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Sabretache



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OF AUSTRALIA



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75 Years of Australian Head-dress Badges

Alfred Festberg has prepared a comprehensive book covering Australian Head-dress Badges from 1901 to 1976 which, subject to response from readers, will be published by The Military Historical Society of Australia.

The proposed publication will be of the high standard of previous badge books by A. N. Festberg.

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The aims of the Society are the encouragement for the pursuit of study and research in military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment and kindred matters; the promotion of public interest and knowledge in these subjects and the preservation of historical military objects, with particular reference to the Armed Forces of Australia.

STOP PRESS

Congratulations to our Editor, Jim Courtney,
on his Award of the Medal of
THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA
in the Australia Day List of 26-1-77

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A Member of South Australian Volunteers, 1868

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CONTENTS

| ARTICLE | AUTHOR | PAGE |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| Darwin Disaster Awards | Editor | 6 |
| Capt. G.C. Wilson, MC, AFC, DCM, MID | R. Clark | 7 |
| Compulsory Military Training in Australia in 1914 | K.R. White | 15 |
| With 'D' Troop IAWSS in Kurdistan | E.C. Gallard | 21 |
| The Digger Hat, the Badge and the Emu Plume | R.K. Peacock | 30 |
| Tasmanian Torpedo Corps Torpedo Boat | R.L. White | 33 |
| Russians in the Derwent | R.L. White | 38 |
| British South Africa Police (Rhodesia) Insignia | | 39 |
| Medalman | | 40 |
| Badgeman | | 44 |
| Book Reviews | | 46, 48 |
| Letters to Editor | | 51 |
| Branch Notes | | 49 |
| Advertisements | | 52-67 |

DARWIN DISASTER AWARDS

Anybody who has read Major General Alan Stretton's book, "The Furious Days", which is his account of the Darwin relief operation following Cyclone Tracy in December 1974, could not help but be struck by his constant mention and laudatory comments about his staff officer, Major (now Lieutenant Colonel) Frank Thorogood. It is obvious Thorogood was much more than a staff officer and made an enormous contribution to the success of the relief operation. We were intrigued why we had heard virtually nothing of Thorogood's actions until Stretton's book was published and decided it was worth checking. Why was his service in Darwin unremarked and more significantly why did he receive no recognition when, as we know from the book, a recommendation was made and Stretton, himself, expresses disappointment at this failure of the Army. Surely some awards should be made to those who merit recognition and at the appropriate level—General Stretton must have earned a knighthood.

Copies of "Army" published during the appropriate period have been examined and it really is quite extraordinary to discover the poor press Stretton received while Thorogood is mentioned not at all. A check has revealed Army correspondents and Public Relations officers were in the area at the time so it is inexplicable that the two principals of the relief operation could be so ignored and by their own Service. Hardly objective reporting, but of the standard we have come to expect of the Army newspaper. Navy News, which we also checked, did better for their RAN commander.

Following Stretton's revelations about the Army's performance in Darwin, after the cyclone, it is obvious now that it is no coincidence that the RAN and RAAF commanders were decorated for their post-cyclone deeds and the Army commander was not. It probably seemed to the Army hierarchy that no other officer could then be decorated for service in Darwin. This assumption received oblique support when it is remembered that two Army cooks were decorated for cooking for Darwin evacuees in Sydney. It is believed proposals were floated to issue a Darwin Disaster Medal which would have avoided all this nonsense about recognition. What a pity that idea was not adopted.

Another member with a long memory recalled that back in the National Service days of 1954, Thorogood saved a number of lives following an explosion at Puckapunyal. Army failed to recognise his act but the St. John's Ambulance Brigade awarded him the Certificate of Honour. In the years following he continued his community service ambulance work and was admitted to the Order of St. John in 1974. Colonel Thorogood has now been thrust into the limelight by the national press who have suddenly discovered he is a key witness in the Darwin saga. In the coming months it will be interesting to see how Thorogood will treat the Army.

CAPTAIN G. C. WILSON, MC, AFC, DCM, MID

By Rex Clark

OF the many decorated members of the Australian Flying Corps only one, Capt. G. C. Wilson, had the great distinction of having been awarded the Military Cross, Air Force Cross, Distinguished Conduct Medal and Mentioned In Despatches. This combination of decorations is unique to an Australian and is not known to any other member of the British or Commonwealth Forces.

Gordon Campbell Wilson was born at Minmi, near Newcastle, NSW on 6th October 1896, the fifth-born in a family of seven. After schooling he became an apprentice pattern-maker with the firm of A. Conin and Coy of Newcastle. Upon the outbreak of war Wilson was in the first to enlist, being allocated to Engineers. After training in Australia he went to Egypt and after further training was in the very first to land at Gallipoli in the early morning of 25th April 1915. At the time of the landing Wilson was a corporal with 1st Field Company Engineers and his gallantry during those desperate hours of consolidation was brought to the notice of the commander. Although wounded during the first month at Gallipoli, Wilson remained on duty until the evacuation.

For conspicuous gallantry at Gallipoli, Wilson was awarded the DCM (Mil. Order 324 of 1917) and Mentioned in Despatches (Mil. Order 168 of 1916). The grant of the DCM to Wilson, as with others for Gallipoli, was not promulgated until July 1917, with the extract of the citation being :

“ No. 110 Corporal (now Sergeant) G. C. Wilson, Engineers. For conspicuous gallantry in action. He exploded an enemy gallery single handed. On one occasion he displayed great courage and determination when in charge of carrying parties to the front line, himself frequently passing through intense barrages.”

In December 1916 Sergeant Wilson transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and went to Reading in England to undergo pilot training. After qualifying as a pilot, 2nd Lieutenant Wilson in April 1917 was posted to 68 (Aust.) Squadron, RFC in France and after gaining operational flying experience was promoted Lieutenant in July 1917 and Captain in September 1917, being appointed a Flight Commander. Captain Wilson was a pilot of



Officers of No. 2 Squadron AFC, March 1918 (AWM Photograph).

the highest skill who displayed exceptional gallantry and daring in air operations over the Western Front. This squadron, which title changed to No. 2 Squadron AFC on 19th January 1918, was the first AFC unit into combat in the European theatre and produced 18 air aces. Wilson flew the unusually designed scout biplanes, DH5, which was mainly used in ground-assault operations. The aircraft, in racks under the fuselage, carried four 25-pound bombs and was flown by Wilson successfully in strafing and bombing attacks during the battles of Ypres and Cambrai. The battle of Cambrai revealed the calibre of the Australian Flying Corps and the commander of the RFC in the field remarked :

“ I have just been to see the Australian fighting squadron No. 68 (2 Sqn. AFC) for the second time in the last week. Their work was really magnificent . . . these pilots came down low and fairly strafed the Hun. They bombed him and attacked him with machine-gun fire from 50 feet, flying down among tree tops; they apparently revelled in this work, which was of great value . . . I think them really great men.”

It was for his gallantry in action against the Hindenberg Line that Captain Wilson was awarded the Military Cross, his citation being :

“ For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. His work at low altitudes under very adverse conditions has been of the greatest value. On one occasion, he scattered the enemy from a strong point with his machine-gun. On another occasion, he bombed and fired upon a field gun, killing two gunners. Despite the constant attack of enemy scouts, he held his formation together, which was out on a bombing raid, and enabled it to drop all its bombs on the objectives, an enemy aeroplane also being driven down. His dashing leadership has been a splendid example to his flight.

—AMO 581 of 30 Nov. 1918.

In the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18 pages 185 to 188, Wilson gives a personal account of one extraordinary adventure involving himself and Lt. H. Taylor, MC, MM :

“ Probably the most extraordinary adventure of the day was Lieutenant H. Taylor’s. His machine was shot down, like Ward’s, inside the enemy lines, where it crashed badly. As the occurrence was officially described, he ‘ attacked parties of the enemy with a German rifle, joined an advanced British infantry patrol, led



DH5 Aircraft as flown by Captain G. C. Wilson, 2 Sqn. AFC.

it forward, and brought in a wounded man. He found Captain Bell's machine and tried to fly it, but without success. He then rejoined the squadron at the advanced landing-ground. His flying partner of that morning, Wilson, relates the glowing detail of Taylor's story. ' Taylor and I found the enemy, he says, ' being massed to repel the attack—confused and dazed by surprise. Close together we dived down and opened our machine-guns on the Germans, pulling up to the level of the fog again (about 30 feet off the ground), and letting a bomb drop as we rose. For a few moments we continued this, scattering and demoralising troops, and preventing them from concentrating their fire on our own men.

Then, as I zoomed up after a burst of machine-gun fire and turned to dive again, I missed Taylor. I was half enveloped in the mist, and for a moment thought he must have pulled up into the fog to clear a machine-gun stoppage. The next second the red light of a pilot-rocket showed up beside me. I guessed that it was fired by Taylor, and that it meant he was in distress. Another red light followed rapidly, and then I saw him down on the ground wrecked and among the enemy. That he was sufficiently alive to fire his rockets was amazing. His machine was just a heap of wreckage. One wing lay 20 yards away from the rest of the heap from which Taylor had scrambled and was now firing his rockets to attract my attention.

Fifty yards or so away from him were scattered groups of the enemy, who had stood off as his machine came down, uncertain whether it was really falling, or whether the pilot was just diving at them and waiting till the last second to let loose his bullets. I saw them turn as they realised that Taylor had crashed, and lift their rifles to fire. I dived at them immediately and scattered them again. It showed Taylor that I had seen his signals.

