armistice.2

The second recipient of the award was Major SW Loudoun-Shand of the 10th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment, who was killed in action in France on 1 July 1916. His award was promulgated in *The London Gazette* of 8 September 1916: "For most conspicuous bravery. When his company attempted to climb over the parapet to attack the enemy's trenches, they were met by very fierce machine gun fire, which temporarily stopped their progress. Major Loudoun-Shand immediately leapt on the parapet, helped the men over it, and encouraged them in every way until he fell mortally wounded. Even then he insisted on being propped up in the trench, and went on encouraging the non-commissioned officers and men until he died."

In addition, the contribution of some Ceylon volunteers is worthy of reference. Although no Ceylonese is known to have been awarded the Victoria Cross, Private Harold R Jacotine of the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards was perhaps one of the closest. In a letter dated 6 May 1918 to Jacotine's father, a member of the Coldstream Guards wrote: "he did splendidly in the recent action when he was killed. He was in a post on the flank of his company and the enemy were working round his flank. When the rest of the men in his post had become casualties he continued to hold up the enemy by himself until he was unfortunately killed... he proved himself to be a brave Coldstreamer." The desperate encounter, initiated by German infantry, took place on 13 April 1918 near the Forest of Nieppe in Belgium, saw the decimation of Jacotine's company. Against formidable odds, Private Jacotine by himself held his machine gun post and kept the enemy at bay for nearly 20 minutes, before being killed.

Vere Modder of the Rifle Brigade was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry at the Third Battle of Ypres when he rescued his wounded officer under heavy enemy fire. Modder, who later received an officer commission in the British Army, was considered: "a fine example of Ceylonese manhood ... He never drank, never swore, and never even smoked."

PD Pelpola was a survivor of the *Ville de la Ciotat*, who served in France with the 28th, 4th, 6th and 5th Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers. He later joined the 25th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (Legion of Frontiersmen), and was deployed on operations in the German East Africa campaign, the largest and longest campaign fought in Africa, where he was wounded. Pelpola was later elected a member of the Legion of Frontiersmen, the only Ceylonese believed to have been awarded the honour.

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2 George Raymond Dallas Moor was born at St Kilda, Victoria on 22 October 1896 but left Australia at a young age.

Sergeant DB Seneviratne is perhaps the most decorated Sinhalese volunteer of the First World War. In 1916 he enlisted in 29th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, and later served in the 18th and 13th Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers. He was wounded in France twice respectively at Beaumont-Hamel in 1916 and Arras in 1917, before he was transferred to the (Queens Own) Royal West Kent Regiment in 1918. While with the West Kent's, Seneviratne was gassed at Ypres, yet he continued to serve. Acknowledged for "good patrol work", he was promoted to corporal in August 1918 and in September to sergeant. For bravery on 22 October 1918, Seneviratne was awarded the Military Medal for "conspicuous gallantry, devotion to duty and able leadership at Knokke." After the war, he served with the British Army of occupation in Germany from December 1918 until 1919.

Other examples include, HS Paynter who joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1915 and was purportedly credited for shooting down the last Austrian aeroplane before the signing of the armistice in 1918. JWS Bartholomeusz is likely to have been the only Ceylonese to have joined the French Foreign Legion. While in France he was wounded and awarded the French Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) First Class. P. Dinguru who was twice wounded at Mons and La Bassee was considered to have been the first 'Asiatic' soldier to reach the Western Front as a member of the Belgium Army Service Corps.

Amongst the more prestigious war trophies given to the Ceylonese, was a captured German Maxim machine gun by King George V (c.1911-1936) as a gift to Trinity College for valorous conduct during the First World War. At the unveiling ceremony after the war, Ceylon's Governor Brigadier-General Sir William Manning (c.1918-1925), stated: "I hope in days to come, if the Empire is again menaced, this College and Ceylon will go on better." In response, some of the decorated old boys present, such as Richard Aluvihare, later Sir Richard Aluvihare, who served with the YMCA in France with Indian troops and mentioned in despatches by General Haig, stated: "It is indeed a source of great joy for us, who went to the front, to find that His Majesty the King and Emperor has conferred a single honour by presenting a war trophy to Trinity College which we love."

Indeed the Governor's statement did relate, not just with Trinity, but other colleges as well. Twenty one years later, Ceylon the 'model colony', again participated, in far greater numbers in the Second World War (1939-1945).

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BHANBHAGTA GURUNG VC

Anthony Staunton

Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung, VC, 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles, was born in September 1921. He died on 1 March 2008 at the age of 86.

Bhanbhagta Gurung was born in the hill village of Phalbu in western Nepal. Shortly after the outbreak of World War 2, he joined the Indian Army and was posted to the 3rd Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles). He first saw action with Brigadier Orde Wingate's Chindit expedition into Upper Burma in March 1943. He was with Wingate's Number 4 Column, which crossed the Chindwin and was on its deep penetration march behind the Japanese lines, when it was ambushed by superior Japanese numbers. The column dispersed and withdrew to India. Following training and refitting that battalion joined the 25th Indian Division in the Arakan in 1944.

