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Sabretache



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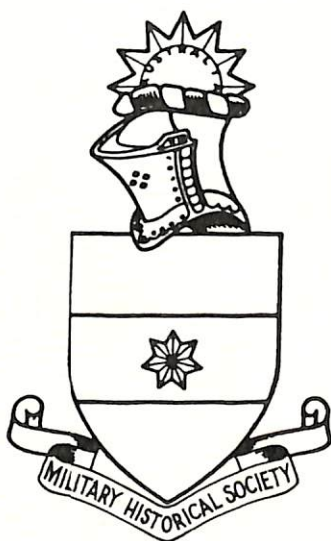
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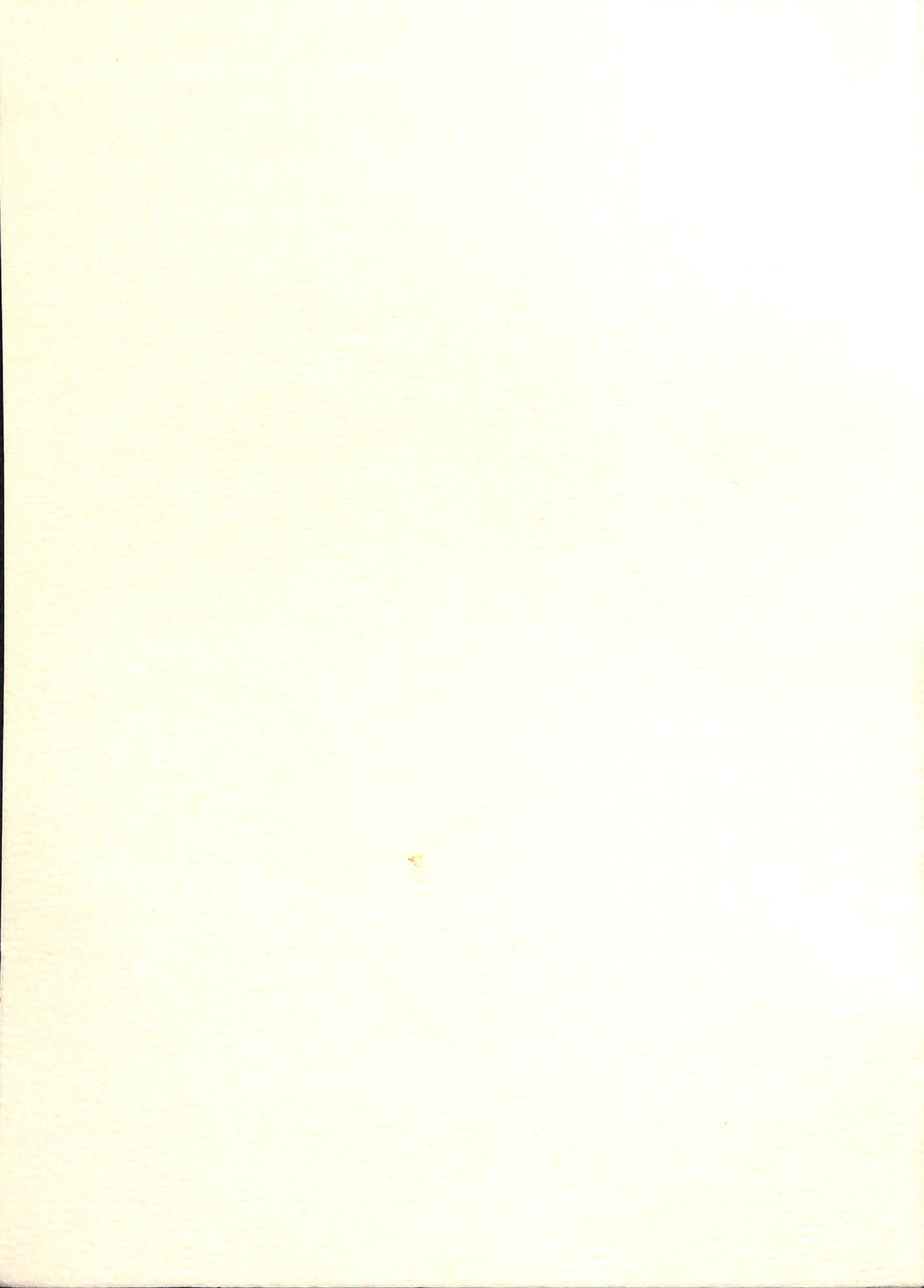


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Journal and Proceedings of the
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Vol XXIII

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Contributions, in the form of articles, book reviews, notes, queries or letters are always welcome. Authors of major articles should also submit a biography of about 50 words and a photograph for publication with their article.

It would considerably assist me if contributors to *Sabretache* could follow these few conventions in submitting work for publication:

- please try to have the item typed in double spacing if at all possible.
- do not type *anything* in capital letters except abbreviations and acronyms.
- names of ships, books and so on should only be typed in lower case and *underlined*.
- use footnotes, endnotes, references or at least bibliographies if at all possible.

EDITOR

From The President

It gives me great pleasure to be able to advise members that Major General R.N.L. Hopkins, CBE, has accepted the position of Vice Patron of our Society.

Major General Hopkins had distinguished service in the Australian Army. He entered Royal Military College, Duntroon in February 1915 and on graduation at the end of 1917 joined 6 LH as a lieutenant, returning to Australia in July 1919. Between WWI and WWII General Hopkins held various training and staff appointments, attended the Staff College, Quetta and underwent training in Britain. He was appointed to the command of 7 Australian Division Cavalry Regiment in April 1940 and later held a number of staff positions in Australia and New Guinea. In December 1943, the then Brigadier Hopkins was awarded the CBE for service in Papua and New Guinea.

In the late war and immediate post-war period, General Hopkins was Commandant of the Staff School and its successor the Australian Staff College, relinquishing this position in 1946 to take command of 34 Aust. Inf. Bde, the Australian component of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. This was followed in 1949-50 by the command of 4 Military District, Deputy Chief of the General Staff 1950-51 and Commandant, Royal Military College 1951-54.

To our members Major General Hopkins will be best known for his 'History of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps 1927-72' published in 1978 by the Australian War Memorial and which is the definitive history of the corps in this period. Major General Hopkins has maintained a deep interest in Australian military history for many years and we are fortunate that he has agreed to become one of the Vice Patrons of the Military Historical Society of Australia.



Hugh Gilchrist

THE AUSTRALIANS IN MACEDONIA

The allied campaign against German and Bulgarian forces in northern Greece between September 1915 and October 1918 never captured the interest of the British public, still less of the Australian. For much of its duration the warfare was static—so much so, that Clemenceau referred disparagingly to its Allied participants as “the Gardeners of Salonika”.

In the great battles around Lake Doiran on the Greco-Serbian-Bulgarian border and in other engagements in the Great War of 1914-1918, the Allied forces suffered severe casualties; and in the end it was Bulgaria which was the first of the Central Powers to capitulate, six weeks before the Armistice on the Western Front.

In this protracted campaign a number of Australians played a highly creditable part, little known to their own people at the time, and almost forgotten since. In addition to nearly 350 army nurses, about 37 soldiers and airmen have been identified, of whom a provisional list follows:



A former Australian Ambassador to Greece, Hugh Gilchrist has for some years been writing an account of Australia's contacts with Greece between 1829 and 1953. This article is a condensation of one of its draft chapters. He would welcome correspondence with anyone who has additional information (C/- Sabretache).

10th Division (The Irish Division)

29 Brigade:

Capt Seymour Bruce McMaster, MC, 3rd Bn, later 2nd Bn, Royal Irish Fusiliers; later 82 MG Co, 82 Bde, 27 Div.

30 Brigade:

Major Bernard Russell French, DSO, 6th Bn Royal Munster Fusiliers; later 5th Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers, 31 Bde. Capt J. Manning, 6th Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers.

Cavalry:

Sgt Douglas Wood Milne, The Yeomanry; later Brigade Scouts, the Cavalry Brigade.

Artillery:

Lieut William Bruce Ronald, 68 Bde RFA; later 57 Bde RFA, 28 Div.
Lieut Francis Keith Mackay, 54 Bde RFA; later 57 Bde RFA, 28 Div.

22nd Division

HQ Artillery:

Major John Dudley Lavarack, RFA; later SO RA, XVI Corps.
Major Edmund Francis Herring, DSO, MC, 99 Bde RFA.
2nd Lieut John Leonard Dunstan, 99 Bde RFA; later 101 Bde RFA; later attd to Royal Flying Corps.
Capt John Percival Barker, MBE, 101 Bde RFA Ammunition Column; later attd HQ 22 Div Artillery as ADC to CRA; later SC RA 27 Div.

Supply Corps:

Capt Edward Druce Yencken.

26th Division

77 Brigade:

Lieut Struan Wright-Smith, MC, 12th Bn Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders.
Lieut Brice Bunny Mackinnon, MC, 10th Bn Royal Highlanders (The Black Watch)

78 Brigade:

Major Frank Debenham (QC D Coy), Capt Harry Andre Henry (D Coy), and 2nd Lieut Alaric Pinder Boor (D Coy), all of 7th Bn Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

79 Brigade:

Capt. John Harrison Dashwood Goldie. The Wiltshire Regiment.

Artillery:

Major Hew O'Halloran Giles, Croix de Guerre, 114 Bde RFA; later 116 Bde RFA; later 57 Bde RFA.

Lieut Rupert Uriah Hoddinott, 117 Bde RFA Ammunition Column.

Lieut Alan Ross Wilkins, 117 Bde, later 114 Bde RFA.

Cyclist Corps:

Pte Clifford John Doolan.

Medical Corps:

Capt Edward Rogerson, MC, 2nd Fd Ambulance attd King's Royal Rifle Corps.

27th Division

80th Brigade HQ:

Brigade Major John Thomas McColl, OBE, MC; later GSO2 28th Div.

28th Division

83rd Brigade:

Lieut Benjamin Henry Marks, 10th Bn York & Lancaster Regiment.

Medical Corps: Capt John Morlet, 67 Fd Ambulance; later attd 2nd Bn Northumberland Fusiliers.

60th Division (The London Division)

179th Brigade:

Capt Kenneth Wills, MC, 15th Bn The London Regiment.

GHQ troops

GHQ staff:

Staff Capt Albert Lewin King, 3rd Bn Royal Sussex Regiment, seconded as Asst Military Landing Officer, Salonika.

Cavalry:

Capt Herbert Thomas Austin, 11th Bn Hussars; later 1st Bn Nottinghamshire yeomanry.

Sgt J.H. Lindsay, 1st Bn Lothian & Border Horse.

Artillery:

Lieut Ivo Harrington Whitton, 196 Heavy Bty, RGA

2nd Lieut Edward Clement Rennie,—Bty, RGA; later attd 17 Sqn, RFC.

Medical Corps:

Lieut-Col Charles Victor MacKay, CO of
80th British General Hospital, Salonika.
Major Cecil Gordon McAdam

Flying Corps:

Lieut Reginald Eric Buckingham, MC, Croix
de Guerre,

Lieut Donald Havelock Glasson and Lieut
Herbert John Gibson all of 47 Sqn, 16 Wing,
RFC.

Post-war Occupation Force

Lieut Rex Victor McKay, 8th Bn The Border
Regiment.

Doubtless there were also others, not yet identified. Lieut Wilkins' diary, for instance, mention "the Australian padre" who distinguished himself by courage during an air



Lieutenant A. R. Wilkins.

raid on Salonika on 27 February 1917 but who is not named or linked with any unit. A Lieut R.N. Cohen is said (in the Sydney Grammar School's Roll of Honour) to have served with the 5th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles and to have been killed in Macedonia in December 1916, but no official records mention him. Hew O'Halloran Giles recalls going on leave to Australia from Salonika in January 1918 with an RFA officer, "Capt Phillips, of Victoria", as yet unidentified. Mrs McHardy White of the AANS contingent in Salonika wrote of "Ian Bird's son", attached to one of the Salonika hospitals, who

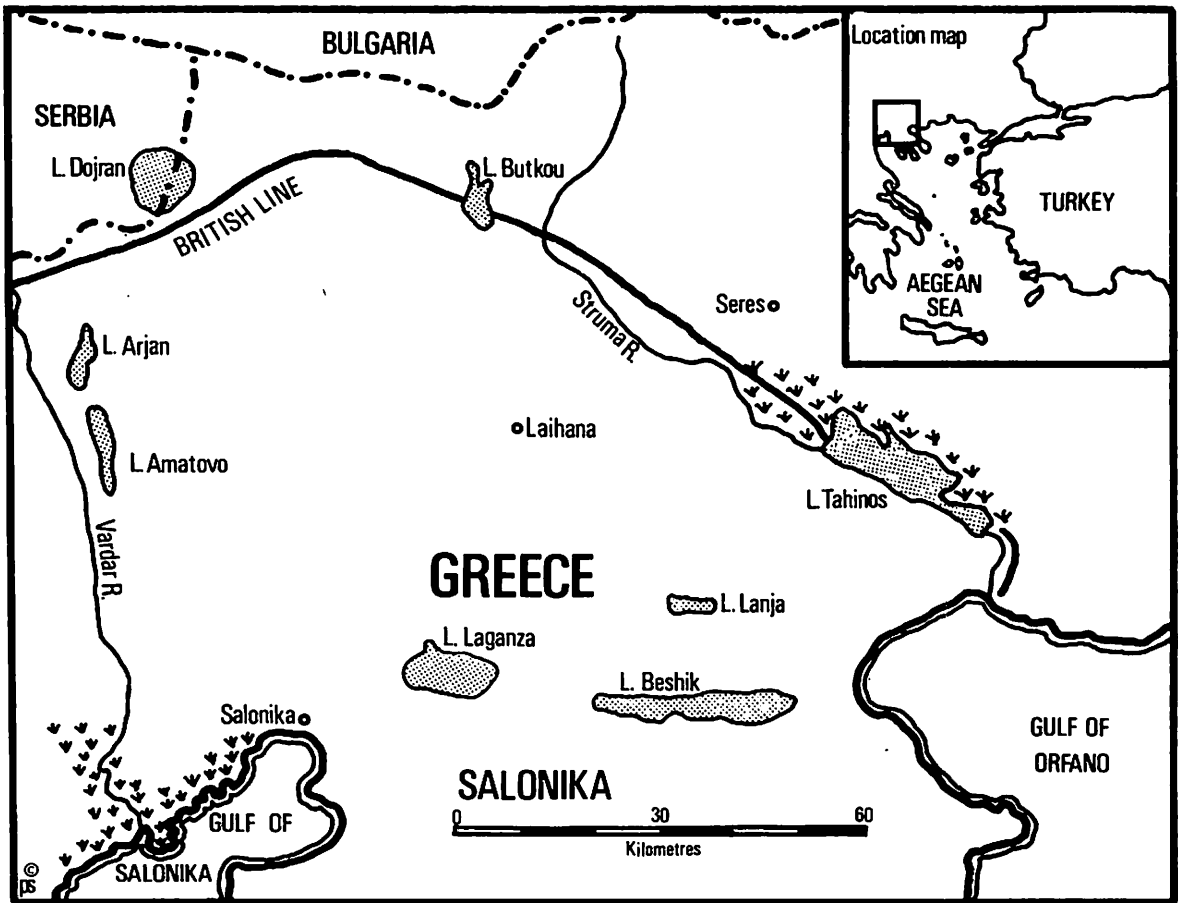
"had been through a very bad time" and "hadn't spoke to a woman for two years before he came to the hospital", apparently referring to an Australian.

And there was a small group of Australians, identified by their Digger hats and observed early in the campaign driving trains of mules through Salonika. They had come over from Gallipoli with the 10th Division and led its mule transport in the first Allied advance into Serbia and in the retreat through December blizzards to Salonika, glad to be on their way to rejoin the AIF. Their names are not at present known.

The Australian officers were a select group. Two—Lavarack and McColl—were regular army officers at the outset; Bernard French was commissioned in the British regular army in 1916. About half were Victorians; the rest were from New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. At least eight were university graduates. Several others, including two Rhodes Scholars, had been studying for university degrees.