Crouching behind a slight mound, he pulled out his automatic and fired at some Germans who rushed towards him as I pulled up ready for another dive. Then, as I dived and scattered the Germans again, he dashed back a few yards, dropped to the ground, and fired again. He repeated this until he had got back maybe 60 yards from his machine and nearer to our own men, and then I saw him surrounded by a small band of British soldiers. He picked up the gun of a fallen man, and he and his little party lay firing at the enemy, who were gradually creeping up and spreading out fan-shape to surround them. For a while I saw snapshots of the unequal contest as I dived down and zoomed up repeatedly

to try and scatter these groups of Germans. Then there was a crashing sound against my head and I was blinded.

Two bullets had pierced the wind-screen in front of my eyes, and dust from the triplex glass had been flung into my eyes. Pulling back the 'joy-stick' and giving the engine full throttle, I climbed up into the fog away from hostile fire, to wait until my eyes cleared. For a while I flew about anywhere, certain of one thing only, that I was climbing up clear of enemy fire. Gradually the glass-dust got washed from my eyes, and I was able to see again.

Descending through the fog bank, I picked up my bearings and sought the spot where I had last seen Taylor fighting with a handful of infantry against odds that seemed to give them no chance. Neither he nor his party were to be seen. Here and there a German jumped up from behind cover and dashed forward between the mud-splash of falling shells, and little rips in the canvas of my aeroplane wings told me that others unseen were firing at me. It seemed certain that Taylor and his party had been captured or killed—that the ground was in possession of the Germans.

I returned to the forward landing-ground, which had been arranged for the day just behind the lines, and alongside which French and British cavalrymen were waiting to ride forward if the surprise attack should break a hole in the German line. There I reported what I had seen of Taylor, and we gave him up for lost.

The rest of the story comes from Taylor himself—or, rather, from the people who brought him back, for whenever Taylor was asked about his own work he just grinned and said something which had nothing to do with the case. The party of men he had found had lost their officer. He had stayed with them till they battled their way, edging yard by yard, to the main body of troops from whom they had advanced too far. Here he left them to try to get back to the advanced landing-ground for another machine. On the way he found the damaged aeroplane of Captain Bell, who had been shot down earlier. With the help of some troops he tried to start the engine, but it refused to work, and he continued back to the aerodrome, which he reached in time for dinner."

Captain Wilson continued to serve with 2 Squadron AFC until 20th February 1918 when he was appointed commander of 8 Training Squadron AFC, a post he held until the end of the war. The award of the Air Force Cross to Wilson was promulgated in CAG113

of 1919, being for outstanding leadership and gallantry in flying operations. In June 1919 Wilson returned to Australia and ceased his service with the AIF in the following month.

Flying was now in his blood so Wilson became a pilot with NSW Airways Ltd. and flew his monoplane 'The City of Sydney' throughout NSW. The famous airman, with M. A. Taylor (his mechanic) and N. Bloomfield on 11th March 1929 whilst on their way to Manildra to repair a Moth aeroplane which had been forced down, were involved in a fatal accident. The car they were driving at night, near Bogan Gate, skidded on some loose gravel, and somersaulted, pinning the three occupants to the ground. Captain Wilson died before a doctor arrived. The door of the car had come down on top of him, breaking his neck. The other two occupants of the car escaped with little injury.

The greatness of Wilson was demonstrated at his funeral in Newcastle, where his pallbearers were Colonels Harrett, Street, Captain Irwin, Flight Lieuts. Ulm, Truscott, Maze and Walker. Flt. Lt. Ulm and Sqn. Ldr. Murray circled over the grave in a plane whilst the service was being conducted and dropped a wreath. One of Wilson's oldest and best friends, Flt. Lt. Ulm, said this about Wilson :

" During the war Wilson had one of the finest records in the Air Force. In several flying ventures he was in partnership with me. He was one of our most decorated and ablest flyers, and his loss is regretted greatly. Australia has lost a flying man who did great things and would have done still greater things for aviation had he been spared."

Decorations and medals awarded Captain Wilson were: Military Cross (named); Air Force Cross (named); Distinguished Conduct Medal (Cpl. 1 F Coy. Aust: E); 1914-15 Star (L/Cpl. 1 F C.Eng. AIF); War Medal (Captain); Victory Medal with MID emblem.

Captain G. C. Wilson and his two brothers, Ronald and Alexander, collectively have one of the finest war records of any Australian family, all three having landed at Gallipoli. Ronald received a mention in despatches for gallantry at Gallipoli. Alexander Wilson was with the CSR as a surveyor in Fiji when the First World War started, but soon returned to Sydney to enlist and was with the field ambulance for the first assault on Gallipoli. Whilst at Gallipoli Alexander Wilson, because of his working knowledge of Hindustani, which he had acquired in Fiji, was transferred to the Indian Transport Corps. After the

evacuation of Gallipoli where he had been wounded and was one of the last to leave, Sergeant Alexander Wilson was attached to 'The Maharajah of Bikanins Camel Corps Scouts,' a semi-privately raised and trained unit serving with the British Forces. In 1916 he went to France as a member of 12 Field Company Australian Engineers, where he was wounded in the head by a shell splinter, which resulted in his evacuation back to Australia.

After the war he went to the Solomon Islands, where he became a surveyor for the British Colonial Office, eventually finishing Commissioner for Lands and Public Works. Mr. Wilson was in Tulagi in 1942 when the Japanese invaded. However, he escaped on a steamer but later returned to serve in the Solomon Islands until 1945. Alexander Wilson reached the rank of major, serving with the British Solomon Islands Defence Regiment. Alexander Wilson, in 1924, married Jessie Watt, who had three brothers killed in the First World War.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The author wishes to thank Alexander Wilson, who provided the material for this article.

With full military honours Len Montgomerie departed his many friends and loved ones on Wednesday 24th November 1976. Monty, who served with the Commandos during the Second World War, was the best known of those gallant Australians who earned undying fame for their country at the Battle of Kapyong in Korea during April 1951 (See Sabretache September 1974). For his outstanding leadership and gallantry during this battle, Monty was awarded the Military Cross. His unique position and respect in the Australian Army was evident from those who attended his funeral at the R.M.C. Chapel. Those present ranged from Australia's top soldier, General Hassett, down to private soldiers who had served with him in Korea. Our deepest sympathy to Monty's family as Australia has lost one of her great soldiers.

COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING IN AUSTRALIA IN 1914

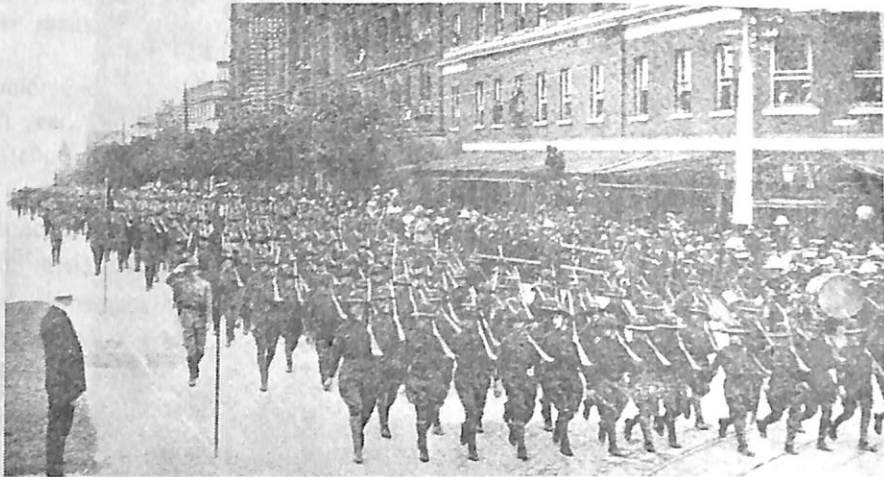
By Ken White

"I have now seen the greater portion of the Australian infantry—four brigades and several single battalions at manoeuvre camps, the remainder on ceremonial parades. I wish very much I could transplant 10,000 of these young soldiers to Salisbury Plain. They would do the croakers good and make them less frightened of other nations, who have no overseas children getting ready to lend them a hand."—Ian Hamilton (1914).

EARLY in 1914 the Inspector-General of the Overseas Forces (General Sir Ian Hamilton) travelled from one end of Australia to the other inspecting the forces of the young army there, and in his report he makes the above-quoted reference to the living material from which Australia's Army of the future was formed. He was clearly enthusiastic, and admits that he went to Australia an opponent of the compulsory service system for military purposes, but came away with a very different opinion of the value and of the success of the method when properly applied.

Australia's entire population in 1914 had just reached 5,000,000—less than that of London. There are roughly 3,000,000 square miles of country within the boundaries of the Commonwealth, so that it is the most sparsely peopled country on the globe's face.

While Australia's system was modelled on that so well known in Switzerland, it differed from it in several respects. It began with the lads of the school—joining age of 12. It required that all boys shall be registered, and as the scheme became operative in 1911, all boys registered as having been born in 1900 became liable for training as Junior Cadets, and those born four years earlier were required to join the Senior Cadets. With a complete system of registration it was easy to trace the boys through the various stages till as men of 25 or 26 they completed their period of service and were then sufficiently trained to take their place in the defence forces whenever called upon. Each year a number automatically passed from one stage to another just as the ranks of the Junior Cadets are augmented by the boys reaching the age of 12 in that year. The method of registration was simple. Forms were obtained from any post



Senior Cadets in Melbourne.



