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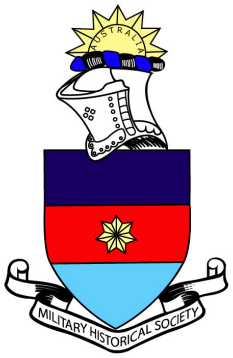
Sabretache



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Journal and Proceedings of the MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

SABRETACHE

Vol XXVIII October/December 1987 Number 4

Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. NBH 0587

SABRETACHE

The Journal and Proceedings of The Military Historical Society of Australia (founded 1957)

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1987
VOLUME XXVIII-NUMBER 4

Contributions in the form of articles, book reviews, notes, queries or letters are always welcome. Authors of major articles are invited to submit a brief biographical note. The annual subscription to *Sabretache* is $26.

Published by authority of the Federal Council of the Military Historical Society of Australia. The views expressed in the articles in this Journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Society.

SABRETACHE

The Editor I would like to start by thanking Alan Fraser for the advice and assistance he has generously provided during the production of this issue. I join with all members in wishing him every success with his own research and writing.

My immediate goal with *Sabretache* is to maintain the high standard of content and presentation set by Alan and previous editors. This ultimately depends on *you*, the members and contributors. *Sabretache* is your journal and its continued success is determined by the enthusiasm of its contributors and readers. Contributions (particularly illustrated material) in the form of articles, letters and reports on branch functions and events are always welcome. Your views on the format and content of *Sabretache* are also invited.

I am looking forward to your continued support.

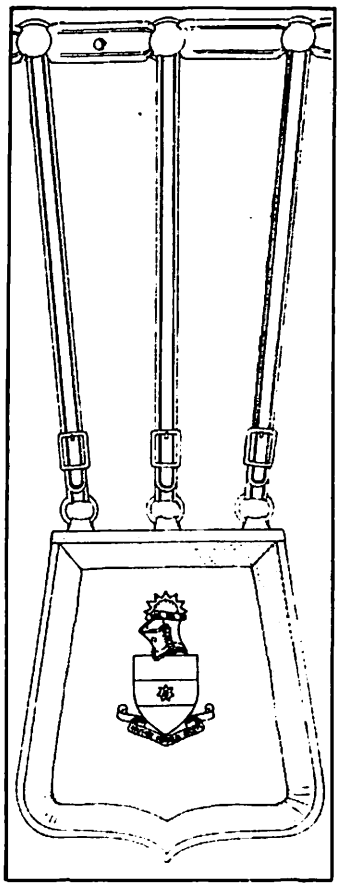
Stephen Allen

Welcome Home Parade An estimated 30,000 Vietnam veterans marched through central Sydney on Saturday 3 October to receive long overdue public and official recognition of their service.

'Unit smokos' preceded the 3 kilometre march through Sydney's streets. Australian veterans were joined by contingents of Vietnamese, American, New Zealand, Thai and Korean ex-servicemen for the march, watched by an estimated 110,000 people. A concert in Sydney's Domain on the Sunday afternoon provided an emotional climax to the reunion.

Congratulations are due to the organisers of the event, and to the many individuals, official and community organisations contributing to the success of the occasion.

Army launches tattoo The 1988 Bicentennial Military Tattoo was launched by a display at the James Hardie 1000 car race at Bathurst during October. The tattoo will commence a tour of Australia in August 1988. Further details of tour dates, venues and costs will be published when they become available.



Infantry Museum Interested persons are invited to visit the Royal Australian Infantry Corps Museum, at the Infantry Centre, Singleton, NSW. The museum was initiated in 1911 and has one of the best collections of infantry weapons in the world. It is open Wednesday to Sunday (inclusive) between 9 am and 4 pm during November to September and is closed during October. Admission is by donation. The two access roads are from the New England Highway at Whittingham, each of Singleton, and from the Putty Road, south of Singleton.

Changi chapel The Roman Catholic chapel from Changi, Singapore, prisoner of war camp is to be erected at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, next to the Anzac Chapel. It will serve as a permanent memorial to all Australian prisoners of war and will be reconsecrated as a chapel for single denomination and interdenominational services.

The chapel was one of three built by prisoners at Changi and was dismantled, crated and shipped to Australia in the care of the Australian War Memorial in 1946, remaining in the AWM's store until a suitable location for it could be selected.

A committee of representatives of the services, the War Memorial and ex-service organisations is seeking to raise sufficient funds to rebuild the chapel and provide for ongoing maintenance. It is planning to lay a foundation stone on Anzac Day 1988 and to consecrate and open the chapel on 15 August 1988, the 43rd anniversary of victory in the Pacific.