Most of them came from well-to-do families, and almost all had been educated at leading Australian private schools. No less than ten had been pupils at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School; eight at Sydney Grammar School; four at Geelong Grammar; and two at Scotch College, Melbourne. Others were from The King's School, Parramatta; Scotch College, Christian Brothers and Perth Modern School, Perth; Barclay College, Ararat, and Hawthorne College, Melbourne; Warracknabeal College and the Ballarat School of Mines; and St Stanislaus, Bathurst. Only Kenneth Wills, born in Adelaide, had had a schooling in England.

For many of them, service in Macedonia was largely a consequence of having been in England at the outbreak of war. McColl, the senior ranking officer among them, was a captain on an exchange posting with the British army; Lavarack was a lieutenant at the Staff College,



Camberley. Others were at university, including Debenham (who had been the geologist of Scott's last expedition to the South Pole), doing post-graduate research at Oxford; Herring (Victorian Rhodes Scholar for 1912), Henry (NSW Rhodes Scholar for 1914) and Dunstan (unsuccessful Rhodes candidate in Western Australia, sent nevertheless to Oxford on a Perth public subscription fund); Yencken and O'Halloran Giles (recently graduated from Cambridge); and French. Rennie, after study at Sydney University, was in France.

Others, in Australia at the outbreak of war, had gone to England hoping to get a commission in some English unit. They included Dr Charles McKay, who had been Medical Superintendent at Melbourne Hospital; Dr John Morlet, house surgeon at the Children's Hospital in Brisbane; Dr Edward Rogerson, in private practice at Kalgoorlie; Wright-Smith, a Sydney University student; Ivo Whitton, trainee wool-buyer in Melbourne and one of Australia's greatest

golfers (Australian amateur champion 1912 and 1913); and Benjamin Marks, who had been working in his family's commercial firm in Fiji.

Several others had been on the land: Glasson near Blayney, NSW; Gibson near Trundle, NSW; Ronald near Pakenham in Victoria. Buckingham was studying at Hawkesbury Agricultural College. Hoddinott was a civil surveyor in Melbourne. Rex McKay was in Buenos Aires representing his uncle's agricultural machinery firm. Mackinnon and Wilkins were still at school.

Four of the Australians took ship to enlist in the RFC. Buckingham, Gibson and Glasson gained their wings at Beverley, near Oxford, and joined the same squadron together. Wilkins, rejected by the RFC, joined an anti-aircraft battery as a gunner and transferred to the field artillery on the way to Salonika.

Some of the Australians had been in action before arriving in Salonika; French, McMaster, Milne, Barker and Ronald with the 10th

Division in Gallipoli before it was brought across to help stave off the defeat of Serbia; and McColl, Lavarack, Wills, Herring, Giles, Debenham, Henry, Boor, Dunstan, Wills, Yencken, Hoddinott, Morlet, McAdam and Rex McKay in France. Charles MacKay had been second in charge of the King George Military Hospital in London. Marks had gone to England with the Fijian Overseas Contingent as a corporal. Hoddinott and Wright-Smith had been with the AIF in Egypt, where Hoddinott in 1914 assumed that the war would soon be over and that the AIF would be merely garrisoning the Suez Canal.

And Doolan, the private in the Cyclist Corps? Reared on a sheep property near Nundle, NSW, he had sailed across the Pacific in a Norwegian full-rigged ship and transferred while in Chile to a German sailing ship bound for Europe round Cape Horn. Unaware of the outbreak of war, he had been intercepted and interned by a RN destroyer off Falmouth. Released soon afterwards, he had joined the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and served with the Cyclist Corps at Villers Bretonneux before his division moved to Greece.

Of the Australians who served in Macedonia between November 1915 and the end of 1918, some were there for less than six months, others for more than two years. Most of them committed little or nothing to paper regarding their experience in that theatre of war. A few wrote letters which have survived in the Old Boys section of school magazines. Several, however—notably Debenham, Hoddinott, Herring, Wilkins and Buckingham—left substantial records.

To the arriving Australians Salonika looked attractive enough from the sea. O'Halloran Giles was reminded of Naples. Debenham, after the hot and grimy sands of Port Said, was favourably impressed by the "green hills and cloud-capped mountains". Wilkins, who wrote that the two "looked interesting and pretty with its multitude of colours, and minarets rising above the houses", was struck by the enormous spread of white-tented camps along the hillsides and by the spectacular gathering of shipping in the harbour, from patrol-boats to dreadnoughts. Ashore, however, it was a different story. "A frightfully muddy and unhealthy place", said Wilkins, echoed by Gibson: "A filthy dirty place and a mixed sort of people". Whitton described

it as "a most awful town, fairly big but absolutely filthy", adding "the roads are too awful to think about". Debenham noted the "sub-hostile attitude of the inhabitants"; and Hoddinott observed that "a big proportion of the Salonika population welcomed the troops as a source of income and hoped that the army would remain but not fight". P.A. Fairbairn, an Australian subaltern in transit from London to Egypt, condemned it as "one of the dirtiest towns I have ever been in". While there overnight he attended a cinema performance of "Carmen" for which the program was printed in seven languages: English, French, Greek, Serbian, Russian, Italian and Turkish, reflecting the polyglot nature of the local population and of the Allied force of over 160,000 troops.

Unfavourable impressions on Debenham deepened during his initial march to the nearby staging camp at Lembet, and he wrote of "sights which, however familiar they afterwards became, were always odious and at times unbearable; Greek transport struggling along in lines of donkeys overloaded and underfed; carcasses of the fallen beasts by the roadside, skinned and left for the vultures; deep and odoriferous mud; a large and unkempt cemetery just outside the town; and the universal bareness of the hillsides... Most of us were thoroughly disgusted with our new home by the time we reached the camp".

It was Hoddinott, however, who left the most detailed description of Salonika life: the German spies and enemy consuls, the high-class cafe "Floca's", the colourful dress of the inhabitants, the immense variety of Allied uniforms, the arrogant demeanour of the Greek officers, the poor food, the high prices. Debenham, for his part, noted the rapacity of the Greek-owned canteen, the exorbitant prices, "the horrible cigarettes, the German matches and the bad beer".

Demographically, Macedonia in those days was far less Greek than it is today. The great exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in 1922-23 had yet to take place, and the local people were a medley of Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Jews (mostly of Spanish origin), Vlachs (from Romania) and a variety of Slavs. Indeed, anyone reading early accounts of the campaign (see footnote at end) will have difficulty in following it on a modern map, since



Lieutenant H. J. Gibson (at left, standing), with his DH2 aircraft.

scarcely a single place retains the original Slav or Turkish name by which it was known during the first World War.

Contact with the local people was limited, partly because the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 had devastated and depopulated much of the Macedonian countryside, causing a vast refugee problem. For some time officers reconnoitring in out-of-the-way places were wary of encounters with komitadji—Greek irregular forces left over from the Balkan fighting and inclined to live off banditry. “Villainous-looking fellows”, Herring termed them, adding that he would never ride into a komitadji-controlled village without his sword at the saddle and his revolver at the ready.

Everyone was daunted by the winter cold. Mackinnon, camped in the mountains amid snow and sleet, wrote: “It’s a terrible climate: warm and sunny one day, snowing and perishingly cold the next. . . The night before we arrived every tent except two was blown away”. Wilkins complained: “It is either 112 degrees in the shade or else a blizzard is blowing”. Whitton wrote of “the most awful weather you could possibly imagine—absolutely freezing, and pouring with rain half the day”. Hoddinott was so cold that he abandoned his tent and burrowed underground, but “in the morning my batman

would throw me my gumboots and I would step out into six inches of water”. O’Halloran Giles’ battery camped one night in a ravine, and next morning he found that half his battery were completely buried in snow, and it took nearly a day to dig them out.

Malaria, however, was the greatest curse. All, or nearly all, the Australians went down with it. The treatment was 30 grains of quinine daily, and Herring declared that patients “were not always convinced that the medicine was less nauseating and stupefying than the disease”. It may well have contributed to the deaths in Hospital of Mackinnon in France and Dunstan in England. Wilkins, who succumbed to it in Fiji after the war, wrote, after his fifth severe attack: “Very few have gone right through the campaign without at least one visit to the hospital, either with malaria or sandfly fever”. Debenham, who commented on the widespread incidence of mild dysentery, was sure that in Macedonia’s summer the flies were even worse than the heat.

There were, however, some compensations. Herring, writing in 1917, although sardonic about the joys of the campaign, was lyrical about the scenery, the spring flowers and the bird life. A shooting trip in the Balkans, he suggested, could be quite enjoyable, provided one stayed only three weeks and avoided both the summer



In Macedonia, 1916: Brig.-Gen. Roberts (left) with Major J. T. McColl, MC, at Ano Krousovo.

and the winter, "in which case you might go home dreaming of the glorious scenery, snow-capped peaks, glassy lakes, glorious hills and valleys, studded with quaint and attractive villages—attractive so long as you are content to view them from afar". Macedonia, he recalled, had been described as a glorious country with a curse on it; but in summer one saw little except the curse.

Mackinnon, who had acquired a textbook and picked up a little modern Greek (Herring and Henry, classical scholars at university, already had some knowledge of the language), found that Greeks in the street were responsive to his few Greek words. He wrote of the bareness of the hills, the poverty of roads, the fertility of the plains, the piety of the Greek peasants and the cleanliness of the Greek villages compared with those of the Turks; but the people generally, he thought, were "in the last stages of utter degeneracy". Like Mackinnon, Herring was a keen bird-watcher; he wrote of his delight in hearing a cuckoo "in full voice", and the lizards, tortoises and insects. Debenham, too, noted the tortoises: "The young ones were not much larger than a match-box, and not a few found their way

to England through the post. Snakes, however, were abundant, and one man was badly bitten."

Debenham also recounted foraging expeditions at Christmas and bargaining with peasants for sheep and geese, adding that "the geese were not all that they promised to be, and the sheep were like overgrown rabbits when stripped of their skin". Hoddinott, on manoeuvres in the mountains, found it a welcome change to get fresh black bread and eggs from the villages, although such purchases were later forbidden because "the people sold us all their food and had to be fed by the authorities". McColl learned to use the local goats for another purpose: to destroy secret documents (by eating them), thus avoiding having to light a telltale fire which would have attracted a Bulgar bombardment. He also told a tale of falling into a subsiding trench which turned out to be the alleged tomb of the ancient Spartan hero Brasidas.

Until Greece entered the war on the Allied side in July 1917 the Greek army was divided in its loyalties, the officers tending to support the pro-German King, while the troops were more sympathetic to the pro-Allied Prime Minister Venizelos. Debenham in 1916 disliked what he saw of the Greek army: "Evidences of the Greek Division were all around us, chiefly in the form of dead horses; in fact, we passed a long line of their transport below the pass, and were witnesses of more than one act of wanton cruelty. It is perhaps unfair to judge an army by its camp followers, but certainly the impression from what we saw of the Greeks at this time was one of slovenliness and wanton cruelty".

An account of the various operations in which individual Australians took part is beyond the limits of this article, but a few episodes are illustrative. Wills' experience was exceptional in that he was involved in a precautionary exercise in Thessaly, south-west of Salonika, aimed at preventing a possible attack in the rear by pro-German troops directed by King Constantine. Wills landed his company through the surf on an exposed beach and cautiously led it to the town of Katerini, only to be welcomed by the brass band of a French unit which had got there before him! Thereafter his company barred the passes over Olympus and were cut off from Salonika by flooded rivers, until the threat passed and they were ordered north. After a seven-day march of

a hundred miles through appalling conditions of heat and cold they reached the front line at Lake Doiran, where he later took part in the disastrous "Battle of the Pips"—one of many efforts to capture a series of Bulgarian-held ridges—before his division was moved to France.

Most of the Australians were involved in engagements along the 90-mile front from the Vardar (Axios) River east to Lake Doiran and the Struma River and southward through the latter's lakes and marshes to the Aegean coast west of Kavalla. For the British troops the campaign was largely a defence of the hills guarding the northern entrances to the valleys leading to Salonika, and of the mountain heights further east and west. In three winters both sides remained stuck in mud and snow. In the summer of each year there were great pushes along the entire front, with severe losses on both sides, but without decisive result until September 1918. For the rest of the time the British infantry and artillery were engaged in local probing and harassing actions to gather information and prevent enemy forces from being transferred to the Western front.

Debenham was evacuated to England after being severely wounded and half-buried by a shellburst during a night reconnaissance in the battle of Horseshoe Hill near Lake Doiran. Goldie led a raid near Lake Doiran on what became known to the British forces as "Goldie's Hill". Mackinnon led a daring raid far into the Bulgar lines to capture a prisoner and return. Herring, as a battery commander in the line, was often under fire. Hoddinott's gun-section was wiped out when a shell exploded in a gun-breech because of a sabotaged fuse, but he suffered only a head-wound from a falling fragment of a limber. Whitton's gun-section was also badly hit once while he was briefly absent; and Wilkins, bringing up ammunition to the advanced dumps, had many narrow escapes, although he also had the honour of spearheading, with the Greek cavalry, the ultimate advance into Bulgaria just before the armistice. Further research would doubtless provide other examples of the Australians in action.

The Australian airmen were in a special category. With a little help from hired Greek labour they built their own aerodromes and camps and dug their own dumps. Their

squadron, No. 47, was a multi-purpose unit flying single-seater or twin-seater De Havilland and Bristol aircraft carrying a maximum bombload of 120 lb. Whenever weather permitted they were aloft on airfield defence, photo-reconnaissance, patrolling the enemy lines, bombing enemy aerodromes, dumps and railheads, and providing cover for the infantry and co-ordinates for the artillery. Their designated area, including Salonika itself, extended from the Vardar to the Struma and east to Kavalla, and well into Bulgaria and Serbia.

Buckingham, Gibson and Glasson, who arrived together in September 1916, were operationally based at Yanesh, a deserted village ten miles south of Lake Doiran. Occasionally they used other forward airstrips to the east or west, and Buckingham was in one raid from the island of Thasos. From November 1916 onwards they were almost constantly in the air, battling against far superior German aircraft. Glasson, the first Australian to die in action in Greece, was shot down by a German plane during a mass bombing raid on Hudova aerodrome up the Vardar valley in March 1917, after surviving narrow escapes in earlier combats; he brought his machine down but died of wounds in a German hospital next day. His grave is in a Commonwealth war cemetery near Skoplje.

Buckingham and Gibson, often aloft together, survived foul weather, forced landings, anti-aircraft fire, aerial dogfights and other hazards, until malaria sapped their energies and they were withdrawn to Egypt later in 1917 for instructional duties. By that time Buckingham had logged 428 flying hours on operations, and Gibson 432. Later in 1917 Dunstan left the artillery to fly with an adjacent squadron. Rennie did likewise, but was shot down in combat on the Struma front and died in hospital of wounds.

Limitations of space preclude more than passing mention of the service of the Australian army nursing sisters stationed in the 42nd, 50th, 52nd and 60th British General Hospitals at Salonika and in the nearby hills, under the administration of their notable Principal Matron, Jessie McHardy White; or of the work of the Scottish Women's Hospital attached to the Serbian army at Lake Ostrovo (today's Lake Vegoritits) between Edhessa and Florina,



From the left, Lieutenants Gibson, Buckingham and Glasson with mail from home.

directed by Dr Agnes Bennett of Sydney and her successor Dr Mary De Garis of Melbourne, aided by assistant camp cook Stella Miles Franklin, better known as the author of "My Brilliant Career". They share, however, in the meritorious Australian record in Macedonia.

As far as present research shows, three Australians were killed or died of wounds or illness during the campaign (Glasson, Rennie and Sister Gertrude Evelyn Munro); several died of illness soon after; a number were wounded. Herring and French were awarded the DSO; Herring, McColl, Wills, Mackinnon, Goldie, McMaster, Buckingham, Wright-Smith and Rogerson, the MC; Buckingham and O'Halloran Giles, the Croix de Guerre; Barker the MBE. At least seven were mentioned in despatches (Barker four times). Thirteen of the nurses received the Royal Red Cross decoration.