Cadets (14 to 18 years).

Neither the Junior nor Senior Cadets were required to attend military camps. It was after he reached his eighteenth year that the young Australian, who had undergone his physical training and the elementary work of the first two stages, set himself seriously to the important work.

He was then promoted to the Citizen Force and his eight years connection with the force began on the 1st of July of the year in which he became 18 years of age. His training consisted of continuous training in camp for 17 days per year in the case of naval forces, artillery, and engineer arms; eight days for other arms, and eight days (or the equivalent) home training for all arms. The total service was 25 days per annum for the specialist and technical corps, and 16 days for other corps, the main body of whom were light horse and infantry. The period of eight days of home training was made up of whole days, half-days and nights, the respective minimum duration of these being six, three, and one-and-a-half hours; two half-days and four nights counted as one whole day.

On entering the Citizen Force the bulk of the Senior Cadets went to infantry. Those who possessed special educational or technical qualifications were drafted as recruits to specialist corps. Each recruit in the light horse was required to provide his own horse. This at the time in Australia was not a serious obstacle, but light horse enrolment was not in any way compulsory.

Parades were classed as compulsory, alternative and voluntary. The first made up the exact amount of training provided, the alternative drills enabled those absent on leave from the compulsory drills to make good their time, and the voluntary drills helped those aiming at proficiency and promotion. Any one who failed to qualify as efficient in any year had to do an extra year's training for each failure.

Unless a young Australian could produce a "clean record" of military service, he stood a very poor chance of a position in the Commonwealth Public Service, and employers generally in Australia were disposed to regard a "clean record" in this respect as an excellent recommendation. The young man who had carried out his military obligations and was a good soldier was more likely to be a good employee than the one who had not.

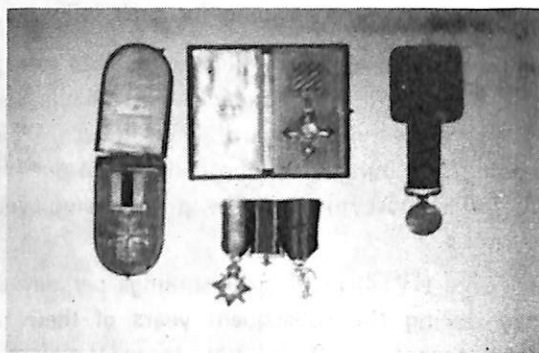
Trainees in the Citizen Force (1914) received 3 shillings per day during the first year, and 4 shillings per day during the subsequent years of their training. The pay for corporals was 9 shillings, sergeants 10 shillings, sergeant-majors 10 shillings 6 pence and 11 shillings. An allowance of £4 per annum was made for the upkeep of a horse to the light horse trainees. In the commissioned ranks the daily rates of pay were 15

shillings for lieutenants, 22 shillings 6 pence for captains, 30 shillings majors, 37 shillings 6 pence lieutenant-colonels, and 45 shillings for colonels. Uniform and equipment were, of course, provided. Government factories for the manufacture of clothing, saddlery, small arms and ammunition were established so that the influence of "Kruppism" was never felt in Australia.

The male population of Australia of military age was only about 177,000 between 14 and 18 years, and 321,000 between 18 and 25. Of these a percentage was subject to medical rejection, and a larger percentage resided beyond the training area. The number in training when the system was in full operation was 90,000 Senior Cadets, and 113,000 Citizen soldiers, the latter being made up of 80,000 trained soldiers, 18,000 recruits and 15,000 of the 25-26 year men.

Promotion was absolutely by merit, the principle adopted being that the best soldiers must lead, whatever their civil avocations or birth. Military and naval colleges were established in Australia for the higher training of officers. No fees were charged at these colleges for maintenance or instruction and each cadet received an allowance of 5s. 6d. per day to meet expenses of uniform, books, instruments, etc.

A striking indication of the success and popularity of the system was the large number of applicants for enrolment in the technical arms where longer periods of drills are necessary. Of course, the advent of the First World War forced the system to come to an end. However, many who served Australia in this war were products of a system which would have merit even today.



Decorations and Medals Awarded Capt. G. C. Wilson, MC, AFC, DCM, MID.

WITH ' D ' TROOP, FIRST AUSTRALIAN WIRELESS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON IN KURDISTAN

Letter from Sapper E. C. Gallard, July 1918

I N my previous letters I told you about being attached to the Political people at Amadia after the garrison went back to Suwara. We were not very much concerned about it ourselves but others were for perhaps they knew more than we did. Many things went through while we were there showing that the people of this particular place were not satisfied. They divided the one half for the government and the remainder left Amadia at midnight one night and went up on to the hills where I suppose they were joined by others. The Political Officer went up a couple of times and tried to fix things up, but even then everything was not satisfactory. Sergeant Troop, the Political Sergeant, was warned many times to leave Amadia, also the P.O. and Gendarmes Officer, but they took no notice of the threats made towards them. On two occasions we were told that night all the British in Amadia were to be attacked and killed. We took precautions on each occasion but nothing came of it.

Gendarmes are local soldiers of the Mesopotamia area also a few Kurds have also enlisted themselves. Well, at Amadia there were about 100 or more of them, some Arabs and a great number of Kurds locally enlisted. There was not much discipline amongst them and we did not place much faith in them although they were supposed to be our guard and also for use of Political for keeping order and general work. They were supplied with British rifles and ammunition and well paid. That much for Gendarmes. The last warning we got was that we had 16 days to live and this was supposed to be final. During this period the land line was finished and three Indian operators came along to carry on with the work. And we of course had orders to return to Suwara which we did and I think I have described in previous letters. At Suwara things were very dead, would hardly get one message in two days and while things were like this I was told that Skenett was coming along to relieve me and I was to go either to Mosuf or Baghdad. Two days before Skenett was to arrive I was going to give everything a great clean up. I had the engine and generator in the shade of a tree and was just getting busy when the adjutant of the camp come down in a great hurry with a message to go on. I just had to put things back again and get ready for traffic. This message I was very sorry to see. It read as follows:



Wireless Dugout at Suwara, Kurdistan.



Saper H. B. Murdoch, 'D' Troop.

" 15.7.19 Letter just received from Abdul Latif, Amadia. Hamasala and Shahan used force against government officials in Amadia last night about 2300 hours. Abdul Latif heard noise from his garden but did not go to Amadia. Says he is sure P.O. has been killed. Land line communication interrupted and no reply to Helio. Line was alright at 2200 hours last night. Please instruct."

We had a great run of traffic from this time but I cannot tell you all the messages for you would not understand them and they are not of much interest. This one came along the same day a Gendarme arrived from Daoudieh, stated that Mukhtar of Tine brought news that morning to Daoudieh that he was in Amadia last night and knows that Captain Willey, Lt. McDonald, Sergeant Troop, four Christian Gendarmes and one telegraph operator were killed. All precautions were taken at Suwara Camp, so that they could not be surprised. When this news reached Mosul, Colonel Leachman, Chief of the Political, set out for Suwara right away, his intention being to then proceed to Amadia with a good escort and see what the feeling was and also to fix up things generally. While he was travelling orders came through as to what was wanted for his escort to Amadia and they were immediately got ready. The escort consisted of one Company of Garhwali infantry (they are the best of the Indians), a mountain gun with crew, a couple of machine guns, Lewis guns and one wireless station. We were ready to move off as soon as Colonel Leachman. He got into the Camp at 3 a.m. the following morning but we did not leave until 1.30 p.m. on the 16th. We marched until dark and then camped to leave early again in the morning. We had to put the station up and get a few messages away. After this was done we had some rice and a cup of tea and retired. Major Henstock in charge of the Column woke us up at 2.30 a.m. the next morning and told us to get ready to move as soon as possible so after giving the closing down signal we dismantled the station and were going to get something to eat but they wanted us to move on at once and have our breakfast later. I managed to get a sip of tea just as we moved off and I am glad now I did. We marched for an hour-and-a-half and then a halt was called and order given to take the packs off as we would be waiting here for a while. The idea was that two planes were to come over and have a look around and then drop a message and say how things appeared ahead. Well, we just got the packs off and were looking for a decent place to sit down when things happened. I think a copy of Major Henstock's report can explain things best, it read as follows:

" I arrived at a position half way between Aerodrome and Bebaide zusho track at 0500 hours and was about to move forward with object of registering on



Setting up Portable Radio Transmitter.



Some Locals with Members of Troop.

Amadia Western gate when quite heavy fire was opened on us from crests of two lower hills, NE and NW of Bebad. My replying to the fire made little difference and as Amadia was said to be held I decided I might become involved by advancing on Amadia. On my retiring they worried my left flank and rear but never came within 1000 yards. They were exceedingly quick in occupying positions evacuated by me. They continued to harass me from distance of about five miles from Bebad eventually coming in as close as 400 yards, whilst I was passing along a deep nullah. In latter stages of retirement enemy I do not think numbered more than 50. They were exceedingly hard to see and seldom offered target especially for guns from above mentioned deep nullah to Sawara we were not fired on."