Annual Heritage Awards The RAAF has instituted a series of awards to foster and encourage interest in its history and activities. Three categories of award have been established, for art, photography and literature. Prizes of $5,000, $1,000 and $500 are applicable for each of these categories.

Unfortunately, applications for the 1988 awards closed on 31 October. Details of the 1989 scheme can be obtained through any RAAF unit, or by writing to: Directorate Office of the Chief of the Air Staff, A-8-13, Russell Offices, Canberra, ACT 2600.

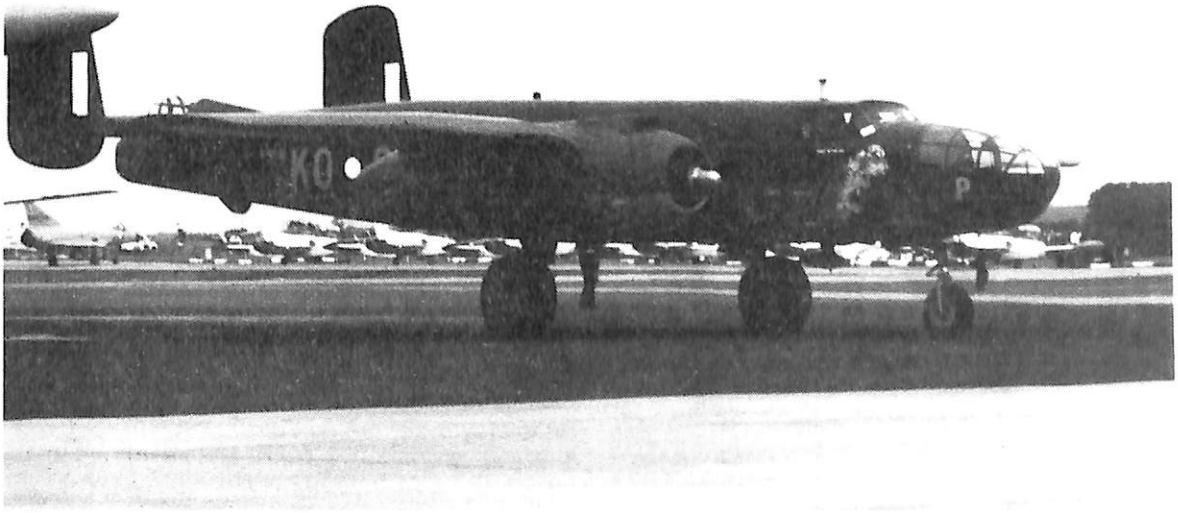
Bicentenary Australia is about to celebrate 200 years of history and no doubt members do not need any reminding! I am sure, however, that the general (and welcome) upsurge of interest in history will encourage a similar increased awareness of Australia's military heritage. I strongly urge society members to take this opportunity to reflect upon and **record** our military history, making 1988 an outstanding year for *Sabretache*.

The July/September issue featured details of the MHSA conference to be held on the 1988 Queen's Birthday weekend, Saturday 11 June to Monday 13 June, in Canberra. *Sabretache* is always prepared to publish advance details of branch activities and functions for 1988, and reports and photographs are welcome.

Brisbane Memorials Two memorials are to be raised in Brisbane's Anzac Square. One will commemorate veterans of the Korean War and South-East Asian conflicts. The other will commemorate veterans of the Vietnam War. The Korean and South-East Asian and Vietnam War Memorial Anzac Square Trust Fund has been set up to erect and maintain the two memorials. Gifts of $2.00 or more made to the Fund before 1 July 1989 are tax deductable.

Return of Mitchell bomber The Australian War Memorial's B25 Mitchell bomber recently returned to Canberra, completing what is likely to be its final flight. The second world war aircraft, representative of a type widely used in the South-West Pacific area, will be placed in protective storage pending its eventual display as a Memorial exhibit.