Scattered through six divisions and the flying corps, the Australians maintained little contact with each other, although the Melbournians made a conscious effort to keep in touch. Only at the ANZAC Dinner on 7 January 1918 in Salonika's ancient White Tower (housing one of the few restaurants to survive the city's disastrous fire five months earlier) was there a real coming together, when Australians and New Zealanders (including some of the nursing

sisters, as guests) held a dinner followed by a concert, reported as having been a bit of a shambles but enjoyed by all.



Lieutenant Clement Rennie.



Australian Sisters quarters at 60 General Hospital near Salonika. Photo AWM C4336

Only three of the Australians in the campaign served again in Greece, in 1941: Herring (who had in the meantime named his house in South Yarra "Doiran"), Wills (whose knowledge of the Olympus terrain proved helpful in the Sixth Division's retreat) and Doolan (still a private when taken POW in Crete). Some, like Lavarack, Herring and Wills, achieved post-war

eminence in Australian public life and in World War II; Debenham became Professor of Geography at Cambridge; Whitton continued his match-winning career as a golfer. Others survived in less prominent positions; but by 1982 it seemed that the only one still living was O'Halloran Giles in Adelaide, aged 91.



Sources: Official History of the War (Macedonia Operations) by Cyril Falls; The War in the Air (Vol 5), by H.A. Jones; Alan Palmer, "The Gardeners of Salonika"; Ward Price, "The Story of the Salonika Army"; H.A. Jones "Over the Balkans and Southern Russia"; British Army Lists, unit histories; "The Mosquito" (Journal of the Salonika Reunion Association); "Alan Wilkins: His War Service" (Mitchell Library); Hoddinott, "Years That Have Flown" (MS, Australian War Memorial); school magazines, especially of Melbourne Grammar, Geelong Grammar and Sydney Grammar; RAF records, London; Army Records, Hayes (Middlesex) and Melbourne; pilots' logs (Buckingham and Gibson); letters to the author from Sir Edmund Herring, Sir Kenneth Wills, Dr R. Buckingham, Mr H. O'Halloran Giles, Mr C.J. Doolan, relatives of deceased officers, school archivists and others; etc.

Jeff Williams

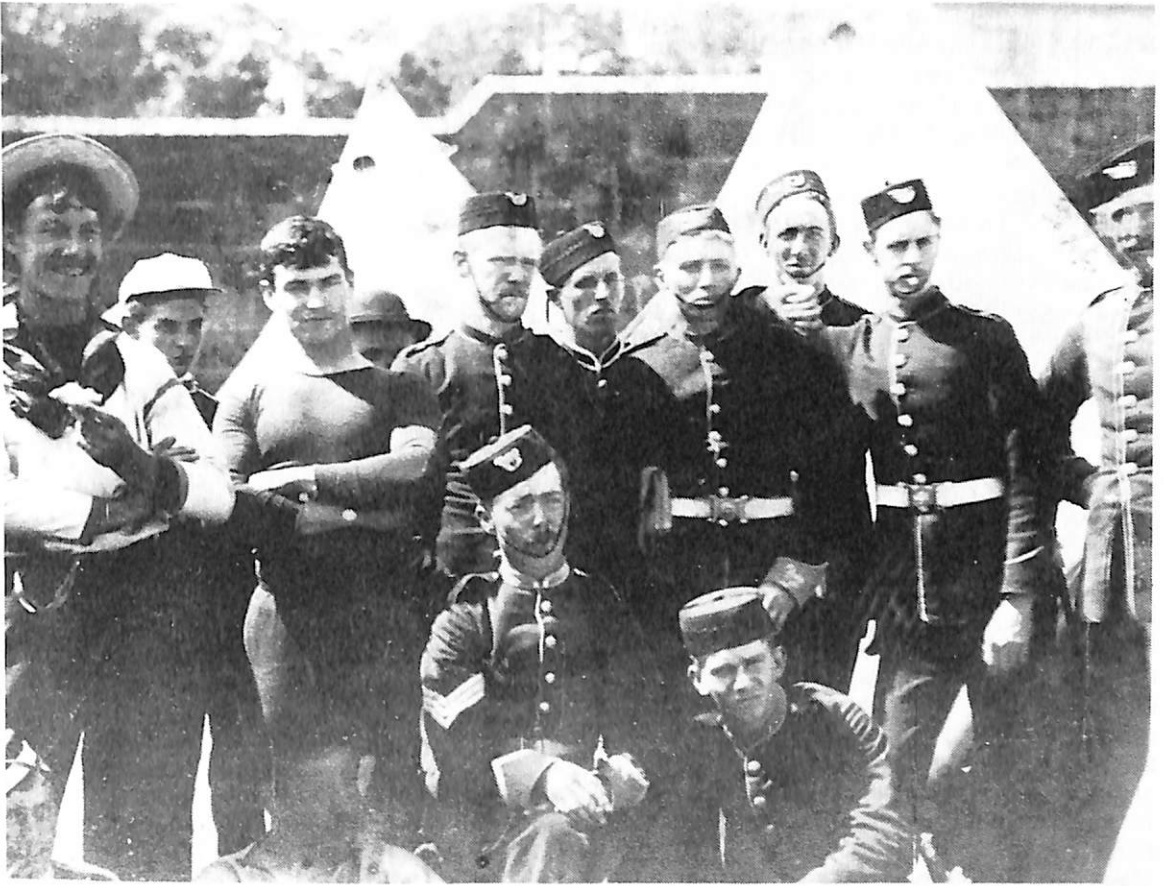
The Sudan, 1885

Tuesday, 3 March, 1885, was a public holiday for the colony of New South Wales. On that day the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan was to embark on the troopship Iberia and Australasian. The Sydney Mail wrote: "It is believed that the demonstration on the occasion of the departure of the troops will be one of the most remarkable incidents in the history of the colony",¹ and a remarkable incident it was.

The 'splendid offer' made by W.B. Daley in 1885 of NSW troops to help Britain in the Sudan and to avenge General Gordon's death has received much critical attention from Australian historians. The events of that year have been analysed in terms of militarism, nationalism,

imperialism, inter-colonial rivalry and patriotism; even the aspect of opposition to the Contingent has been treated. Contemporary newspaper accounts, parliamentary debates and scant official documents have provided the basis for these numerous studies.

Jeff Williams is a staff member of the Australian War Memorial. A history graduate, he works in the Memorial's History and Publication Branch. He has published numerous articles relating to Australian military history and biography. He was formerly Research Assistant to Dr Robert O'Neill, official historian of the Korean war, and is currently investigating the subject of discipline in the First AIF for a post-graduate degree.



Volunteers for the NSW Infantry Contingent for the Sudan at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, shortly before the Contingent's departure on 3 March 1885. AWM No. A5137

Very little has been written, however, about either the attitudes or activities of those men who embarked upon such a 'great adventure' and these lacunae have been directly attributable to the lack of an official diary and to the dearth of personal reminiscences.

Having rediscovered relevant documents I will attempt to use them to give some insight into the attitudes of members of the Contingent and reveal more of the particular nature of their service.

Henry Lawson in 1888, confidently wrote:

"Why on Earth do we want closer connection with England?... The loyal talk of Patriotism? After Egypt, Burmah, Sudan, etc. Bah! It sickens one... We are Australians—we know no other land".¹

These thoughts may have found favour amid the radical sector in 1888 but they did not ring true for those enlisting in the Sudan Contingent in early 1885. Then "...all classes in the colony seemed to be inspired by a single thought: namely the thought of sending the best samles of its manhood to co-operate with Imperial troops against the Mahdi;..."²

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1. *Republican*, 7 January 1888, cited in R. Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics*, Melbourne, 1970, p.119.
 2. *Age*, 16 February 1885.

The men who chose to “serve our Sovereign lady the Queen . . . resist Her Majesty’s enemies, and cause Her Majesty’s peace to be kept both on land and at sea”³ were clear in their purpose. Private Hamilton St Clair Dick of the NSW Infantry (No. 162) saw the offer as “. . .the inauguration of a new era in our history. It indicated to the world that the British people in the south were swayed by the same instincts and the same patriotism as their countrymen at home”.⁴ Similarly, Private Tom Gunning (No. 499), recalled: “We were eager to be off to this mysterious Sudan where 50,000 Arabs were embarrassing Britain at an awkward time”.⁵ In a further exhibition of patriotic fervour Dick tells us that the Contingent members “. . .showed that they wished not only to share in England’s prosperity but also in her troubles and adversity.”⁶

The Goulburn Company Volunteer Infantry, in a memento presented to Private Jonas Goode Nelson⁷(No. 65), expressed that the service of he and of others has “. . .demonstrated the loyalty and attachment of this and the other Australian colonies to Old England, and—what was indeed a noble enterprise—”.⁸ In a similar memorandum the officers of the Road and Bridges Department express the hope that Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Wells and Lieutenant C.B. Airey of the Infantry “. . .will both return in safety and with honour to resume the duties which you leave for the present, in so patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit, to show in the Field how dear to Australia and Australians is the honour and glory of Old England.”⁹

One of the most significant myths surrounding the Sudan affair is that in joining each member had a chance to express his ‘Australianism’. If the previous examples leave any doubt as to where loyalties lay, then an analysis of the Contingent’s composition, allied with comments of the members should expiate these doubts.

There was a high proportion of British born men in the Contingent; a factor which can be explained by the desire of the military authorities to obtain the services of experienced men rather than by any lack of enthusiasm on the part of the native born.¹⁰ Of the Infantry component it was reported:

“Englishmen were rather in the majority among them, and as to previous training the



Private T. Gunning, an infantryman of the NSW Sudan contingent, wearing the khaki uniform issued for active service. AWM No. A5310

greater number had served in the Imperial Forces or New South Wales Artillery. There was thus a considerable and valuable proportion of disciplined men, many of whom had already been in action”.¹¹

3. F. Hutchinson and F. Myers, *The Australian Contingent*, Sydney, 1885, p.25.
4. Personal records of Private H. St C. Dick held in the Donated Records Section, Australian War Memorial.
5. Tom Gunning, “Those Sudan Days” in *As You Were: 1946*, Canberra, 1946, pp.100-101.
6. Personal records of Private H. St C. Dick, loc. cit.
7. Jonas Goode Nelson was an archetypal Contingent member. Born in Bicester, Oxfordshire, England in 1852 he came to NSW with his parents on board the *Parsee*, when he was aged three.
A member of the Goulburn Volunteer Infantry, he volunteered for service in the Sudan War in 1885. After the war, for which he received the Egypt Medal and the Khedives Star, he returned to Goulburn and continued to serve with the local citizen’s forces (2nd NSW Infantry) receiving the Colonial Auxiliary Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1901.
8. Personal records of Private Jonas Goode Nelson in the Donated Records Section, Australian War Memorial. (Attachment 1).
9. Personal records of Lieutenant Colonel F. Wells in the Donated Records Section, Australian War Memorial. (Attachment 2).
10. J.G. Williams, “And the Band Played God Save the Queen: One Man’s Account of the Sudan Campaign 1885” in *Sabretache*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, July-September 1981, p.23.
11. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February 1886.



Infantrymen of the Sudan contingent photographed after their return by Tuttle & Co., Cnr George and Market Streets, Sydney, 1885. At top left is Private J. A. Moutray; far left seated is Lance Corporal L.A. Parkinson; and Sergeant J. Spence is reclining on the floor. Parkinson, nicknamed 'Curley' held the world's amateur record for remaining underwater, 4 minutes 5½ seconds and other swimming distinctions. AWM No. A5526 (Donated by Iris Parkinson)

A list of the names of 495 men of the infantry component of the Contingent which gives age, marital status, country of origin and previous military service is particularly revealing. New South Wales was given as their place of birth by 182 men. The total of those born in the British Isles, however, outnumbered those born in Australia by 263 to 223.¹² Nearly every infantry unit and several of the cavalry units of the British Army were represented, as well as the Marines, Royal Naval Reserve and units as diverse as the Capetown Rifles and Natal Native Contingent.¹³ These experienced men were obviously sought after because less time would be required to train them; and time was pressing.

Furthermore, the Contingent was represented by a cross-section of society. Private Robert Hunter, (No. 412), an infanteer, adds that the contingent "...was composed of men of all classes, some of whom put up with "Privates" fare were men who had left good homes, left comfort and good positions..."¹⁴ This surprise is echoed by Major E.A. de Cosson, a British regular soldier, who also noted that many

Australians had left behind good jobs.¹⁵ Dick also tells how "...High government officials, bankers, clerks, old soldiers, businessmen of every grade fought for a position in the ranks".¹⁶

12. *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 3 March 1885.

The British Isles total includes a small number of men who gave their place of birth as India and who were obviously brought up as Englishmen. The term Australia includes New Zealand as well.

13. *SMH*, 15 February 1886.

14. R.M. Hunter, "Diary and News Cuttings", MS. No. B1162, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

This covers the activities of the Contingent from February to June 1885 and is written in pencil in an exercise book.

15. E.A. de Cosson, *Days and Nights of Service with Sir Gerald Graham's Field Force at Suakin*, London, 1886, p.308.

16. Personal Records of H. St Clair Dick, loc. cit.



Warrant Officer Michael Tuite, Regimental Sergeant Major of the NSW Infantry Contingent to the Sudan, 1885. Prior to his service in the Sudan, Tuite had served in the New Zealand wars and Afghanistan.
AWM No. A4706

Attestation papers¹⁷ which include the occupation on enlistment of 334 men of B and C Companies of the Infantry, support those views. This sample of Contingent members includes a spread of ninety three separate vocations. The largest group, made up of skilled craftsmen or tradesmen, accounts for 136 men. A total of 97 men were employed in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations and this figure suggests that the notion that working men were reluctant to enlist is false. The occupations ranged from five men of private means to an acrobat, drayman or courthouse keeper. The Contingent, although replete with men of good, sober habits did have, according to Hunter, some examples of "the worst type of Larrikinism",¹⁸ although no more is said about this element.

From the personal accounts of the soldiers the reader can evince some criticism of the officers of the Contingent. Sergeant A.O. Butler (No. 12) in his diary points to the inflexibility of one Captain L.H. Kyngdon who placed him under arrest for being improperly dressed on shore; "... not having a pugaree on helmet. Although I explained to him that I had never received one,

being in hospital when they were issued to company and had sent in requisition for one when discharged from hospital but had been unable to obtain it."¹⁹ In a more general comment, Hunter is less veiled in his criticism. After specifically excluding Major C.G. Norris from his remarks he says "I am sorrow to have to admit that most of our officers are failures as far as drill and military matters are concerned."²⁰ The officers, however, wished to ensure that the men did not imitate them and one of their orders led to the following complaint from Dick:

"No one objected to necessary drill and plenty of it, but we did complain when we were detained sometimes for an hour and a half to two hours doing nothing except sustaining the weight of a heavy kit."²¹

Another illuminating factor to emerge from the personal accounts is the interest the soldiers displayed in both local and international affairs. Like the people back in the Australian colonies who awaited news of the campaign, the soldiers also eagerly awaited news from 'home'. In a letter home to his mother, Private Thomas Mulready (No. 427) talks about a rowing race recently conducted in Sydney: "... I was not surprised to hear that Beach won it... won a pound backing him... a fellow could have won a little if he had the money. It must have caused great excitement in Sydney..."²² Hunter noted also that "... the Australians were in high spirits today as we have just received the news about the great race on the Parramatta River NSW between Hanlan and Beach."²³ After mentioning the fact that he, unlike Mulready, had backed Hanlan and lost he switches to the international situation—"the Russian scare is going ahead in the colonies according to latest news".²⁴

17. Attestation Papers, B and C Companies, NSW Infantry, "Soudan Contingent Records", Australian War Memorial file no. 208/1/3.

