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## THE TALE OF PLUMER'S PONY

Tom Johnstone

This is an account of just one expedition by Colonial Horse in the second South African War. It was led by the future Field-Marshal Lord Plumer of Messines, who would command two Anzac Corps in the Ypres salient during a later war. There, the Anzacs fought three battles in 1917, described as "the cleanest and most decisive victories they had yet fought".<sup>1</sup>

In 1900, the NSW squadron of Bushmen joined the brigade commanded by Br-Gen Herbert Plumer on the right flank of Lord Roberts' army in the general advance on Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal. Herbert Plumer was short in stature, slightly built and delicate looking; near-sighted, he wore a monocle. On first sight he would typify the Australian image of the 'pommy' officer. Indeed, he later became the unwitting model for Lowe's cartoon figure, 'Colonel Blimp'. Plumer's brigade consisted of Australians, Canadians, South Africans, and was shortly to be joined by New Zealanders. A column of lightly equipped mounted men, its service is perhaps best epitomised by the part it played in countering the great raid by Christian De Wet, from 26 January to 6 March 1901.

The capture of Pretoria on 5 June would, Roberts thought, end the war. However, there were those on his staff who felt that "bitter enders", such as Botha and the de Wet brothers, if not reconciled or captured quickly were capable of conducting a guerrilla war on the open veldt for years. In the event the assessment of Roberts' staff proved accurate.

The bitter-enders continued the fight and six months after the fall of Pretoria, De Wet, the greatest of Boer commando leaders, concentrated a large mounted force of Boer burghers in the Doornberg mountains in the north east of the Orange Free State. His intention was to raid Cape Colony and encourage the Cape Boers to rise in rebellion. Kitchener, the Chief of Staff, to the British Forces, received warning from his intelligence section of the concentration and intention. Three columns were immediately dispatched to intercept the Boer column.

However, De Wet out-maneuvred all three columns in the Orange Free State and succeeded in crossing the Orange River into Cape Colony. From Kitchener's headquarters orders were flashed by telegraph and heliograph links across the veldt to a total of fifteen columns to intercept, contain and trap the rampaging Boers. De Wet, intercepted by Plumer's brigade, immediately abandoned his southward march, and wheeled north-westwards in a storm of torrential rain to escape. However, Plumer's Colonials hung on grimly and although De Wet did escape, he lost his supply train of forty wagons. Never far behind the Boers, on 12 February the Colonials surprised De Wet's rearguard and scattered, then hunted its remnant north towards the Orange River. In doing this Plumer's force was spent. Lacking food and fodder, the column halted for resupply. Notwithstanding this setback, a handful of Bushmen remained in contact with De Wet and their determination achieved the important result of forcing De Wet to completely abandon his expedition into Cape Colony.

While De Wet searched for a ford on the Orange River, Plumer's frontiersmen proved unshakeable, and met with success on 23 February when within a few miles of the Boer main force, they captured three guns. Again the Boers with superb skill, eluded all pursuit, but ford after ford of the swollen river proved impassable. Eventually, after trying fifteen fords in nine days, crossing was affected at Botha Drift by the concentrated forces of De Wet, Hertzog, Brand and Fourie. The united Boer force then gained the Modder River and safety. Plumer's men never

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<sup>1</sup> Bean, C.E.W. *Anzac to Amiens*, Penguin Books, 1993.

gave up until the very end of De Wet's, superb ride. De Wet and his burghers had made a sweep of 800 miles through British held territory in 43 days.

Plumer made one gallant and final attempt to catch De Wet. He and his indomitable Colonials hung on till 11<sup>th</sup> March when the hunt ended.<sup>2</sup>

The main reason for de Wet's escape was that the column sent to Oliphant's Nek to cut off the Boer retreat failed to arrive. It was commanded by General Ian Hamilton. Kitchener was furious and Hamilton was only saved from dismissal by the intervention of the CinC, Lord Roberts whose protégé Hamilton was.<sup>3</sup>

Plumer, although a strict disciplinarian, had a fine sense of humour, and developed in South Africa a capacity to get the best out of his men. He took some jokes against himself, but could also deliver in kind. One morning his best pony was missing, a search by his galloper failed to discover its whereabouts. Taking up the hunt himself, he descended upon the lines of the Australians and New Zealanders, with his eye-glass firmly fixed, and there discovered the missing beast. History does not record the exact lines in which the pony was discovered, but there are clues.

What had been a grey was now a sort of dirty dun - the work of Condy's Fluid - while the tail had been docked, mane trimmed, and much mud plastered over the identity hoof numbers. Identity was, however, established before a sheepish looking Colonial trooper. A reminder from the General as to the traditional fate of horse-thieves in one of our former colonies made the 'sheep' shift his weight from one leg to the other, but the general quietly inquired, 'had the culprit ever done a day's march on his feet?' 'No?' Then he might try it.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout that hot day the brigade enjoyed watching the culprit walk behind the brigade commander's pony, witnessing without enjoyment the fighting with only a restricted view. Thereafter Plumer's ponies were treated with greater circumspection.

At the end of their year's service, the Bushmen expected to leave at once. Unfortunately a distant column got into difficulties, and Plumer's brigade, the nearest, was ordered to its relief. The Australians protested loudly. Plumer acted at once, going to them he said they would be ordered to parade at a certain time, he would be there and so would they. Cheers broke out and there was no further trouble. The trust of the Dominion troops in good leadership was never more manifest. That trust was not misplaced, directly at the end of the relief expedition, the Australians and new Zealanders embarked for home.<sup>5</sup>

"Daddy" Plumer was the only WWI army commander to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

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<sup>2</sup> Harington, Gen. Sir C. *Plumer of Messines*, London, 1933. p. 39-41

<sup>3</sup> Pakenham, Thomas. *The Boer War*, London, 1979; p. 307.

<sup>4</sup> Harington p. 45-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* During WWI, Harington was MGGS on Plumer's 2nd Army staff. As a result of meticulous planning for the Messines attack in 1917, "considerable trust was generated between the staffs at all levels of command and also between the artillery, infantry and Royal Flying Corps. A remarkable atmosphere permeated Second Army." T. Johnstone, *Orange, Green and Khaki*, Dublin, 1992; p. 273. The item was based on papers of Colonel H.F. Stonham., Liddle Collection, Leeds University.



## ADVENTUROUS ROVING NATURES NORTHERN TERRITORY VOLUNTEERS OF 1914

Paul A Rosenzweig<sup>1</sup>

Ninety years have passed since an immense wave of patriotic fervour was aroused throughout Australia upon the outbreak of World War 1. Young men from even the most remote and isolated outback settlements made their way into towns by whatever means they could muster to enlist for what they saw either as a great adventure or duty to the Commonwealth or Empire - they were the men described by the official historian C E W Bean as, "*the adventurous roving natures that could not stay away; whatever their duties and their ties*".

The Northern Territory community at that time was small and highly transient, so no single Northern Territory battalion was raised as was the case in the States. Further, there was no recruiting depot established in Darwin so all volunteers had to travel interstate (at their own expense) to enlist, becoming dispersed among the many regiments and companies being raised for the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force (AIEF). In chronicling the earliest stages of the war, Bean lamented that, "*In only two or three cases do the records preserve details of these early enlistments*"<sup>2</sup>. Enlistments from the small Northern Territory community might not be known at all today were it not for the fact that those who volunteered were generally well known amongst the residents, and had their enlistment documented by *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette*. As the war progressed, the service of 'Territorians' was followed with interest through letters from the 'boys at the Front'.

Some 300 from the Northern Territory enlisted during the course of the war, and Bean might have been describing what has now become recognised as the 'Territorian' when he spoke of, "*all those who could not refrain from taking life in strong draughts, both the good and the bad of it*"<sup>3</sup>. Yet only sixteen men enlisted in 1914. Was there no "wave of patriotic fervour" in the Northern Territory?

### Enlistment

Up to 1911, the remote 'Top End' was the 'Northern Territory of South Australia'. Despite the first three attempts at settlement having been military garrisons, the South Australian Government had made no provision for the defence of Palmerston, as Darwin was then known.

Those pioneers who had settled in the Northern Territory had certainly faced the good and the bad - from fires to devastating cyclones, and equivalent extremes in both temperature and politics. The Top End received significant injections of projects, funding and investment after the Commonwealth assumed responsibility on 1 January 1911 (with Dr John Anderson

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<sup>2</sup> Bean (1934), p.44.

<sup>3</sup> Bean (1934), p.43.

Gilruth as Administrator<sup>4</sup>). A minor defence presence was introduced with Darwin becoming a Naval Reserve sub-district, but more importantly, a Cable Corps (or 'Cable Guard') was created to protect the important Cable Station in Darwin, considered to be a potential target for a German raider. Yet by 1914, the Top End was still very much a wild frontier, with a populace drawn from all over Australia – the adventurous and the optimistic, escaping a former life or seeking a fortune in their new one.

Recruiting for the AIEF was authorised by Proclamation on 10 August 1914. In the Northern Territory on 13 August, together with the first reports of action in Europe, a notice in *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* advised readers that, "*Those desirous of volunteering for local or active military service are requested to send in their names to R J Lewis, captain of the cable guard, as early as possible*". Robert James Lewis<sup>5</sup> commanded the Cable Guard with the honorary rank of Captain in the Australian Military Forces. Originally from Dublin, and a British Army veteran of the campaign in South Africa, Lewis had arrived in Darwin on the SS *Montoro* on 15 September 1912, and held appointments at the Hospital and Darwin Gaol and Labour Prison at Fannie Bay, and also as Sheriff and Commanding Officer of the Cable Guard. The Guard was presided over by the Administrator Dr Gilruth, who personally petitioned for his appointment to the rank of Colonel (he was listed on the Unattached List in May 1912).

From the very beginning, there was great enthusiasm within the Territory community. From 1914 to 1918 inclusive, at least 319 men from the Territory enlisted for war service<sup>6</sup>. While this may not seem significant, the first point to note is that these volunteers came from a population which numbered just 3,600 in 1914<sup>7</sup>, and grew to a peak of 4,883 in 1917 – and from these totals should be discounted some 1,200 Chinese residents<sup>8</sup>, who were not permitted to enlist (under the *Naturalisation Act*, Chinese were not permitted to become naturalised). So these wartime enlistments came from a European population which averaged around 3,000, representing some 8% of the population of the Northern Territory at that time.

Despite the enthusiasm, the second issue impacting on enlistments was that no recruiting depot was established in Darwin, and the Northern Territory Administration would make no provision to transport prospective recruits to interstate depots. Accordingly, volunteers made their own way interstate – and their names and exploits were later included in the rolls of numerous Australian and British battalions and regiments, with nothing to distinguish them as Territorians. As Bean recorded of these early enlistments: "*often there remained no record to connect them with the district from which they came*"<sup>9</sup>. One Darwin resident identified this shortcoming:

The mere fact that one or two, or even more, individuals have gone, or are willing to go, at their own expense, to the nearest recruiting depot, does not in any way identify the Territory as shouldering its share of the burden, since these units become merged in the contingents of other states and only go to swell their records.

<sup>4</sup> Appointed Administrator on 25 March 1912; appointed Temporary Colonel on the Unattached List, Australian Military Forces, May 1912 (for duties in relation to the Cable Guard); recalled by the Commonwealth Government on 20 February 1919.

<sup>5</sup> HHA 1917; NTTG, 29 October, 31 December 1914, 29 April 1915.

<sup>6</sup> NTTG (23 June 1923) reported 250 enlistments. The Darwin RSL roll includes 272 names. Further names have been identified from NAA records where Darwin, NT is shown as the place of enlistment.

<sup>7</sup> HHA 1920, p.34; this total does not include Aborigines.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, T (1990) *The Chinese in the Northern Territory*. NTU, Darwin, p.132.

<sup>9</sup> Bean (1934), p.45.



Officers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF at the battalion Christmas sports carnival at Mena Camp, Egypt on 25 December 1914, using a wagon as a grandstand. Captain Felix Giles (Officer Commanding G Company) is marked with an 'X' [ original photograph by Captain Mervyn Herbert, Officer Commanding D Company].

By the beginning of 1915, the Territory residents were anxious to be represented in Australia's war effort and, despite the early and willing response of individuals who made their own way overseas or interstate, the fear was that such honourable actions would not identify the Northern Territory as having participated. It was clearly the wish of Territorians:

that they may be able, in times to come, to say that they gave that which they had freely and to their utmost, instead of being under the stigma of being the only part of Australia that failed to respond to the call in the hour of need <sup>10</sup>.

### August 1914

There were many keen volunteers, who could not be accepted<sup>11</sup>. Joshua Ernest Rowlands, a self-confessed 'old unionist' who suffered for his opinions, was as outspoken as ever with global conflict on the horizon. He claimed to have been the first man in the Territory to offer himself for home or foreign service, but was repeatedly turned down. Walter Bell, who ran the shipping, insurance and customs agency in Darwin and a General Store at Maranboy, as well as being an auctioneer, had his application refused on medical grounds. Albert Colley of the 2½-mile railway depot tried twice to enlist but was rejected on both occasions because of a 'bad heart'.

Others showed a particular determination<sup>12</sup>. Percival Philips, a teacher on the Daly River, tried four times to enlist - in Darwin, Perth and elsewhere - finally making his own way to Thursday Island and then to Brisbane, where he enlisted on 9 July 1915, joining the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Similarly, Frank Parr from Darwin was rejected on four separate occasions, before finally being accepted by officials in Sydney on 1 October 1915. Alf O'Neill, a miner from Pine Creek born in Launceston, Tasmania, applied in 1914 but was rejected because of problems with his teeth. He

<sup>10</sup> NTTG, 25 February 1915.

<sup>11</sup> NTTG, 26 November 1914, 23 September and 21 October 1915 (Rowlands & Bell) and 20 July 1916 (Colley).

<sup>12</sup> NTTG, 25 November 1915 (Parr & Philips) and 13 April 1916 (O'Neill).

had these fixed, and tried again - four further times - but each time was turned down for some other problem (he was finally accepted, on 5 November 1916, on his sixth attempt, and joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Tunnelling Company).

The first Territorian to depart for war service was Pat Holmes<sup>13</sup>, a worker at Darwin's 2½-mile railway workshops. A veteran of service with the Munster Fusiliers, Holmes could not bear waiting to be called upon for service and instead chose to voluntarily leave Darwin by the first steamer to join his old regiment. He received an enthusiastic farewell on 15 August 1914 at the Hotel Victoria in Darwin, led by his boss Julian O'Sullivan, the Locomotive Superintendent, who stated that they were losing a man, "*who had not the slightest sign of a yellow streak in him*". Holmes received two tobacco pipes, the best procurable in Darwin, as a mark of esteem from his railway shop-mates. He remarked that, "*While smoking the pipes, he would cherish the fond memories of those who had presented him with them, and the many friendships he had formed in the Northern Territory*"<sup>14</sup>. Holmes sailed from Darwin on SS *Mataram* on 22 August for England, via Singapore.

Next to go was Sidney Rochefort from the Public Works Department<sup>15</sup>. He had earlier served with the King's Royal Rifles and as a Reservist with the Winchester Rifles, and also decided to make his own way back to England to volunteer. A farewell function was held on 17 August at the residence of the Superintendent of Public Works, Mr W C Kellaway, with the Clerk of Works, Mr W J Byrne, as vice-chairman of proceedings. William Byrne was prominent in the various farewells of Public Works Department members during 1914 and 1915, and finally was permitted to enlist himself in early 1916<sup>16</sup>. Surrounded by flags and amid rousing choruses of patriotic songs, Rochefort was described as a 'straightforward' man, and was presented with a pair of tobacco pipes and a safety razor. Rochefort sailed on SS *Changsha* on 30 August, and served with the British Expeditionary Force in France. Likewise, Felix Aron departed Darwin to join the British Expeditionary Force, and served through the war as a Captain with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hussars.

Leslie James Parer was the first to enlist with the AIF, travelling interstate to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Field Artillery Brigade as a Gunner on 17 August. He was the son of J J Parer, the descendant of an old Spanish settler, a Darwin entrepreneur recorded as being particularly militant in his support of the war. Parer founded the Overseas Club in February 1917 while his son Leslie was serving with distinction in France, and from 1921 held the lease of the Club and Terminus Hotels in Darwin (which had been operating at a loss under government control since 1915). Leslie Parer returned to Australia on 13 November 1918, a recipient of the Military Medal for bravery in the field<sup>17</sup>, and Parer Drive in Casuarina recalls his father's various contributions to Darwin.

Frank Carr<sup>18</sup>, born in Masterton, New Zealand, was an employee of the Public Works Department in Darwin. He went to Toowoomba, Queensland and enlisted on 27 August, joining

<sup>13</sup> Stated in NTTG and by the Administrator to be P L R Holmes; listed on the Darwin cenotaph as P E L Holmes. Not recorded as a fatality under either name by AWM, CWGC or NAA.

<sup>14</sup> NTTG, 20 August 1914.

<sup>15</sup> NTTG, 20 August, 3 September 1914.

<sup>16</sup> Enlisted 1 March 1916 (number 10215), served with 10<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Australian Engineers; returned to Australia 8 July 1919 with the rank of Corporal.