The Australian War Memorial's North American B25 Mitchell, seen on the ground and in the air at the RAN's 75th Anniversary Air Display at HMAS Albatross, naval air station, Nowra, 1986.
(Photo courtesy of Mr David Simpson)



H.J. Zwillenberg

South Australia's preparedness for imperial war — mobilisation for South Africa

Involvement in the South African conflict proved an excellent test of South Australia's preparedness for imperial war, that is, the extent to which her defence machinery was ready to meet the demands of organising an expeditionary force for service overseas in the interests of empire defence. The social aspects of South Australia's first war have been discussed by Hayden,[1] and the actual war history of that campaign may be read in official records.[2]

The contingents dispatched to South Africa fell into three categories. The first two contingents were equipped and paid from colonial revenue and one contingent, the South Australian Bushmen's Corps, by private subscription. Then there were the Imperial Bushmen, subsidised by the British government, and finally, after federation, came the Commonwealth contingents. The Imperial Bushmen and the Commonwealth contingents received imperial pay, while the earlier contingents received colonial pay.

The organisation of the contingents from South Australia bore little resemblance to the establishments arrived at by the *Inter-Colonial Military Committee* in 1896, or by the conference of the military commandants just prior to the outbreak of the war. It was a question of filling the quota, that is, of filling what had been sanctioned by the legislature including reinforcements. Thus, the first contingent's five officers and 121 other ranks were in excess of the normal company establishment. (Actually six officers sailed, including a Captain Lascelles, an imperial officer attached to the contingent.

Mobilisation took place in three stages, *war probable, war imminent* and *war declared.* During the *war probable* stage the initial political debate, of whether troops were to be sent or not, had to be settled. The government's motion for sending the contingent was opposed, in the lower house of parliament, by ten votes out of 28, and in the upper house the motion was only carried by the casting vote of the president.[3] The *war imminent* stage overlapped the *war probable* stage to some extent, because volunteering had begun before parliament had decided to send troops. During the second stage military stores were assembled and the Lobethal spinning mills went onto two shifts to complete a military order for 400 yards of cloth.[4] *War declared* meant actual mobilisation.

On Friday 13th October, 1899 the selection of volunteers began. It was based on their military shooting ability — only first class shots were considered — and on physical condition. Medical examinations began three days later. A score of civilians also volunteered. There was even 'one individual forcing his way into the ranks full of patriotism and beer. He was promptly rejected on the ground that he was not *bullet proof*'.[5] After medical selection, the men were interviewed by the commandant, Colonel Stuart. Most married men were rejected, among them those who just wanted 'to get away from mum and the kids',[6] and those who borrowed uniforms to impress the selectors. The men went into a camp at the Exhibition Grounds, where training began almost immediately, but weeding continued, so that by the time the contingent sailed the commandant had raised as good a company as anyone could have expected. No information is available describing the type of training undergone by the troops, but it is important to note that within 20 days a company was raised, freshly attested, equipped, organised, allotted transport (two wagons and a watercart), issued with 12 mules, and embarked.

The other colonies mobilised equally quickly, which speaks highly of the administrative capability of the Australian forces as a whole. Military planners had not worked in isolation; the federal defence thinking of senior officers since the eighties had borne fruit. They had been in consultation with each other and the rapidity with which the mobilisation plans were put into operation shows that the military planners, in South Australia at least, were more competent than their predecessors had been in 1885. Admittedly, the task in 1899 was easier. There were no civil defence aspects to consider and no involvement of the whole population. On the other hand, a new set of legal circumstances and the question of repatriation had to be faced. Problems were raised by differences in pay levels for Australian and the English soldiers, and for the first time in Australian history nurses were enrolled.

The attestation (conditions of service) which every soldier was asked to sign, was headed *South*

Australian Volunteer Contingent for South Africa — Army Act 44 and 45, Victoria, Cap 58 — The Defences Act, 1895. Under the *Defences Act 1895* Section 19, officers and soldiers were 'liable to serve in any part of Australia, or Tasmania, but not elsewhere'. However, Section 36 of the *Defence Act* stated that once a soldier had been attested, he was subject to the provisions of the *Army Act* 'as if he had been duly enlisted and attested for Her Majesty's Army for general service, and as if the Force formed part of Her Majesty's Army . . . so far as the same are not inconsistent with this Act'.[7] Attestation was, therefore, essential, since neither the colonial nor the imperial acts met the conditions of the situation.[8]