I don't know exactly what our casualties were but they were few. None of the Wireless were hit except an Indian driver loading one of our mules. We had many close shaves bullets singing past us at a distance of a few feet. My nearest shave was when fixing the harness on one of the horses. I had my back against a little mound when a bullet buried itself into it. It must have missed me by inches. I forgot to mention that before we started to retire we erected our station in a little dip and informed Mosul of the reception, then dismantled immediately and got moving. We then kept going for nearly seven hours as fast as we could travel through the rocky and dangerous country. How it was done I don't know for we had nothing in our stomachs and at 1.30 p.m. we found ourselves just staggering along and every few yards coming to some poor fellow stretched out exhausted not able to go any further. Then a halt of 20 minutes was called but we could not eat. I had a drink and lay on my back with my feet up in a tree.

We started off again and after a few hours trudging along arrived at Suwara in a straggling trail everyone more or less done, I was helpless. One chap who dropped out along the track came to his senses and found it was dark and wandered into the camp the following day in a rather bad way. The following day the last line connecting Suwara and Mosul was cut and we had to do all traffic. A party was sent out to repair it which they did but not without being fired on. When a Political Officer travelling from Dohuk to Suwara had his mule shot, one of his escort killed and two wounded and lost all his kit and belongings. The following day the line was again interrupted but they did not bother sending out again the Wireless did instead and the Column which was coming through the next day was to do the job.

This Column was in charge of General Nightingale and consisted of one Battalion of Infantry, mountain guns, machine guns, etc. Also No. 14 Wireless Station from Mosul.



Amadia—Barracks on Right of Monument.



Unloading Pack Transport.

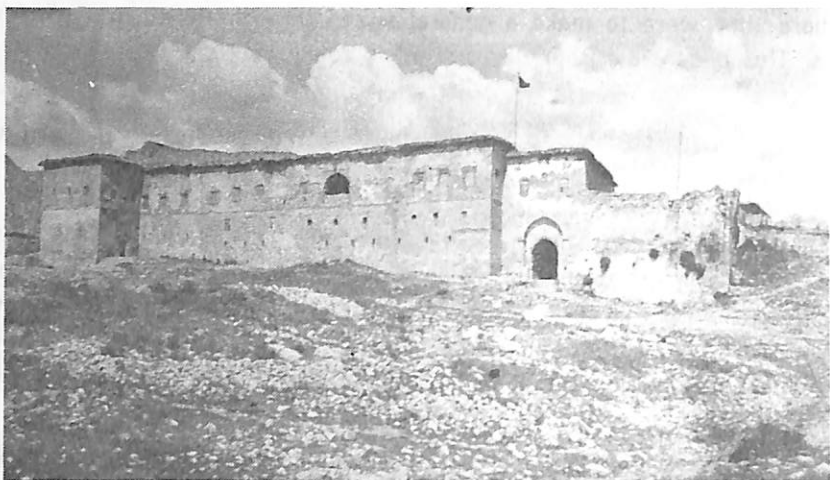
They eventually arrived at Suwara and camped there waiting for more men to be sent along where they were to make a general sweep through the country where all the trouble is. This began last Thursday and all is going well, so far.

The day after the march back to Suwara the following manifesto was sent around to each unit:

“ Officer Commanding Suwara wishes all ranks to know that he is very much pleased with the excellent work done by everyone during yesterday's operations. Though the fighting was not heavy great powers of endurance and determination were called for and no one was found wanting. Doubtless the time is not far off when these will again be called for but in the advance and not withdrawal and it is certain that everyone will do the same good work.

.R. P. HENSTOCK, Major Commanding Suwara.”

As I said earlier in this letter Skenett arrived the same morning that we moved out but Sergeant Rodd wanted me to go as I knew where everything was and it was only fair that I should, in fact I wanted to go, so did Skenett, so we both went. When we got over the trip I officially handed over to Skenett and was free. No. 14 Station arrived then and camped with us. Mr. Goodman accompanied them and he told me I would be going to Baghdad as I/C Motor Cycles and Fordham was to be Mr. Sanders driver. So last Wednesday I left Suwara with a convoy for Dohuk, arriving Dohuk next day where Dick Smith met me with car. We left for Mosul after having a bathe in the river and arrived there about 3 p.m. I stayed there for a few days and left with car at 3.30 a.m. on Sunday morning for Baiji. We arrived there at 2.30 p.m. The train left at about 7 p.m. so at that time we drove over from the rest camp and I got aboard and arrived Baghdad next day, early. I have never seen such a change as there is round Mosul since we left in April when there was beautiful green grass everywhere but now nothing but a barren sun-baked waste over which the dust blows in clouds daily. One thing I forgot to mention and that was that the General on arriving at Suwara called at our camp and asked to have a few words with the men who were on No. 24 Station. He congratulated us on the work we did in erecting the station and sending the message in record time under such awkward conditions and said they were all very pleased and ended up by saying we are all much obliged to you. This little parade was very funny. Not one of us was dressed alike when he landed in our camp some in pyjamas. others no socks, no hats, etc., but he did not mind that.



Typical Barracks in Kurdistan.



On Way Home.

I have got some photos to send you of the station working under fire, also a few views of Suwara Camp taken before all the troops arrived. There is a good deal of writing in this so I think I had better finish off now as I have given you a general idea of the start. Keep this letter for me please, I might want it later on when I get back.

News I got before leaving Suwara was how the victims were killed. This I will not tell you, it makes me shudder to think of it. Two of the telegraph operators escaped but not before one of them got an awful wound over the eye. The other one was killed. I can thank myself, I have got a sound skin not punctured by knife or bullet. The station which is out on the stand at present should be alright for there is not likely to be any fast moving or danger for this is a properly organised affair and is being carried out properly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Appreciation is extended to Spr. E. C. Gallard and Spr. H. B. Murdoch, who provided the photographs for this article.



THE "DIGGER" HAT, THE BADGE AND THE EMU PLUME

(A talk by Mr. R. K. Peacock, Librarian of the Department of Defence,
over Station 3U.Z. on Wednesday, January 4th, 1939)

THIS series of broadcasts is to my mind doing a considerable amount of good in that, dealing with the sidelights of the Services, it is presenting the military organization of the Commonwealth as a lively entity; a corporate body, working, playing, growing and developing. It is with this belief that I am attempting tonight to outline some of the personal details associated with the genesis of the "Digger" hat, the regimental badge and the picturesque emu plume--all distinctive features giving individuality to Australian troops in any part of the world.

An interesting new angle has recently been given to the discussions on the popular plain felt hat worn by our soldiers, the purport of the evidence being to indicate that the origin of this piece of "military millinery" is due to no other personage than Colonel "Tom" Price of the old Victorian Forces, better known as the father of the Victorian Mounted Rifles, a volunteer corps formed by him in 1885. The hat was first adopted as the head-dress for that well-known organization.

We learn only recently from Brig. F. Rose Price, CMG, DSO, a son of this genial officer, that his father was responsible for the fashioning of the hat. It is likely therefore it will go down in the annals of the forces, as does the military belt go to Colonel "Sam" Browne.

Major-General Sir Julius Bruche, a former Chief of the General Staff, and an officer who had long association with the Victorian Military Forces, was adjutant to Colonel Tom Price in the South African War, and had many chats about the old felt hat. He says that when a discussion arose as to whether the hat should be turned up on the left side "Tom" Price made some "peppery" remarks on the subject and explained that when introducing the hat, he decided to have it turned up on the right hand side, his reason being, that when the troops were "marching past" on a ceremonial parade they could, as the drill book said "look the inspecting officer in the eye." The drill of the time was another factor for the hat being turned up on the right. "Shoulder arms" was done from the "order" and such an exercise was liable to push the hat off during the movement.

Romance is now attached to this old felt hat for one finds in December 1890, as an outcome of a suggestion at a meeting of military commandants held in Melbourne, an agreement was reached " that the whole of the Australian forces should wear a looped-up felt hat, and that the pattern should be made universal."

Most of the Colonial Contingents (that is State Contingents) proceeding on active service to South Africa to take part in the Boer War 1899-1902 kept their own mode of wearing the hat, but when the Commonwealth troops began to be despatched the hat became to be generally looped-up on the left side. The puggarees worn on the hat were mostly of the flat folded type, but the Victorians and Tasmanians had the three pleated plait.

After various changes over the intervening years Australia during the Great War gave the A.I.F. the felt hat with the plain khaki cloth band around the crown and the flap of the hat held in position by what was known as the Commonwealth badge. After the war the same hat was used by the Militia forces until the suspension of universal military training, after which, in 1930 new puggarees and distinctive regimental badges were sanctioned.

Coming to the subject of the regimental badges which adorn the head-dress of the Australian Military Forces one finds that the designs have quite a zoological character. To run through the list of animals, birds, etc. represented in the designs we find the elephant, lion, tiger, bull, horse, kangaroo and the koala bear. Of the feathered tribe we have the emu, eagle, black swan, piping shrike and of course the kookaburra. Such emblems as appeal to all Australians, the wattle, waratah, gum, bay, laurel, oak, and the grass tree are also represented, and also is the constellation of the Southern Cross.

Many interesting discussions have taken place in regard to the emblems which are carried on the old felt hat, these refer particularly to the Commonwealth badge, more popularly referred to as the "Rising Sun" and the Emu plume, jocularly known as the "Kangaroo feathers" so much sought after by the ladies in England during coronation time.