18. R.M. Hunter, "Diary and News Cuttings", MS. No. B1162, loc. cit.

19. Personal records of Butler, A.O., Sgt AWM file no. 749/15/5 in Donated Records Section, Australian War Memorial.

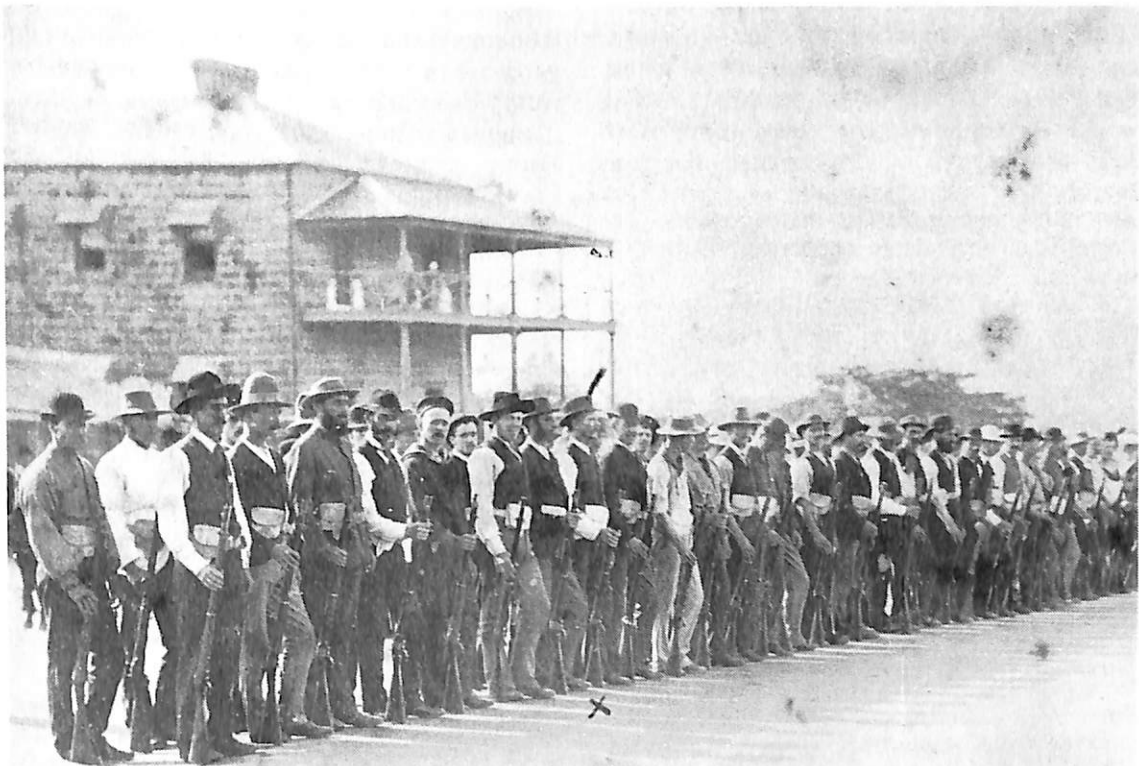
20. R.M. Hunter, "Diary and News Cuttings", MS. No. B1162, loc. cit.

21. Personal records of H. St C. Dick, loc. cit.

22. Personal records of Thomas Mulready, DRL 2873 in Donated Records Section, Australian War Memorial.

23. R.M. Hunter, "Diary and News Cuttings", MS. No. B1162, loc. cit.

24. *ibid.*



Volunteers for the NSW Infantry contingent to the Sudan parading at Victoria barracks in February 1885. The men have not yet been issued with uniforms but have received Alexander Henry rifles and ammunition pouches and belts.
AWM No. A5138

When it was announced that the Suakin force would be disbanded, a large number of the Contingent were willing to remain with the British Army and “follow the flag to India, Afghanistan, or St Petersburg; but . . . Russia explained away the Pendjah incident, and the war-cloud temporarily vanished.”²⁵ At least they saw themselves as having some importance in an international sense and were willing “to go to Central Asia if their services were required in that direction.”²⁶

It was at the public banquet held in Sydney on 28 July that members of the Contingent gave full voice to their patriotic sentiments.

Lieutenant Colonel W.W. Spalding, Commander of the artillery, believed that had the Contingent been put to the test they “would have well maintained the honour of that grand flag which flies throughout the British Empire.”²⁷ The recipient that same evening of an engraved silver tea and coffee service, Sergeant Major Michael Tuite (No. 1),²⁸ said that the “conduct of the members of the Contingent had

been praised by the greatest officers in the army”.²⁹ Explaining that no praise or flattery was necessary for men who had simply done their duty Corporal A. Stourton (No. 508)³⁰ intimates how well the Contingent performed against the British soldiers in a sports

25. Hutchinson and Myers, *op. cit.*, pp.180-181.

26. R.M. Hunter, “Diary and News Cuttings”, MS. No. B1162, *loc. cit.*

27. T. Shine, *The History of the Soudan Expedition*, Sydney, 1885, p.105.

28. Warrant Officer Michael Tuite, Regimental Sergeant Major of the New South Wales Contingent to the Sudan, 1885. Prior to his service in the Sudan, Tuite had served in the New Zealand Wars and Afghanistan. On the Contingent’s return to Sydney, Tuite was presented with a silver tea and coffee service by the Mayor of Sydney because he “had been the most efficient man in the service”. Part of this silver set can be seen on display at the War Memorial.

29. Shine, *op. cit.*, p.105.

30. *ibid.*, p.107.

Corporal A. Stourton was one of the many members of the Contingent who had seen prior service with the Imperial Army. His service included a period in the Cape Colony.

competition organised by the English officers: "Private Barnes came first in the 100-yards race, and Private Myers and Stevens won the camel race... by a hump."³¹ Hoping that his comment would not draw an accusation of egotism Private J.A. Moutray (No. 426) asserted that the "success that attended our operations in Egypt was mainly due to the fact that the men of the Contingent were determined to emulate and rival the Imperial troops..."³² But after expressions of healthy competition the spirit of kinship was to prevail and Private G.G.H. Stuart (No. 385) summed up the feeling of the Contingent in these words: "...we are not fighting for New South Wales alone, but for the dear old mother country which gave us birth... wherever the British flag flies there is unity in the hour of need."³³

The first Contingent to be contributed by a British self-governing community to an Imperial Army sailed from Sydney on 3 March 1885.



Private Jonas Goode Nelson in the uniform in which he served as a member of the NSW Sudan contingent. His father was Constable Samuel Nelson who was murdered at Collector, NSW, by Johnny Dunne of the Ben Hall Gang. AWM No. A4885

As the ships steamed out of the heads a new mood overcame the men who: "...had just said good-bye to all those who were near and dear to them, they had taken what many of them thought was a last farewell to many familiar scenes..."³⁴ In the coming months the Contingent was to endure campaigning in a land of "Intense heat, dust, insects, thirst and stench from bodies of dead Arabs and animals...sufficient 'horrors of war'..."³⁵ It was the soldiers not the vocal politicians and opponents who participated in the campaign, and for this reason they should be considered as a body of individuals rather than as an 'amorphous' entity, as has previously been the case.



31. Private W. Barnes, No. 117, was a member of E Comany, 1st NSW Infantry.

Private A. Myers, No. 470, also of the Infantry later saw service in China in 1900 and was a member of the Shanghai Volunteers.

There were four Private Stevens' in the Contingent so it is therefore difficult to ascertain who the Stevens mentioned is: Private W. Stevens, No. 488; Private D. Stevens, No. 479; Private J. Stevens, No. 480; and Private R. Stevens, No. 95.

32. Shine, op.cit., p.108.

33. *ibid.*, p.109.

Private Stuart (initials incorrectly cited in Shine's account as G.N.) had seen prior service in the Royal Guards and Mounted Police.

34. Personal records of H. St C. Dick, loc. cit.

35. Colonel A.J. Bennett, "The First Contingent" in *Reveille*, 1 July 1937.

Alfred Joshua Bennett was born on 10 January 1865, at Bruceadala Park, Wagga Wagga and saw his first military service as a Corporal in the NSW Contingent in 1885. After service in the Sudan, Bennett was promoted to Lieutenant 10 April 1886 in 1st Infantry Regiment, Captain 11 April 1898 in 3rd Infantry Regiment and then went on to the Reserve of Officers. Major Bennett served in the South African War with the 1st and 3rd NSW Mounted Rifles, was severely wounded at Driefontein and twice mentioned in despatches — *London Gazette* 19 April 1901 and 29 July 1902. He was awarded the DSO. Served in First World War with AIF landing at Gallipoli where he commanded 4 and 1 Battalions. Later wounded at the Battle of Lone Pine, then period 1916-17 with transport service whilst recovering health. Returned to field in France as commander of 20 Battalion and was again wounded. Awarded CMG *London Gazette* 5 November 1915. Retired from the AMF in 1925.

In civil life Colonel Bennett was employed by the NSW Education Department. From 1929-32 served as Administrator of Norfolk Island. (From R. Clark, *Soudan Contingent*, 1885, Canberra, 1972, p.6).

Franklin Garie

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FREE RIFLES

*There comes a time when a history of a Corps of Australian citizen soldiers should be collated and told.*¹ The following is an example of enthusiasm beyond common necessity and which was exercised by a body of men calling themselves the "Free Rifle Corps". Even though some of its members were well-to-do citizens, gentlemen per se, riflemen, and men of education, nevertheless the fact that they physically surrendered their time and money with the intention of defending their country like true patriots, is reason enough to look upon the Corps as something exceptional.²

However, from what little there is recorded of this para-military force's prowess at drill as opposed to what is recorded of their success at rifle shooting, perhaps after all they were evading the discipline and responsibilities of proper drill, but paying for it by a greater dedication to quasi-military rifle shooting. One can only presume that if the Corps had met the foe in sanguinary congress, their enthusiasm or adventure would have known no retreat; assuming thus the qualities demonstrated by Australian soldiers who in later times served overseas during War.

From wading through South Australian newspapers and archival records and judging by events on foreign soil at the end of the 19th century, i.e. 1916, this enthusiasm for something which Australian colonial life avoided, remained unquenched.

Throughout the British Empire the threat of war in the late 19th century was as ever a fear by the colonists of foreign invasion and the destruction of property and commerce. As a result of the expansionist policies of France's new Napoleon, a continuing distrust by Englishmen of the French (and vice versa), together with increased French naval activity around New Caledonia, and sightings of Russian Men-of-War in the Pacific, the usual pitiful condition of local defence in the Australian colonies became a subject for resumed parliamentary and public debate in the late 1850's.

Out of the fears and opinions raised by the colonial newspapers there was rekindled a spirit of loyalty for the Home government and self defence. This spirit or awareness was accelerated with the arrival of news via a mail steamer in July 1859 from England which advised of the possibility of war with France. Even though Her

Majesty Queen Victoria, had issued a Proclamation of Neutrality, Palmerston, the new Prime Minister of England, chose to upgrade Her Majesty's defences to regain what had been a decay of Britain's maintenance of the balance of naval power, particularly in her home waters and hence the need to strengthen the Colonies' defences if in the case, as it was feared by Palmerston's party, that France might choose to seek retribution for Waterloo! Britain extended its sovereignty over the Fiji Islands at this time to prevent the French possessing them.

Of the many bodies of men who volunteered to do a term (3 years) of Military service for their country, one in SA had a unique and popular career. This was the SAFRC or South Australian Free Rifle Company. It was one of the first volunteer rifle companies to form in South Australia.

In compiling this article for Sabretache, Franklin Garie, of the Society's South Australian Branch, has asked if members of the Society who frequent archival resources in Canberra could advise whether any South Australian colonial defence records exist there which do not exist in South Australian archives.

Under the chairmanship of David Sutherland (an MP for the district of Noarlunga in SA's House of Assembly) a meeting of 45 people was convened at the Flagstaff Hotel³ on the fourth of August 1859 to consider the enrolment of a free rifle company. "Free" was not meant to infer independence from duty in time of war, nor rifles given free, rather a freedom from the restrictions otherwise imposed upon them by government drill times in "peace time".

Acknowledging that they were not to receive pay like the "Government Volunteers", their aims were: "the attainment of the highest possible degree of perfection in the art of rifle shooting, to purchase all of their own rifles and equipment, and in time of War to pledge themselves to assist in the defence of the Colony by enrolling as Volunteers under clause 15 of Act No. 2 of 1854", (the SA'n Volunteer Military Force Act). In so doing they would be setting the best possible example. These details were read into the eventual regulations.

Drafted rules were read out and after a general acknowledgement of what form the Rifle corps was to assume, a memorial was drawn up for the Governor's attention. Because of the reluctance on the part of the colonial government, but not the Parliament, to approve of the establishment of Rifle companies outside of the Volunteer Act of 1854, the government refused to loan private companies brand-new Liege made Pattern 1853

Enfield rifles which were stored in the government's armoury, off North Terrace, Adelaide.⁴ Nevertheless the free rifles, composed of men who mostly resided within 10 miles of Adelaide, chose to subscribe to Mr Allan McFarlane's⁵ offer of arranging a bulk order of Terry rifles which were sent out from Calisher & Terry's manufactory of Whittall Street, Birmingham, England.⁶ Other Terrys were already in the colony.

In addition to the Terry rifles the free rifles chose a modest grey uniform of British volunteer derivation (much admired at a Governor's levee in 1860) and the usual accoutrements comprising a waist-belt and frog for a sword bayonet, a cartridge box, cap box, ammunition, and necessaries. Like many volunteer companies which were purely local defence corps there was no call to purchase field equipment, i.e. valises, haversacks, water-bottles, and the like. Such things were generally supplied from the government store and returned after encampments, field, and range days. Estimates prevailing at the time put the cost of their equipment alone at £20 per man, and including company obligations each man paid about £25 to join.

This was at a time when the average weekly wage in SA was less than £4, but with respect to the free rifles, men of plenty, 'twas but a small fee.⁷

Footnotes:-

1. Owing to the destruction of most of SA's colonial defence records below Ministerial level and an absence of private records, this history is consequently curtailed in the area of the Corps' military activities.
2. From a perusal of the Statutes of the other Australian colonies it appears that for a short time only Tasmania had an Act, the Volunteer Amending Act of 1877 (amending the Volunteers Act of 1863) which approached the SA'n act, but differed in that the government could supply auxiliaries with arms and accoutrements.
Intercolonial historians might shed some light as to whether surviving records show that "Free Rifle corps" existed elsewhere in a capacity formally recognised by the Government.
3. The Flagstaff Hotel still stands in what was once the Adelaide suburb of Sturt, now named Darlington.
4. SA's VMF which was at this time in the process of being raised, was fixed at a preconceived and budgeted level of 2,000 which was the actual number of brand-new Enfields in the hands of the government. These Enfields had been requested during the course of the Crimean War scare, but were not delivered until February 1857. From earlier defence enquiries it had been established that the Colony (Adelaide) would require a volunteer force of 2,000 men to satisfactorily resist a landing of enemy troops. The fact that the quality of such "instant soldiers" was always a doubt in reality pervaded our citizen volunteers and militias throughout both SA'n history and that of the other colonies. It was generally presumed by politicians that such "soldiers" were adequate for the task!
In the early 1860's, SA's overall population was approximately 125,000 and if we deduct the number of able men who were residing outside of Adelaide and its network of railways, then the number of men expected to volunteer would be approximately one in 50 people. Militia return figures at the time showed that a total of 14,330 men were liable to serve if the Militia Act (No. 9 of 1854) was proclaimed. These figures however do not accurately reflect the number of men required for the defence of Adelaide, Robe, and Wallaroo, the latter being not insignificant outports in those times.
5. Allan McFarlane was a noted SA'n rifle shooter and later a parliamentarian.
6. The number of Calisher & Terry rifles is unknown to me, but probably did not exceed twenty five. Terry collectors might shed light on this problem.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1981-82

Presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on 19 July 1982.



Again it is my duty to report to members on progress made during another year—the Society's twenty-fifth anniversary year. Achievements by a Society such as ours are rarely the result of isolated actions. Rather, they are the product of many activities by many people over a period of time and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution made by members of Federal Council and Branch Committees over the past twenty five years.

A number of activities have been planned by Branches to mark the anniversary. So far the Queensland Branch has organised a display at the Queensland State Library and the Albury/Wodonga Branch held an exhibition at the RAAOC Museum at Bandiana. The Western Australian Branch will hold an exhibition at the Army Museum in October. Congratulations to all involved.

As reported in the last issue of the journal the Society has been honoured with the acceptance of the office of Patron by Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot KBE AO.