Section 177 of the *Army Act* allowed for its application within the territorial limits of a colony or in the instance of a colonial force serving with Her Majesty's forces, where the colonial administration had made no provisions for discipline. Doubts had arisen concerning the degree to which the *Army Act* was binding. The Boer War force *had not* been raised for service within territorial limits, and the colonial administration *had* made provisions to discipline the colonial force once it was serving with Her Majesty's forces. However, until the force arrived in Africa, it was both outside territorial limits, and at the same time not serving with Her Majesty's forces. As a result, the legal gap could only be bridged if the volunteers agreed to 'bind themselves from 17th October 1899 and until discharge . . . to be the subject of the provisions of the Army Act'.[9] It must be noted that since the above attestation implied enlistment *for the duration of hostilities,* and not for a set period, it lay outside the provisions of the *Defences Act, 1895,* and therefore should have been subject to a new regulation under the Act, which in turn would have required the approval of both Houses, under Section 38 of the Act. There is no record that such a regulation was passed, and one cannot help but gain the impression that the whole procedure was probably constitutionally illegal. But buried in an avalanche of enthusiasm for the empire, by that time inseparable from the colonists' concern for the security of hearth and home, the legality of the attestation was generally ignored, even by the legislators.

The latter were far more concerned with the *repatriation* aspects of South Australia's first war. Not previously encountered in British military history, repatriation also involved insurance and medical care, as well as preferential civilian employment of the enlistees. The troops were insured for £250 on death or total disability, and £125 for partial disability, against premiums ranging from £15 for the first year of service, to £5 for the second year, and £6.5.0 for the third and successive years. Apparently, the risk of getting killed in action increased with service. The contract awarded to the Citizen Life Insurance Company shows that its first contingent cost the South Australian Government £1,270.[10]

The principle of preferential employment of returned soldiers was an innovation, in keeping with South Australia's reputation as a social laboratory. The government, in reply to a submission by the Reverend J.C. Kirby of Semaphore, did not consider preferential employment to be a *right* —this would have required appropriate legislation —but rather established the principle that *early consideration* be given to the employing of returned servicemen in the government service.[11] Upon return, every man was medically examined. If declared fit, he was given one month's pay upon immediate discharge, otherwise leave on full pay and first class railway passes until medically discharged.[11] Soldiers undergoing medical treatment were attached, for administrative purposes, to the permanent force.[12] Invalids, of which the first contingent had a fair share, were looked after by philanthropists, as far as comforts were concerned, and a group of Adelaide ladies prepared for all servicemen so called comfort kits, containing a flannel shirt, pyjamas, slippers, two pairs of socks, two handkerchiefs, soap, towel, toothbrush and sponge.

The return of the first contingent was anticipated with some trepidation. General Roberts had advised Sydney that the men should 'not be treated to alcoholic stimulants in public houses'[13]: apparently there had been unpleasant scenes elsewhere because morale was not particularly high. In Africa, the Australian contingent had had a rough time. As one soldier wrote home,

> the whole system is rotten, half of the time we were without horses and the other we had only Argentine horses, badly broken in; food not too good, often it was a question of loot, loot, loot . . .[14]

Not surprisingly, there wea a near-mutiny when the first contingent reached Albany and Colonel Tom Price refused to let the troops ashore, although it was generally known that he himself attended an official luncheon in honour of their return.[16]

Mention should be made here of the first South Australian women to go overseas in defence of the Empire. It was a strange arrangement. Although the nurses, referred to in cypher as 'clot birds',[16] were not part of the South Australian contingents, being sponsored purely by private subscription and not by the government,[17] their conditions of service were embodied in a collective agreement, which acknowledged one of them, Sister M.S. Bidmead, as officer commanding and acknowledged the authority of the British medical service on arrival in South Africa.[18] The agreement was to be in force for six months or for two months after

cessation of hostilities, whichever was the sooner. If a nurse refused to return after six months, or left the service during that time, she forfeited her return passage and every nurse had to inform the chief secretary of her whereabouts by the first day of each month.[19] Thus despite the private nature of the nurses contingent, the government maintained some control.

In September 1899, within a fortnight of the imperial government's acceptance of the proffered nursing contingent, nearly thirty applications were received.[20] All unsuccessful applicants received beautifully worded letters of appreciation from the government, while the six nurses who were selected sailed for South Africa on the *Australasian* in January 1900. In a subsequently published letter Sister Bidmead sought to discourage the dispatch of further nurses — there had been an avalanche of applications after the news of raising the fourth contingent had become public[21] — because there were too many nurses in Africa already. Her surprise at the fact that the nurses were assigned military rank[22] implied that the medical corps in South Australia had not kept up to date.

The cost of equipping and transporting one nurse to and from South Africa, and paying her a salary of 15/- per week, was estimated at £106.10.0.[23] This meant that the total cost of sending six nurses to South Africa was between £630 and £635.[23] By 30th June, 1900, about £1,285 had been received in donations to the Nurses Fund and the balance stood at £880.[24] After the fund was finally wound up the credit balance was transferred to the Bushmen's Corps,[25] a private army raised for empire defence.