<sup>17</sup> LG, 14 May 1919, page 6060; CAG, 15 September 1919, page 1367.

<sup>18</sup> HHA 1917 (Wilson was not listed).

the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, a Queensland battalion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Brigade; he returned to Australia on 8 October 1918.

William Henry Mansfield<sup>19</sup> had come north to seek his fortune in the goldfields of the Tanami Desert and, after these closed down in 1911, had then worked at the Brock's Creek copper smelter before enlisting on 30 August 1914. He was one of the many who, despite only having spent a short time in the Northern Territory, developed a close affinity with it. He landed at Gallipoli with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion AIF on 25 April, and was wounded. From Abbey Wood in Kent, Mansfield wrote to the Editor of *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* in February 1916, summing up the sentiments of those who had been smitten with a respect for the Territory:

Years bring many changes, and our pathway leads us through curious, strange, and mysterious places. When I was roaming amidst the spinifex grass of the now-forgotten Tanamai goldfields, I little ever dreamed that I would don khaki and chance my life against screeching shot and shell on the hard fought and now never-to-be-forgotten Dardanelles Peninsula. God bless us all till we meet again.

Mansfield served in France with the 4<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion, together with fellow Territorian Robert Bousfield, was again wounded, and was awarded the Military Medal for bravery; he was discharged on 19 June 1918 with the rank of Lance-Corporal.

The third factor which caused a seemingly low Northern Territory response was the tempering of enthusiasm by practical realities – the small European population and the significant commitment of many in such key areas such as mining, agriculture, public works, health, policing and defence, meant that not all could be released to volunteer. The Clerk of Works, William Byrne, was prominent in the various farewells of Public Works Department members during 1914 and 1915 but could not himself be released; he was finally permitted to enlist in early 1916<sup>20</sup>.

Almost every eligible officer of the small police force, for example, had offered himself at the outbreak of war, but eventually only six were released for enlistment<sup>21</sup>. The Irish-born Noel Tracy Collins had arrived in the Top End in June 1911, and had served with the Northern Territory Police at Borroloola, Roper River and Horseshoe Creek. The latter was a temporary camp midway between Pine Creek and Katherine, manned by one Mounted Constable. Collins' attempt to enlist in August 1914 was therefore refused, but after Horseshoe Creek was closed down in December 1915 (and the station was relocated to Maranboy) approval was granted and he enlisted in 1916<sup>22</sup>. The first to enlist from the Territory, the only police enlistment permitted in 1914, was Mounted Constable Frederick William Murray Taylor. He had been born in Bundalong, Victoria, and returned to Melbourne to enlist. After serving at Gallipoli and in

<sup>19</sup> NTTG, 1 July 1915 and 11 May 1916 (letter dated 29 February 1916); LG, 19 February 1917, page 1756; CAG, 25 July 1917, page 1543.

<sup>20</sup> Enlisted 1 March 1916 (number 10215), served with 10<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Australian Engineers; returned to Australia 8 July 1919 with the rank of Corporal.

<sup>21</sup> McLaren, W J, 'The Northern Territory and its Police Forces', unpublished manuscript, p.552-553; Debnam, L (1990) *Men of the Northern Territory Police, 1870-1914*. Genealogical Society of the NT Inc, pp.30; HHA 1915; Inspector of Police annual report for 1915-17 dated 20 August 1917, In HHA 1917, p.53.

<sup>22</sup> Collins enlisted in Melbourne on 31 March 1916, joining the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion; he returned to Australia on 21 July 1917.



France, he returned to Australia on 10 April 1919 as a Lieutenant. Taylor and Collins appear not to have rejoined the Northern Territory Police after returning<sup>23</sup>.

### September 1914

Also prevented from volunteering were those men engaged in employment of national significance: men were not taken from the Eastern Extension Cable Company, the Overland and Radio Telegraphs, the banks and the newly established Vestey's Meatworks. The other occupational group which had restrictions imposed by the Gilruth Administration was the medical profession.

The Irish-born Dr Cecil Lucius Strangman<sup>24</sup>, qualified with a Diploma in Tropical Medicine from Cambridge University, had first settled in South Australia but moved to Darwin at the end of 1906, arriving with his wife and child on SS *Empire* on 16 December. He was Medical Officer and Protector of Aborigines (1907-09), and then Government Medical Officer (1907-13), noted for his outstanding work in improving hygiene and controlling disease, notably malaria. Strangman's term in Darwin finished in awkward circumstances, which culminated in the abolition of the Central Board of Health by the Gilruth Administration in 1914, Strangman having suffered the same fate as other 'men of character and independence' who stood up to or criticised the Gilruth regime: "*the much-loved and exceedingly able Strangman resigned under a pressure which made office here intolerable to him*"<sup>25</sup>.

Strangman returned to Adelaide and there enlisted on 21 September 1914. It was intended for him to accompany a hospital unit to France but, with an expert knowledge of tropical diseases and eight years' experience at the Darwin Hospital, he was instead attached as the Principal Medical Officer to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (ANMEF). Strangman joined the unit on Rabaul after fighting had ceased, and effectively dealt with malaria which was spreading amongst the troops. In recognition of his efforts, Strangman was appointed Principal Medical Officer for New Britain with the rank of Brevet Colonel. He took leave in 1917, and was on SS *Matunga* in August when it was captured by the German raider *Wolf* – he was held prisoner aboard a captured Spanish collier in the north Atlantic, not being released until March 1918. He returned to South Australia on 20 October 1918, and was discharged in February 1919.

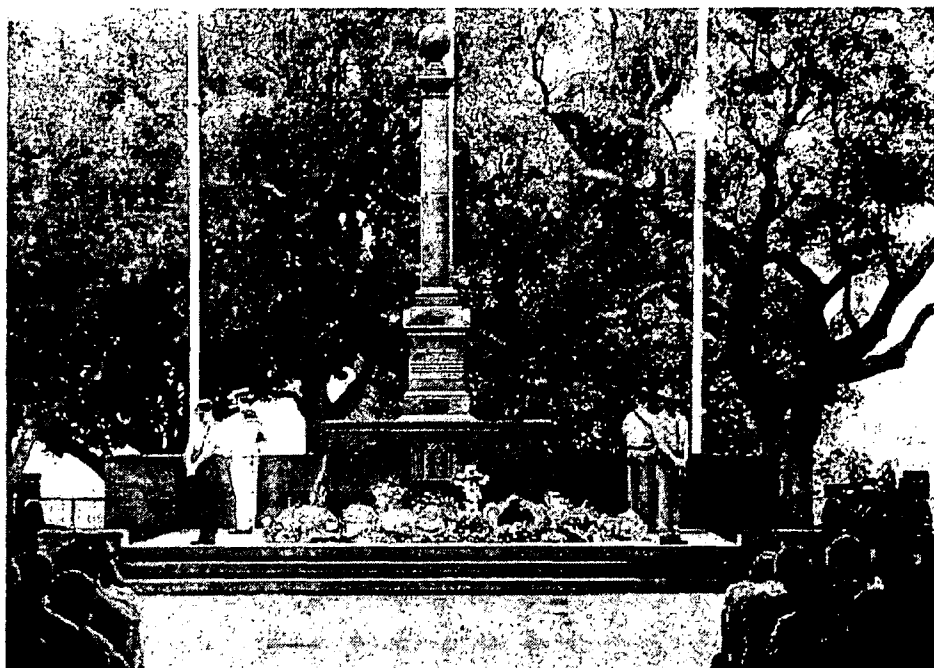
Dr Frank Howson<sup>26</sup>, the Government Health Officer in Darwin, also had his early attempts to enlist blocked. Born in England, he had served with the Oxford University Volunteer Corps whilst studying medicine in 1896-97, and had graduated as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant from the Durham University Officer Training Corps. He was finally released in 1915, enlisting on 27 July and joining the Australian Army Medical Corps as a Captain. He was appointed to command the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Stationary Hospital located on Lemnos during the Dardanelles campaign. He returned on 10 June 1916 as the Medical Officer on the *Itonus* and had his AIF appointment terminated on 19 November, resuming his vocation in Darwin as Government Health Officer.

<sup>23</sup> Not listed in List of Permanent Officials in Northern Territory Public Service at 30 June 1920. In: HHA 1920, p.31.

<sup>24</sup> Carment *et al* (1990) pp.279-281; NTTG, 26 November 1914, 24 December 1914.

<sup>25</sup> NTTG, 26 November 1914.

<sup>26</sup> HHA 1915; HHA 1917; HHA 1918.



The Darwin Cenotaph in Bicentennial Park. In 1970, the Cenotaph was relocated from outside Government House to the Darwin Civic Centre. In 1992, it was moved to its present location in Bicentennial Park.

Dr Mervyn John Holmes<sup>27</sup>, the Government Health Officer at Pine Creek, was another who was anxious to offer himself for war service but was not released by the Gilruth Administration. Born in Melbourne, Holmes was a University of Melbourne graduate appointed to the NT Health Department as a Medical Officer in 1911, charged with curbing the spread of malaria and leprosy amongst Territory Aborigines. He was then Chief Health Officer for just over three years, coming to Darwin during Howson's absence, and during this time he formed some very clear views on the Northern Territory. He became renowned for advocating settlement in this new and hopeful region, whose value had not yet been realised, he made determined efforts to remedy the sanitary conditions in Darwin's Chinatown, and he improved the drainage and water supply of the town. In 1915, the Administrator reported that Holmes had, "*succeeded in improving the general sanitary condition of Darwin*". Gilruth was not prepared to release Holmes in 1914/15 with Howson being away, but finally saw fit to release him in 1916:

Owing to the passing of the new Health Ordinance and the great influx of people, the majority of whom had perforce to dwell in tents, necessitating close attention, his services could not be spared till February, 1916, when he joined the Australian Army Medical Corps.<sup>28</sup>

Holmes was appointed as a Captain, succeeded in Darwin by Dr H Leighton Jones as Acting Chief Health Officer. His specialist knowledge and experience in the field of public health was

<sup>27</sup> HHA 1915; HHA 1917; HHA 1918; NTTG, 10 December 1914.

<sup>28</sup> HHA 1917.

recognised by his superiors, and for several months Holmes was held in Victoria for work of that nature. He was then sent to the Front in Europe where he again was detailed for public health work. He served with distinction, earning four of the 28 decorations conferred upon Territorians during the war. He was twice Mentioned-in-Despatches (1917<sup>29</sup> and 1918<sup>30</sup>), was awarded the French Croix de Guerre<sup>31</sup>, and was then awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1919<sup>32</sup> for "*distinguished service in connection with military operations in France and Flanders*". He returned home on 23 July 1919. He enlisted again at Royal Park on 30 October 1942 and served as a Medical Officer at Land Headquarters during WW2, and was discharged on 14 July 1945 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Equally vital for retention in Darwin was the Cable Guard, under the direct authority of Administrator Gilruth himself, which was tasked with defending the Cable Station in Darwin. The members of the Guard were provided with one blanket, stretcher and table utensils whilst in camp, and each had a water canteen on permanent issue. Other equipment such as tables, cooking utensils and water tanks were loaned by the Northern Territory Administration. They were called up for active service as the German threat intensified, each member receiving the militia rate of pay: Lewis received the pay of a Lieutenant in the Citizen Forces (15 shillings per day), while his men received 10 shillings (Sergeants), 9 shillings (Corporals) and 5 shillings (Private soldiers) per day<sup>33</sup>. Not surprisingly, every eligible member of the Guard was an early volunteer for war service, particularly once it was apparent that there would be no provision for active service in Darwin itself, but none were released.

Lewis turned his attentions to securing AIF recruits until finally he was permitted to enlist, in April 1915 – "*it having been impossible to relieve him prior to that date*" as Dr Gilruth explained to the Minister for Home and Territories<sup>34</sup>. Before his departure, Lewis married the matron of Darwin Hospital in Darwin's Christ Church; Mrs Lewis herself also enlisted and subsequently went to England and France as an Army nursing sister.

### Petition

Robert Bruce Bousfield, born in Middlesex, England, left Darwin to enlist in Brisbane on 2 September 1914, joining Frank Carr in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Aged 27 years 10 months, he had previous service in the Cambridge University Rifle Volunteers, and with the Thursday Island Garrison. More were keen to follow, but they faced official opposition from His Excellency Dr John Gilruth – referred to in the newspaper as 'His Obstinacy'. This resulted in a petition bearing 22 signatures being presented to the Administrator on 25 September 1914, asking Dr Gilruth to assist in hurrying their enlistment:

We, the undersigned residents of this Territory, are desirous of enlisting in the service of His Majesty the King, and of serving the Empire at the Battle Front, and we beg that you will use your valuable influence to secure for us enlistment with one of the earliest contingents to leave Australia.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> LG, 1 June 1917, p.5423; CAG, 4 October 1917, p.2625.

<sup>30</sup> LG, 28 May 1918, p.6203; CAG, 24 October 1918, p.2057.

<sup>31</sup> LG, 10 October 1918, p.11949; CAG, 12 February 1919, p.268.

<sup>32</sup> LG, 3 June 1919, p.6461; CAG, 7 November 1918, p.2110; Creagh & Humphris (1978), pp 91-95, 270.

<sup>33</sup> NTTG, 31 December 1914. By comparison, a Private in the AIF received 5 shillings per day plus 1 shilling deferred pay.

<sup>34</sup> HHA 1917.

<sup>35</sup> NTTG, 1 October 1914.

All but three of the signatories of this petition were veterans of imperial or colonial military service, and eight had seen active service. Walter Catt had been a Sergeant with the 14<sup>th</sup> Kings Hussars (12 years) and Bob Butters had been a Sergeant with the Royal Scots Greys (8 years) and was a Boer War veteran. Jeremiah Buckley had served in the Shanghai Light Horse, and Tom Sawyer in the Gloucestershire Regiment. Others had served with the Sydney Scottish Rifles, Tasmanian Rangers and Australian Artillery.

Former Colour-Sergeant David Campbell McPherson aged 40, born in Glasgow, was a veteran with 12 years' service in India and South Africa with Princess Louise's Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He did not wait for a reply to the petition - perhaps recognising the obstinate nature of the Gilruth Administration. He made his own way to Fremantle and then Perth, there joining up and training at Black Boy Camp with the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion: "*We are training hard and getting fit to knock the Germans out*" he wrote in late 1914<sup>36</sup>.

Another of the impatient signatories was Jack Johnston<sup>37</sup>, a Canadian who had been mining at Pine Creek. Born in Penticton, Canada, he had served with the Royal Horse Artillery for three years and had spent a year surveying in India with the Royal Engineers. By the time the petition was presented, he had already left Darwin in SS *St Albans* to enlist in Sydney. He actually enlisted in Townsville however, with his Territory mates on 11 March 1915, for service with the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF. He returned to Australia on 23 July 1919 with the rank of Warrant Officer. Sydney Greenwood aged 39, the well known and respected Darwin barber and tobacconist, had seen three years' service in the Australian Artillery<sup>38</sup>. He too paid his own fare to Townsville on the Yuill & Co cargo vessel SS *Taiyuan*; he enlisted on 17 February 1915 and went to Gallipoli with the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF as a Corporal.

### October 1914

On 15 October 1914, the Administrator replied to the petition:

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable the Minister for Defence has intimated that in view of the present condition of the Territory, he feels, while appreciating the patriotic spirit that has prompted your request, that your presence is required in Darwin.<sup>39</sup>

Locomotive Superintendent Julian Rodger Bede O'Sullivan<sup>40</sup>, whose name headed the list of signatories, became frustrated with the lack of support. So keen was he to play his part that he had actually been the first to apply in South Australia, to which the Northern Territory then belonged - his application had reputedly been received before war was actually declared. Known for his 'kindliness of disposition and good comradeship' at the 2½-mile railway workshops, O'Sullivan was a 42 year old veteran with 23 years' service in the South Australian field artillery, garrison artillery and light horse, attaining the rank of Lieutenant. During this time, he had seen active service in South Africa, commanding C Squadron of the 5<sup>th</sup> South Australian (Imperial) Contingent in 1901-02 (with Colonel De Lisle's Column in the Kroonstadt district and Orange River Colony, and the night attack on General Smut's laager at Grootvallier).

<sup>36</sup> NTTG, 3 December 1914.

<sup>37</sup> Letter dated 14 August 1916: NTTG, 23 November 1916.

<sup>38</sup> HHA 1917.

<sup>39</sup> NTTG, 15 October 1914.

<sup>40</sup> HHA 1915, p.18; NTTG, 27 May, 25 November 1915, 20 July 1916, 31 August 1916 (letter dated 1 July 1916).

In response to the opposition of the Gilruth Administration, O'Sullivan announced his intention to make his own way south to enlist. He was farewelled by employees of the 2½-mile workshops at a smoke social at the Hotel Victoria on 22 May 1915, and was presented with a pair of pipes and a gold wristwatch. If his application had not been eventually accepted, he told his mates, he would have volunteered as a mechanic in making munitions. Giving his reasons for joining up, he said that he did not claim to be a hero, but had been trained to military duty and felt it to be his absolute bounded duty to offer himself. Once his enlistment was complete, he sarcastically wired the Administrator to say simply, "*Leaving this morning. Goodbye*". O'Sullivan served as a Captain in the 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and returned to Australia on 20 December 1917 as a Major.