The Commonwealth badge is familiar to all of you from the fact that our soldiers fought under it in the Great War, the design is also included on so many headstones on the graves of our fallen heroes of the A.I.F. at home, and on foreign battlefields and memorials scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country. The badge is now symbolical of the undaunted courage of Australian soldiers and carries a sentiment which should make every young Australian proud to wear it.

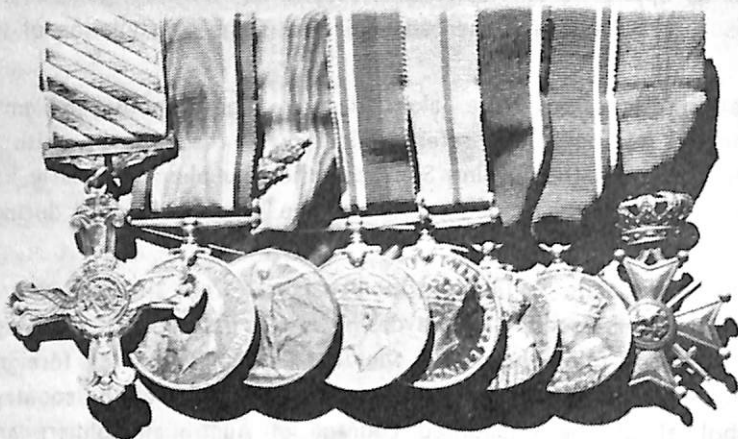
assembled a conference of brigadiers. This conference could not come to an agreement and Sir William referred the matter to the Minister for Defence (Sir George Pearce) who ruled that the whole of the Australian Light Horse might wear the plume, and it has been worn by them, and attached units, except artillery, ever since.

Australian soldiers have reason to be proud of the old felt hat for it has suffered the pathos of two wars, stood steadfast in all our peace time training, and has the proud distinction of doing duty on His Majesty's Guard at Buckingham Palace.

We hope shortly to see its familiar shape getting much wider publicity by being on the heads of 70,000 militiamen.

And so ends my talk on this well-known piece of "military millinery"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The Society is indebted to Colonel Rex Hall for this article.



THE TASMANIAN CORPS TORPEDO BOAT

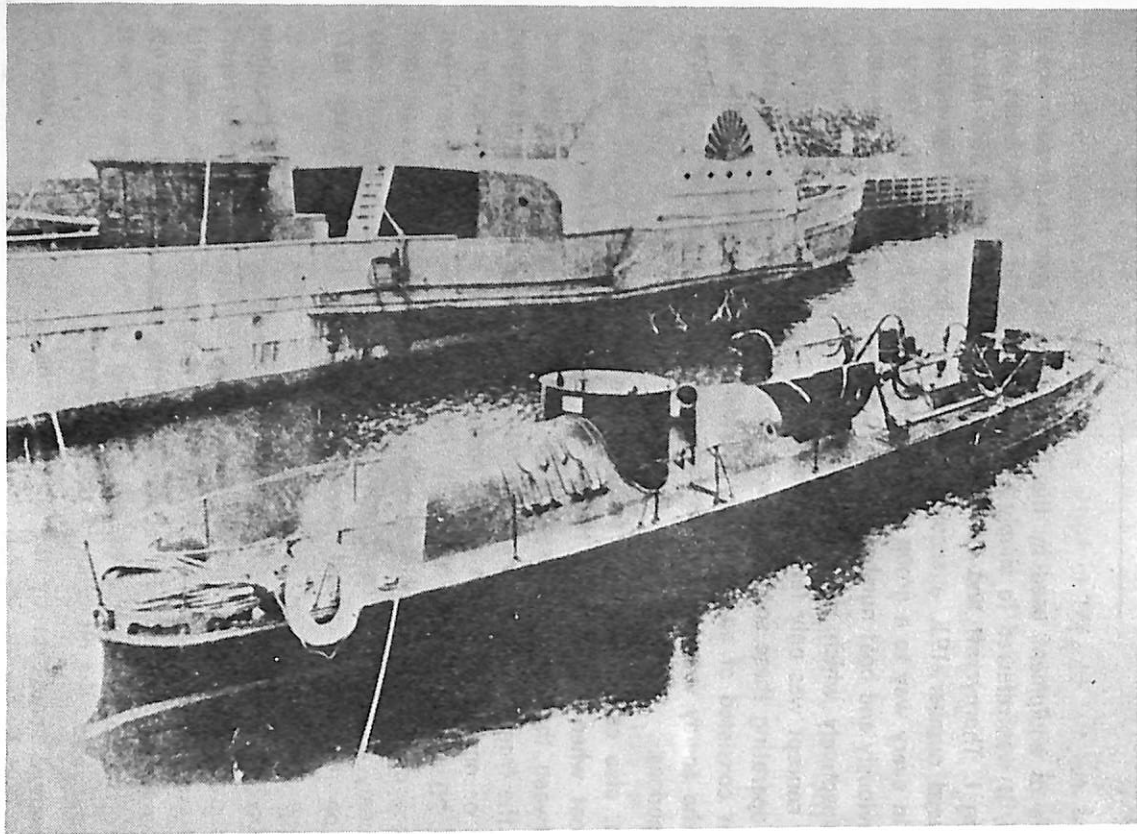
By R. L. White

THE major piece of equipment used by the Torpedo Corps was the torpedo boat. Never named, it was referred to simply as Torpedo Boat No. 1. The vessel was ordered from John I. Thornycroft and Co., London, in a contract dated 30th March 1883. She was yard number 191, a second class torpedo boat built of galvanised steel and similar in every way to a group of four torpedo boats built for New Zealand a few months previously and boat numbers 189, 190 and 193, named Nepean, Lonsdale and Mosquito respectively which were built for New South Wales and Queensland. The torpedo boat concept was only ten years old when Tasmania's boat was built and the technique of operating these small craft was hazardous in the extreme. An attack by a torpedo boat consisted of an apparently suicidal attempt to come in under the intensive fire of the enemy vessel and either ram with a spar torpedo or fire tubular self-propelled torpedoes.

The spar torpedo, also called a McEvoy torpedo, was the main armament fitted to the Tasmanian boat when it arrived in Hobart. The spar was a 40-foot pole which was mounted between the twin funnels with its forward end projecting a few feet over the bow. At the front of the pole was a can of explosive which could be detonated either electrically or on impact. In the attack position the pole was pushed out until it projected some 20 feet in front of the boat with its explosive charge several feet beneath the surface of the water. All that remained was for the crew to steel itself and charge the enemy. In a test by the French Admiralty, one of the Thornycroft boats made an attack on the obsolete vessel 'Bayonnaise' and the 'Times' of March 1877 related that :

"The Thornycroft put on a last spurt and struck the Bayonnaise with its whole force on the starboard bow. The sea was terribly agitated, a deafening report was heard and the Bayonnaise, with a rent as big as a house, sank with wonderful rapidity. As for the Thornycroft, rebounding by the shock about 15 metres off, even before the explosion occurred, it went round and round for a few moments and quietly resumed the direction of the squadron."

The effect was marred somewhat by the silence of the target's guns, but those on shore were well satisfied with the display.



TASMANIAN TORPEDO BOAT No. 1 AT REST ON THE DERWENT. (Paddle wheeler at rear is the Monarch.) The Tasmanian Torpedo Corps operated this vessel for 16 years from a slip on the Hobart Domain. Note that the funnel is at the bow, the stern is nearest the camera. The tongs, or dropping gear, for the torpedoes are just aft of the funnel and she was steered from the open cylinder conning tower midships.

—Picture by courtesy of the Maritime Museum, Battery Point, Hobart.

Despite this proven success of the spar torpedo, the Tasmanian Torpedo Corps opted for a later invention—a pair of Robert Whitehead's torpedoes. Whitehead was an inventor engineer headquartered at Fiume, a city in Croatia later to become part of Yugoslavia. He had invented the self-propelled torpedo in 1866 and his factory made them for many of the torpedo boat manufacturers although the British Government had purchased the patent rights (for £15,000) as early as 1871. The Tasmanian torpedoes were actually made at Fiume, however, and they were mated to two sets of dropping gear ordered from Thornycrofts in May 1885, the latter at a cost of £420. The gear was little more than a pair of complicated tongs which had all the appearance of life boat davits. They were mounted just aft of the funnel, and enabled the torpedoes to be started out of the water ready for the run into the target where they were dropped into the water as the helmsman aimed the boat.

Modern torpedoes are cylindrical with a spherical nose. The Whitehead was more interesting but much less accurate. It was 14 inches in diameter and almost 12 feet long with sharp pointed ends and vertical stabilisers for most of its length. A compressed air motor driving a single screw provided propulsion for the torpedo and its depth was controlled by a hydrostatic valve which operated a horizontal rudder to prevent porpoising. The long fins no doubt aided directional stability as the torpedo slid towards its target at about six knots. With a range of between 200 and 700 yards depending on wave conditions and the state of air pressure in the motor, the torpedoes had to be launched under hazardous conditions. Despite their shortcomings, Whitehead's torpedoes were a vast improvement on the earlier steam discharged or 'impulse' torpedoes, which had to be fired at virtual collision distance to be effective.