This has been my final term as Federal President. After four years I believe that it is time for new ideas and new leadership. Despite some problems the Society has made progress during the year and for this my thanks and yours have been earned by all members of Federal Council. Again I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without giving my particular thanks to the Federal Secretary.

Finally, it is a matter of some regret that my final year has seen the necessary increase in annual subscriptions. A study of the annual financial statements gives the reason. The cost of producing Sabretache has increased by more than fifty percent in the last six months.

My best wishes for the coming year to all members.

Neville Foldi

**THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA
NOTES WHICH FORM PART OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1982**

1. To separate the Operating and Investment Accounts the following adjustments have been made to the closing balance as at 30 June 1981:

	\$
Balance shown in final statement	
less Deposited on investment	3611.01
less Deposited on investment	2000.00
	1611.01
less Interest received on investment	120.66
Closing balance of cash book	1490.35

2. Operating Surplus 1981/82

Balance of Operating Account 30 June 1982	3082.88
less Balance carried forward 1 July 1981	1490.35
	1592.53
plus Subscriptions in Advance during 1980/81	210.00
	1802.53
less Subscriptions in Advance during 1981/82	156.08
Operating Surplus 1981/82	1646.45

As there were only 3 accounts paid for publication of Sabretache this is not considered to be a satisfactory result and indicates the need for review of the annual subscription.

N.S. FOLDI
Federal President

I have examined the books of account and records of the Federal Council of the Military Historical Society of Australia and in my opinion the attached Statements are a true and fair view of the affairs of the Society.

D.B. DAWES
Honorary Auditor
14 July 1982

**THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA
FEDERAL COUNCIL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1982**

A. OPERATING ACCOUNT

INCOME

Balance brought forward		1490.35
Subscriptions Received		4939.78
1981/82	4914.90	
In Advance	156.08	
	5070.98	
Less Branch Capitation	131.20	
Advertising		304.00
Sales of Publications		88.60
Sabretache	33.10	
Other	55.50	
Donations to Publications Fund		91.50
Bank Interest		99.51
		7013.74

B. INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

Balance brought forward		2120.66
Interest		233.09
		2353.75

EXPENDITURE

Publication of Sabretache		3310.00
Postage		484.24
Valuation of Medals		50.00
Federal Council Expenses		45.35
Stationery	40.35	
Cheque Book Stamp Duty	5.00	
Albury/Wodonga Exhibition		22.00
Sundry Expenses		19.27
Bank Charges	4.27	
Returned Cheque	15.00	
Balance carried forward		3082.88
		7013.74
 Balance carried forward		 2353.75
		2353.75

OFFICE BEARERS

The following office bearers have been elected at recent Annual General Meetings of the Society and Branches:

Federal Council

President—Maj. H. Zwillenberg ED (RL)

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Committee—Mr P. Newton, Mr A. White, Mr J. Webb

Federal Councillor—Mr J. Irwin

Western Australian Branch Committee

President—Mr P.A. Shaw

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The SA'n Commandant at the time remarked that "with their breech-loaders, they'd be admirably suited to act as skirmishers". Records reveal no practise of this nature nor encampments involving the Free Rifles.

A meeting was held at the Gresham Hotel⁸ on 5-4-60 to elect their own officers. The Captain elect was W.H. Trimmer; 1st Lieutenant was Allan McFarlane junior, 2nd Lt. was James D. Sutherland (also an acclaimed rifle shot soon to be mentioned) and Quartermaster Alfred Heath.

Initially, the free rifles was formed as a civilian rifle club in June 1859 pending government acceptance of the free rifle's special autonomy. Under clause 15 of the VMF Act 2/54, the government could accept the services of certain persons and to permit those persons to form volunteer companies, mounted or otherwise, of not less than 25 men, and to appoint their own officers. This they did but they received no official government recognition (because of the prevailing peace) and hence why the free rifles sought a new act to establish credibility as an "honourary" volunteer corps rather than a privileged rifle club. The free rifles were not the type of men to be daunted by public ignorance and political snubbery. David Sutherland (Lt JD's father) initiated the introduction of the Auxiliary volunteer bill into the House of Assembly in July 1860, which was "to provide for the further defence of the colony against foreign invasion". Early in the course of debate it was changed to—"to facilitate the formation of an Auxiliary VMF" and also to ensure that such a force would be liable to serve in time of war, i.e. to be under the command of the Colonel Commandant. What the free rifle corps wanted most of all was the authority or privilege of framing their own regulations so that their activities would be at their convenience⁹ and not the government's, except in time of war or imminent war. Other reasons have been mentioned.

One MP thought that the government should have properly initiated the Bill; another thought that if passed, SA would have free corps springing up all over the place doing just what they liked! However sympathy reigned and Sutherland was asked to reframe the title of the Bill and provide grounds for its introduction. The fact that some of the members of the Parliament were also members of the Corps also had more than a

passing influence on the Bill's expedition. The expected withdrawal of Imperial troops at any time for New Zealand was also on the mind of the House. Two months later the Bill was approved of and passed to the Legislative Council (the Upper House) which likewise sped the Bill through. Major O'Halloran's words may have summed up the feelings of both Houses when he said, "they were volunteers in every sense of the word". The government were not unhappy with the Bill because it didn't require government expenditure and also helped to avoid the need for the government to proclaim the moth-balled Militia Act, a politically unpopular move to have to make at any time other than when war was on the doorstep.

The Bill was passed in September 1860 and assented to on 17-10-60, becoming: *The Auxiliary VMF Act No. 7 of 1860*.

The Free Rifles Act was "to facilitate the formation of an Auxiliary VMF within the Province of SA" and in the Act's preamble was designed (at least on the Government's part) to increase the VMF without increasing the expense thereof. Under the Act men volunteering for the corps did so at their own expense and without pay, took the Oath of Allegiance, and were to organise and train themselves as volunteers without the use of government Drill instructors. With the governor's consent they were to appoint their own officers and make their own rules and regulations. Although they were to enjoy the same exemptions, immunities, and privileges (like free rail passes to shoots) as the VMF, their obligations under self-imposed regulations (which were proclaimed on 31-1-61) meant that each member on admission had to pay an

-
7. The cost to the government for each member of the VMF was £6.
 8. The Gresham was conveniently opposite Parliament House, North Terrace, Adelaide. It was demolished in recent times.
 9. The convenience of the members with regard to drill attendances "perhaps" referred more to the seasonal requirements of harvesting the crops and the scattered distribution of the intending members than to selfish diversions of city members.
 10. In August 1860, the corps had 9,500 rounds of ammo held in reserve. (For the invasion I expect).

entrance fee of one guinea and the cost of 250 cartridges,¹⁰ and thereafter an annual subscription of half a guinea. This, in addition to their own uniform, rifle and equipment.

It was run like a rifle club and under clause 2 of the regulations, per verbatim: "the object of the corps shall be the attainment of the highest possible degree of perfection in the art of rifle shooting, with the view of assisting, should occasion arise, in the defence of the colony"; in other words a less useful corps than the VMF. However, members were obliged to attend all meetings for drill or practice ordered by the Captain. Drill was to be carried out at least once per fortnight and members who missed quarterly meetings or drill without reasonable excuse for a period of six weeks would be struck of the roll of the Corps. An annual shooting match was also to be held.

They adopted the motto—"NOTA BENE":—Take Notice.

So at last the SAFRC's desired status had been achieved¹¹, but what did the public and other volunteers think? Initially the corps was held at insult and contempt by both the newspapers and the government alike! The very nature of their independence, despite their commitment and enthusiasm, was more to the point of being the reason why they were not treated as equals or better by the public. It was said in Parliament that other volunteers were jealous of the SAFRC's privileges. Even the Terry rifle was ridiculed at first because of faults in the early model.

The following public notice entitled "Adelaide Free Corpse"¹² possibly indicates the general feeling in times before the rifle shoot at Sandridge, Victoria:—

"There being still an opening for a few Rale Jintilmin in this Corpse, application must be made soon by them Hiros what wish to poor out there blud for there country. Noboddy need Appli what isnt a jintilman, cause the Hiros dont want there blud 'to micks with common fellows', and it aint fashionnible nither. Noty Bevy—Merchants and Lawyers' Clicks admitted fre on presentin a stificate of sarvice four upwards of a wick."
Signed "By Come Armed".

It is interesting to note that despite their exemption from battalion drill (as different from

their own company drills) and other special drills periodically required by the Commandant and the resultant lack of battalion discipline which was desired in all Military forces, the SAFRC was a significant segment of SA's defence movement in the post Crimean war period, so much so that their early rifle shooting prowess was continually finding a prominent place in the columns of the local newspapers. Perhaps it was through this prowess that they hoped to achieve acclamation and an abatement of ridicule?

Like all other volunteer companies in SA references to details and Company strength have been limited and therefore sketchy, hence the sparsity of the following:-

In February 1861 the founders of the free rifles swore in another 24 members and thus exceeded the minimum requirement so as to enable the Company to receive the governor's approval to the election of their officers (who had been elected 10 months before).

The SA'n Government Gazette for May 9, 1861 listed the appointed officers, per verbatim:- "Whereas Wm. Henry Trimmer Esq¹³; James de la Zouche Sutherland, gent; Messrs Alfred Heath; Edmund Thos. Smith¹⁴; and John Colton¹⁵; have been appointed by the Members of the Auxiliary Rifle Coy, known as the South Australian Free Rifle Corps, to be Captain, Lieutenant, Quartermaster, Sergeant, and Corporal of that corps respectively: This is to notify that His Excellency the Governor in Chief is pleased hereby to confirm the appointments made as aforesaid by the members of the said corps."

By Command, F. Blyth, Colonel VMF.

These appointments however did not provide for the automatic granting of commissions, and despite a letter to Governor MacDonnell from the officers of the corps in September 1861 seeking this status, they were never granted them.

My interpretation of the reasons for this letter is that the hierachy of the corps were presuming that their social status would be adequate cause

11. Surviving historical records do not show any other free rifle corps or country detachments thereto as having been formed under this act.

12. SA'n REGISTER 22-2-60.



Presented by the SAFRC—Private F.R. Ayers, Corpl Colton, Sgt Edwin Smith, Private P.H. Burden, Private W. Colman—to each of the five above who at the Rifle Association matches in October 1862 won the Company's match, competing with a small detachment of the 40th Regiment and twenty-four volunteer companies. The Free Rifles were armed with the Calisher Terry 30 bore breechloading rifle. Twenty-three companies used the government long Enfield and one company (Cavalry) used the Westley Richards carbine.

for their colleagues in parliament to expedite their commissions. Since this would have meant not only putting the SAFRC officers on a par with VMF officers but additional government expenditure in the long run, the matter was dropped. In any case this would have been contrary to the purpose of the SAFRC (free to the government and free of government regulations), unless of course it was called out in time of war, in which case commissions would have been granted, but under the VMF Act, not the SAFRC Act.

Whereas prior to the governor's approval the corps had been hovering around 25 members,

after the approval the Corps comprised: 1 Captain, a 1st and a 2nd Lieutenant (Allan McFarlane, jr, the 1st Lt., being overseas competing at Wimbledon) 1 Quartermaster, 1 Sergeant, 1 Corporal and 23 Privates.¹⁶

13. An MP in later years.

14. A notable SA'n in later years and the 1860's

15. Another MP

16. A full list of the Corps appeared in the SA'n REGISTER for May 2, 1861, excepting A. McFarlane jnr, who was in England.

Statistically the corps reached its peak between 1862 and 1863 (41 members in all) and then gradually fell in 1865 to 33 (partly in sympathy with the declining VMF), and finally to disbandment, which I will add at the end of this history.

Since Rifle shooting and drill were not to commence with the Terry rifles until their arrival in late 1860, company practice began in late 1859 with a collection of Enfields and other arms and was carried out on private property. Although records have not disclosed where this property was, it would not be too presumptuous to suggest that it was either McFarlane's or Sutherland's, South of Adelaide. Other practices took place on the Sturt and Brighton Rifle Company's range in the suburb with sandhill butts, now known as Somerton.¹⁷

Although I have failed to discover the results of the SAFRC's first annual rifle match held in 1859 (presumably with long P'53 Enfields) the second annual match was held on a Saturday in November 1860 at the Sturt and Brighton range using government loaned targets and Terry rifles. These targets were of the Hythe¹⁸ pattern and comprised a cast iron slab of dimensions 6 feet high, 2 feet wide, about 2 inches thick, with 6 inch squares cut into the face. The bullseye and scoring ring were painted on as required. These scoring areas were:- bullseye 3 points, centre 2 points, and outer (the rest of the slab) 1 point. At this time the "Free Rifles", "Sturt Rifles", "Sturt Free Rifles", or even "Terrifiers" as they were coined by the REGISTER, numbered 26 under their elected Captain, Bill Trimmer, all in uniform and all accoutred, except for new members who were then without.

After standard Hythe target shooting a rapid fire match was conducted in which the winner was the person who made the highest score in 60 seconds standing at 200 yards. After the match a Terry rifle complete with sword bayonet and accoutrements was presented to Sergeant-Major Worsnop (a D.I. to the VMF and honorary D.I. to the Free Rifles). The butt of the rifle was inlaid with a silver plate and the inscription displayed the Free Rifles' gratitude for his services.¹⁹

A few days later a challenge was inserted in the Volunteer Notices column of the REGISTER by Captain Trimmer. The idea was to find which rifle was the best, either the Terry or the Enfield.

It was proposed that five of the Free Rifles shoot against five of the VMF for two matches. The first match to be 120 rounds!—10 rounds at each of the regulation (Hythe) distances: 150, 200, 250, 300, 400, 500, 550, 600, 650, 700, 800, and 900 yards. No wiping out between shots. The second match, timed fire, 10 men per team, two minutes per position, highest aggregate score in 6 minutes. Losers to pay all expenses plus a dinner for both parties and thirty others.

A month later Captain J. Rankine²⁰ of the Milang Rifle Company (VMF) inserted a challenge in the Volunteer Notices to meet the Free Rifles at the Strathalbyn practice range on New Year's day. 60 rounds, 5 each were to be fired at each of the classification (Hythe) distances. Prizes were a Westley Richards Monkey-tail, a Whitworth, and a Challenge bugle. A return match was to follow later.

The Free Rifles won both their challenge match and that of the Milang Company's taking all prizes on Milang's home range.

In early January 1861 the Victorian Rifle Association (a civilian body) asked the Colonel commanding SA's volunteers if he would send them a list of names of any volunteer who wished to compete for the Gold cup²¹ (value of 100 guineas!) as well as other prizes. This second meeting of the VRA was to be held at the swampy Sandridge range, Melbourne, from May 30th to June 1st, 1861, a period in America where a Civil war was to demonstrate the superiority of breech-loading rifles like the Terry. The Victorian matches were open in fourteen events to all-comers with any rifle not exceeding 10lbs in weight, without hair triggers, magnifying sights, nor slings.

17. Especially during the muzzle-loading rifle years, a doctor was normally present, even as a shooter, whenever a rifle company practised on a rifle range.

18. Hythe—the British school of Musketry.

19. Like other members of the corps, Worsnop's name has been memorialised in one of Adelaide's streets.

20. Captain J. Rankine was an MP in later years and a long term supporter of adequate defences, and thus the volunteer movement.

Although around 350 VRA members competed at the matches no inter-colonial competitors other than South Australians fronted up. This match however was just the beginning of a movement which continues today.

While the VRA members were largely armed with Lancaster rifles and a lesser number of Enfields, the SAFRC (J.D. Sutherland and F.R. Ayers) had their Terrys, and both F. Rymill (Adelaide Rifle Co'y—Adelaide Rifles Regiment) and J. Morthmore (1st Adelaide Co'y—Adelaide Rifles Regiment) had their Enfields.

On Thursday, May 30th, six ranges were used to run the first and second matches—the first match was 200 yards standing, 5 shots.

The second match was 300 yards standing, 5 shots.

After a shoot-off was held for those who had tied scores on Thursday, Sutherland took the second prize in both matches, having missed in the shoot-off's against his Victorian opponents. These prizes were £20 each.