Following Frank Carr from the Public Works Department was Alfred Frederick Schofield<sup>41</sup>. Born in Melbourne, Schofield enlisted on 16 October 1914, and returned to Australia on 20 October 1918 as an Honorary Lieutenant (Quartermaster) with the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance. With the coming of war again, he enlisted in Perth on 21 May 1941, and served until 27 August 1943 as a Captain with the Australian General Hospital at Northam, then aged 54.

Carr and Bousfield were then joined in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion by Alf Noble<sup>42</sup> (enlisted 8 December), one of the survivors from a terrible drowning tragedy in the MacArthur River a few years earlier, and Territory-born Walter Styles (enlisted 19 December), a grandson of the Territory's first European settlers, Ned and Eliza Tuckwell. Styles grew up at Brock's Creek where his father worked for Zapopan Mine and was manager of the Eureka Mine, and was later a Guard at the Darwin Gaol and Labour Prison. They were among the first ashore at Gallipoli - "*with orders to storm the heights at any costs before daylight and to use only the bayonet*", as Bousfield later recorded.

Bousfield later wrote of their 'tremendous welcome' on the morning of 25 April: "*we had a whistling good tune of Mausers from the shore, and pompoms, etc, flying all round and splashing and zipping overhead*"<sup>43</sup>. Styles wrote to his father of the landing:

The A and B Co. of the 9th Battalion were the first to land. The Turks were waiting on the beach with machine guns, and they let our lads have it (as the saying is) when they got about a hundred yards from the shore; but when they got out of the punts they let them know what the Australians were made of. The Australians drove them back over the third ridge.<sup>44</sup>

Robert Bousfield said of their enemy: "*For though the Turk is a brave fellow, a very brave fellow – before rifle fire, he doesn't like cold steel*"<sup>45</sup>. Bousfield received both a lump of shrapnel and a bullet in the leg on the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup>, and was evacuated to Birmingham. His designated next of kin, Miss Elsie Colley in "Port Darwin, South Australia", was notified by telegram on 12 June that Bousfield had been wounded. The Colley name had first come to the Territory in 1875, and Elsie was the aunt of Alf Colley who became a notable crocodile shooter and bushman after WW2. Whilst on board the hospital ship, Bousfield met up with William Mansfield, the former Tanami gold miner: "*It was a great joy to me to meet him, and we had a long yarn about Territory people and affairs*"<sup>46</sup>. Bousfield was invalided back to Brisbane but once he had recovered, he immediately re-enlisted and joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion, again meeting up with William Mansfield; he received a gunshot wound in the right thigh and calf in

<sup>41</sup> HHA 1917 (Wilson was not listed).

<sup>42</sup> H B Pott, letter dated 3 December 1915: NTTG, 16 March 1916.

<sup>43</sup> Letter to Mr Kirkland (editor), undated: NTTG, 1 July 1915.

<sup>44</sup> Letter dated 5 July 1915: NTTG, 14 October 1915.

<sup>45</sup> Letter to Mr Kirkland, undated: NTTG, 1 July 1915.

<sup>46</sup> Letter to Mr Kirkland, undated: NTTG, 1 July 1915.

October 1917, and was discharged in Australia on 2 February 1918. He was still alive in 1967 - aged 80 and residing in Brisbane – a proud recipient of the ANZAC Commemorative Medal and lapel badge.

Styles had been a member of the reinforcement detail which came ashore immediately after the initial landing, to help the Australians hold their line at the Second Ridge. He was among a party of 33 which spent three days with beach parties collecting oars, shovels and picks, unloading munitions and food, and erecting hospitals, up to his waist in water and under fire the whole time. He joined the battalion in the line on Bolton's Ridge facing Pine Ridge, and was present on 18 May during a Turkish offensive in which the Turks bombed the wire entanglements to the front of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Styles wrote home:

I thought my days were numbered. My mates were falling both sides of me, but as fast as they fell reinforcements took their places. The only thing happened to me that day was being stunned. A shell dropped about two yards in front of me and I put my hands to both sides of my head and kept telling myself that I was dead. I suppose I was only stunned a few seconds but it seemed like minutes.<sup>47</sup>

During a patrol on 30 May, Styles was wounded, receiving "*a bullet in the side about four inches below my armpits*" he wrote to his sister Eileen<sup>48</sup>. He underwent surgery at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital at Heliopolis and returned to Gallipoli, only to be wounded again by an exploding shell. Styles went to the Peninsula a third time, but in July was mortally wounded by Turkish machine-gun fire while digging trenches, receiving hits beneath the right shoulder blade and at the base of the spine. His company commander Captain D K Chapman wrote to Tom Styles, "*He was most heroic in the manner in which he bore great pain, and was an example to many a hardened soldier*"<sup>49</sup>. Chapman, noted as the first man ashore at the original Gallipoli landing, dressed his wounds and saw Styles evacuated to the hospital ship standing off the Peninsula, where he died on 28 July 1915. It is recorded that, "*His death caused great sorrow*" amongst his sisters because the family had been extremely close<sup>50</sup>: his sisters were Eileen (later Mrs Eileen Fitzer OBE), Lillian (Mrs Lovegrove), Gertrude (Mrs Easton) and Myrtle (Mrs Fawcett), all very well-known Territorians. Private George Bassett and several fellow Territorians visited the grave of Walter Styles, and reported that the grave had a painted cross with the name carved in<sup>51</sup>.

Fellow Territorian Harry Pott wrote home of the death of Alf Noble – he had been wounded by a Turkish shell and was evacuated to Egypt, but died of his wounds in hospital on 2 August 1915 at the age of 22.

Norman Claude Wilson, a carpenter with the Public Works Department, was another of the signatories to the petition to the Administrator. Born at Mernda, South Yan Yean in Victoria, he gave his age on the petition as 26 years and, in his enthusiasm to enlist, stated that he had seen service in South Africa during the Boer War! He was another who was not prepared to await the Administrator's assistance: he sailed from Darwin on SS *Taiyuan* and enlisted at Broadmeadow Camp in Victoria on 6 November 1914. He gave his age as 27 years 9 months and, more modestly, stated his previous experience to be four years with the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment. He was at Gallipoli with A Squadron, 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment from 21 May 1915, received a

<sup>47</sup> Letter dated 5 July 1915: NTTG, 14 October 1915.

<sup>48</sup> Letter dated 6 June 1915: Sunday Territorian, 20 April 1986.

<sup>49</sup> Captain D K Chapman, letter dated 29 July 1915: NTTG, 21 October 1915.

<sup>50</sup> Carment, D and B James, eds (1992) *Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography. Volume 2*. NTU Press, Darwin, NT, p.62.

<sup>51</sup> NTTG, 20 April 1916.

gunshot wound in the shoulder and fractured clavicle in September, participated in operations with the regiment in Palestine and the Sinai, and was promoted to Lance-Corporal on 17 January 1918. He contracted malaria however, and died in the French Hospital at Damascus on 18 October. Wilson Park (Lot 3826) and Wilson Crescent in Darwin have been named in his memory. On his War Memorial records, his age when he died in 1918 was given as 33.

### Honours

Just 20 Territorians received total of 28 decorations for war service. These included three 1914 volunteers: William Mansfield and Leslie Parer (Military Medal), and Felix Gordon Giles (Distinguished Service Order and Mentioned-in-Despatches).

Felix Giles<sup>52</sup>, born on 23 November 1885 in the Wesleyan Parsonage in Palmerston (as Darwin was then known), was the first child of the explorer and pastoralist Alfred Giles, who had been Second-in-Command of the expedition which set the route for the Overland Telegraph Line to Port Darwin. His mother Mary was also a significant pioneer – she and her maid Lydia were the first white women to live on a station in the Northern Territory. He was also the nephew of Christopher Giles, a First Class Cadet with Surveyor-General George Goyder's party which had arrived in Port Darwin in 1869 to identify a site suitable for settlement, and then a Sub-Inspector for the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line.

Giles had gone to Adelaide to study, and was then employed in the electrical branch of the General Post Office, and later the Adelaide Electric Lighting and Traction Company. He served in the South Australian Scottish Infantry from 1908, was a company commander in the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry ('Torrens Battalion') from 1912, and was appointed to the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion AIF on 19 August 1914, commanding G Company with the rank of Lieutenant. On 2 January 1915, when the Australian infantry battalions changed from eight rifle companies to four, his company merged with D Company, with Giles becoming Second-in-Command. On the conclusion of the war, returned to Adelaide on 21 February 1919, and resumed his civilian employment as a Meter Superintendent with the Adelaide Electric Supply Company.

Giles landed at Gallipoli on 25 April, was Mentioned in Army Corps Routine Orders, and assumed command of D Company after his company commander was evacuated wounded<sup>53</sup>. During a lull in the fighting in August, Giles wrote to his parents:

Still in Turkey, and still in the fighting line. Over four months continuous service – record for any regiment almost, in these days of trench warfare . . . Oh well, with fondest love, and hoping the Ki-ser will soon die.<sup>54</sup>

Felix Giles served continuously on Gallipoli Peninsula from the morning of the landing until the battalion's evacuation – only one other original officer of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and two others within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, could claim the same distinction. He was nominated for honours

<sup>52</sup> Alexander, J, *Ed* (1950) *Who's Who in Australia*, The Herald, Melbourne, p.287; Bean, C E W (1942) *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18. Volumes II, III and IV*. AWM Canberra; Carment *et al* (1990); Carment & Wilson (1996); Creagh & Humphris (1978), pp.38-39, 251; Forrest, P (1985) *Springvale's Story and Early Years at Katherine*. Murrarji Press; Gibbney, H J & A G Smith, eds (1987) *A Biographical Register 1788-1939, Volume 1*. Australian Dictionary of Biography, Canberra; WW1 Service Record, F G Giles (NAA 5008404, Series B2455, accession number B2455/1).

<sup>53</sup> See Rosenzweig, P A (1986) 'Furthest inland at Gallipoli'. *Sabretache*, XXVII (2): 37-40.

<sup>54</sup> F G Giles, letter dated 20 August 1915: NTTG, 18 November 1915.

(including a foreign decoration) in November 1915 and January 1916, while later in 1916 he was recommended for the Distinguished Service Order for his "*cool resource and gallantry under fire*"<sup>55</sup>. One of the first indications to Territory families that their boys had been transferred to the Western Front was a postcard full of optimism from Giles which arrived bearing a Marseilles postmark: "*Just tip top. Not submarined yet . . . We'll write from Berlin! Well. Love - F.G.G., Major*"<sup>56</sup>. At Pozières, Giles played a valuable role in linking up two key objectives; he was gassed and, on no less than three occasions, was knocked down by high explosive shells. He persisted until after nightfall and then, despite being very shaken by concussion, guided his company into the position and had them establish their defences. For his conduct, Giles was again recommended for the DSO: "*Major GILES has exhibited great skill and judgement and was at all times wonderfully cool and collected under the most trying circumstances*"<sup>57</sup>.

His good work in the capture of Le Barque in early 1917, including his harassing of the enemy rear-guards during the German withdrawal, earned for him further recommendations for honours. It was for his meritorious performance during the operations around Boursies and Beugny in early 1917 that Giles was 'Mentioned' - in the Despatches of Sir Douglas Haig on 9 April<sup>58</sup>. He was finally awarded the DSO in 1917 for, "*services rendered in the prosecution of the war*"<sup>59</sup>.

### Commemoration

The deaths of Alf Noble and Walter Styles opened the Northern Territory's Roll of Honour. By the time of the first anniversary of the Anzac landings in April 1916, a further six Territorians were known to have died as a result of operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula. In addition, Lieutenant Pat Holmes had been killed at Gallipoli, but this was not known in Darwin until July 1916<sup>60</sup>, so his name was not recorded on the Roll of Honour produced for a memorial service which was held in Darwin on 25 April 1916.

The next act of commemoration in the Northern Territory took place in the Public Works Department's offices on 13 May 1916, when an Honour Roll was unveiled by the Administrator as a permanent record of those members from Darwin who had enlisted for war service. One of the PWD workers present, a Russian, shook one of the returned soldiers by the hand, saying: "*I thank you, not only for fighting for the Empire but for fighting for my country and for liberty*"<sup>61</sup>. Ironically, given his lack of support for 1914 volunteers, when the Administrator reported to the Minister for Home and Territories in September 1917 on the state of the Northern Territory Public Service he boasted, "*at the present time I think the Service does not contain a single individual who is eligible and has not joined the Forces*"<sup>62</sup>. At least 82 government employees had departed for active service by that time.

<sup>55</sup> Recommendation by GOC 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division, undated, 1916 (AWM 28, 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion).

<sup>56</sup> F G Giles, postcard dated 2 April 1916: NTTG, 27 July 1916.

<sup>57</sup> Recommendation by GOC 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade, dated 29 July 1916 (AWM 28, 1<sup>st</sup> Div, 23-26 Jul 16).

<sup>58</sup> LG, 1 June 1917, p.5421; CAG No.169, dated 4 October 1917, p.2623.

<sup>59</sup> Recommendation by GOC 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division, dated 7 March 1917 (AWM 28, 1<sup>st</sup> Div, 23 Feb-07 Mar 17); LG, 1 June 1917, 6<sup>th</sup> Supplement No.30111 dated 4 June 1917, p.5475; CAG, No.169, dated 4 October 1917, p.2626.

<sup>60</sup> NTTG, 20 July 1916.

<sup>61</sup> NTTG, 18 May 1916.

<sup>62</sup> HHA 1917; a total of 75 were listed by Dr Gilruth, and at least a further seven are known to have enlisted before the publication of this report but were not listed by Gilruth.



The Superintendent of Public Works, Mr Kellaway, said that the roll also included the names of eight ex-members who had worked with the Department at some stage during the preceding two and a half years, and four men (including Rochefort and Holmes) who had been forced to go elsewhere to enlist although they would undoubtedly have enlisted in Darwin had they the opportunity. Recognition was also given to six employees who had volunteered but had been medically rejected. With such a significant contribution, Kellaway hoped the roll would be a reminder to all that, "*when duty called, the 'Public Shirks' . . . did not shirk the grandest call of all - that of their Empire*"<sup>63</sup>.

The Mayor of Darwin, Mr Percy Kelsey, announced that actions were being taken for the erection of a permanent public monument in honour of the brave Territorians who had left for the Front. The Darwin Cenotaph was erected outside Government House, as a polished grey granite column sitting on a polished red granite table base, itself sitting upon a polished red granite stepped base. It was originally intended that, if sufficient funds could be secured, a bronze figure of a soldier would replace the ball on top of the column but this has not occurred<sup>64</sup>. At the monument's unveiling on 21 April 1921, the Mayor, Councillor J Burton, expressed his regret that the Monument Committee, in spite of their great efforts, had been unable to obtain the names of all who went to the Front from the Territory – reflecting Bean's lament at the lack of records from these earliest days of the war, and the peculiarities of the Northern Territory of 1914.

Instead, the names of 52 Territorians who lost their lives were commemorated on the Cenotaph, but even this was incomplete. Of the 319 Territory volunteers, it is now known that 68 lost their lives in the Great War. Three 1914 volunteers are listed on the Darwin Cenotaph:

- Private Walter Styles (9<sup>th</sup> Battalion): wounded 30 May and died at sea off Gallipoli on 28 July 1915, aged 24; buried in the Embarkation Pier Cemetery at Gallipoli, and his name is also listed on the Lone Pine Memorial.
- Lieutenant Pat Holmes (British Expeditionary Force): killed-in-action at Gallipoli.
- Norman Claude Wilson (8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment): died of illness in Damascus on 18 October 1918, aged 33; buried in the Damascus British War Cemetery, Syria.

The fourth 1914 volunteer who died during the war, whose name was inadvertently omitted, was Private Alf Noble (9<sup>th</sup> Battalion) who died of his wounds on 2 August 1915 at the age of 22 and was buried in Chatby War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

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Sixteen Territorians were 1914 volunteers, of which four lost their lives and three were decorated. Many others however, had attempted to enlist or were frustrated in their efforts by not being released. Although the patriotic fervour was as strong as in any other quarter in Australia, the lure for the adventurous and the optimistic was upset by external forces. Enlistments were limited in 1914 because the volunteers came from a small transient population, they had to make their own passage to interstate recruiting depots, and quite simply, most were deemed to be in 'critical' employment categories and were not released to enlist.

The requirement to travel interstate and the reluctance of the Administration to release key personnel meant that many had to hold their enthusiasm in check for a year or two. And with the

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<sup>63</sup> NTTG, 18 May 1916.

<sup>64</sup> NTTG, 18 May, 20 July 1916. In 1970, the Cenotaph was relocated to the Civic Centre, and in 1992 was moved to its present location in Bicentennial Park.

transitory nature of the Territory population, many who had been in the Top End for a short time but had already left would not have had the association noted. It would not be until 1915 that distinctive Northern Territory contingents would be assembled, the first commanded by Captain Robert Lewis of the Cable Guard, ensuring that the Northern Territory would, in fact, be seen to be 'shouldering its share of the burden'.