In early 1945 his battalion attacked an enemy position known as Snowden East. On approaching the objective one of the sections was forced to ground by heavy machine gun, grenade and mortar fire and was unable to move. The pinned section then came under accurate fire from a sniper who inflicted casualties. Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung, being unable to fire from the prone position, stood up fully exposed to the enemy fire and calmly killed the enemy sniper with his rifle.

The section then advanced again but when within 20 meters of the objective again came under heavy enemy fire. Bhanbhagta Gurung, without waiting for orders, dashed forward alone and attacked the first enemy foxhole. Throwing two grenades, he killed the two defenders and without any hesitation rushed on to the next enemy foxhole and killed the Japanese in it with his bayonet. Two further enemy foxholes were still bringing fire to bear on the section and again he dashed forward alone and cleared these with bayonet and grenade.

During his single-handed attacks on four enemy foxholes, Bhanbhagta Gurung was subjected to almost continuous machine gun fire from a bunker on the north tip of the objective. Realizing that this light machine gun would hold up the advance, for the fifth time he went forward alone in the face of heavy enemy fire to knock out this position. Bhanbhagta Gurung killed three Japanese and captured the light machine gun. The position was consolidated and when the Japanese counter-attacked the captured positions he led the defence that inflicted heavy loss on the enemy.

In January 1946 with only a frail mother and young wife to care for his land and stock at Phalbu, he decided to return home. When he left the Army he was given the honorary rank of Havildar (sergeant). In later years the King of Nepal awarded him the Medal of the Order of the Star of Nepal. In the years after the war he visited his regiment in Malaya, Hong Kong and in Britain and was always greeted as an honoured guest. Bhanbhagta Gurung suffered from asthma for many years and for the last four years of his life was housebound at his youngest son's house at Gorkha, where he died on Saturday, 1 March 2008. The young wife whom he left the Army to rejoin predeceased him. He is survived by his three sons who followed him into the 2nd Gurkha Rifles and are now pensioners. .

Bhanbhagta Gurung was described by his company commander as "a smiling, hard-swearing and indomitable soldier who in a battalion of brave men was one of the bravest". His death leaves 11 surviving recipients of the Victoria Cross, seven including Australian Ted Kenna from World War 2 and four including Australian Keith Payne since World War 2.

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Obituary - Clem Sargent - 1923-2007

Thomas Clem Sargent, who was always known as Clem, was born at Maesteg Glamorgan, South Wales on 14 August 1923. When he was five, his family migrated to Sydney where two uncles already resided. In 1932, the family moved to Wollongong and following school Clem worked in the steel works during World War 2. On 13 April 1943, he joined the 33rd Battalion, Volunteer Defence Corps and served until discharged on 30 September 1945. Less than six months later, on 19 March 1946, Clem joined the Interim Army and was allotted to the 5th Field Survey Company as a sapper. He was soon doing survey work in the Snowy Mountains, on foot and on horseback.

In 1949 Clem was posted to the Long Range Weapons Establishment, and was involved in surveys for the Woomera rocket range. After a special Survey Course at Balcombe in the latter part of 1950 and another in 1951, Clem was commissioned as a Lieutenant on 15 December 1951. His career in the Survey Corps took him to New Ireland, the Gulf country and Cape York, Bendigo, Singapore, Fremantle where he worked in the Kimberley's and to Indonesia on the first Defence aid project. His last posting was to Bonegilla from which he retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on 19 March 1975.

Clem married Betty Marie Semmens in Bendigo in September 1952 and they had five children: Margaret, Rosemary, Glyn, Owen and David. Betty became ill early in 1986 and subsequently died on New Year's Eve 1986. On retirement from the Army, Clem joined the Australian Survey Office, later transferred to the Department of Defence, and finally the Division of National Mapping where he became Senior Executive Officer (Planning and Co-ordination). After retirement he kept an active interest in Corps matters and from 1983 to 1989 was Colonel Commandant of the Royal Australian Survey Corps. Clem married Margaret Gabb on Australia Day in 1990.

In retirement Clem was involved in the publication of the book *Australia's military mapmakers* by Chris Coulthard-Clark in September 2000, the dedication of a commemorative plaque to the Survey Corps unveiled at the Australian War Memorial on 9 July 2007 and the re-establishment of the Survey Corps Museum at the School of Military Engineering, Casula.

Clem joined the Military Historical Society of Australia in Victoria in 1959. He was an inaugural member and office bearer of both the Western Australian and Australian Capital Territory Branches. He was Federal Secretary (1978–1988) and later Federal Vice President of the Society. His military history interests were primarily in the Peninsular War and the Peninsular War veterans in Australia. He book T*he Colonial Garrison 1817-1824*, the history of the 48th Regiment, the Northamptons, in Australia between 1817 and 1823 was well received. He had been working on another regimental history; the 40th Regiment, 2nd Somersetshire Regiment, who served two tours of duty in Tasmania between 1824 and 1860. Between 1963 and 2005 he contributed over 50 articles to *Sabretache*. For his service to the Society he was made a Life Member of the Military Historical Society of Australia and in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2003 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his contribution to military history.

Clem was an eloquent speaker and could be very gregarious. He will be missed.

Col Simpson