On Friday the Gold cup event was shot by the 39 volunteers who had attained the highest scores in matches 2, 3, and 4. This match attracted intense interest especially on range number 3 where most of the crack-shots were performing right in front of the stand. After the first five shots the field of probable winners was down to four, viz.—Mr Frost of the Melbourne Proper Company, J.D. Sutherland of the SAFRC, Mr Weldon of the Williamstown Rifles and Mr Kaye of the St Kilda Rifles. Shortly, Weldon dropped a shot and the remaining three with eight points each went on to a shoot-off. While the others missed, Sutherland scored a centre (two points) and won, Kay taking second place and Frost third.²²

Sutherland was heartily and loudly applauded,—a peace-time hero!

Not all was serene however. Some competitors were not too happy with Sutherland's rifle nor his shooting position (the others used the less stable stance, the standing position I believe). But, since his "wonderful and perfect coolness and precision" was acceptable by the "Argus", and the VRA at a subsequent meeting upheld the spirit and sportsmanship of

the competition, and courtesy to intercolonials, the matter was soon passed by.²³

On the 8th of June, J.D. Sutherland received his prize from Major-General T.S. Pratt (O.C. Imperial forces in Australia) at the Melbourne Exhibition building and was met with especially loud and continuous cheering. Although the Gold Cup had not been made at the time, Sutherland accepted the option of the trophy rather than the 100 guineas.²⁴ At Sutherland's special request the cup was to be made in Victoria by Victorian craftsmen. (Messrs Walsh & Sons, Melbourne).

With headlines ascribing to Sutherland the title of "Champion Rifleman of Australia", he and J. Northmore were met with a heroes' welcome when they arrived at Glenelg in SA. After a salute fired by the Glenelg Rifle Company and three hearty cheers by a large gathering of SA'ns, the local Reedbeds cavalry escorted the winner's carriage (drawn by six greys) via the Bay road²⁵ to Adelaide where the heroes' welcome was over-whelming. Formed up at the corner of South and West Terraces (top end of the Bay road) were the 1st Adelaide rifles

21. The Victorian Gold cup was described thus—It had a stem (a fern tree rising from a rocky ground, ornamented with ferns and other indigenous plants) supporting the bowl which was approximately the same size as an emu egg cup, richly embossed with vine leaves, and engraved:—"THE VICTORIAN CUP, First Prize, Match 5, at the second meeting of the Victorian Rifle Association, won by Lt. J.D. Sutherland of the Adelaide Free Rifles, 10 rounds at 600 yards, 8 points, Melbourne, June 1, 1861." Beneath the rocky ground was an octagonal pedestal of blackwood, the facets of which were formed of polished white Victorian marble (6) and Burra (SA) malachite (2), all set in gold and about 12 inches high. There were 20 ounces of 22 carat gold in the cup and frameworks around the facets. The opposite side of the cup bore Sutherland's crest. This trophy was first seen by the people of Adelaide at the first SARA match prize presentation on November 8, 1861.

I am unaware of both this extravaganza's fate and SARA's "Ladies Cup" of October 1861.

22. Argus 1-6-1861.

23. Understandably as the disciplines of competitive shooting evolved and grew, omissions and errors in the rules were corrected and tightened.

24. The 100 guineas had been put up by an anonymous Victorian, and was held, pending the winner's option, by the editor of the "Argus".

25. Bay Road, now called Anzac Highway.

and Band, together with the SAFRC, each on opposite sides of the road. After the speeding carriage passed and topped a little beyond these men, they fell in behind the carriage and altogether marched slowly along West Terrace to Hindley Street and King William Street. With acclamation all the way they arrived at the Exchange in King William Street where Sutherland again expressed his pleasure at the recent events and welcome.

Rarely had the colony surpassed this form of welcome for anyone, perhaps not even for governors and royalty!

Arriving shortly after this demonstration of pride in South Australians, the public were further enraptured or moved by the news that the first Australian to win a prize at Wimbledon (National Rifle Association of Great Britain) matches was their own Allan McFarlane jr of the SAFRC! Small world and what glory. Allan had competed in the uniform and "peculiar helmet"²¹ of the SAFRC at the second meeting of the NRA and used a small bore (52 bore or .450 calibre) Terry rifle presumably loaned to him by Calisher & Terry for the purpose of competing in the Wimbledon matches.²⁶ Allan had competed against 230 other riflemen.

In August '61 a challenge shoot between the Sturt and Brighton volunteers and the SAFRC came off at the butts on Adelaide's South Park Lands.²⁷ A list of their scores will illustrate their accuracy potential such that it was in those muzzleloading and blackpowder times. Five shots were fired at each range with showers and wind giving cause to careful loading practises by the Enfield-toting "crack-shot" Sturt and Brightons. The prize winners were:-

SAFRC					
	900	700	500	300	Total
Priv. F. Ayers	1	3	5	6	17
Priv. P.H. Burden	1	5	5	9	20
Priv. E. Heath	3	4	4	7	18
Sturt & Brighton					
Priv. Palmer	3	3	5	7	18
Priv. R.F. Burton	0	1	3	8	12
Priv. Vincent	0	2	3	7	12

In addition to the bad weather the Sturt and Brightons further handicapped themselves by adopting a kneeling position whereas the Free

Rifles shot prone. Those breech-loading "Terryfiers" had won again! At a return match the "Terryites" repeated the performance, Terryfic!

Having found an incentive in the VRA matches, the lethargic SARA set its sights on its own "National" matches, and being an organisation "to promote efficiency in the use of the rifle amongst all classes", chose to permit the Free Rifles to compete on equal terms with the Volunteers. These matches were shot in late October 1861 and Lt. Sutherland's score in the standing 200 yard match was three points more than what he had made in Victoria. This was done standing in crutches (from a recent broken right leg)!, and in addition to adverse weather conditions and the event being open to all rifles including the *small bore*, Sutherland failed to get a place. Incidentally no Victorian competed. Perhaps then this was the beginning of the end or just the topping for the SAFRC, a period of rapid achievement?

One of the few recorded occasions when the SAFRC participated drill-wise with the "other" volunteers was at the review held in aid of Governor MacDonnell's departure on March 4th, 1862. Here they received the governor's inspection. (Sorry, no details).

Unfortunately I have been unable to discover just when this enthusiastic band ceased acting together but I presume that it was coincidental with the repeal of the various volunteer acts in May 1866.²⁸ Presumably the keen ones re-volunteered to join the VMF or Reserve, while

26. A short note on this event exists in J.E. Corcoran's "The Target Rifle in Australia 1860-1900" Dolphin Press, Aust., 1975.

27. The South Park Lands was the site of Adelaide's original volunteer rifle ranges. They were "demolished" in early 1878 as a result of increasing urbanisation.

28. The SA Government Gazette for 3-5-1866 proclaimed the disbanding of the Volunteer Acts, amongst which was the SAFRC Act. The purpose of the disbandment was essentially to make way for the creation of new "volunteer districts", not to basically nor drastically alter the acts and regulations themselves. The founders of the SAFRC did not appear to re-apply, presumably because there was no war scare at that time and they were sick of being snubbed; e.g., Dr Browne's prize of a double-barrelled B/L Purdy (Purdey) rifle and the Free Rifle's offer of a Silver challenge bugle, both to all-comers, were greeted with an unfriendly acceptance by those to whom the Free Rifles were trying to extend a friendly hand. This was in October and November 1861.

others joined SARA. Nowhere in newspapers nor archival records have I found any reference whatsoever to winding up the corps, social or otherwise.²⁹

It is a little sad that an organisation such that the SAFRC was and which was never to be again in South Australia's history was to disappear from the scene without ceremony. They just seemed to fade away.

Existing SA'n Terry rifles in 30 bore are extremely rare, only two having come to my notice and both have been tampered with. Bayonets, accoutrements, and most of all uniforms appear to have succumbed to eternity

long ago, no doubt destroyed through a lack of interest in Australian origins. A photograph of the SAFR helmet badge appears on page 29, Vol XVIII No. 1 of "Sabretache". I am unable to explain why the men in the photo weren't wearing the badge, perhaps a later enhancement?



29. In late 1866 W.H. Trimmer was noted as being the ex-captain of the Free Rifles.

30. Taken from a helmet plate held in a private collection in SA.

31. "Times" 8-7-1861.

REFERENCES: 1859-1866 (in brief) Newspapers: SA'n "Register" SA'n "Advertiser", Melbourne "Argus"
SA Government: Parliamentary Debates, Statutes and Gazette, Chief Secretary's Office.
General: SA'n Directory, Australian colonial statutes.

INFANTRY CORPS MUSEUM

The Royal Australian Infantry Corps Museum has become a subscriber to the Society. The Museum is located at the Infantry Centre, Singleton Army Barracks, NSW. Access to the Barracks is either from the New England Highway, turning off at the old Whittingham Railway Station, or off the Colo-Putty Road on the outskirts of Singleton. A small green and white sign indicates the turn off in both cases.

The Museum is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday each week, except for public holidays, and on the last two Sundays of each month. Timings are from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon and 1.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. The entrance charge is \$1.00 for adults, 50 cents for children or \$2.00 for a family group.

The concept of an Infantry weapons museum was initiated by the original Commander of the School of Musketry (Randwick, New South Wales), Major F.B. Heritage, in 1909. Initially, the museum was confined to samples of foreign rifles and muskets and it was not until 1921 (when the school was renamed the Small Arms School) that the scope of exhibits was widened to include machine guns, grenades and pistols.

In 1965 the museum was redesignated the Royal Australian Infantry Corps Museum when the Patron, the then Major General T.J. Daly, KBE, CB, DSO, General Officer Commanding Eastern Command, opened the museum officially at Ingleburn. General Daly, although now retired, remains patron of the museum.

By late 1973 the museum had been relocated, in conjunction with the Infantry Centre, at Singleton, New South Wales. It was officially opened in its present location by the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Roden Cutler, VC, KCMG, KCVO, CBE on 15 March, 1974.

The Museum possesses over 450 rifles which date from the fourteenth century to most modern semi-automatic and automatic rifles. The evolution of the rifle is clearly displayed commencing with a representation of the "Tannenberger Busche" circa 1399, continuing through matchlock and flintlock muskets, early rifles, muzzleloaders and breechloaders, to the modern automatic and semi-automatic rifles. All the famous manufacturers are represented and there are many experimental rifles, which have never been used in war, on show.

There are numerous other weapons including bayonets, swords, machine guns and anti-tank weapons as well as exhibits of badges, medals and equipment.

Christopher M. Fagg

THE ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENCE MEDAL

The Zimbabwe Independence Medal was instituted by Warrant of the Rhodesian Governor, Lord Soames, on 14 April 1980, under his powers to create honours and awards, to commemorate the independence of Zimbabwe.

The medal is circular and of two classes; first class in silver, second class in bronze.

The medal of either class may be awarded to any person, or group, or category of persons nominated by the "Zimbabwe Prime Minister".

The medals are 38 mm in diameter. On the obverse is a representation of the "Zimbabwe Ruins", encircled by the description "18th April 1980 Zimbabwe Independence". Below this is a representation of a crossed gun and hoe. The reverse has an eagle atop burning flames, the whole superimposed over a chequered background symbolic of a new map. The whole depicting the symbolic birth of a nation out of conflict.

The ribbon consists of seven coloured vertical stripes, in order of green, gold, red, black, red, gold, green. The ribbon is attached to the medal by means of a ring.

Each medal issued is numbered. There have been approximately 200 medals issued.

When the ribbons above are worn, possession of a silver medal shall be indicated by a silver rosette.



The Zimbabwe Independence Medal (obverse).



The Zimbabwe Independence Medal (reverse).

Members of the Australian contingent that formed part of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force are not entitled to wear this medal if issued with it. It is likely that "restricted permission" to wear the medal will be sought for the Australian contingent, thus bringing them in line with that already granted to British members. New Zealand members are similar in this regard.

The restricted permission means that the medal may be accepted, but only worn on certain carefully stipulated occasions.

This medal is the second that members of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force are eligible for. The other being the Rhodesia Medal 1980.

Notes

Warrant No. 1 of 1980—Rhodesian Government
 Foreign and Commonwealth Office—
 Information
 Department of Defence Australia—
 Information
 Department of Defence New Zealand—
 Information
 Registrar of Honours and Awards—
 Zimbabwe Information

INDIANS AT ANZAC

A footnote to the story of the Indians at Anzac (*Sabretache* April-June 1981) is found in the diary of Corporal T.J. Richardson, 1st Field Ambulance, who noted an incident in his diary on Boxing Day 1915. Just after the evacuation he recorded:

Coming home we stopped with some Indians and watched them cooking flat, pancake-like bread. I had some with a curried dish spread thereon. They made us very welcome after satisfying themselves that we were Australians. They just love our men and in return our men love them, they are so clean and trustworthy. For instance, at the "two-up" school there are many about but gambling is disallowed, a rolling penny hit the foot of an Indian and a fellow turned and swore savagely at him for not getting out of the way. A Sergeant standing nearby jumped and threatened to punch this soldier for treating the Indian harshly. He said, and I agree with him, that "these men were the only friends we had at Anzac and we should be grateful to them all our lives. I don't care who you are or what battalion you belong to—you're a — rotter. We would have gone hungry and thirsty many and many a time without these hardworking and fearless fellows and I'm not going to allow you or any man three times as good as you to treat them so while I've got a pair of hands. You're a damned reinforcement or a waster or you would know of the way they worked those mountain guns and saved our own positions time and again with their shrapnel. etc." The soldier apologised.

The Diary is now held in the Donated Records Collection of the Australian War Memorial.

PETER STANLEY

Julianne Richards

EVELYN ROSE MOREY; M.B.E.

In the last issue of Sabretache Dorothy Hart traced the development of the Australian Army Nursing Service. In this short article Julianne Richards writes about one of the originals, Evelyn Morey.

One of thirteen children of a respected agriculturist and pastoralist, Evelyn was born at Triabunna on the east coast of Tasmania. She pursued nursing as a career, training at the Lyell Hospital, Queenstown. On the 23rd of October, 1917, she enlisted with the Australian Army Nursing Service as a Staff Nurse. Less than a month later she embarked at Melbourne on H.M.A.T. "Nestor" for passage to England via Egypt. The "Nestor" arrived at Southampton on the 18th of January the next year. Immediately she was posted to the second Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Southall. During February she was attached to the third A.A.H., where she was to spend the bulk of her time in England. This was situated at Dartford in Kent and at that time was the second largest hospital in the country with about 3,000 beds. Whilst here she worked in the theatre under Sir Allen Newton.

In September, 1919 she was again transferred, this time to the first Australian General Hospital and on November 1st, she began the return voyage to Australia on the same vessel that brought her for duty with the nursing staff.

She was discharged at Hobart on the 25th of February, 1920. "On my return to Tasmania, I became interested in institutional work..." and thus began her career with the then Lachlan



In 1951 Evelyn Morey received the M.B.E.

Park Hospital, (a mental institution). In 1934 after eight years, not continuous, on the staff, she was appointed Matron. She was the first registered Mental Nurse in the State, and in the New Year's Honours list of 1951 she was awarded an M.B.E. for her work with the mentally ill.

On the 14th of August the next year she was forced to retire because of her deteriorating health, and died on the 18th of January, 1953.

Hans Zwillenberg

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCES CLOTHING REGULATIONS

Hans Zwillenberg has contributed significantly to the study of South Australia's defence forces. For those readers who have followed his serialized MA thesis in Sabretache the following extract from Regulations, South Australian Volunteer Military Force 16.10.1861 published in the Government Gazette (SA) No. 44, Oct. 17, 1861, will be of interest.

REGULATIONS FOR CLOTHING.

CALVARY VOLUNTEERS

For Privates

1. *Jacket*.—Tunic of blue or rifle-green cloth, with scarlet facings and bronze buttons, trimmed with black braid.
2. *Trousers*.—Blue cloth, with two scarlet stripes down the side seams, one inch wide and half an inch apart, tight at the small of the leg and within boots.
3. *Boots*.—To be Napoleon pattern.
4. *Cap*.—Blue cloth, with scarlet band, and scarlet netted button and trimming at top, black leather peak and chin strap; ornament, crown in bronze metal.
5. *Sword-knots*.—Those now in use.