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### Legend

CAG	<i>Commonwealth of Australia Gazette</i>
HHA	His Honour the Administrator's Annual Report
LG	<i>London Gazette</i>
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NTTG	The Northern Territory Times and Gazette



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## JOHN OSCAR NORTON

Steve Chilvers

John Oscar Norton was born at Montrose Scotland on 26 March 1838, the son of John Norton a Revenue Officer and Ann Norton (nee Binns). He joined the Royal Navy in 1853. He was present at the bombardment of Seaborg (in what is now Finland) in the Baltic in 1855-56 during the Crimean War period. In 1857-60 he was aboard the flagship *Vesuvius* during a punitive expedition up the river Scarcis on the west coast of Africa. Later he went to the Arctic regions in search of Sir John Franklin with the expedition under Sir Leopold McClintock. In 1861 he served as a clerk on board HMS *Bulldog* which was then engaged in surveying the northern route for the Atlantic cable.



On 3 October 1861 he married Emma Miller and they had eight children. From 1862-1867 he was on board the Royal Yacht *Osborne* and from 1867-1871 he occupied a post on the troopship *Himalaya* which conveyed the last English regiment from Australian shores in March 1868. In 1872 he was on board HMS *Lord Clyde* an ironclad that was wrecked at Pantaleria in the Mediterranean, while proceeding to the wreck of another vessel. From 1872-1874 he served as storekeeper on HMS *Agincourt* of the Channel Squadron and from 1875-1879 he was in the flagship *Devonport*. On 11 July 1882, John Norton was present at the bombardment of Alexandria aboard HMS *Alexandra*, commanded by Captain Charles Frederick Hotham and flying the flag of Admiral Sir Frederick Beauchamp Seymour. On returning to England he was stationed at the school of gunnery at Devonport until he transferred to the South Australian Navy in 1884. He and his family travelled to South Australia aboard HMCS *Protector*.

Upon arriving in South Australia he was given the position of Assistant Paymaster on the *Protector* until 7 August 1900 when his son Ernest Claude Norton took over the role of paymaster. John Norton remained in the Australian Navy until 1906.

On 18 June 1898 John Norton's wife Emma died and was buried at Cheltenham Cemetery, Adelaide. A few years later he married Mary Ann. On 22 April 1915 John Norton passed away at the age of 77 years. He was given a naval funeral with full honours. The service was conducted by Reverend Canon Swan and had six pall bearers from the Naval Instructional Staff, with members of the Royal Australian Navy Reserve providing a guard of honour. At the funeral were Warrant Officer Cameron, Capt Slane, Royal Australian Garrison Artillery, Mr W J Giddings, Chairman, South Australian Corps of Veterans. John Norton was buried with his first wife in the family plot a Cheltenham Cemetery, Adelaide (Row B, Path 27). His second wife Mary Norton died on the 28 September 1933 and was buried in the family plot. His son John Leopold Norton is also buried in the family grave.

John Oscar Norton was awarded the Baltic Medal, Egypt Medal 1882-1889 with Alexandria 11th July Clasp, Khedive's Star and the Royal Naval Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

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## THE 1915 ROYAL COMMISSION INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LIVERPOOL CAMP

Peter Hopper

On 1 July 1915, Richard Beaumont Orchard MP, the federal member for Nepean in the House of Representatives, delivered a scathing attack on the mismanagement of affairs he felt existed at the military training camp at Liverpool, 35 km SW of Sydney. In all he made twenty-four charges against the existing administration of the camp under the following headings:

- (i) General insufficiency of equipment and training. This involved a lack of uniforms; an insufficient supply of overcoats; a shortage of rifles and ammunition; the defective condition of some of the rifles and little or no rifle practice.
- (ii) Unsatisfactory medical service. Men objected to being treated by a doctor of German parentage.
- (iii) Poor housing accommodation. Huts are draughty and the supply of mattresses is inadequate.
- (iv) Poor sanitary conditions of the camp, especially the latrines.
- (v) Preferential treatment in the German Concentration Camp.
- (vi) Horses without sufficient food.
- (vii) Excessive centralisation and discouragement of initiative.
- (viii) Miscellaneous.

Such was the impact of this attack that a Royal Commission was almost immediately set into motion. The actual site of the camp had also come under criticism in the press due to the prevalence of fogs in the low-lying area. On Monday 12 July the Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, announced that a Royal Commission would be appointed to inquire into the charges made in Parliament by Mr Orchard. On 14 July, the Hon Mr Justice Rich, at Darlinghurst Courthouse, opened proceedings of the Royal Commission into the administration of the Liverpool camp. On 16 July he carried out an inspection of the camp site and decided to move the Royal Commission to the camp itself. Throughout the next two weeks (16-29 July) evidence was taken from 118 witnesses.

Right from Day One complaints steadily poured in concerning the unsatisfactory state of affairs at the camp. Captain Arthur Wallace confirmed that troops had been sent overseas with inadequate training. Sergeant Creft supported this by maintaining that the men were training with obsolete rifles. He also maintained that diarrhoea and constipation was rife among new recruits. Three privates then reported that they had actually boarded the troopship *Berrima* and were then sent back to Liverpool without their gear or pay as the ship departed for the front without them. Private Bailey said they now belonged to *the stony-broke company*.

On Day Two Dr Herbert Schlink came under close questioning concerning his allegiance to the Crown. He found himself in a very difficult situation being of German parentage and holding the position of Officer Commanding the 40th Medical Corps at the Liverpool Camp. He had in fact resigned in early July when reports became public that he had supposedly made unpatriotic statements. Several patients at the Camp hospital then testified as to the poor treatment they had received.

On the third day the Commandant of the German Concentration Camp at Liverpool supported Mr Orchard's claim that prisoners there were better clothed, housed and fed than regular army recruits. There were also reports of men having to go on night duty without adequate greatcoats. Then there was the problem posed by the lack of continuity of doctors at the camp hospital.

The next day Dr Schlink supported this lack of continuity. The death of Private R.S. White from cerebo-spinal meningitis in the camp hospital was also aired. It also became obvious that mattresses and overcoats had been quickly provided to some sections following Mr Orchard's address in Parliament.

On Wednesday 21 July Mr Justice Rich heard that following the death of Private White there had been a cover-up as to the causes of his death from meningitis. Worse was to come. The horses belonging to the Light Horse Regiment had been insufficiently fed on a number of occasions and bandsmen who performed at the numerous funerals in and around Sydney were also not adequately fed or cared for.

The following day Private Herbert Donald told Mr Rich that no mattresses had been supplied until after Mr Orchard's speech to Parliament. Inadequate clothing and poor sanitary conditions were once again aired. The latrines were not roofed nor constructed to provide privacy. Private Harry Thompson told Mr Rich that he did not like having to wear his civilian clothes for the first few weeks in camp. He said that *uniforms would make us feel more like a soldier. We would not walk about like a lot of convicts.*

Architects and engineers were then called to pass judgments on the newly-constructed huts that housed the recruits. It became obvious that they were too draughty. The following day the Camp Commandant, Colonel John Stanley went on the defence. He maintained that the huts were not draughty and said that British troops also were only issued with two blankets. He then maintained that he felt it was unreasonable for the new recruits to expect to get their uniforms straight away.

At this point Mr Rich issued the first of his Interim Reports outlining changes that should be made immediately to improve the conditions at the camp. For example, all latrines were to have cement floors and hot water was to be supplied for the men so that they could wash their dixies after meals. Prior to this many simply washed their dixies in the sand beside the creek that passed through the camp.

The spotlight then moved back onto Dr Schlink concerning his alleged derogatory remarks about the quality of the Australian troops who were being sent overseas. Mr Orchard was forced to withdraw his assertion that Dr Schlink had ever made such remarks. There were only rumours to that effect. Major Lawes, who took over from Schlink, confirmed that there had been a lack of discipline in the Army Medical Corps but claimed this did not reflect upon the previous regime.

On Monday 26 July as the Royal Commission entered its final week Mr Rich heard about the appalling postal arrangements that operated in the camp. Only two staff were assigned to deal with the thousands of letters that passed into the camp each day. Colonel George Kirkland, the former Camp Commandant then let it be known that he wouldn't let the men be issued with straw for their bedding as *it made the place untidy*. This angered Mr Rich when he discovered that there were 1400 mattresses available during the time when Kirkland was refusing to issue the men with straw.

It then became obvious that patients from the Venereal Compound had been escaping regularly. Mr Rich later that day ordered that lists should be put up in all the huts showing the men what clothing and equipment they were entitled to.

On Wednesday 27 July Mr Rich suggested that *a hospital for sick rifles* be established. He was prompted to do this after hearing of so many cases of unserviceable rifles being used by the recruits during rifle practice.

Private Charles Woolley told Mr Rich that he hadn't received any army clothes for five weeks since he arrived. This eventually forced the authorities to admit that there had been a shortage of supplies throughout June.

There were then calls for a Dental Corps to be set up in the Camp. Several dentists in Sydney had even offered their services free of charge but no one had bothered to follow up this offer. Troops also complained of having to provide their own bottles for medicine when they went to the hospital. There had also been no shelter provided from the elements for recruits who went on sick parade outside the hospital. This, however, had been quickly rectified following Mr Orchard's speech to Parliament.

Two further cases of fatalities in the camp were then examined and both exposed lack of adequate bedding and care for the men. A police sergeant from Liverpool then testified that there had been considerable drunkenness of troops in Liverpool in late 1914 and early 1915.

Towards the end of the hearings more and more evidence was provided showing that over-centralisation from Melbourne had hampered the task of supplying the troops with adequate clothing and equipment. Richard Featherstone, the Director General of Medical Services in the Military Forces, maintained that *excessive centralisation has seriously mitigated against the comforts of the troops.*

On Thursday 29 July Mr Innes, Counsel assisting Mr Orchard, rose to make his final address. He spoke eloquently and strongly about the serious findings of the inquiry. He maintained that *the soldiers and the country are indebted to Mr Orchard to a very large degree for having ventilated these undoubted grievances.* He criticised Colonel Stanley for maintaining that the huts were not draughty and for failing to do anything about the shortage of greatcoats until after Mr Orchard's speech. He went on to declare that *every single material charge made by Mr Orchard has been proved to demonstration to be correct.*

In concluding Mr Orchard fired off the following broadside at the administration of the camp.

It seems to me the wheels of this military machine may grind exceedingly small, but they also grind exceedingly slowly.

He reserved his strongest criticism for the appointment of Dr Schlink.

I do submit it was the greatest possible blunder on the part of the administration.

Mr Rich also learned that when Dr Schlink was at the camp he had only been on duty in the afternoons. He had been given permission to carry on his own private practice in Sydney during the mornings.

Mr Innes concluded by listing about twenty recommendations for the improvement of the camp. Most of these were later included in the recommendations made by Mr Rich himself.

On 27 July Mr Rich produced his second interim report recommending another set of fifteen improvements that he felt were necessary. Blankets were to be cleaned and aired on a regular basis. Properly constructed butchers' shops were to be constructed next to the kitchens. Electric light was to be installed throughout the camp and barbed wire fences were to be constructed around the isolation compound. There were other recommendations to improve the general level of hygiene in the camp. Mr Rich's work had indeed been thorough. He had even visited four camps in Victoria following his investigations into the Liverpool camp.

On 18 August his final report was sent off to the Governor General.

The Prime Minister then sat on his hands, so to speak. He wrote to Rich complaining that he should not have been critical of the officers for their lack of initiative. Questions were raised in

Parliament in September inquiring as to when the Rich report would be made public. Rumours then spread that wet canteens were to be set up inside the training camps. This prompted the NSW Alliance to seek an audience with the Prime Minister to lodge their opposition. Andrew Fisher was under extreme pressure at this stage and he wrote saying he needed rest and could not receive their deputation.

Much of what was contained in the final report issued by Mr Rich had already been included in his earlier interim reports but he did list a number of radical changes that he felt should take place. To begin with the administration of the camp should be entrusted to permanent staff, none of whom is to be available for service at the front. Permanent staff should also be provided for the Medical Corps and a Dental Corps should also be set up. Dining sheds with cement floors should be provided for the men. Alterations should be made to the huts to reduce draughts. Blanket drying brackets should be fitted to the exteriors of the huts. A complete septic system should be installed for the latrines. The Depot Band should meet the new recruits and play them into camp. Upon arrival they should be provided with a hot meal. One can only be amused at what the NCOs possibly thought of that recommendation. The Camp Commandant was to be given £500 in petty cash to spend on small items that he felt made be needed. Measures were to be taken to prevent the visits of women of loose morals to the Camp or its vicinity.

As a consequence of the findings of the Royal Commission, the NSW Branch of the British Medical Association established a Liverpool Military Camp Site Committee of 11 prominent doctors. On 5<sup>th</sup> October it commenced its investigations into the health aspects of the camp. On 13<sup>th</sup> December 1915 it published a report that would make astounding reading in today's climate. They declared that between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> September 1915, 53 soldiers had died while training at the camp.

They even listed the causes for the deaths.

Measles and Pneumonia	17
Cerebrospinal Meningitis	12
Pneumonia	16
Alcoholism	1
Septicaemia	1
Acute colitis	1
Accident and violence	3
Sunstroke	1
TOTAL	53

The report outlined a number of reasons for such high figures. It maintained that overcrowding and defective ventilation were major contributors promoting deaths from pneumonia. It also claimed that alcoholism was another major contributing factor. It declared *that alcoholism is prevalent and excessive among the recruits*. The Department of Defence refused to publish these findings for fear that *it would constitute a serious deterrent to recruiting*.

At this point the whole focus shifted to the establishment of wet canteens in the training camps in an attempt to solve the problem regarding alcohol consumption. This proposal had been put forward by the Liverpool Military Camp Site Committee. The Camp Commandants of the training camps in each of the six Military Districts were invited to comment on this proposal and the following three recommendations made by Mr Justice Rich in his final report of the Royal Commission.

- (i) All public houses to be closed to soldiers for the sale of alcohol of within a 5 mile radius of training camps.
- (ii) Picquets to be placed near public houses to police the above.

(iii) Civilians to be prevented from bringing alcohol into the camps.

The Camp Commandants quickly responded and it soon became clear that each camp had its own set of ways of handling problems regarding the consumption of alcohol. To ask them all to adopt a similar strategy seemed to go against the findings of the Royal Commission that had been so critical of the impact of centralisation. So although the general hygiene of the camp was improved along with improvements in the supplying of equipment and clothing, the vexed question of alcohol consumption loomed as a major obstacle towards creating harmony among the troops. Unfortunately the attempts by the authorities to restrict the access of the troops to alcohol only made matters worse. The idea of establishing wet canteens was also shelved for the time being.

Sadly the Rich Report did little to prevent further outbreaks of unrest among the troops in the Liverpool Camp. On 26 November 1915 a riot broke out when sentries tried to prevent troops from going into Liverpool without proper leave passes. On 1 December another disturbance erupted in Liverpool when 1000 troops asked for and were denied 'patriotic drinks' (gratis) at a number of hotels. Two days later the State Commandant, Colonel Ramaciotti, visited the camp to talk to the men. He made a number of changes to appease them, such as allowing them to purchase their rail tickets in camp instead of having to wait in lengthy queues at Liverpool Railway Station.

On 14 February 1916 matters came to a head when several thousand troops from Liverpool and Casula camps refused to accept an increase in the number of hours they were being asked to drill. They simply marched out of camp and headed into Liverpool and then on to Sydney to vent their anger. It seemed that all the good work achieved by the Royal Commission had been to no avail. Basically the new recruits were frustrated by the inability of the authorities to handle such large numbers in confined quarters. The men simply wanted to be sent off to the front as quickly as possible. They were not convinced that rifle drill and marching was worthwhile. Their eagerness to get into the fray is hard to comprehend today but the horrors of trench warfare in France had yet to make their mark. At the time they held the mistaken belief that this was a war worth participating in as soon as possible.

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## John Profumo CBE

Anthony Staunton

John Dennis Profumo, CBE, the central figure in the 1963 Profumo Affair which contributed to the defeat of the Macmillan Conservative government the following year has died aged 91.

In 1939 Profumo joined the Northamptonshire Yeomanry and served in North Africa where he was mentioned in despatches in 1943 and Italy where he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (Military Division) in 1944. In 1947 he was awarded the US Bronze Star.

In March 1940, while serving in the army, he was elected to the House of Commons as a Conservative at a by-election in Kettering, Northamptonshire. On 7 May the Opposition moved a motion of no confidence that led to the fall of the Chamberlain Government. This was the occasion when Chamberlain's Secretary of State for India and Burma Leopold Amery quoted Cromwell's imperious words to the Long Parliament "You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!" Profumo was one of 31 Government members to support the no confidence motion, which resulted in the fall of the Chamberlain Government. He was the last surviving member of the 1940 House of Commons.<sup>1</sup>

Profumo lost his seat in 1945 but was re-elected as member for Stratford-on-Avon in 1950. After junior posts in transport (1952-57), the colonial department (1957-58) and the foreign office (1958-60) he became Secretary of State for War in 1960. As Secretary of State for War he signed an amended warrant for the Victoria Cross on 30 September 1961. The warrant replaced previous Victoria Cross warrants and incorporated the increase of the Victoria Cross pension from £10 per annum to £100 per annum which was extended to commissioned officers who had previously been ineligible for the pension.