The Tasmanian boat was shipped out from England as deck cargo on board the S.S. Abington, arriving on 1st May 1884. The crowd which gathered to see the unusual arrival saw it lifted onto the water and towed to the Battery Point shipyard of John Lucas, where it was moored awaiting placement of its machinery and propeller. It was a well proportioned vessel which looked longer than its 63ft. length. Although there are no photographs of the Tasmanian boat with men aboard, pictures of Queensland's 'Mosquito' show the heads of the crew somewhat startlingly level with the top of the funnel. The draught was only 13 inches under the bow and 3ft. 2in. under the stern with only 1/16th inch plating under the whole vessel. With an all-up weight of 12 tons and a top speed measured in England by Admiralty surveyors at 17.221 knots, the boat represented an investment of £3,300.

Minor problems began almost immediately. Firstly, the boat leaked. It was found that the concussive effect of the engine was springing rivets. W. Pitfield the engineer on board for the early runs, replaced rivets and reinforced the plating under the engine but as the boat was used infrequently it was obvious that it could not simply be moored offshore when not in use. A boatshed and 160ft. long slipway was subsequently built on a site on the Hobart Domain foreshore roughly where the present Naval headquarters is situated. The timber and corrugated iron structure cost almost £500 but each time the boat was slipped, more damage was done to the hull.

Following her first trial on 10th October 1884 in the hands of two engineer officers from HMS Nelson in Sydney, the boat was run five times by Colonel Legge in December. His enthusiasm, combined with some experience on this class of boat at Portsmouth provided a valuable store of knowledge for the crew. However, the boat was slipped and not used again until the following 15th May when Legge took her to Ralphs Bay for survey work. During this time Pitfield had been busy plugging leaks and the boat had been painted a steel grey. The major problem was the time it took to get the boat moving. To fill the boiler with water, get up steam and lower the boat down the slip, load equipment and generally make ready for action took the best part of half a day. No doubt the time could be cut somewhat in time of dire emergency but obviously ample warning would be required for the boat to be in a useful state of readiness.

The latter half of 1885 saw Torpedo Boat No. 1 receive her Whitehead torpedoes. To accommodate them the deck had been specially strengthened in England during the boat's construction, under Legge's authorisation. The twin funnels with which she had been supplied were removed and a single funnel was positioned further forward and trunked into the twin exhausts on the boiler below deck. In addition, a twin barrelled Nordenfelt 1in. machine gun was mounted near the conning tower beside the helmsman, who was becoming too crowded for efficiency. The Nordenfelt required a two-man crew and the conning tower afforded only some nine square feet of deck space. In his original suggestions regarding the formation of the Torpedo Corps, Captain Boddam had specified a crew of five for the torpedo boat. There was to be an engineer, a coxswain, a forehand boatman, a stocker and an electrician. To those would have to be added torpedo artificers and gunners, which meant that the little vessel would probably have had a crew ranging from six to ten.

The torpedo boat was obviously regarded as good insurance. Colonel Legge put the case for a second boat in several reports and memos, and his suggestions were supported by eminent inspecting officers from the mainland and overseas. The second boat was

never ordered which was probably a good thing; the boat they had caused enough problems without compounding them. The major problem was obtaining a crew. Pitfield acted as engineer for two years to be replaced by a Mr. Murrell in 1887, but a trained crew was hard to find. A suggestion was put to the Hobart Marine Board for seamen to operate the boat two or three times a year, but the men asked for so much money that Legge dropped the idea.

As the years rolled on the boat was used less and less until in 1894 it was actually laid up through lack of finance. In 1895 it was exercised again until the partial collapse of the slipway, when repairs had to be effected. Throughout this period the boat was kept in excellent condition and should the occasion have demanded, she could have fulfilled her function. In 1900 a decision was made to dispose of the boat and the Engineers agitated for an actual torpedo-firing, something which had never been done before on the grounds of expense. Now with the boat leaving the State, the torpedomen wanted to have one last fling and permission was grudgingly given to fire one of the torpedoes. The little craft steamed proudly away from the slip and the men on shore ran around the hump of the Domain to see her head down river. Shortly the davits swung outboard and a torpedo was made ready. The compressed air cylinder had been filled from the compressor in the boatshed and with the screw screaming the 'fish' was dropped. With somehow poetic anticlimax it was never seen again. Within months Torpedo Boat No. 1 had been sent to South Australia where it eventually became a unit of the Australian Naval Forces. The transfer took place when the old steel cruiser 'Protector' called at Hobart en route from Sydney. She took aboard all the equipment from the Domain shed and with the torpedo boat in tow got her safely to Adelaide after an uneventful voyage.

NOTES—Lieut.-Colonel William Vincent Legge, Commandant and Inspecting Field Officer, Tasmanian Local Forces. Late Major Roy. Arty. His appointment dates from 6th Dec. 1883. Captain Edmond Meyer Tudor Boddam, Staff Officer of the Local Forces, late R.A. Appointment dates from 18th Feb. 1878.

ACKNOWLEDEMENTS: D. J. Lyon, Research Assistant, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Lt.-Col. C. T. P. Holland, Curator Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham.

Maritime Museum, Battery Point, Hobart.

Tasmanian Archives, Australian Archives.

RUSSIANS IN THE DERWENT

By R. L. White

DESPITE all of the preparations for defence, and particularly defence against the Russians, a warship of the Russian fleet sailed up the Derwent and anchored in the harbour on Sunday, 25th May 1870. Its purpose was perfectly peaceful and the captain and crew were met with overwhelming hospitality. The vessel was the 'Boyarin' of 903 tons, mounting seven rifled breech loading cast steel 100 prs and four small 12 prs. She was commanded by Captain Serkoff. On her arrival, the corvette was re-ic-tualled and the crew began periods of shore leave, visiting beauty spots and sampling other entertainments as the invitations began to flow in. On one occasion the Volunteer Band played while the captain and officers visited Dr. Coverdale's Asylum for Orphans at the Cascades and on another, they played at the funeral of one of the crew. Almost as soon as the ship berthed, permission had been sought to remove one of the men to the Hobart Hospital. He was Gregor Belawine, the assistant paymaster, who was in the terminal stages of tuberculosis. He died on 6th June and was buried at St. David's Cemetery with full military honours.

If Captain Serkoff had come to Hobart with anything else in mind but peaceful co-existence, he must have gone away chortling at the presents given to him in Hobart. James Wilson of the Colonial Secretary's Office began by presenting a packet of seeds of indigenous trees and plants for transfer to the Imperial Botanical Gardens. Shortly afterwards, Serkoff received 46 photos of scenes of the public buildings of Hobart, to be followed by copies of all the transactions of the Royal Society from 1864-9 to be given to the appropriate authority in St. Petersburg. Finally, he was handed the meteorological abstracts for the previous 25 years and a case of charts and maps of Tasmania. Mata Hari never had it so good.

British South



Africa Police



OFFICER OF RANK



SERGEANT



SERGEANT



SERGEANT



SERGEANT



SERGEANT



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MEDALMAN

The Most Highly Decorated Member of the AANS: In answer to a reader's query as to our most highly decorated member of the AANS, I would think that Sister Alicia Mary Kelly (1886-1942) must rate a mention as a Nursing Journal at the time of her death listed her decorations as Associate Royal Red Cross, Military Medal, Croix de Guerre and was also Mentioned in Despatches. Can any reader suggest any other contenders?

Multiple Gallantry Awards: A number of readers have expressed agreement that groups of medals with multiple awards for gallantry are much more desirable than ones with a single award although it may be a higher individual award. As stated previously, Medalman considers that multiple gallantry award groups are at present grossly under-rated by collectors. A reader has asked that Medalman publish a list of those Australians awarded three or more gallantry awards. A list will be prepared, but it will take some time to do so don't get anxious. The question of which of the following groups is the most desirable will be left to readers to determine: Military Medal with 3 Bars or DCM with Bar and MM with 2 Bars???

Armoury Sale by Tender of Medals: The first section (Medals and groups to Australians) is now completed and British Groups which contain many outstanding lots will be sold by the end of the year and then the last section, British single medals will take place early in 1977. The Australian section contained some bargains. However, those collectors who have specialised in awards to Australians can be assured they have invested most wisely. Medalman will publish a report when the sales have been completed.

Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal: It has been announced that the Queen is to award a Jubilee Medal, no doubt on a basis similar to the previous Jubilee Medal of George V. Under the conditions of the award the medals are a complete nonsense as they no doubt will be awarded on the basis of the rank of the recipient. Within the uniformed services such medals should be granted to all serving on the date of the Jubilee or not at all. If there is a financial restriction on the number to be awarded then as with most European awards have the recipient pay the cost involved. No matter how a limited list of recipients is prepared it will cause resentment and claims of favouritism. However, a list based on dedicated or community service would help. Another method

if the medals are to be rationed would be to ballot for recipients as all would have equal opportunity to receive a medal which in reality is only a gift.

AWARDS TO AUSTRALIANS FOR SERVICE IN NORTH RUSSIA 1919

Awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal

In furtherance to the excellent article in Sabretache Volume 22 Number 4 of August 1976 by P. J. Burness the following are the only awards that Medalman has a record of for North Russia. The following immediate awards for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty were confirmed by Major-General W. E. Ironside, KCB, CMG, DSO.

Archangel Command

BROOKE, No. 133029 Private N. M., 45th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (late 2nd Medium Trench Mortar Battery Australian Imperial Force). During the attack on Kochamika and Sludka, 10 August 1919, he showed great gallantry and skill in ascertaining the enemy's positions, and, under heavy fire, came back with reliable information, enabling his platoon to advance without casualties. He materially contributed to the success of a difficult operation.