For Non-Commissioned Officers

7. The Same as for privates and with chevrons of scarlet cloth, in lace, on both arms, according to rank, as in Her Majesty's Service; the cost being borne by themselves.

For Commissioned Officers

8. The same as privates, but with silver lace on the coat, down the seams of the trousers, and round the cap, 1½ inches n width. Black silk or leather sword-knots, acorn pattern.

ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS

For Privates

9. *Tunic*.—Blue, single breasted, stand collar, hooks and eyes up the front, black braid round the edges, top and bottom of collar; also on back, skirts, side, edges, and cuffs, with grenade and wreath on each shoulder strap, on scarlet cloth.
10. *Trousers*.—Blue cloth, with scarlet stripe down side seams, 1½ in. broad.
11. *Cap*.—Blue cloth, with grenade, wreath, and crown in front, on scarlet cloth.

For Non-Commissioned Officers

12. The same as for privates, and with chevrons of scarlet cloth, in lace, on both arms, according to rank, as in Her Majesty's Service. The cost being borne by themselves.

For Commissioned Officers

13. *Tunic*.—Blue frock, rolling collar, hooks and eyes up front of tunic, black braid on edges and across the breasts, hussar style.
14. *Waistcoat*.—Scarlet cloth, hooks and eyes up the front, stand collar, ½ in. silver lace on the edges, traced inside with narrow Russian braid.
15. *Trousers*.—Blue cloth or doeskin, with scarlet stripe down side seams 2 in. wide.
16. *Hat*.—A drab felt helmet, trimmed with silver ornament in circle in front.
17. *Belts and Swords*.—Those now in use.
18. *Sword-knot*.—Black silk or leather, acorn pattern.

RIFLE VOLUNTEERS

For Privates

19. *Tunic*.—Melton cloth of stone-grey mixture, single breasted, to button in front. Cuffs of same material. Collar, 1¼ inches high, and rounded off in front. Sleeves to have an Austrian knot, to form a cuff 3 inches deep at the point; the knots 9¼ inches long and 4 inches in width, formed with black square cord, and traced round with narrow scarlet tracing braid, the collar edged with the same, the edges of tunic trimmed with same; the skirts to be 14 inches deep for an officer or private 5 feet 9 inches high, half an inch longer or shorter, being allowed for 1 inch variation in height; back and shirt to be cut whole and not to open; nine bronze buttons in front, and two behind—design, raised crown in centre, and S.A.V. in raised letters. Shoulder straps of double scarlet silk cord, and one small bronzed button. The color of the facings to be selected by the several companies.

20. *Trousers* of the same material as tunic, cut so as to be sewn into a band round the waist, large from the hip, with side pockets, and trimmed with black square cord, narrow scarlet tracing braid, as on tunic, down side seams.

21. *Cap* of same material as tunic, ¾ inches high in front and 4 inches high at back, band of same material, trimmed with two pieces of cord, and braid same as on tunic round the top and bottom of the band and edge of the crown. Square Prussian black leather peak in front, and to be worn with linen covering. A bugle, in bronze, to be worn in front.

22. *Belts*—Those now in use, if supplied by the Government; or of brown or black leather if preferred by companies, at their own cost—each company to be uniform.

For Non-Commissioned Officers

23. The same as for privates, and with chevrons of blue cloth, on both arms, in lace, according to rank, as in Her Majesty's Service; the cost being borne by themselves.

For Commissioned Officers

24. *Tunic*.—The same as worn by the men, with the following alterations—the ornaments to be embroidered in silver, and the shoulder knots of silver cord; tunic to be fastened in front with hooks and eyes instead of buttons, no buttons to be worn behind.

25. *Trousers*.—The same as worn by the men.

26. *Cap*.—The same as that of men, with distinguishing ornament—A bugle in silver; trimmed with band of black mohair braid, 1¼ inches in width, of oak leaf and acorn pattern.

27. *Sword*.—Infantry regulation, with steel scabbard.

28. *Sword-knot*.—Black silk or leather, acorn pattern.

29. *Belts and Cartouche Boxes*.—Black leather, silver mounting.

DISTINCTIONS OF RANK

(Regulations on dress, on page 110 of the Queen's Regulations, for 1859, to be adopted as far as practicable.)

30. Field officers to distinguished by silver lace, half an inch broad, round top and bottom of collar, down edges of skirts behind, and edge of sleeve flaps—two rows of lace round tops of cuffs, and the following badges, embroidered in gold, at each end of the collar:—

Lieutenant-Colonel—A crown in gold.

Major—A star in gold.

Mounted field officers of infantry to have brass scabbards, with helmets instead of caps.

31. The other officers to have lace on the top of the collar, only one row round the top of the cuffs, none on the edge of the skirts, loops only on the skirt flaps and sleeve flaps, and the following badges at each end of the collar:—

Captain—A crown and star.

Lieutenant—A crown.

32. Officers may wear a full dress when not under arms. The full dress to consist of blue cloth tunic, and trousers of the same pattern as the undress; coat to be embroidered with black mohair braid, in same style as undress tunic. Officers to wear silver lace down the outside seams of the trousers, 1½ inches in width.

GENERAL ORDER.

33. All Commissioned officers to incur the cost of their own dress and equipment, except as to fire-arms and accoutrements, adhering strictly to pattern. White trousers and white cap covers may be worn by all volunteers during summer, to be provided at their own cost.

34. All ranks and description of force to wear black silk ties round the neck, with white shirt collars showing above collar of tunic.

35. The rifles of the volunteer non-commissioned officers, except in the cavalry and artillery, to be of the short pattern, with sword bayonets.

Comment: Sabretache thanks Tony Harris for explaining that no short pattern rifles with sword bayonets were issued to the N.C.O.'s. Only the normal long infantry rifles were issued to all ranks.

Textbook on Australia at War to be published

Two authors have been appointed by Nelson Education to collaborate on an education textbook of Australian military history in association with the Australian War Memorial.

Ms Helen Simmelhaig and Dr Geoff Spenceley will co-author the high school textbook on military and social history of Australia at war to be published by Nelson Education.

Ms Simmelhaig is a secondary school teacher with considerable experience in Australian history. She has also worked in curriculum development and prepared an education kit for the Australian Heritage Commission. Ms Simmelhaig is the author of *Front Page History*. She is currently a history consultant with the NSW Department of Education.

Dr Spenceley is a senior lecturer in economic history at Monash University. He is the author of *The Depression Decade* (Topics in Australian History Series).

Dr Michael McKernan, Assistant Director (History and Publications) commented, "We expect the blend of Dr Spenceley's research experience and Ms Simmelhaig's teaching experience will produce a book that is both accurate and effective for the intended audience".

The new publication tentatively is intended for students in years 9 and 10 and will contain photographs, maps, replicas of original documents and a text of approximately 30,000-40,000 words of about 150 pages on the many facets of Australia's military history. It will examine why Australia entered the wars, describe the battles and operations and discuss the social effects of the war on the homefront.

The soft cover book, to be published by Nelson Education, one of Australia's largest educational publishers, is intended for distribution in 1983.

BOOK REVIEWS

Ian S. Mulelly and Hugh R. Smallwood, *Airworthy! Flying Vintage Aircraft*, Blandford Press, Poole, Dorset, 1981, 128 pages, illustrated, glossary, index. Review copy from ANZ Book Co. Pty. Ltd. Recommended price \$24.95.

Everywhere, it seems, people are busy on the artifacts of the past, recapturing history restoring old buildings, implements, ships, vehicles, aeroplanes... The highest of restoration arts, perhaps, is making old aeroplanes airworthy, and that is what this book is all about.

It opens with case studies of two restorations with before and after illustrations, followed by a page of description and history and one ground and one air photograph in colour of each of 32 aeroplanes. They range from the Bleriot XI of 1909 to the Yakovlev YAK II of post-1946 vintage. Most are military types including five from World War One and such WW2 classics as the Hurricane, Spitfire, Swordfish, Kittyhawk and Flying Fortress.

A third section provides details of some of the better known collections and organisations in Britain, North America and France devoted to keeping the aeroplanes flying. Finally, there is a section on the engines fitted to the aircraft featured in the book.

Although the technology of these machines is less advanced than it is nowadays, much of it is not all that simple and a great deal of highly skilled and dedicated work is needed. Most of the effort is freely contributed but the operation overall can be very expensive. The book tells us that it costs £2,400 to fill the tanks of the Flying Fortress!

All the machines covered are genuine—there are no replicas with their inevitable compromises and that not-quite-right look. Some of them are unique—the only examples left in the world. There is a body of opinion that it is unwise to risk them in the air, and, to be sure, despite great care, occasionally one is lost. The Douglas A-26C Invader in this book was completely destroyed in a crash at Biggin Hill in 1980. Fortunately, it was not the last one.

This nicely presented book is a rather simplified survey of collections but tells the restoration tale well and is a useful guide if you want the thrill of seeing these ancient machines actually flying, or in some cases almost staggering, through the air.

ALAN FRASER

Philip Warner, *Auchinleck The Lonely Soldier*, Buchan and Enright, London, 1981, pp.i-xii + 288, \$28.50. Our copy from ANZ Book Co. Pty Ltd.

It is true that extremes tend to beget extremes. If Lord Montgomery, whose *Memoirs* appeared in 1958, had generously recognised Sir Claude Auchinleck's achievement in stopping Rommel in July 1942, what a mass of unrewarding writing may never have appeared including, perhaps, this sympathetic biography of the last commander-in-chief of the Indian Army. But Montgomery had to speak his mind about the state of the Eighth Army when he took command on 13 August 1942. His graceless candour with its exaggeration and inaccuracy generated a bitter, unprofitable and continuing controversy. Montgomery had neither liked nor respected Auchinleck when he served under him after Dunkirk—"I cannot recall that we ever agreed on anything"—but it was unpardonable that he could not or would not recognise Auchinleck's contribution to the defence of Egypt in that desperate summer of 1942.

Warner's biography, unlike John Connell's massive and eloquent work which ends with Auchinleck's retirement in 1948, takes the story on to his death in 1981. He does not appear to have consulted the Australian and New Zealand official histories nor the classic South African work on the Gazala battles, Agar-Hamilton and Turner's *Crisis in the Desert*. He also omits the significant fact that Sir John Dill, the CIGS, and Auchinleck's friend, advised Churchill "that Auchinleck, for all his great qualities and his outstanding record on the Frontier, was not the coming man of the war, as the Prime Minister thought".¹ But Churchill rejected Dill's advice to back Wavell at that juncture and leave Auchinleck in India where his long experience and great abilities as organiser and trainer were sorely needed.

The war chapters of this short book are necessarily highly compressed. They should be read with caution as they contain slips too numerous to detail here. These range from errors of fact such as locating 25th Australian Infantry Brigade in Tobruk in 1941 to wild statements such as: "the Germans had been concentrating on armoured warfare in the years between the wars". Most remarkable is Warner's discovery in Egypt of "a small town close to the coast called El Alamein". Warner also makes some surprising claims, for example, that of "Montgomery's private knowledge that Auchinleck was the better general". Anyone knowing even a little about Montgomery's views on generalship and Auchinleck can only be amazed. He also quaintly states that Auchinleck was "undoubtedly the hurdle between Montgomery and his supporters' vision of him as the greatest military commander since Wellington". Auchinleck can only be judged by what he did achieve in November-December 1941 and July 1942 not by what he might have done if he had known how to handle Churchill and so on. Montgomery's record 1942-45 notwithstanding Enfidaville and Arnhem, is simply in another class.

Warner follows Corelli Barnett's line in *The Desert Generals*. The July battles at Alamein were Auchinleck's victory but Montgomery's defensive victory, Alam Halfa, was won on Auchinleck's plan. No one who was at Alamein in July (as this writer was) ever mistook that stalemate for a victory and as for the planning of Alam Halfa, the naive proposition of Barnett repeated by Warner, was completely demolished by Lord Alexander in his *Memoirs*.² Warner includes this book in his bibliography but does not comment on Alexander's impressive rebuttal.

It would appear that Auchinleck, with all his aggressive qualities, his calm and his moral courage, was not 'at home' in the desert war and in a command which over-burdened him as it had Wavell. On both counts Churchill must bear part of the blame for insisting on Auchinleck to replace Wavell and for his slowness in reorganising the Middle East into a more manageable command. As Warner admits, it was Auchinleck who installed Cunningham then Ritchie as commander of the Eighth Army, who dismissed each of them and who, when Brooke offered him the choice of any officer he cared to name as his CGS, chose an Indian Army man who had never served with the British Army or in the Middle East! Warner does not avoid these difficulties and he does quote the damning judgments of Sir David Hunt and G.P. Smart, both of whom admired Auchinleck as a man but were troubled by his choice of subordinates. His insistence on leaving the inexperienced and inadequate Ritchie in command of the Eighth Army until it was all but destroyed sprang we are told from his 'concern to do the right and fair thing!' Right and fair by Ritchie, but what was right and fair for the Eighth Army and his country's cause? Great commanders look on war through other eyes.

Five of the latter chapters of this book examine Auchinleck's service in India, 1943-48. Warner shows the tragedy of those years including the break-up of Auchinleck's marriage and his awful task of dividing the Indian Army, to which he had devoted his life, between two hostile societies. He leaves one with the strong feeling that India and its army were Auchinleck's true sphere where his great knowledge of the people and their Army, and his love for both, were most fruitfully employed.

A.J. HILL

1. Maj-Gen. Sir John Kennedy, *The Business of War*, London, 1957, p.121.

2. London, 1962, pp. 21-3

George Christensen, Editor. *That's The Way it Was in The History of the 24th Australian Infantry Battalion (AIF)*. Published by the 24th Battalion (AIF) Association, 1982. Recommended price \$20.00.

There have been many unit histories, but this is one with a difference. It is the outcome of a distributed effort, but the reader would not notice differences in style and treatment between the background chapters, the sections dealing with the period from the outbreak of war in 1939 to the first embarkation early in 1943, followed by ten chapters describing the New Guinea campaigns and the last two sections on Bougainville, disbanding the unit and subsequent activities. It is to the credit of the editor that he created such a uniform and harmoniously blended treatise.

Another and more significant difference between this and other unit histories is that *That's The Way It Was* appeal to many people other than those associated with the 24th Infantry Battalion (AIF). The other people are, of course, military historians who can gain a very clear picture, for instance, of the difficulties the units existing at the outbreak of the war found themselves vis-a-viz the Australian "two armies" policy. The book contains information not readily available, such as information relating to equipment schedules (p 175) or the administrative details implied in moving troops over relatively large distances by land or sea or air. (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Particularly useful to the historian are full eyewitness accounts of actions and patrol activities. The report by Lt Looker on page 73 is a case in point.

One can go on and on extolling the good features of this book which is much harder than tearing it to bits. The book in this writer's opinion has no bad features, except for a few irritating ones. For instance the reader would expect when seeing the words "The Brisbane Line" as sub-heading to chapter 4 some mention of Australian overall strategy, but instead he is treated to the admittedly exceedingly useful discussions of the conditions governing the transfer of militia (so-called) soldiers to AIF status, explaining how some units became AIF without the prefix second.

Another irritation perhaps is the very frequent reference to Lt General Sir Stanley Savigde having been a member of the original 24th Battalion in 1915-1919.

The book is well illustrated and well indexed but the mapping effort could have been improved upon, both in quantity and occasionally in quality.

Apart from these very few noticeable blemishes, it is a very good book and well worth the recommended price.

HANS ZWILLENBERG

Available from the 24 BM Association Secretary,
Box 687 E
GPO MELBOURNE, 3001

Geoffrey Serle, JOHN MONASH: A Biography Melbourne University Press. 600 pp. \$27.50.

To one in whose mind John Monash has been established mainly as the composed and almost computer-like planner of successful battles on the Western Front in 1917-1918, it comes as something of a shock to contemplate the disorders of parts of his young years with their succession of failures in university examinations, amorous adventures, emotional and self-scrutinising outpourings in letters and diaries. If, as he makes his way through these disorders to some creditable but not extraordinary achievements in the matter of earning a living there is evidence of greatness to come, this evidence is not easily discernible. By the time the Great War breaks out in August 1914 John Monash himself is beginning to feel that it is possibly too late for him to realise that special destiny he had always believed to be his, that his career is showing all "the signs of a dying fall".