After his resignation from the government and parliament in June 1963 he devoted his time to Toynbee Hall, a charity supporting people in the East End of London. He began washing dishes and later became its chairman from 1982 to 1985 and then its president. In 1975 he received the CBE but his full public redemption came in 1995 when he was seated on the Queen's right at the top table of the dinner celebrating the 70th birthday of Margaret Thatcher.

Profumo married Valerie Hobson in 1954 who stood loyally beside her husband assisting in his social work. She had been a leading lady in the British cinema of the thirties and forties and had retired from show business at the age of 37 after her greatest success in 1953, as the governess in the first London production of *The King and I*. She died aged 81 in 1998. They are survived by their son the writer David Profumo.

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, Winston. *The Second World War, Volume I, The Gathering Storm*, p.525. Leopold Amery was chief correspondent for *The Times* during the Boer War and edited the seven volume *The Times History of the South African War (1900-09)*. His son, John Amery was executed for high treason in 1945 see Goyne, Rohan. "British Free Corps (BFC): Traitors to the King", *Sabretache*, Sep 2005, Vol XLVI, No. 3, p. 39-42 and Vivian, David, "Some notes on the capture and trial of John Amery", *Sabretache*, Dec 2005, Vol XLVI, No. 4, p. 33-34



## VOYAGE TO WAR

Andrew Pittaway<sup>1</sup>

George Leslie Davidson was a 23 year old clerk when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 28 September 1915. Born in Melbourne in 1892, George came with his family to Western Australia in 1894; his father setting up a wood business in Fremantle. George attended the Fremantle Primary School and later obtained his junior certificate from Adelaide University in 1908, and soon after obtained employment as a clerk with the Fremantle office of the shipping company, McIlwraith McEacharn & Co.

George did not join up when war was declared as he was looking after his sick mother. He would have liked to have enlisted in 1914, particularly as his best mate from McIlwraith & McEacharn, Ernie Moorhouse, had joined the 16th Battalion. Other friends from the office also joined up and one, Tom Elder, after service with the artillery, would write in 1919 that:

My greatest regret is the large number of mates who gave their lives. Seven of us young men volunteered from the Shipping Office where we worked – five of whom lost their lives, and only two of us survived.<sup>2</sup>

Though all that was still in the future. 1914 came to a close and George continued working at the shipping office racking up five years of employment. As the months of 1915 passed by, George heard with excitement the landing of the Australians on Gallipoli. Little did he know that by the time he heard of the landing, Ernie Moorhouse would already be dead, killed in the 16th Battalion's charge at the Bloody Angle on 2 May.

When word of Ernie's death did come, this only made George more determined to enlist, which he did in August 1915. Owing to a minor sight disability he was not accepted straight away but in September was accepted for inclusion in the Army Medical Corps, and on 11 October:

Left Fremantle by 8.20 am for Drill Hall Perth. Joined others there and after receiving instructions left Perth by 10.15 am for Midland Junction thence to Blackboy Hill by car arriving between 11 am and noon. Tom Young and I went direct to the AMC lines where we were fixed up in a tent with five others. We were given two blankets and an oil sheet & told this would be our home for the time being. The weather was very wet and the ground muddy, so naturally my first impression was not very favourable but as time went on and the weather improved I got used to it.<sup>3</sup>

George was comfortable in the AMC as many of his friends from Fremantle were also in camp, but as November passed his friends continued to be sent away to the war while he remained at Belmont and later Claremont Camp. In December he continued in his role as a camp medic, but a positive was that he was able to gain some leave to spend time at home for Christmas and go for a trip to Albany with a mate, Ralph Mole.

After returning home from Albany he got the news he had been waiting for:

Heard that Jack Brady, Bill Williams, Ralph Mole, Tom Young, Percy Payne & myself were included in the recruits selected to go overseas in the 14<sup>th</sup> reinforcements to AMC units already overseas.

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<sup>1</sup> The author has compiled a nominal roll of the approx 3000 Fremantle people who served in the AIF in World War One and is currently writing a history of Fremantle people in World War One using their letters & diaries. He would welcome feedback regarding this article or from anyone who has any information regarding Fremantle people who served in World War One. Contact Andrew Pittaway, Archivist, City of Fremantle, PO Box 807, Fremantle WA 6959; phone (08)9432-9583; [andrewp@fremantle.wa.gov.au](mailto:andrewp@fremantle.wa.gov.au)

<sup>2</sup> Tom Elder, Recollections of war service, Battye Library.

<sup>3</sup> This and the following two quotes are from George Davidson Diary, Army Museum of WA.

The men learned that they would be allotted to the 14th Reinforcements to the 4th Field Ambulance. Before they would embark on 13 February 1916 aboard A28 HMAT Miltiades, training continued at Blackboy Hill. After a late night of farewells on the 12th, on the 13th it was:

Reveille 5 am as usual & after breakfast were marched down to Helena Vale station to entrain for Fremantle. Arrived at Fremantle wharf at 8.30 am. All the way down people were lined up to wish us farewell. There were crowds at the wharf. I saw my people as I left the train and also after I boarded the troopship. The Miltiades A28 left the wharf at 10.30 am amid a great den of cheering and shouting and after an hour or two set sail for Egypt via Colombo. The troops on board comprised 14<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Stat. Hosp, 14<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Fid Amb. From WA and 3<sup>rd</sup>/32<sup>nd</sup> from South Australia about 1270 all told. I was part of the 14<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Field Amb. quartered in the upper troop deck aft, fitted out to sleep 83 and mess 122. The food and accommodation was good.

Unfortunately the weather at the start of the trip was very rough and two days after leaving port a life boat broke loose and smashed into a soldier, breaking his leg in two places. Not a very good start for the trip but worse was to come the following day. Lt Benno Lehmann, a Marine Engineer from Fremantle & formerly a Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery who was in command of the 14th Reinforcements to the 11th Battalion wrote back home that:

Have had both good and bad weather, one gale gave us a very bad time, my cabin was swamped and all my things were under water in a few minutes. The same sea did a lot of damage on deck smashing a temporary deck house and pinning several men underneath. One of my company was killed outright, another, a South Australian has since died. So we have had two burials at sea already. There are several others still in hospital but they will all recover.

Apart from these troubles we are now having a good trip and are living in luxury as this is a splendidly fitted boat but the heat is awful. I am the senior subaltern on board, have a deck to myself and am enjoying the trip.<sup>4</sup>

Two deaths just four days out of Fremantle was truly bad luck. The accident is more fully described by George Davidson, whose medical training would prove to come in very handy:

Weather very rough and I felt very much off colour. Huge waves washed over the ship & there was water everywhere. Between 6 & 7 am a huge wave dashed against one of the huge out houses on the port after well deck and smashed it to splinters causing many casualties. One Arthur Gillies of the 14th/11th (WA) was killed instantly & several others were seriously injured. A busy morning for the A.M.C. men but we were equal to the occasion. The remains of the late Arthur Gillies was committed to the deep at 4.15 pm. The body was sewn in canvas & lowered from the Poop deck after which the buglers sounded the last post. During the proceedings the engines were stopped as a mark of respect and all was quiet on board.<sup>5</sup>

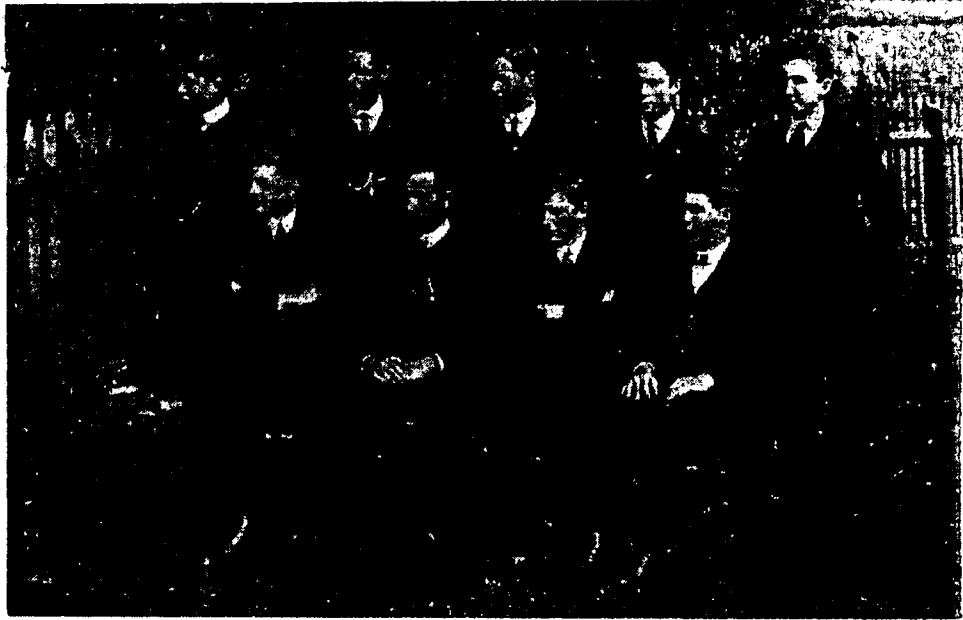
No. 4641 Pte Arthur Gillies was a 41 year old miner who had spent the last few years working around the towns of Fimiston and Boulder. He is commemorated on the Chatby Memorial in Egypt. The following day the weather had improved slightly and the men of the AMC continued to treat the casualties of the previous day's occurrence:

Feb 17th. Weather fine & getting hot. Pte Rowntree of the 3rd/32nd (SA) who was injured yesterday died this evening ... The body of Pte Rowntree was committed to the deep at 8 am.

No. 2103 Pte Joseph Lancelot Rowntree was a Yorkshire born 25 year old driver/mechanic from Port Adelaide. Strangely while Gillies is commemorated on the Chatby Memorial, Rowntree is listed on the Jerusalem Memorial in Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Letters of Lt Lehmann MC, private family archive.

<sup>5</sup> The remaining five quotes are from the George Davidson Diary, Army Museum of Western Australia.



1913 group of McIlwraith & McEacharnclerks. Back Row: 2nd left Tom Elder 7th FAB; 3rd left Charles Dick 28th Bn KIA 04/10/17, 2nd Right Albert Wallwork RAN. Front Row: 2nd left George Davidson 5th Famb; 2nd Right Ernie Moorhouse 16th Bn KIA 02/05/15.  
This photo is from the Local History section Fremantle Council



Egypt 1916. George Davidson 3rd left back row.  
A Stewart middle & R Bentley-Taylor right.  
Ralph Mole left 2nd row & R Leivesley right.  
JN Williams left 1st row & J Clarke right.



Lt Benno Lehmann 3rd MGC.

Both photographs from private collection

In the next week of the voyage the weather grew hotter and life for those on board was getting monotonous, but the AMC men were kept busy as all the vaccinations were needed to be completed before the ship docked in Colombo, and on 24 February the ship reached Ceylon. Fortunately all the vaccinations had been completed and the men were granted their leave.

Anchored outside Colombo harbour early a.m, entered and tied up at a buoy in the harbour about 7 am. Coal & water supplies were replenished ex lighters. Shore leave was granted to the troops in sections. L/Corp Bentley-Taylor, Pt. Arthur Baker & I went ashore in the morning & was on duty in the afternoon. Had a roam around the town, visited the Cinnamon Gardens, had lunch at the Globe Hotel, a six course meal if you wanted it for 2/-, then returned to the ship to relieve the morning shift. Went ashore again in the evening with Ralph Mole & did a bit of rickshaw riding around the town.

The next day was similarly spent in seeing the sights of Colombo, but on 26 February no leave was granted as the ship was due to leave at midday. The next week Davidson was kept busy with hospital duty and was quite excited when they could see land again as they passed Aden. On 5 March the *Miltiades* was:

Now in the Red Sea. Sea choppy causing the ship to roll appreciably, although the weather was generally fine. Had the first glimpse of Africa and during the day passed a number of small islands including the "Twelve Apostles" group.

On 9 March they reached Suez in calm conditions and saw a crowded port:

A dozen troopships and several warships were in the harbour including a few familiar to me namely *Aurora*, *Thermistocles* and *Willochra*. A triplane, the first I and many others have seen flew overhead. The *Beltana* came through the canal and anchored near us for an hour or so. She had on board 3000 British soldiers who had seen service in France and were on their way to relieve garrison troops in India.

The following day the troops on the *Miltiades* commenced to disembark and went their own ways for their various training camps. Lt Lehmann led the 3 officers & 202 men of the 14th Reinforcements to the 11th Battalion off the ship. Not all were destined for the 11th Battalion however. Many were directed to the 51st Battalion, the newly formed "daughter" unit of the 11th, while others went to ancillary units such as artillery & signals. Lt Lehmann himself was directed to the 1st Australian Divisional Base Depot due to his experience in training from pre war days. He would eventually reach the 11th Battalion in December 1916 and a short time later the 3rd Machine Gun Company. With the 3rd MGC he was wounded & awarded the MC at the 2nd Battle for Bullecourt. When recovered he would rejoin his unit, only to be killed at Clapham Junction during the Third Battle of Ypres on 21 September 1917.

Pte George Davidson and the rest of the 14th Reinforcements to the 4th Field Ambulance would be sent to Zeitoun camp to join up with their unit, though many of the group never ended up serving with the 4th but were transferred to other medical units. Davidson was one of these and spent much of 1916 with the AMC & the 2nd Australian Stationary Hospital in Egypt before reaching England in a draft of the AMC Details. He was then sent to the 5th Field Ambulance, with whom he would serve through 1917-18, before arriving home in Fremantle in June 1919. Upon discharge from the AIF he married & recommenced employment with McIlwraith McEacharn & Co, retiring in 1960. In the post war years he was heavily involved in the local rowing & swimming clubs and was a foundation member of Fremantle Legacy, an interest he continued all his life. He died in 1988 aged 96 years.



## THE COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS AND ITS ACTIVITIES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW GUINEA 1942-1945.

Keith Richmond

In the panoply of intelligence agencies that operated in New Guinea during World War II, few are as intriguing and prone to criticism as the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC).<sup>1</sup>

The CIC had its origin in the Corps of Intelligence Police set up by US forces in World War I. It was re-established under the new title as of 1 January 1942.<sup>2</sup> Detachments served in counterintelligence operations around the world from Iceland to Burma, undertaking tasks as varied as guarding the Manhattan Project and uncovering German soldiers disguised as Americans during the Battle of the Bulge.

In the South West Pacific Area (SWPA), General MacArthur's headquarters assumed responsibility for positive intelligence relating to operations, while the rear echelon USAFFE (United States Armed Forces Far East) in Australia was given responsibility for denying vital information to the enemy: the CIC was the agency directed to undertake the counterintelligence task. The mission of the CIC in the SWPA was to provide a group of specially selected men,

to detect and investigate all manners pertaining to espionage, sabotage, disaffection and subversive activity occurring within the military organisations, to apprehend enemy agents or otherwise to nullify their activities, to inform proper authorities regarding differences in the security of vital civil or military installations, to assist in the security instruction of military personnel in the field and during stabilised operations, and in combat operations to assist in ensuring the necessary security of captured enemy installations, documents and material".<sup>3</sup>

While some suggest that CIC has similarities with the Gestapo or the Japanese Kempeitai,<sup>4</sup> one of the CIC's main preoccupations was the investigation of US troops. Indeed, it gained the

<sup>1</sup> In this paper New Guinea is taken to be the island mass containing the areas of Papua, New Guinea and Dutch New Guinea

<sup>2</sup> Ian Sayer and Douglas Botting, *America's Secret Army: The Untold Story of the Counter Intelligence Corps*, Grafton Books, London, 1989, pages 9 and 23. One of the best sources of information on CIC in the SWPA remains the 'History of the Intelligence Activities Under General Douglas MacArthur, 1942-1950, The Intelligence Series G-2 USAFFE-SWPA-AFPAC-FEC-SCAP', Wilmington DEL, Scholarly Resources, 1950. This microfilm series under the call-sign ORMF 0081/1-0081/8 at the Australian War Memorial, is hereafter referred to as The Intelligence Series. It contains among others, ORMF 0081/4, 'Counter Intelligence Corps' (from which this article is largely drawn), ORMF 0081/3, 'Operations of the Civil Intelligence Section GHQ, FEC and SCAP' (looking at the post-war experience with CIC), and ORMF 0081/7, 'A Brief History of the G-2 Section, GHQ SWPA and Affiliated Units'. Major-General Charles Willoughby, G-2 to MacArthur, edited the CIC history and added caustic footnotes which provide a running commentary on the irritations Willoughby had with the CIC.