GASCOIGNE-ROY, No. 130525 Sergeant H. F., 46th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (North Sydney, Australia). During the attack on Gorodok, on the 10 August 1919, he displayed great gallantry and able leadership under very heavy fire. He captured, with the aid of one section, 85 of the enemy. During the whole attack he did splendid work.

LUTHERBORROW, No. 133005 Lance-Corporal A., 45th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (late 7th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force). For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the operations of 24-25 July. He was seriously wounded in the head and both thighs during the operation, and suffered great pain; notwithstanding that, he remained at his gun, and directed his fire at the enemy until he became exhausted. The courage and determination of this NCO, without a doubt, greatly assisted the operation.

PURDUE, No. 133007, Private J., 45th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (late 7th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force). For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during operations, 7 to 11 August 1919. He carried a wounded officer for four hours through marsh and forest, and when the enemy attacked, he showed great coolness while helping to repel the attack.

QUARRELL, No. 133059 Private W. F., 45th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (late 5th Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Imperial Force). For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the attack on two Bolo armoured trains. In the face of very heavy fire, he rushed one of the armoured trains, and threw two bombs into the truck which contained the naval gun and gunners, and killed the whole team, thereby placing the gun out of action. Throughout he did excellent work.

Awarded the Military Medal

HODSON, No. 133024 Private W., 45th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (late 4th Machine Gun Battalion, Australian Imperial Force).

SUTTON, No. 133032 Private (Lance-Corporal) J. N., 45th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (late 18th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force).

Mentioned in Despatches

BROWN, Captain A., Australian General List.

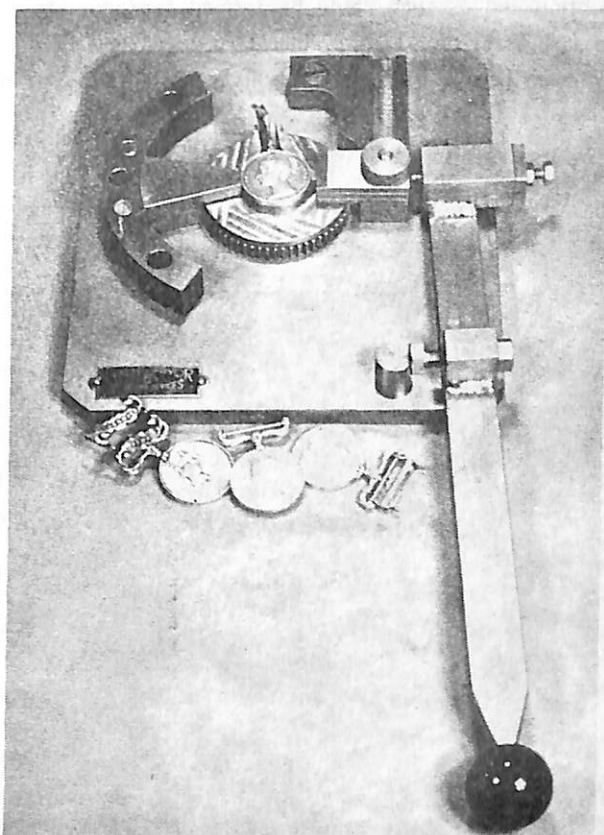
The above list does not include the two Australian VC winners who have been well written up in other publications.

New Australian Awards: There has been comment in previous editions of Sabretache on the standard and design of the Australian awards. Medalman having seen the National Medal would like to support the adverse criticism as this medal can only be described as hideous, being both poorly designed and manufactured out of material similar to the one and two cent pieces. What an insult to recipients to be given such an award for 15 years service. Surely those in power should have commented on these medals. There seems little doubt that the National Medal, although packaged in a nice box complete with miniature, will be refused by self respecting servicemen. Surely 15 years of dedicated service is worthy of a silver medal. It is estimated that the National Medal would cost about 10 cents to manufacture. Compared with existing long service awards the National Medal is a disaster and I am told the bravery and gallantry awards are of a similar standard.

The Importance of Having Medals Verified: It was recently reported from Queensland that a collector wrote to the Society to have a group of medals containing an MC verified. The verification showed that the initial and name on the medals were that of an MC winner, however the service number identified the recipient as an acting corporal. Since medal collecting began many years ago the unscrupulous have taken advantage of the unwary, so the 'dud' MCs in Victoria (mentioned in last magazine) and the group mentioned is a clear indication of the importance of having medals verified.

An investment of \$2 could save you over \$200, so don't become the victim of the unscrupulous and at the same time help fellow collectors. Purchases of medals should not be made unless they are accompanied by a certificate of verification from the Society.

Warning to Collectors: Collectors of British awards are again warned to be careful when purchasing British medals as the most recent machine (pictured) can name medals in ANY STYLE. As a number of the early British campaign medals were issued unnamed be wary of freshly named medals. It has been common practice with antique dealers to dump the duds on the dumb Colonials or on the Americans, so one could expect we would be or have been the target of 'dud' medals. Who knows how long this naming machine has been in use producing 'rarities' for unsuspecting collectors. Of course, these machines could also be used to name awards to Australians. However, with the verification service available from the Society your investment in awards to Australians will be safe provided you have your awards verified.



'Ponsomby, knock up another Light Brigade medal for a Colonial customer.'

BADGEMAN

First Pattern Rising Sun Badges: In the last edition of Sabretache mention was made of the Society obtaining some first pattern Rising Sun badges—some badges: at this date one oxidised and one gilt. However, it is hoped others will turn up as the Secretary has been swamped with requests for the badges. Badgeman has examined the badges and considers them excellent items made from the original dies and as such worthy of a place in any collection. It is thought the badges were made at a time later than the original production and as such could be termed reproductions.

Pre-Federation Horse Brasses: The Federal Secretary now has a number of these badges which include Victorian Local Forces, NSW Local Forces, Australian Horse and General Service Q.Vic.

3 Cavalry Regiment Badges: Badges for this unit have not yet been manufactured and it will probably be March 1977 before they become available as priority has been given to the production of other items of insignia.





QUEENSLAND DEFENCE BADGES IN BOB GRAY COLLECTION.

BOOK REVIEWS

" SAVING THE CHANNEL PORTS 1918 " (W. D. Joynt, VC). The author, one of Australia's Victoria Cross heroes, passionately believes that the Australian divisions fighting in France and Flanders were never given full praise for their part in stemming the German breakthroughs on the Somme and Lys. Contending that there was a " conspiracy of silence " to prevent the Australians' " saviour role " becoming widely known, he hopes this book will bring them honour, although 58 years after the event.

He has devastating things to say about British morale which, in his opinion, was low, with officers lacking drive and the structure and training entirely wrong. Yet when the British Fifth Army's 18 infantry and two cavalry divisions gave way on the Somme they did so only under the enormous weight of 44 German divisions with another 40 following in reserve.

The Australian 3rd, 4th and 5th divisions were brought in to stop the gap and did so splendidly. Had this new German thrust been successful it could have pushed on to take the Channel ports.

The author's diary and the excellent photographs show that the Australian troops when in defence were superb at harassing the Germans and in attack displayed great initiative and audacity. Their fieldcraft was excellent. This book makes fascinating reading. (Soldier.) Wren Publishing Pty. Ltd., 2 Palmer Street, South Melbourne, Australia.

" WAR, ECONOMY AND THE MILITARY MIND." By Geoffrey Best and Andrew Wheatcroft. This book explores the relationship between European society and the military institutions it fostered from 1815-1918.

In the period from the fall of Napoleonic imperialism to the outbreak of the First World War armies and navies grew in complexity, cost and size. The first half of this book investigates these institutions from within, and looks at some of the factors which held them together in an increasingly difficult and hostile world, at their self-image, and at the pressures upon them from society at large.

As the role of military institutions within society increased in importance, analysts began to look for the effects which this interpenetration had on society. Part 2 is concerned with the effects of this growing dominance of society by its defenders. By the end of period covered by this book, the age of total mobilisation for the war effort was upon us. In a sense this second part of the book reinforces the conclusions of the first, that military institutions are separate from the societies which surround them, and between the two a growing gap of misunderstanding and incomprehension yawned.

Published by Groom Helm Ltd., 2-10 St. John's Road, London, S.W.11. Price: £5.95

" STRATEGY WITHOUT SLIDE RULE." By Barry D. Powers. The early history of British aerial defence development is one of misdirection and delusion. The misdirection, judging by the criteria of successful aerial defence in World War II, was primarily in the downgrading of home defence measures including the fighter plane. The delusion, again judging by Britain's efforts in that second world war, was primarily in the assumption of the effects to be obtained by strategic bombing.

In both cases, the First World War was a major catalyst. Although events and writings before that war indicate the coming patterns, it was during that war that a great amount of the patterns are well established. This work explores these origins and stresses the interaction between various diverse segments of English society in the formation of the major patterns. The working out of these patterns in the first half of the interwar years is also analysed, again with respect to diverse groupings in Britain. Published by Groom Helm Ltd., 2-10 St. John's Road, London, S.W.11. Price: \$8.95.