Geoffrey Serle spares no detail as he attempts to reveal the man who has struggled through 49 years to that point; or, rather perhaps, Serle's attempts are to guide and if necessary force Monash to reveal himself through his voluminous letters and diaries, his own actions and words. And clearly revealed the man is both in his strengths and his weaknesses, his faults and his virtues, at the end of something approaching 100,000 words.

When the overweight and ageing Colonel Monash sailed from Melbourne with his 4th Brigade on 22 December 1914, outwardly he cut no great martial figure. Nor did he do so in action on Gallipoli; certainly a factor influencing some of the judgments of his leadership there by the historian, C.E.W. Bean, and others. Serle meticulously examines those judgments against the detailed background of the actions in which Monash and his brigade were involved and concludes "that Monash did rather better on Gallipoli than has generally been believed".

He may very well be right. But one would feel more confident about that if he had not had to work so obviously hard to reach that conclusion; if he had been able to spare a little space critically to compare with Monash, and what he did and did not do, the other brigade commanders on Gallipoli, and what they did and did not do; and but for his suggestion that Bean's judgment was influenced by the fact that Monash was a Jew. True enough, Bean did not like Monash much; but for reasons other than his Jewishness—which did not prevent him giving generously what he thought was due to him on a good many occasions. Monash's judgments of Bean could be much more sweeping and unjustly critical—as when later he was to dismiss his reporting of the fighting at Messines as "the apotheosis of banality. Not only is the language silly tosh, but his facts are, for the most part, quite wrong".

It was from the springboard of Messines, of course, that Monash made his great leap forward into fame as probably the most competent and successful of the twenty corps commanders on the British front (with possibly an even greater unrealised potential). With great skill and industry Serle traces the details of Monash's battles as a divisional and corps commander from Messines to the Armistice, no uninterrupted panegyric but a vividly reasoned analysis of plans and the developments which flowed from them. Nor does he seize on praise lavished on Monash by British military writers to bolster his protagonist—perhaps even errs in the other direction. "Monash's ultimate reputation eventually owed most to the steady advocacy of Sir Basil Liddell Hart, widely recognised as the outstanding military commentator and historian of his generation. . . Liddell Hart had not made any deep investigation and his conclusions were reached largely from discussions with senior British officers. His antipathy to Haig and his bitter clashes with the military establishment perhaps inclined him to extol Monash as the new type of military leader".

Quite rightly Serle devotes significant space to the manoeuvrings of Bean and Keith Murdoch in mid-1918 to get Monash into the overall A.I.F. command in place of Birdwood and to have White appointed to the vital operational Australian Corps command instead of Monash. If he does not seem to recognise clearly enough the anomaly of having Birdwood as a British Army commander continue at the same time in overall command of the A.I.F., there were a good many others before him, on the spot at the time, who fell into the same error. These others were motivated largely by personal considerations—not necessarily unworthy: White by loyalty and utter selflessness; Birdwood by wartime ambitions and hopes for the post-war years; Monash by a soldier's natural desire to clinch his "battle honours" and his conviction (well based) that he was the best man for the fighting job. Ill-judged (as subsequently generously and publicly admitted by Bean) and unduly persistent though the interference by Bean and Murdoch was, their efforts (sincerely motivated) scarcely deserve to be stigmatised "as perhaps the outstanding case of sheer irresponsibility by pressmen in Australian history". (What about, for example in military history alone, Chester Wilmot's efforts to bring Blamey down during the Second World War when there was no other Australian who could have replaced him?)

Serle's touch, however, is magnificently sure when he describes "the great task of repatriation". Here, unobscured by the fog of war, Monash's tremendous organising ability, towering personality and dynamism are in plain view. From the moment he begins that task until the day of his death twelve years later, the many facets of his personality seem to expand and coalesce into a glowing whole which Serle displays before our eyes, seeming to make it revolve there with an even and controlled touch which permits no doubt as to its authority: Monash's work at the S.E.C.; his myriad public activities; his work for Melbourne University; his constant generosity; his love for and joyful empathy with his grandchildren; his mischievous flaunting of the not very attractive Liz; his reluctant acceptance of the need to lie his way out of an awkward situation if there seemed to be no other course open; his wisdom

and serene adherence to his beliefs in the face of many pressures brought to bear upon him during the political stresses of the early Depression days; his dignified acceptance before the approach of death.

The description of Monash's funeral and the national feeling evoked at that time is a fitting climax to a remarkable biography. This book will remain as *the* "Life" of Monash (amply justifying what, at first sight, seems to be its rather daunting bulk). The Monash descendants who (with an integrity and wisdom rare in such circumstances) "were determined that the eventual biographer should have entire freedom to tell the truth, as he saw it, about his subject . . . that nothing should be concealed", can see their trust in that "eventual biographer" as having been richly vindicated.

The reviewer is the author of (inter alia) Volume V of the Army Series of the official history of Australia in the War of 1939-1945. His biography of C.E.W. Bean will be published shortly.

DUDLEY McCARTHY

SOCIETY NOTES

Military Figures

Collectors of military figures will be interested to know that the Buckingham Pewter series of figures by Charles Stadden (see 'Two Vignettes—Sabretache Vol XXI No. 2) are now being manufactured in Australia and include an Australian figure with bases for eight Corps at \$35.00 each.

Details are available from:

Fine Art Selections (Pty) Ltd
PO Box 121, KARRINYUP WA 6018
Please mention Sabretache if you write.

Renewal of Subscriptions 1982-83

Membership subscriptions for 1982-83 were due on 1 July 1982. A large number of members have not yet paid their subscriptions. The Constitution provides (Para 7b) that "*members whose subscriptions are 3 months in arrears shall not receive further publications of the Society until their subscriptions are brought onto a current basis*".

Because of mounting printing costs Federal Council budgets to print only that number of journals needed for financial members. It is not economical to print copies for members whose subscriptions are in arrears and whose intentions to renew are unknown.

If you delay payment of your subscription beyond mid-October you run the risk of not being provided with a copy of the next issue of the journal.

Federal Secretary

The Twenty Fifth Anniversary Display at Albury-Wodonga

In an attempt to encourage as many members of the Society, as possible, to participate in the Silver Jubilee Display to be held during Queen's Birthday weekend of 12th-14th June 1982, the Federal Council chose as the venue the R.A.A.O.C. Museum at Bandiana. This site, being on the Victorian side of the River Murray, was an admirable choice, for not only was it adjacent to the city limits of the Upper Murray Regional Growth Centre of Albury/Wodonga, but was, assumably, central to all the Eastern State Branches of the Society. It too was on the home-ground of the Albury/Wodonga Branch, whose members pitched in, with a will, determined to make the event something to be remembered. Congratulations for initiative go to the Branch on its publicity, for not only did we receive full media coverage, but they organised a Colouring competition, amongst the school-children of the region: the emphasis being on the Society's Exhibition. The results of which were prominently sited, at the Museum, during the weekend. Each winning entrant was presented with a prize at the Opening Ceremony, during which two flag-poles, gifts from the Society to the Museum—as a gesture of thanks and also to commemorate our quarter-centenary—were unveiled.

The Albury/Wodonga Branch was somewhat ham-strung, from an accommodation view-point, for a Wine Walkabout—through the Vineyards of N.E. Victoria—took place on the same weekend and, also as Queen's Birthday heralds the opening of the snow season, every form of Guest accommodation, within an eighty kilometre radius, was booked out well in advance. However this had been taken into consideration and for those of us who were prepared to 'return to the army', we were bedded down at the depot of the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles, almost in the heart of Albury, whilst motel rooms were found for those who wanted a bit more comfort.

Although there was a wide cross-section of Members who travelled great distances for the occasion, it would have been tremendous if we could have had a larger turn up, for it is not every day that a Society celebrates twenty-five years of its existence. Nevertheless those that did make the function enjoyed a memorable weekend. Because of its size the Museum lent itself, grandly, to any display that our Members mounted, albeit we competed with some fascinating aspects of large and small weaponry, together with logistic impediments of war. It was pleasing to see the amount of effort that everyone put into their displays. From ephemera, through tunics and equipment, badges and insignia, Boer War Memorials of Victoria, Canadian Military badges, Medals and decorations, a superb history of the Peninsular War: in all aspects, right up to an exhibit which included the Victoria Cross, Military Medal group of Albury's famous resident—Albert Chalmers Borella. Society Members continually manned a book-stall which included literature, for sale, on most facets of military history. We are grateful to Martin Kennedy and Karen Herkes for the time they gave to man the bookstall.

We were definitely not a "closed shop", for amongst the active participants were representatives of the 2nd/23rd Battalion (Albury's Own) Association. The Military Vehicle Corps of both New South Wales and Victoria who drove their excellently restored war-time transports many hundreds of kilometres, to be with us. There was even a troop of Light Horsemen, dressed in the uniform and equipment of the 20th L.H. Regiment, who not only escorted Brigadier R.D. Milikin when he arrived to open the Display, but performed Musical Rides and bouts of tent-pegging to the delight of the many hundreds of visitors. A number of the local Veteran/Vintage car enthusiasts came along with their car to add colour to the event.

As has now become traditional with gatherings of Society Members, there was a Medal Seminar, chaired by Ian Barnes, with talks on 'Air Force Decorations' by Pat Hall, and 'Foreign Decorations' by Pat O'Rourke, all of the Geelong Branch. A Badge Seminar was chaired by John Haken, of Sydney. These were attended by those Members who were vitally interested in those aspects, causing problems with timings, as the discussions became quite lengthy. There was also an Extraordinary Meeting of Federal Council, chaired by former Federal President, Ian Barnes, with Federal Secretary, Clem Sargent officiating.

The Ordnance Corps' Sergeant's Mess provided a popular watering-hole, where many friendships were made and renewed, as well as Society anecdotes exchanged, whilst warmth was restored into our chilled bodies, for although the weather was favourable: it was still winter-time.



Brigadier R.D. Milikin, Deputy Chief of Logistics (Army Office) inspects Guard of Honour of the Light Horse Troop of 8/13 VMR with Society Secretary Lt Colonel T.C. Sargent (RL). In background is Lt Colonel P.T. Newman E.D., Area Commander.

On the Saturday evening a Society cocktail party was held in the Service's Club, at the Centre, where the Federal Secretary welcomed the guests and read out the many official messages of congratulations. From the Society's view-point the week-end was a resounding success. As an exercise in public relations it could not be faulted. To every Member of the Albury/Wodonga Branch who worked as hard—both at the venue, and in those countless administrative jobs behind the scenes, which gave them little chance to actively participate in the Display—thereby ensuring that nothing went wrong, we thank you. To all ranks of the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps who went out of their way to make us feel at home, as well as the Staff of the Museum, to those who contributed something, no matter how small, to make this a resounding success, you too have our thanks. The writer, for one, is looking forward to the next Society get-together suggested for 1984.

JOHN PRICE

Members Wants

Wanted—information on Servicemen who might have been in the hospital attached to the Glennie Memorial School, Herries Street, Toowoomba during the 1939-45 War.

Dr C. Henderson, Unit 7, 83-85 Helen Street, Lane Cove, NSW, 2066

**Irvine Robert Lee
1925-1982**

With the death of Bob Lee the Society has lost a Member of inestimable worth and we, of the Victorian Branch, a valued friend.

Bob was comparatively unknown by Society Members from outside the Melbourne sphere, yet he was, very much, a keen Member, a past Committee-man and, as we had all hoped, a future Branch President.

Although Bob had a wide interest in military history, his major love was medals and it was in this field that he excelled. For him, as with all true collectors, it was insufficient to own a medal. He had to know the recipient. Consequently he read widely, gleaning crumbs of knowledge from countless sources. Largely self-taught Bob's interest in matters military reached back to his boyhood.

He was very much a family man and a wonderful host. Our last Branch Christmas Party was held at the home of Bob and Gwen Lee and is still spoken of in glowing terms.

His passing has left a gap that can never be filled.

To Gwen, their son Bruce, and daughter Helen and family we send deepest sympathies in our sad loss.—*JOHN E. PRICE.*

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

In reference to the photographs accompanying Robert Williams' note "Australians at the Cape", *Sabretache*, Vol. XXIII No. 1, Jan—Mar 1982, pp.26 and 34, I submit the following information:

Both photographs were taken by Mr Alf. F. Hosking, Bryson Studios. The photograph on page 26 shows this authority, and that on page 34 was reproduced in *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1900*, Dennis Edwards and Co., Cape Town, n.d., p. 38, and is attributed to Hosking.

The only infantry units sent by Australian Colonies departed about October—November 1899 so the photo on page 34 depicts one of these. Queensland sent only mounted troops. Victorian and Tasmanian infantry wore hats turned up to the right, which seems to eliminate them. The coloured collar, snake belt clasp, and V cuffs are shown in D. MacDonald, *The Australasian Contingents in the South African War*, A.P.C., Melbourne, n.d., only in photographs of South Australians, app. pp.606-7. It would therefore seem to be the first S.A. infantry company. Some faces appear recognisable in both photographs. Lt. Col. P.L. Murray, *Official Records of the Australian Military Contingents to the war in South Africa*, Defence Department, Melbourne, 1911, p.343, states that this unit entrained from Cape Town to De Aar on 1 December 1899.

The other photograph on page 26 depicts mounted rifles. Only N.S.W., Victoria and Queensland sent mounted units in their first contingents. The absence of a right-hand turnup of the hat seems to eliminate Victorians, and both N.S.W. and Queensland hats were plumed, so this seems to be a later contingent. MacDonald, op cit., opp. p.610, shows the S.A. second contingent in similar uniform to the men in Mr Williams' photograph. It is possible that Mr Hosking was retained by South Australia to provide a record. Murray, op cit., p.347, states that the South Australian 2nd (MR) contingent disembarked at Cape Town on 25 February 1900 and entrained for De Aar on 2 March 1900.

Max Chamberlain
471 Highbury Road
Mt Waverley, 3149
Victoria

**1983 AWM CONFERENCE AND
AWM-MHSA HISTORICAL
RESEARCH WORKSHOP**

The 1983 Australian War Memorial Conference will be held from 8-12 February 1983. The form will be similar to that of the two previous conferences but more time will be allowed for discussion. It is expected that about the same level of financial support for visiting participants will be available in 1983 as in 1982 but the introduction of sessional attendance fees may help to contain costs for those wishing to be selective in their attendance.

Any corresponding member who is interested in attending the workshop and who has a particular topic which he would like discussed should advise the Federal Secretary before the end of October 1982 of his interest.

Further details of the AWM Conference and the AWM-MHSA workshop will be included in the next issue of *Sabretache*.

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THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

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

ORGANISATION

The Federal Council of the Society is located in Canberra.

The Society has branches in Brisbane, Canberra, Albury-Wodonga, Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide and Perth.

Details of meetings are available from Branch Secretaries whose names and addresses appear on page 2.

SABRETACHE

The Federal Council is responsible for the publication quarterly of the Society Journal, *Sabretache* which is scheduled to be mailed to each member of the Society in the last week of the final month of each issue.

Publication and mailing schedule dates are:

Jan.-Mar. edition mailed in the last week of March.

Jul.-Sept. edition mailed in the last week of Sept.

Apr.-Jun. edition mailed in the last week of June.

Oct.-Dec. edition mailed in the last week of December.

ADVERTISING

Society members may place, at no cost, one advertisement of approximately 40 words in the "Members Sales and Wants" section each financial year.

Commercial advertising rate is \$120 per full page; \$60 per half page; and \$25 per quarter page. Contract rates applicable at reduced rates. Apply Editor.

Advertising material must reach the Secretary by the following dates:

1 January for January-March edition

1 July for July-September edition

1 April for April-June edition

1 October for October-December edition

QUERIES

The Society's honorary officers cannot undertake research on behalf of members. However, queries received by the Secretary will be published in the "Queries and Notes" section of the Journal.

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Society publications advertised in *Sabretache* are available from:

Mr K. White, P.O. Box 67, Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602.

Orders and remittances should be forwarded to this address.

THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Please address all Correspondence to:

The Federal Secretary, P.O. Box 30, Garran, A.C.T. 2605, Australia.

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