<sup>3</sup> USAFFE Regulations No 1-30, Counter Intelligence Corps, 5 June 1944. Also see Intelligence Series, 'Counter Intelligence Corps' ('CIC'), page 3

<sup>4</sup> See Sayer and Botting, op cit, page 6, Raymond Lamont-Brown, *Kempeitai: Japan's Dreaded Military Police*, Bunting, Gloucestershire, 1998, Chapter 1 and US War Department, *Handbook on Japanese Forces* (originally published as TM-E 30-480 on 1 October 1944), Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1991, page 84. Not surprisingly, there are features of each agency that make them somewhat comparable. However, it is disturbing to read in Sayer and Botting, op cit, page 226, 281 and 283 of the willingness of CIC units to call themselves the Gestapo for their own ends.

On another similarity with the intelligence agencies, AWM 54 423/4/105, 'Moto Heidan Intelligence Reports', included this Japanese unit's counter espionage regulations, which not surprisingly mirror those followed by the CIC -- eg screen all applicants for jobs, watch disposal of scrap paper, censorship of mail, care to be taken in allowing natives to listen to the radio, care to be taken with natives generally, etc.

sobriquet “the FBI of the Army”.<sup>5</sup> As it was small, (the CIC never reached more than 5000 agents across all theatres) it needed to work in conjunction with other intelligence agencies. Where it was attached to US Army units it supported the recruitment of informers to create an “elaborate and fine network of secret agents” with, according to Finnegan, an average ratio of one informant to every thirty men. In just one of the nine service commands in the US, 52,000 operatives produced 162,000 reports in one month; CIC agents were required to pursue any issue arising from this mountain of words.<sup>6</sup> As an example of their enthusiasm, a million security reports revealed 600 suspects. Even the CIC admitted that it allocated half its man-hours in 1942-43 to the selection of its own applicants.<sup>7</sup>

If this sounds like an agency that was doing little to thwart the enemy, for much of its existence Allied observers were similarly confused. There were other and competing intelligence bodies seemingly doing the same job; commanding officers often expected CIC agents to be first class combat troops, which they were not trained to be; they were confused with the military police, whether as part of its criminal investigation unit or linked with provost marshal units; and they tended to poach tasks allocated to other units.

CIC agents were selected from the best of the Army intake – often from peacetime occupations such as lawyer, journalist, detective or insurance investigator. Every agent was educated to at least officer level (that is, an IQ of 110), they commonly had at least one college degree and were required to speak one foreign language, they were not expected to take on guard duty or other inconsequential task, and they were “encouraged to exercise initiative to the fullest extent and will be permitted to operate with minimum restrictions.”<sup>8</sup> CIC agents could “make arrests of US Army personnel” and in US jurisdictions they could arrest non-Army personnel “where the arrest appears essential to the performance of the CIC mission”. The opportunity was there for agents to become a law unto themselves.<sup>9</sup>

What irked many was that with the talent residing in CIC, it should have accomplished more. To make things complicated from a military perspective, the agents were rarely commissioned: one of the problems CIC had was convincing suitable applicants to join the CIC as a private when with their unique qualifications they could as easily have entered officer’s school. Further, they were

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<sup>5</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 19. In the US it also spied on defence plants and organisations involved in war work.

<sup>6</sup> As an example of the coordination role that the CIC played in late 1943, it produced monthly intelligence summaries and received input from intelligence officers in USASOS (United States Army Services of Supply), 6<sup>th</sup> Army, 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force, the 14<sup>th</sup> Anti Aircraft Command and the Civil Censorship Detachment – Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 41

<sup>7</sup> John Finnegan, *Military Intelligence*, Army Lineage Series, Centre of Military History, US Army, Washington DC, 1998, page 72, and Joan Jensen, *Army Surveillance in America, 1775-1980*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1991, pages 219 and 220.

<sup>8</sup> USAFFE Regulations 1-30, which was issued under the command of General MacArthur and signed by General Sutherland as Chief of Staff, 5 June 1944.

<sup>9</sup> See William A Owens, *Eye Deep in Hell: A Memoir of the Liberation of the Philippines, 1944-1945*, Southern University Methodist University Press, Dallas TX, 1989 from pages 20 to 24. Owens as a CIC agent was ordered by an infantry Colonel to pick up a shovel and dig a trench. Owens removed himself from the scene, advised superior officers of his actions and made a difficult trip to see Colonel John Irwin, second in charge of CIC in the southwest Pacific, to explain his actions and obtain a ruling confirming that the CIC was exempt from such work. Also, Brigadier Thorpe’s autobiography which reveals little about the CIC or his role in it, said that much effort went into getting CIC agents “understand that they were not judge and jury”, there was a tendency “among too many members of the CIC to feel they were Judge Lynch”, and that agents had to be convinced “subversion and not sin were our business” – Elliot R Thorpe, *East Wind, Rain: The Intimate Account of an Intelligence Officer in the Pacific 1939-1949*, Gambit Incorporated, Boston, 1969, at page 98. Also see Sayer and Botting, op cit, pages 276-277 where it describes the indulgent lifestyle of one CIC staff sergeant in Germany, Henry Kissinger, later to serve in the Nixon Administration.

expected to remain as enlisted men with little chance of promotion (leading them to become known as the 'Corps of Indignant Corporals'). Only in the SWPA was the CIC agent required to wear badges of rank; this was circumvented where possible and agent badges were pinned on the underside of the shirt lapel. As two intelligence officers said after the end of the war in what must be one of the great understatements, the CIC "frequently got in everybody's hair".<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the continuing bureaucratic problems experienced by the CIC were partly to blame – the command of the organisation always seemed in a state of flux<sup>11</sup> and through the war the CIC had come under the control of the 5227<sup>th</sup> CIC Detachment (Provisional) and then the 441<sup>st</sup> CIC Detachment. Indeed, the machinations would be worthy of a separate study by a student of organisations. As an untried agency it was not until after the North African landings that the CIC gained some general measure of credibility which then washed over into the SWPA<sup>12</sup>. But to some senior officers, fighting in a country such as New Guinea where the prospects of espionage, sabotage and subversion were limited and the resistance movement decidedly slim, the CIC represented a burden without any offsetting advantages. In some commands it was undoubtedly given short shrift. The CIC history suggests late 1944 as the time when it had "sold" the message of its usefulness to unit commanders,<sup>13</sup> and that may have been the case with the US 6<sup>th</sup> Army.

Given the CIC's broad canvas of shortcomings, we need to assess the role it played in Australia and New Guinea. In the dark days of early 1942, Brigadier Elliot Thorpe escaped from Java and with the agreement of General MacArthur, established a counter intelligence apparatus in Australia. Thorpe was given the position of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence), USAFFE, and remained chief of the section and director of counter intelligence throughout the war. A section of 14 officers and men began CIC operations in April 1942. Thorpe set up his area with three components: theatre censor, being responsible for censorship of all US mail and photographs within SWPA; security, responsible for maintaining security in the region including disseminating literature and indoctrination material; and the investigative section, responsible for investigation and suppression of all subversive activities, security violations and sabotage.<sup>14</sup>

One cannot separate Australia from the operations of CIC in the SWPA. Whereas MacArthur and his team acted as the forward echelon and moved some distance behind the troops, the USAFFE as the rear echelon used Australia as its base. USAFFE and CIC headquarters moved from Melbourne to Sydney, and then to Brisbane in February 1943. By the end of 1944 it was in Hollandia, and by 14 March 1945 the headquarters had moved to Manila.<sup>15</sup> Obviously, CIC advance bases moved far earlier than headquarters, with the first advance base at Port Moresby from 17 October 1942 followed by one at Milne Bay. As of 1943, all CIC operations on the island came under the control of a detachment at Oro Bay. When Hollandia was taken the detachment there assumed responsibility for Dutch New Guinea while the Oro Bay detachment

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<sup>10</sup> Finnegan, *op cit*, page 76. In the Intelligence Series, 'A Brief History of the G-2 Section' at page 81, the comment is made that the CIC developed dual but contradictory functions – in combat areas the CIC came under the direction of troop G-2s and where interrogation was to be done, ATIS (Allied Translator and Interpreter Section) worked with them, while in rear areas the CIC was independent and separated from other intelligence groups.

<sup>11</sup> Sayer and Botting, *op cit*, at page 247 claim that in the first months of 1942, the Theatre G-2 responsible for counterintelligence was changed seven times and there were nine changes of Commanding Generals in the same period

<sup>12</sup> The subsequent performance of the CIC in Italy, France and Germany seems to have been of a very high order where it worked with the resistance and rounded up collaborators, for example.

<sup>13</sup> Intelligence Series, 'CIC', page 45 - also see Sayer and Botting, *op cit*, page 28 for a comment on the conflict experienced by agents in the SWPA

<sup>14</sup> Intelligence Series, 'CIC', page 4

<sup>15</sup> Intelligence Series, 'Operations of the Military Intelligence Section, GHQ, SWPA/FEC/SCAP' at page 94



looked after Papua and New Guinea.<sup>16</sup> We turn to a review of the efficacy of the CIC by viewing its three stated missions.

### **Censorship**

Censorship of mail from US troops was a massive task. There were few trained operatives (trained censors were not sent from the US until November 1943) and the massive build-up of troops produced enormous quantities of outgoing mail needing to be censored: incoming mail was not examined. Staffing problems were only barely overcome by the recruitment of Australian civilians – initially there were six women in a Melbourne suburban house concentrating on letters from non-English correspondents, with the figure rising to a claimed 2000 civilians recruited in 1943.<sup>17</sup> The mail was read by a unit censor then sent to base office then to the theatre censor where it was spot-checked; the theatre censor could make recommendations for action such as destruction of the item. In September 1942 a combination base office and theatre censorship office was moved to Sydney from Melbourne, and a base office established in Port Moresby soon after. This gave six base censorship offices, at Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Port Moresby.<sup>18</sup>

By November 1942 there were over one million pieces of mail leaving Australia each month, with over half a million going through the Brisbane office. This figure reached 4,510,906 items by September 1943. The amount of mail undergoing censorship only reached about 15 per cent and so new offices had to be opened (including a field office at Rockhampton). Brisbane remained the “hub of the censor’s wheel” until 1944 when Port Moresby took over; the hub then moved to Biak, Leyte, and Luzon. With the push to the Philippines, former base offices including Darwin and Adelaide had closed by the end of 1943. When Army Transport Command moved to Port Moresby in April 1944, the censorship staff there was simply unable to cope and censorship coverage ran at about one half of one per cent. This forced the downgrading of the Cairns, Sydney, Melbourne and Rockhampton offices and all possible personnel were sent to Port Moresby (Australian civilians were not allowed outside the country). A solution came with the arrival in Port Moresby of the 5203<sup>rd</sup> WAC (Women’s Army Corps) Detachment, with most WACs transferring to censorship duties. By October 1944 the Port Moresby office was clearing 572,819 pieces of mail per month. Base censors were also appointed at Lae, Finschhafen, and Hollandia. To handle materials leaving the main ports a base was set up at Milne Bay, and later at Finschhafen.

An associated challenge was that of photographs. While the US Signal Corps usually took responsibility for developing and censorship of photographs this was not possible so Kodak in Brisbane was given the task from May 1943. But by July 1945, two million rolls of film were checked during the month and the Kodak office clearly was not coping. Kodak in Brisbane was allowed to co-opt the Kodak offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, air freighting the materials to the other plants, but the demand was too great. The level of soldiers’ complaints reached the ears of General Sutherland who instigated an inquiry, although the findings showed the fault did not lie with the censors.

### **Security Measures**

The second mission of the CIC was security, and the initial focus was US bases in Australia. In conjunction with the Australian Security Services, the CIC established programs to screen the

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<sup>16</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 42

<sup>17</sup> See Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 6. This number could be a typographical error, for at page 28 it says that “of the 269 base and theatre censorship personnel in August 1943, 226 were civilians”. A chart at page 51 indicates the various censorship detachments and postal gateways in the theatre.

<sup>18</sup> Thorpe, *op cit*, page 102 said that the censors also removed items such as skulls and Japanese ashes from the mail

employment of civilians. A list of undesirables was drawn up and circulated to all bases. Lectures on security matters were arranged for troops entering the area. To ascertain the usefulness of security measures, in April and May of 1942 a program known as 'security (espionage) checks' was introduced to determine how much enemy agents could learn if present. A group of ten Australians, eight of them women whose backgrounds "might not be generally considered respectable", were trained and told to circulate among US servicemen and women at public places such as bars and restaurants. Some 30 reports a week were submitted on their findings and not surprisingly, "uncovered considerable evidence of security lapses in unguarded conversations". The program was discontinued when sufficient CIC agents were available to undertake security checks of their own. In addition, a "Counter Subversive System" or operation to determine the level of disaffection, low morale or the potential for sabotage, was instituted by intelligence officers in the army camps.<sup>19</sup>

Security posters (such as 'The Enemy is Listening' or identification charts of enemy aircraft) were printed and hung in taverns, restaurants and at railway stations. Cards and menu folders were printed and placed on restaurant and pub tables while slides stressing the importance of security were played during intervals at movie theatres. For troops, training films and animated films were shown on the same topic. To ensure adequate coverage of CIC agents beyond the base offices, extra field offices were established at Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Rockhampton where there was the highest concentration of troops.

Intelligence officers were kept up to date with a regular newsletter, known as 'Bi-Weekly Intelligence Survey' and later 'Counter Intelligence Bulletin', which included news, stories of the CIC in action overseas, hints on Japanese booby traps or other ordnance, as well as including updated lists of citizens not suitable for employment at US Army bases.

Security was to remain a problem. When attack seemed imminent, there was little worry with the passage of information, but as the months passed and the level of troops rose in Australia, the public became disinterested. Evidence grew of breaches. When Japanese submarines entered Sydney harbour the enemy knew the locations of the shipping in port at the time, including the number of warships, their types and exact locations. In New Guinea it was known that the enemy had received information through "activities of enemy agents or resident collaborators within our areas, interrogation of our troops taken prisoner, reconnaissance by air, submarines and small craft, capture of mail bags and diaries".<sup>20</sup> There was a definite need to increase security precautions.

Australian intelligence agencies organised the country into areas: offices were established in each of these locations to maintain a closer security check. From March 1943, a "concerted drive" was undertaken to instruct the Australian public as well as the US troops, and this emphasis was not relaxed until the war ended. The indoctrination program included posters, radio advertising and lectures. A security survey was made of the coast watching system, of ports, of the US Army safe-hand courier system, of travel centres and of small units in the field.<sup>21</sup> The CIC at this time became "more and more" concerned with security matters. At the request of

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<sup>19</sup> Ironically, the system was discontinued in SWPA on 20 December 1943 which "relieved CIC headquarters of considerable supervisory work of doubtful value" – Intelligence Series, 'CIC', page 41

<sup>20</sup> Intelligence Series, 'CIC', page 31. Australian Security staff for example, had identified that the Japanese were using Dutch and Australians as spies to pass on information, and Chinese were recruited to be used to land as refugees. As well the Japanese were setting up spy rings using natives in New Guinea.

<sup>21</sup> As an example of the challenges, Austin Laughlin, *Boots and All: The Inside Story of the Secret War*, Colorgravure, Melbourne, 1951 at pages 105-108, discusses the joint operation between Australian Military Intelligence and the CIC in ensuring no word leaked of the departure of troops from the Atherton Tablelands to the Salamaua-Lae-Finschhafen battles in early 1943.

General George C Marshall, CIC conducted night “raids” on the offices of Headquarters, USAFFE as well as 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force, Intelligence Corps and other headquarters where the raiders took every classified document in open view. CIC operatives travelled through regional areas to Cairns, Townsville, and Mackay to see if there were security problems, and later the group went to Adelaide, Port Moresby, Oro Bay and Milne Bay. Agents also sought out areas of friction that could have led to adverse publicity. This included looking at subversive organisations, and conflict between Australians and Americans. When the Philippine invasion was planned, two three-man lecture teams were sent around bases in Australia making presentations on three themes – general security matters, the importance of not disclosing information, and dealing with prisoners. In July 1944 teams were sent to the New Guinea combat zone. Subsequently teams lectured on the experience in the Philippines and then prepared troops for the invasion of Japan – eventually ten teams were used. Linked with this activity were radio lectures and spot comments on security through the “jungle network” of Army radio stations, and the distribution of ‘The Intelligence and Security Guidebook for SWPA’ to appropriate personnel.

From 1943, the CIC was involved with what was known as “panelling” or checking ships for security breaches. The original intent was to control the passage of merchant seamen sailing into forward areas, so all seamen were screened and a register of shipping maintained. In 1944, 4621 ships were boarded and the papers and effects of 47,553 seamen examined. In July 1944, CIC was requested to coordinate the panelling of aircraft, so points were established at Milne Bay, Hollandia and Biak: by the end of 1944 12,649 aircraft had been checked along with the papers of 1,002,000 persons. In June 1945 the CIC handed this task to the Military Police.<sup>22</sup>

#### Investigative Section

Investigations constituted the third area of CIC’s mission. Given the expectation of an invasion in early 1942, there were concerns that aboriginal tribes that had been befriended by Japanese lugger crews over years, would help any invasion force.<sup>23</sup> In conjunction with Australian security authorities, the CIC began work with the tribes - one officer spent twelve months on this task. Also, agents worked with tribes in the inland, encouraging them to help any Allied airmen who had landed miles from civilisation and needing guidance or help in getting back to the authorities.<sup>24</sup> By May 1942 agents were investigating sabotage claims on aircraft and shipping, aircraft crashes, fire in Army installations and machinery breakdowns. In December 1942 for example, there were three cases of apparent sabotage at the Jackson aerodrome at Port Moresby. Other activities included “checking port and coast security, examining suspect persons and organisations, investigating ‘accidents’ involving Allied personnel and equipment, fighting unfounded rumours and loose talk” and other tasks as required<sup>25</sup>

As there were shortages of trained CIC agents in the theatre, a decision was made in July 1942 to recruit agents locally. This led to recruitment from US troops already in Australia, and some 14 were selected from a pool of 1500. These recruits were then given courses on intelligence, investigative procedures and report writing, surveillance, use of informants, interrogation procedures, espionage, counterespionage, censorship, codes and ciphers, and explosives. Australian experts were also used where possible. Training was initially carried out in classrooms of the Melbourne Grammar School. A move was made to Brisbane in February 1943

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<sup>22</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 48. This number of over a million people appears to be too high given the size of most aircraft at the time.