THE SILENT DICTATORSHIP. By Martin Kitchen. The political influence of the army in Germany has long been of interest to historians. This book, based on extensive use of original archival material, provides a detailed account of the two years in which the army enjoyed unprecedented power and influence. The rise of Hindenburg and Ludendorff is seen against the background of the failure of the army to win decisive victory in the early stages of the war. Once in control of the impressive organisation of the High Command, Hindenburg and Ludendorff had a critical influence on domestic politics, on economic policy and on foreign affairs, as well as on the development of war aims. They were able to secure the dismissal of many key figures including the Chancellor, Bethmann Hollweg. Their excessive and intemperate demands were couched in terms of 'military necessity', and it was not until defeat at the front showed that these 'demi-gods' were all too mortal, that the civilians were able to reassert their authority. This study provides new insights into the dynamics of German militarism and imperialism, and is an important contribution to the discussion of the continuity of German history.

Published by Groom Helm Ltd., 2-10 St. John's Road, London, S.W.11. Price \$8.50.

BOOK REVIEW

By James W. Courtney

Collecting Military Antiques. By Frederick Wilkinson. 1976. Published by Ward Lock Limited, London. 208 pages.

It would be hard to find a more suitable author than Frederick Wilkinson to write what is perhaps the most authoritative, interesting and diverse book dealing with such a variety of subjects which appeal to the collector of militaria, be he a specialist in one field, or, as so many are, interested in more than one particular field of collecting.

Wilkinson is an acknowledged authority on militaria — a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and President of the Arms and Armour Society of Great Britain. He has written over twenty books on uniforms and weapons.

In this book he deals with not only subjects of usual interest such as medals, uniforms and badges, but helmets and head-dress, arms and armour, equipment, pay, military mail, model soldiers, police and naval collecting to name a few.

The book is well illustrated with both colour and black and white photographs. In addition, to each section is devoted advice on the care and display of the particular items. There is a select bibliography and reading list which will prove most useful to those interested in pursuing a particular line of interest, plus a handy list of important museums and collections in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A.

This work, by the variety of subjects covered, will be of great help to those with an interest in the collecting of militaria, memorabilia, and ephemera. Whilst it is not intended as a catalogue, nor does it delve into the monetary value of the above items, it is nevertheless a most useful and handy reference book which will no doubt grace many a collector's bookshelf at the most reasonable price of \$15.90 (Australian retail price).

SOLDIERS AS STATESMEN. Edited by Peter Dennis and Adman Preston. 'The Duke is a soldier—a bad education for a statesman in a free country'. Sir Walter Scott's fear of the political soldier has long been a part of Western political life. Yet although many countries would have preferred to keep the military out of politics few have been successful.

This book examines the careers of five distinguished twentieth century soldiers and assesses their contribution as statesmen. Hindenburg, Byng, Franco, Eisenhower and De Gaulle all came into political life in different circumstances but none did so in the name of the profession or to establish a praetorian state. Each was a professional soldier who found himself drawn into the political arena. Each of these essays illuminates one aspect of the range of political, sociological and historical issues which now surround the interrelationship of civil and military. At a time when the tensions of democracy, both internally and externally, impose increasing pressure on the role of the military in society it is important to study the history of soldiers-as-statesmen.

Published by Groom Helm Ltd., 2-10 St. John's Road, London, SW11. Price \$5.95.

FEDERAL SECRETARY'S NOTES

The response to our appeal for prompt payment of subscriptions was very good and as a result we were able to produce this issue of Sabretache rather more promptly than in the past. As mentioned in our appeal this issue will only be posted to financial members, so if any fellow member complains about non-receipt ask him to contact me and I will ensure the position is clarified.

On behalf of the President and Federal Council I would like to wish all members and Seasons Greetings and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

—KEN WHITE

CHRISTMAS CARDS

While it is too late for this year, I have had a number of inquiries for Society Christmas Cards and if sufficient response is received I will ensure a supply is available for future occasions.

The cards would feature the Society Badge on the front, a suitable greeting on the inside and if required a personal greeting plus address could be supplied.

Please let me know if you are interested, with possible requirements and I will check on costs and give further details in next issue. —FEDERAL SECRETARY

NOTICE OF EXHIBITION

The YMCA of Brisbane will be holding a major exhibition of militaria at YMCA Centre, 444 Ann Street, Brisbane, from 23rd to 25th April, 1977.

The display is open to all collectors of militaria and prizes will be awarded for best exhibits in various fields. Full details may be obtained from—

SPECIAL PROJECTS OFFICER
YMCA OF BRISBANE
444 ANN STREET
BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND 4000

NEW WAR MUSEUM

What will be the finest war museum outside of the Australian War Museum, and even superior to the AWM in some areas, is planned to be officially opened at Caloundra on 31st March 1977. The war museum is to be controlled by a trust.

An extensive display of vehicles ably supported by 'Australians in all Wars' relics will keep visitors well entertained. Each of the campaigns will be represented by weapons, medals, uniforms and associated relics. Some new style of entertainment/education is to be incorporated in the museum. When planning a trip to Queensland members and friends would be well advised to place a visit to the museum at the top of their list of things to do. —FEDERAL SECRETARY

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Dear Sir,

In reference to R. D. White's article "The Story Behind the Guns" in the August 1976 (p. 302) issue of "Sabretache", I have the following additions and amendments to make.

The 1867 (manufacture date) R.M.L. Armstrong 300-pounder guns at Fort Gellibrand and on the seashore at Williamstown are all one of a kind and bear the gun (barrel) numbers of 1669, 1675, 1679 and 1683. These numbers are hidden beneath the bronze trunnion bearings. These numbers should not be confused with the "B-pivot iron-dwarf carriage" numbers as are visible upon the rear top right hand face of the slides. In fact, these are 9in. 12-ton (nominal R.G.F. weight, but possibly 12½-ton (EOC)—also hidden beneath bronze bearings) guns by Sir W. G. Armstrong & Co., NOT 10in. as stated. The number of rifling grooves (six) is also a guide to their calibre.

Apart from my own detailed knowledge of heavy RML Ordnance (British), the above info was extracted from the Federal "1901 Report on Ordnance and Ammo" which lists these guns as being stored (not mounted) at the Williamstown Dockyard in 1901. This is the reason why racers have not remained at Fort Gellibrand where in fact B/L's had replaced them in the late 1880's.

It will do well for the Melbourne branch to reactivate this battery, removing the "rust-glued" 9in. cast iron common shell will have its problems.

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This book is available from Heinemann Educational Australia Pty. Ltd. Box 173, South Yarra, Victoria, 3141. The recommended price is \$29.75.

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Contact FEDERAL SECRETARY.

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—Contact FEDERAL SECRETARY.

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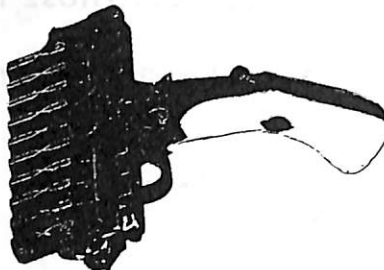
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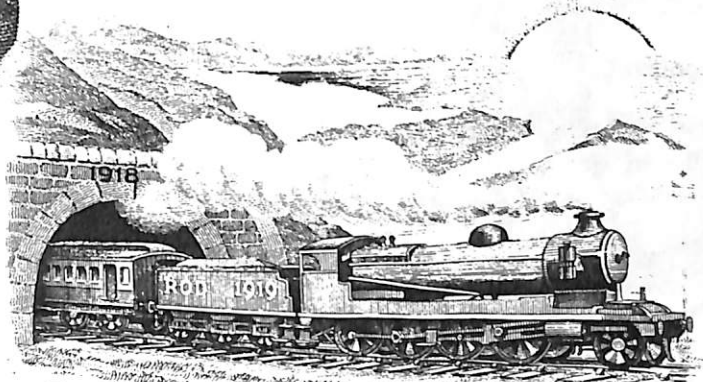


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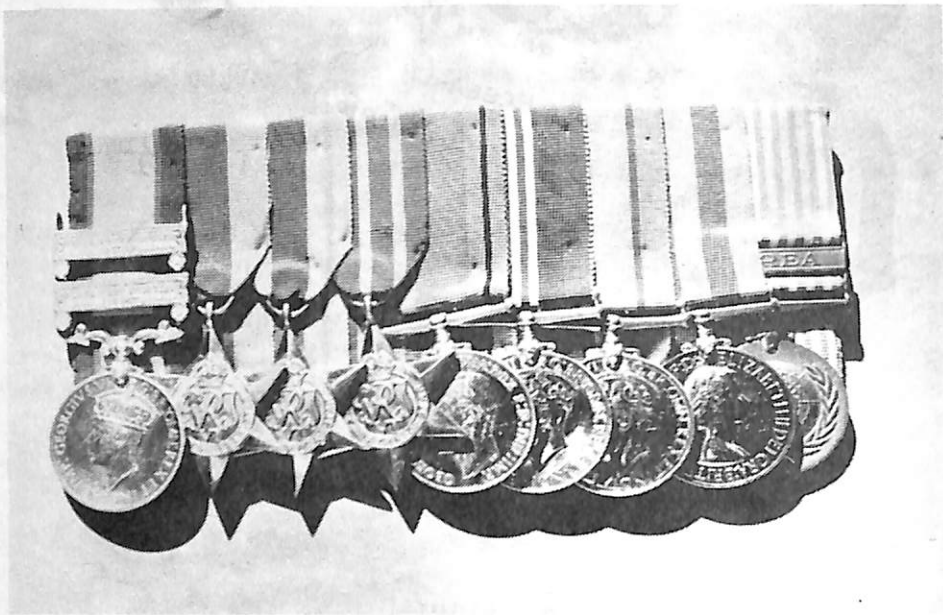
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