<sup>23</sup> See Archives A 8911/1/226 ‘Japanese Activities Among the Aboriginals’ for the assessment of the tribes and their expected willingness to succumb to any Japanese entreaties

<sup>24</sup> Thorpe, *op cit*, page 110

<sup>25</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 19

and a permanent school was set up there as from June 1943 in the T and G Building in the city.<sup>26</sup> From early 1944, a mansion in the Brisbane suburb of Hamilton known as “Palmarosa” was taken over for the two or three week training courses.<sup>27</sup> In addition to any local recruits, all incoming CIC agents from Camp Ritchie in Maryland were given localised training there. Courses grew to include jungle training, combat counter intelligence, field security, and map reading. For those likely to work in combat units in New Guinea, extra jungle training was added, along with courses in pidgin, Malay or Tagalog. On occasions, CIC agents also trained at Canungra and at the Australian School of Military Intelligence. Later schools were set up in Hollandia, Manila and Tokyo.<sup>28</sup>

When Hollandia fell, some Allied citizens were released from prison. They were all taken to Brisbane and interrogated by CIC staff; information provided gave knowledge of Japanese interrogation techniques.<sup>29</sup> Similarly when the Philippines was stormed, 76 formerly imprisoned American military personnel were questioned for possible future leads on the Kempeitai and other agencies. While planning for the Philippines invasion was underway, the US 2<sup>nd</sup> Filipino Battalion was taken over by the CIC to assist with counterintelligence work and their leaders taken to Brisbane. There they were given intensive training from 23 August until 17 September 1944, then returned to Oro Bay to help train the rest of the battalion.<sup>30</sup> Conferences and meetings among various intelligence groupings were held at “Palmarosa” on a regular basis.<sup>31</sup>

One of the key activities of CIC was undertaking investigations. In September 1944, for example, the number of cases by category was: sabotage 17, espionage 5, incidents 57, subversive 9, loyalty 2264, disaffection 107, security surveys 34, for a total of 2511. In the May 1943-February 1944 period the proportion of cases was loyalty of personnel 67%, disaffection 11%, security 11%, subversive 5%, incidents 3%, and sabotage and espionage 1%.<sup>32</sup>

Agents gathering data for their cases made use of the latest technical equipment and procedures. Brisbane became the home of the technical support apparatus. A photographic laboratory was established in September 1943 to photograph staff working in support of CIC and requiring identification (such as native police used at Hollandia) as well as any suspects, documents, and examples of CIC projects. The facility was also able to develop confiscated Japanese film. In August 1944 a chemical laboratory was set up to permit chemical analysis along criminological lines, to detect secret inks and to detect items of sabotage as used in fuels, engines or other

<sup>26</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘Operations of the Military Intelligence Section, GHQ, SWPA/FEC/SCAP’ at page 92 says that Major Vreeland opened the school which instructed “American officers and enlisted men, as well as officers of the Australian Field Security Services”. It is claimed by General Willoughby that the wide and practical curriculum was due to his urging – *ibid*.

<sup>27</sup> See [www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/palmarosa.htm](http://www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/palmarosa.htm) for the street location of “Palmarosa” and the T and G Building used by CIC

<sup>28</sup> By December 1944 William Simpson was recruited from a US camp near Buna, sent to a training camp at Hollandia with 150 others over a 39 day period, and then sent into the Philippines campaign – William Simpson, *Special Agent in the Pacific, WW II: Counter-Intelligence – Military, Political and Economic*, Rivercross Publishing, New York, 1995, pages 34, 36, 38, 43, 50, 104

<sup>29</sup> Owens says that he spent six weeks in Brisbane interviewing priests and nuns. His preoccupation when in the Philippines was to meet with Catholics who had known of the Hollandia group – Owens, *op cit*, page 73

<sup>30</sup> See Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 57, and also Finnegan. *op cit*, page 95 where it says that Filipinos manned the 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion (Special) that was sent in to the Philippines via submarine to link up with the resistance and collect intelligence

<sup>31</sup> AWM 54 423/9/27, ‘Combined Counter Intelligence Centre, Report on Conference held at US Intelligence Office July/August 1943-August 1944’. This contains the minutes of intelligence meetings held over the period 20 June 1943 to 18 July 1944, and included topics such as censorship, capture of a bacteriological bomb, booby traps, airfield and port security, and security measures on mail.

<sup>32</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, at page 43 says that espionage and sabotage were “such rarities” and there were no treason incidents or cases of collaboration.

mechanical components. Fingerprinting and ballistics identification was undertaken in the technical laboratory (knowledge of fingerprints was especially useful in the Philippines where the Japanese destroyed almost all official records and the CIC's work there managed to facilitate the arrest of collaborators). Once the CIC moved north to Hollandia, the technical laboratory was developed and improved at that location.

Brisbane also housed the research teams. These agents prepared briefing papers on the Japanese agencies such as the Kempeitai (military police), the Special Service Organisations (Tokumu Kikan)<sup>33</sup>, the neighbourhoods association (Hoko system), and the Army Intelligence Department in charge of espionage and fifth column activities, the Rikugun Sho Dai Nika. They also produced a gazetteer of the SWPA and the South Pacific, and a range of topical studies on future target areas (such as the oil fields at Balikpapan and nickel mines in the Celebes). From July/August 1944 the teams prepared a series of twelve Area Studies or geographical terrain studies including maps of likely target locations.<sup>34</sup> Included in the material was either 'black lists' of expected disloyal suspects or 'white lists' of likely supporters. The same unit prepared the "Who's Who of the Philippines" in September 1944 which listed the most likely collaborators as well as key figures in any new civil government. Studies on the Philippines including shipping, armaments, politics and economics were prepared at the express request of MacArthur's office. Later the unit prepared studies on likely targets in Japan.

The researchers also compiled material on Japanese atrocities. These were given to the G-2 USAFFE for checking and subsequently forwarded to the Webb commission of inquiry into the topic and to the Allied War Crimes Commission.

Another interest of G-2 USAFFE was the obtaining of technical intelligence. Combat units were required to send any new item of materiel to the Allied Enemy Equipment Board in Brisbane while any documents were sent to the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS). However, the success rate of this exercise was not considered satisfactory as too many items were being kept as souvenirs. So USAFFE called a conference of all technical staff sections under its control and new guidelines were laid down for holding souvenirs. Sayer and Botting suggest that the CIC helped fix the issue by offering troops a 'grab bag' of gifts - provide the CIC with an item needing to be assessed and the soldier could have in exchange an item from the 'grab bag' containing materiel of no military significance.<sup>35</sup>

A significant deficiency for CIC agents for some period was their lack of understanding of the territory or inhabitants of the island of New Guinea. When Thorpe set up the counterintelligence unit he instituted training in Malay from his earlier experience in Dutch New Guinea, although this was next to useless in Papua or New Guinea. In June 1943 the CIC was given approval to work with ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit).<sup>36</sup> Eleven members of the CIC spent three months with ANGAU, receiving training in field-craft and native customs, and

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<sup>33</sup> Intelligence Series, 'CIC', at page 56 approvingly noted that the Counter Intelligence Bulletin had published a study of the Tokomu Kikan. A footnote presumably written by Willoughby, says that the article had been taken from an existing ATIS reference, an 'Enemy Publications' issue.

<sup>34</sup> The level of verification on some of the geographical studies was limited. For example, the report on Dutch New Guinea was checked by a Dutch lady and former resident who was working as a censor, and the one on Java and Madoera was checked by the CIC agent who was author, and the same lady - see Intelligence Series, 'CIC', page 36 footnotes.

<sup>35</sup> Sayer and Botting, *op cit*, page 250. This explanation seems most unlikely as the problem with souvenirs was never resolved.

<sup>36</sup> See Alan Powell, *The Third Force: ANGAU's New Guinea War, 1942-1946*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2003, page 60 for the recommendation from General Herring that ANGAU become the control agency for all intelligence gathering from July 1943. For the CIC, see Intelligence Series, 'CIC', page 23

learning the Japanese approach to administration. CIC thereafter maintained a close link with ANGAU staff.<sup>37</sup> This exposure helped CIC agents understand better the intricacies of the interview process, as suspects needed to be interviewed in their own language (CIC agents worked with Nisei, ATIS staff or sometimes their own men who could speak the appropriate language or dialect). In addition the CIC agents learned the importance of preparing typed interviews and affidavits along with other legal requirements that enabled the guilty to be taken to court as required.<sup>38</sup>

With these skills at their disposal, there was a demand for CIC agents to go into combat, and indeed, become part of the leading echelons in landings on enemy territory. In the European theatre, there was resistance from the CIC to their agents going into battle but it was not the same in the SWPA.<sup>39</sup> From 17 April 1943 the proposition was accepted that CIC agents were to act with forward combat troops. The intent was that they would make “an immediate and continuous check of the battle area for civilians, both native and white, and individual enemy personnel, question and investigate refugees, combat fifth column activities, ensure internal security, locate, secure and guard vital installations such as public utilities and aid the intelligence officer of the task force”.<sup>40</sup> In combat zones, CIC agents came under the control of the tactical G-2s.

The first landing with CIC agents was on 22 June 1943 with the Kiriwini and Woodlark Island operations. They “immediately put security measures into effect”, liaised with ANGAU and began a survey of the local natives to find out what information they could on the Japanese presence. CIC agents were subsequently involved in combat operations at Saidor, the Admiralties, Finschhafen, Oro Bay, Aitape, Hollandia, Wakde-Sarmi, Sansapor, Biak, Morotai, the Solomons, New Caledonia, Bougainville, and New Britain, prior to their heavy involvement in the Philippines.

Among their activities were the obtaining of documents (it is claimed that 350,000 were obtained) and sending these to ATIS in Brisbane, taking information or items from bodies, looking to secure technical equipment such as new ordnance or radars, liaising with ANGAU and establishing a native intelligence network that helped bring in Japanese soldiers, interviewing suspects, searching buildings, arresting collaborators, screening civilians, distributing posters, giving lectures, and going on patrol to seek out collaborators or Japanese agents. They were often the first to interrogate downed Japanese airmen brought in by natives, and they accompanied Nisei operators working with ATIS when moving to an area where Japanese were to be interrogated. Where possible, CIC agents went with the natives to church and mingled with the congregation to ascertain the whereabouts of Japanese stragglers (the offering of a reward probably helped). CIC was part of the planning before any landing in Japanese-held areas, advising on security concerns, while the CIC was often involved in positive intelligence gathering as well as counterintelligence activities.<sup>41</sup> At Noemfoor they supervised what was described as a ‘counter reconnaissance screen’ which involved watching for

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<sup>37</sup> In the Philippines the CIC set up a Legal Board of Review comprising lawyers, to determine whether a prima facie case of collaboration was shown so that the suspect was not denied natural justice. Thorpe, *op cit*, page 139, says that they sometimes used natives as intelligence agents although he said that the natives had a lack of ability to describe what they had seen, “they couldn’t count” and they had no words “suited to describing modern military men and equipment”. However, AIB agents used natives constantly and were quite capable of learning information from them – the CIC force may have lacked a true understanding of the capacity of the natives. Also see AWM 54 423/4/105 which looks at the Japanese Moto Heidan unit, and includes a map of Allied positions based on the information provided to the Japanese by the natives.

<sup>38</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘A Brief History of the G-2 Section, GHQ, SWPA and Affiliated Units’, page 80. Nisei were the first generation Japanese born in America and therefore likely targets in a combat zone.

<sup>39</sup> Sayer and Botting, *op cit*, 251

<sup>40</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 20

<sup>41</sup> Sayer and Botting, *op cit*, pages 249, 250, 251, 252

enemy observation, reconnaissance and filtration.<sup>42</sup> They also established parachute units such as the one with the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division that went through the usual training in New Guinea.<sup>43</sup> In the Wakde-Sarmi area agents went into the air in spotter aircraft to search for Japanese command posts.

Given their interest in technical intelligence, the CIC sections moving into combat zones included a number of extra men – the US Navy had Mobile Explosives Intelligence Units, the Army had ordnance specialists, engineers, chemical warfare technicians “and others”. In addition, there were often AIB (Australian Intelligence Bureau) and ANGAU representatives plus NEFIS (Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service) or other personnel able to work with civil agencies. The intent was that when the unit landed, seizure of enemy documents would take place with the advice of ATIS, enemy equipment would be under the eye of the technical equipment services, interrogation would be handled with ATIS, the civil representatives such as the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) would begin work on establishing order, while CIC would be coordinating these activities as well as looking out for fifth column activity, collaborators or other enemy infiltration.<sup>44</sup>

An informal report from a CIC agent who was with the Humboldt Bay landing during the Hollandia operations gives a good feel for what could be achieved. With his section he landed at H + 76 (i.e. three days after the main force) and he sent back through Intelligence Corps approximately 3500 pounds weight of documents and printed material. His unit screened and processed some 300 natives and others in the area. Two Ambonese who had worked for the Japanese were arrested. Two radar sets were located and turned over to the Intelligence Corps. The CIC also located four different types of bomb sights, meteorological equipment, as well as “one of the new types of incendiary grenades and a mortar shell with a new type of filler”.<sup>45</sup>

Brigadier Thorpe described the recruitment of two Mormons who were sent to work behind the Japanese lines in the Vogelkop region of Dutch New Guinea, staying there three months.<sup>46</sup> He also described a project based on Merauke when natives were supplied with a boat and told to sail into Japanese-held ports to try and purchase rubber. Not surprisingly, this was “not a great success”.<sup>47</sup>

The actual number of CIC agents in Australia and on the island of New Guinea is not known with any accuracy. While the staffing of the CIC agents across all theatres approached 5000, the CIC history in the SWPA says that it grew from two officers to become a “trained team of several thousand” although this figure must include a sizeable allocation of ancillary staff. The ideal number allocated to one division was 26 (one officer and 25 enlisted men). From the initial allocation of two agents in the SWPA the CIC went to 50 staff in Australia by February 1943 (23 of them agents), and there were sizeable later allocations of US-based staff. Sayer and Botting say that only “one roster of CIC personnel now exists” as of February 1945 and that is “demonstrably erroneous”. They do advise that as at September 1944, there were 39 detachments

<sup>42</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, Appendix 14

<sup>43</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, Appendix 14. In Europe the CIC parachute units dropped on quite a few occasions, such as Normandy.

<sup>44</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, page 47

<sup>45</sup> Intelligence Series, ‘CIC’, Appendix 8,

<sup>46</sup> It was not within the CIC charter to operate behind enemy lines as their role was counterintelligence, not covert operations as undertaken by bodies including AIB

<sup>47</sup> Thorpe, op cit, pages 100 and 135. He says that Mormons were particularly good as CIC agents as they were accustomed to looking after themselves with few resources. He also says that the agents in the Vogelkop were happy to do another 3 month stint behind enemy lines as they were doing some proselytising of the natives in their free time. The Special Operations Executive (SOE) was also involved in smuggling rubber in its Operation Mickleham – see Ian Dear, *Sabotage and Subversion: The SOE and OSS at War*, Cassell, London, 1996, Chapter 13

of CIC agents, with 73 officers and 381 agents.<sup>48</sup> The total complement in the SWPA may have been around 450 agents and 1500 ancillary staff.

### Comment

For its own reasons, the rear echelon USAFFE decided to duplicate services administered by MacArthur's Headquarters. Thus CIC developed a publishing arm that did much the same work as that of the Allied Geographical Section (AGS) while in technical intelligence CIC duplicated the activity of the 5250th Company, also under the direction of GHQ SWPA.<sup>49</sup> On the positive side, the CIC was willing to work closely with other intelligence agencies as well as bodies including NICA and ANGAU when required.

The CIC assumed three areas of responsibility - censorship, security and investigation. Of these, the CIC seems to have scored well in the unpopular role of censor given the lack of trained experts, the rapid troop build-up and the vast geographical area to be covered. On security matters, while examination of troops by US troops verged on the excessive, when it came to maintenance of security in the theatre, the effort seems appropriate and often innovatory. Looking at its investigative role, results are mixed. Its activities are confused by the often senseless duplication of effort with other agencies, while the CIC often only did what say, the Australian Intelligence Service was doing in the same circumstances.<sup>50</sup> Yet when one looks at activities of CIC agents in the field, the application of agents in dangerous missions looks most impressive.<sup>51</sup>

We need to acknowledge the positive aspects of the CIC and the job it did – it may well have trampled over other agencies and intelligence specialists, assumed responsibilities it should not have had, and gained itself an unenviable reputation for being aggressive and overbearing. Yet its counterintelligence role was important and carried out with skill. Significantly, when General MacArthur moved to Japan with the occupation forces, the CIC was retained in a modified form within the Civil Intelligence Section.<sup>52</sup> It is a tribute to the contribution that the CIC made in World War II, not least in Australia and New Guinea, that the organisation was updated and readied for the next challenge in the occupation of Japan.

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<sup>48</sup> Sayer and Botting, *op cit*, pages 247 and 254, and Intelligence Series, 'CIC', Appendix 3. At page 58 of Intelligence Series, 'CIC', it provides a map of CIC detachments extant as at July 1945. Even at that stage of the war with most CIC units in the Philippines (74 units), there were seven units in rear areas: at Brisbane, Finschhafen, Hollandia, Tarakan, Brunei, Balikpapan, and at Morotai.

<sup>49</sup> Intelligence Series, 'Operations of the Technical Intelligence Unit in the SWPA', page 17. At Wakde-Sarmi, for example, the CIC beat the 5250<sup>th</sup> to the scene and shipped out "considerable Japanese ordnance equipment" before the 5250<sup>th</sup> arrived – *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> Finnegan, *op cit*, page 96 notes that General Willoughby was seen as unable to control the activities of the competing intelligence agencies while he was engaged in the daily tactical intelligence requirements of the forward echelon at MacArthur's headquarters. There is an odd duality about Willoughby and the CIC – he was closely associated with the agency in such activities as appearing at graduation classes yet was also very critical of CIC as shown in his pungent footnotes in the CIC history.

<sup>51</sup> Sayer and Botting, *op cit*, at page 247 say that most of the wartime documentation of the CIC in the SWPA has been lost, so a complete assessment of the agency is not possible. Any judgement needs to be tempered by the realisation that New Guinea was a battlefield with different problems from say, the Philippines (for example, infiltrating Japanese were not likely to pass as New Guinea natives fleeing the battle zone, but the CIC lacked a strong resistance movement to assist in ferreting out collaborators as they had in the Philippines).

<sup>52</sup> Intelligence Series, 'Operations of the Civil Intelligence Section', page 1 notes the changes made from wartime operations, and Intelligence Series, 'CIC', page 42 affirms the correctness of such changes. See Archives A1066, 'Security Interrogation of Australian Civilians by United States Counter-Intelligence Section', which is a memo from the Secretary, Department of the Army of 30 October 1945 to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs, advising that the Counter-Intelligence Section is "authorised to interview such Australian citizens in occupied territory as they may desire".



## LANCE-SERGEANT HAANE MANAHI DCM

Dr Noel Cox<sup>1</sup>

It has been reported that Defence Minister Phil Goff has this week asked Buckingham Palace to reconsider the decision to not review the award of a VC to Lance-Sergeant Haane Manahi. This request is worthy of comment. Mr Goff can be commended for recognising that The Queen is the source of all royal honours and is entitled to be consulted on all matters concerning them. However, it may be questioned whether it was altogether appropriate for Mr Goff to approach the Palace on behalf of the advocates for the late Sergeant Manahi. Mr Goff could be in danger of being seen as a lobbyist for Sergeant Manahi's supporters. As Minister of Defence he has a wider duty, and specific responsibility for gallantry medals. This duty ought to include, one would have thought, taking the broader view of any question and not becoming involved too closely in individual cases. His duty is to uphold policy, not promote departures from it.

It is unfortunately that Mr Goff has been reported as asserting that Manahi's gallantry was "unrecognised". The sergeant, as did many others who were originally nominated for the Victoria Cross, received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. This is almost as highly regarded as the VC.

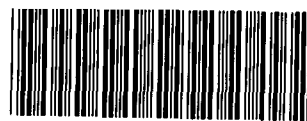
Ultimately it is both unwise and unhelpful to attempt to second-guess decisions of more than sixty years ago. It is impossible to say with any certainty now whether or not Sergeant Manahi ought to have received the VC rather than the DCM. But he didn't, and the matter should be left to rest. Many thousands of acts of heroism went unrecognised. Many hundreds of soldiers received lesser awards than they were originally nominated for, or than they possibly deserved. These people did not campaign for higher awards - nor, significantly, did Sergeant Manahi.

There is no reason why this one case should be treated as special, or why the long-standing principle of not reviewing such decisions should be abandoned. Nor is it appropriate to portray the Queen, as some media have done, as somehow denying Manahi something which was his by right. Gallantry medals are honours and come from the Crown. There would be precious little honour in them if they were awarded as the result of lobbying. It would also be very unfortunate if the first award of the Victoria Cross for New Zealand were to be made in such controversial circumstances - assuming that this would be an award of a New Zealand medal, rather than of the VC under British regulations, for which Manahi was originally nominated.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Noel Cox is Chariman, Monarchist League of New Zealand. This statement issued 28 May 2006.



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## THE LAST STRIKE

Alan Fraser<sup>2</sup>

Prepared by one who took part, these notes outline the last offensive action taken by the Royal Australian Air Force in the 1939-45 war - a strike operation by Beaufort aircraft of No 71 Wing against Japanese installations at Kiarivu in Northern New Guinea on the morning of 15 August 1945.

No 71 Wing comprised three squadrons (60 aircraft) of Australian-built Bristol Beaufort reconnaissance bombers and was located at Tadjai airstrip, near Aitape in Northern New Guinea. The wing's functions included attacks on the Japanese forces in New Guinea and direct close support, when called upon by the Army, of the 6th Australian Division's offensive against what remained of the Japanese XVIII Army in the Aitape-Wewak-Sepik areas, estimated to number over 20,000 men. An amphibious landing at Dove Bay, near Wewak, in May, strongly supported by RAAF aircraft and ships of the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Navy, drove what was left of the Wewak garrison inland, augmenting their forces in the mountains and the Sepik River system, where the Army and the RAAF continued the offensive.

On what proved to be the last day of the war for the RAAF, 15 August 1945, No 71 Wing's three squadrons, Nos 7, 8 and 100, were ordered to carry out an attack on enemy concentrations in the village of Kiarivu, inland some 25 air miles WSW from Wewak. This was in response to a request by the 2/7th Battalion, 17th Brigade, which was completing an encircling movement begun nine days before to take the main Japanese force along the Yoilu River in the rear.

Atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August and on Nagasaki on the 9th, and early Japanese capitulation was confidently expected. By mid-August, advice of Japanese surrender and instructions to end hostilities were expected hourly.

Our target on that last morning was a large village occupying the centre of a 500 meter long ridge running east and west, covered by kunai grass and with a high knoll at the eastern end. Patrols the day before had estimated about 100 Japanese were concentrated in the area. Upon the approach of the attacking aircraft, the target was to be marked by a ground unit laying down 3-inch mortar smoke on the west end of the ridge.

The strike force comprised 30 aircraft, led by nine from 100 Squadron commanded by Squadron Leader Dewar, followed by another nine from 8 Squadron and twelve from 7 Squadron. The first group left Tadjai at 0900K (local time) and all 30 machines were off the ground by 0935. Bombing commenced at 0944, each aircraft bombing individually. The last formation, from 7 Squadron, was over the target from 1015 until 1103, but unlike 100 and 8, after bombing with their sixteen 500-lb and fifty 250-lb bombs, heavily strafed the area, expending 950 rounds of 0.5-in and 18700 rounds of 0.303-in ammunition. Altogether the 30 strike aircraft dropped over 25 tons of bombs - a huge expenditure of ordnance on what seemed to us at the time to be a target of no great importance. However, nobody minded that if it helped the Army, who had been slogging away in that awful terrain for months and taking heavy casualties.

The subsequent report on the attack described the target as a well laid out area with new huts surrounded by a fence, with other huts under construction. Only two were left standing. Stores were seen to be located under timber and it was thought that the area was possibly a Japanese headquarters. The army, close by, reported good accurate coverage of the target. Although damage to Japanese installations was seen to be considerable, casualties to Japanese personnel are not known. It is possible that they were few. Experience had shown that the enemy often

temporarily abandoned their positions when a raid appeared imminent, as when the target was marked by mortar smoke, retreating into nearby gullies and leaving only a few men on guard.

'Our crew, in Beaufort Mk VIII A9-608, coded KT-V, were No 4 in the third and last



Roy Avins, Wireless Operator/Air Gunner

sub-formation of four from 7 Squadron, which meant that we were the last to bomb. This was our 60th bombing mission in 71 Wing. Our contribution was six 250-lb M.57 high explosive bombs and 200 rounds of 0.5-in and 2400 rounds of 0.303-in ammunition. On such bomb and strafe missions it was the practice, after bombing, to form a strafing circle, each machine in turn attacking in a dive, the pilot firing his two fixed wing guns (0.5-in in late production aircraft like A9-608) and the navigator/bomb aimer his two gimbal-mounted 0.303s, then turning away from the target giving the wireless operator, with his one free 0.303 mounted on a spigot firing from a hatch on either side, and the turret gunner with his two guns, their turn. This was maintained until the strike was called off.

On this occasion we were last into the strafing circle and had made two firing passes and were committed to the next when all aircraft were ordered by the controller at the base to cease all operations and return to base. As the order was coming through (and we all knew what it must signify - the end of the war), the crew made this pass a good one. We were in fact the last on the target and thus, I believe, took the last offensive action by the RAAF in the 1939-45 war. Turret gunner Roy Avins actually fired the last shots. In one significant respect the account of the strike in the official history is at variance with official records and the recollections of 71 Wing personnel. George Odgers' *Air war against Japan 1943-45* asserts that news of the Japanese surrender arrived from Command Headquarters just after the Beauforts had made their attack

and implies that the recall was signalled by the controller immediately after. In fact, news of the surrender had been known before the first strike formation had left the ground. Flight Lieutenant Damman of 100 Squadron, deputy leader of the strike, recalls that they were barely airborne, at about 0900, when one of the wireless operators who had been listening out on another frequency reported that he had heard news of the surrender. Personnel of other squadrons had also picked up the news, but as the crews had been told nothing of this officially and nobody ordered cancellation, the operation continued. We in A9-608 had no knowledge of it and there was no discussion of the matter or its implication for the strike over the air before or after take-off. Nos 100 and 8 Squadrons had completed their missions and 7 Squadron's was nearly at its end before the controller's cease fire order came through timed by me at 1103 hours.

Why the strike was not called off is not clear from available records. Presumably 71 Wing officers considered they had no authority to cancel. The officer commanding the Wing, Group Captain Hancock was himself flying on the strike with 7 Squadron and, like most of the crews, may not have known of the surrender.



Crew of Bristol Beaufort A9-603, KT-V, of No 7 squadron, RAAF prior to taking off on 15 August 1945. From left: Ted Bragge (Navigator /Bomb Aimer). Alan Fraser (pilot), Roy Avins and Jack Laughton (wireless operator/air gunners)  
Photo - Ted Bragge

Although that operation of 15 August marked the end of the RAAF's offensive action in the 1939-45 war, it was not the end of the Army's active involvement in this area. The 2/7th Battalion also heard the news early, with confirmation from Brigade shortly after. One of the battalion's officers attempted to communicate the news to Japanese troops facing his patrol but a few minutes later a large number of bombs fell on the ridge north of A Company and it was thought the officer failed to convince them.

With surrender anticipated, the Army had ordered several days before that risks of loss of personnel were to be minimized, the enemy to be engaged with long range weapons and patrols to be protective only. The 2/7th reported enemy activity around the perimeter the next day, although it was clear by then that the Japanese opposing them knew of the surrender. They had not, however, been ordered to cease resistance and on the night of 17/18 August a raiding party killed one man and wounded six others of B Company. It was, not until 23 August that General Adachi, commanding the XVIII Army, ordered his troops to cease fire. The return from the strike was uneventful although one aircraft of No 7 Squadron did a noisy high speed low level pass over Wing Headquarters to celebrate the occasion. Wing were not amused and the pilot was awarded orderly officer duty for a fortnight.

No time was lost in spreading the news of the surrender, aircraft of all three squadrons commencing to drop surrender leaflets over Japanese-occupied territory on the afternoon of 15 August. Two crews were later lost in carrying out leaflet missions.

The ending of the war had been expected for several days and was taken quietly on the squadron. Not for us the rejoicing and congratulations of crowds of civilians and dancing in the streets! We were subjected to an address by the commanding officer followed by, of all things, community singing. Behaviour in the messes was subdued; things might have been more lively if there had not been a shortage of drinks.

Squadron personnel were relieved that the war was over although a few recently arrived aircrew felt that they had not done enough and were disappointed. Men were anxious to get home but return to Australia and demobilization was phased and the process for personnel overseas took some time.

Meanwhile, there was relatively little flying, mostly reconnaissance missions to observe the Japanese and courier runs between bases, occasionally relieved by flying aircraft back to Australia for storage. Unfortunately, with the departure of many senior engineering personnel, the quality of maintenance fell away and there were frequent problems with the aircraft. We had one particularly narrow escape over mountainous terrain and when my turn came for return to Australia I loaded A9-643 with other returning personnel and their gear and left New Guinea without regret.

#### References:

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## OBITUARY — BARRY JOHN VIDEON

The Victorian Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia laments the passing of another Branch stalwart, indeed a pioneer of the Society, in Wing Commander Barry John Videon. Born in Morgan, South Australia on 15 August 1925 Barry was an early collecting enthusiast and scouting participant. He joined the fledgling Air Training Corps in 1941 and started to collect militaria in earnest. Employment followed with the Munitions Supply Division as a clerk and, as soon as age permitted, he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force for aircrew training. Barry gained his wings as a Kittyhawk pilot at Mildura and waited impatiently for transfer to an operational area. With the end of war in sight and a glut of pilots waiting for active service, Barry chose to go the South West Pacific Area in an administrative roll as a Flying Officer.

Marriage to Vida in 1947 and a growing family ensued after Barry was demobilized in Adelaide. With qualifications in accountancy Barry first joined the Mines Department then relocated to Melbourne in 1956 to work on the Mary Kathleen Uranium Project. It was in Melbourne in 1957 that he was instrumental with a small group of like-minded collectors in forming the Society.

A further employment relocation came about in 1961 with a move to Sydney, where Barry was again busy with the Society and largely responsible for establishing a NSW Branch of the MHSA. Four years later he joined the Commonwealth Public Service and came back to Melbourne to work for Defence.

In 1972 Barry Videon collaborated with Alfred N. Festberg to complete his first book, *Uniforms of the Australian Colonies*. Still with a strong attachment to the RAAF he served on with the ATC and became the Victorian Squadron Commander in 1980. After leaving the Government in 1985 Barry became active in the RAAF Association and completed a Videon family history and *The First Fifty Years: A History of the ATC*.

For his military service Barry was awarded the 1939-45 Star, Pacific Star, War Medal and Australian Service Medal 1939-45. He was later awarded the 1977 Queen's Jubilee Medal and made a Life Member of the MHSA and RAAF Association. He was also a member of various organization such as The Battle for Australia Committee, RSL, Defence Services Council and Veterans' Affairs committees. His magnum opus, which focuses on the Australian Flying Corps consumed much of his time in recent years and remains to be published.

Barry passed away suddenly on 27 January 2006 at his home leaving behind his wife Vida, a large and loving family and a wide association of Society and other friends. He is sorely missed and irreplaceable in the ranks of the Society.



## OBITUARY — DAVID PATRICK RADFORD

David Patrick Radford was born at Warwick, Queensland on 9 May 1921 and died in Brisbane on 29 March 2006.

On the outbreak war in 1939 he was serving in the Citizen Military Forces and soon found himself guarding critical installations, fuel stores and powder magazines, at Dakabin, Whinstanes and Windsor. He was commissioned Lieutenant in the 9th Battalion on 4 February 1941 and when Japan entered the war deployed with his unit to Caloundra which was considered a possible invasion point. In May 1942 the 9th Battalion moved to Rollingstone, north of Townsville, where the proximity of the railway line to the sea made it vulnerable to attack. It was here that he and many other members of the 7th Brigade volunteered for the 2nd AIF.

In June 1942 the 7th Brigade deployed to Milne Bay, Papua with the 9th Battalion embarking aboard the SS *Tasman*. The Japanese landed at Milne Bay and between 25 August and 7 September, the 7th and 18th Brigades supported by the RAAF inflicted the first land defeat on the Japanese. In 1945 the 7th Brigade was part of the 3rd Australian Division on Bougainville and David Radford with the rank of captain commanded the 9th Battalion's B Company.

Following the war he withdrew from his course at Queensland University but found his niche as a returning officer with the Australian Electoral Office. He married Carmel O'Brien in 1950 and they had four children. However his hobby was military history and he loved building model warships and planes from balsa wood. He was a long time member of the Military Historical Society of Australia and at the time of his death was Vice President of the Queensland Branch. He was an active member of the local Catholic parish and served his local community in organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch. He was in good health until final illness. He is survived by his wife, children and six grandchildren.

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