The idea of forming a *Mounted Bushmen's Corps* apparently originated in London, where resident Australians decided to raise the necessary funds by private or, if necessary, public subscription.[26] As a result £10,000 became available for distribution among the colonies.[27] Sydney residents also embraced the scheme and 'in order that the movement might assume a Federal character', South Australia was asked to cooperate.[28] Within a fortnight the Lord Mayor of Adelaide had convened a meeting of leading citizens at which £1,575 of the estimated £5,000 necessary to put 100 all ranks into the field were promised. An executive committee was also formed and charged with the responsibility of selecting both personnel and horses. Some 40 horses were presented as a gift. The government, having already put two contingents into the field, did not feel justified in subsidising the movement directly, but offered considerable indirect assistance[29] in the form of free postage and stationery, and railway transport for men, horses and any gifts of produce assigned to the corps. The government also undertook to train the troops and to look after pay arrangements.[30]

Officers were not appointed until just before the corps sailed for South Africa. Subalterns were taken from the ranks of sergeants serving in the South Australian army. Since the officer commanding was to be a captain, none of the serving officers of superior rank could be considered. Meanwhile none of the serving captains, nor subalterns for that matter, fulfilled the pre-requisite of being genuine bushmen. Consequently a civilian had to be chosen, one S.G. Hubbe, who was later killed at Ottoshoop.[31 32] The contingent which on 7th March 1900 embarked on the *Maplemore* consisted of four regimental and two non-combatant officers, eleven non-commissioned officers, 83 other ranks, 120 horses and two transport waggons, but no weapons. These were to be issued in Africa, from the imperial ordnance depots.

Several features of the Bushmen's Corps seem worthy of comment. Firstly, the majority of its members were over 25 years of age, the explanation being that men over 25 were supposed to be in better physical condition and more mature, and thus better fitted to carry out the task of the corps. This is difficult to accept, because patrol work in particular makes very heavy demands on the physical stamina of a man and a person under 25 years would, surely, have been preferable for this reason.

It must also be remembered that this corps, setting forth to defend the Empire, was a private enterprise. A comparison with the first contingent, where most of the recruits came from the working class,[33] seems to lend support to the view that the formation of the corps was undertaken as the rich man's contribution to empire defence. Perhaps it was a reaction against periodic accusations by the radicals that wealthy colonists, in particular the well-to-do rural middle class, sought to stay aloof from the defence effort. That the members were more able, financially, to go a-soldiering might be deduced from their willingness to accept less pay than was received by the other contingents.

However, public acclaim for the Bushmen's Corps was more likely to be due to other factors. In the first instance, there was a general enthusiasm for the empire at that time, fanned by such people as Rudyard Kipling. The *Observer* when comparing Robert Buchan with Kipling, described the public appeal of the latter in the following words:

> Mr Kipling causes his readers to see and feel, he expresses kind ideas in strong vigorous diction. He places his finger on the pulse of the public and records the heart-beat of a nation.[34]

The reverses suffered by the British troops in Africa at that time accelerated the heart-beat of the nation. The pyrrhic victory at Caesar's Camp on 6th January, where the British casualties were almost twice those of the Boers,[35] and the loss of 1,200 British at Spion Kop, where ' . . . with an unerring instinct the British were tackling the most formid-

able hill in the whole line of the Tugela heights',[36] had come shortly after Black Week in December 1899.[37] In South Australia, as elsewhere, people seemed to react in a manner similar to that experienced in 1940 after the fall of France — of the bonds of empire loyalty[38] and of defeat patroitism was born.[39]

But perhaps the most important factor in the raising of the bushmen's Corps was its being regarded as a people's corps, manned by volunteers motivated raising of the Bushmen's Corps was its being regby 'warm patriotism',[40] and raised by public subscription, *not* by the government. Then, as now, the latter was not really regarded as being 'of the people'. The press rather scathingly silenced those who belittled the idea proposed by a patriotic South Australian, J.C.F. Johnson, that a *gentlemen's corps* should be raised from the well-to-do members of the community who would pay for their own equipment and passage to South Africa.[41] After comparisons with Colonel Roosevelt's *Rough Riders,* who were either millionaires or sons of millionaires, the press thought it right and proper that people living on unearned incomes should enrol themselves in a special force. 'Don't let us call it the Gentlemen's Corps, don't let us have any cheap smears about. Let us rather wish success to the *Australian Self-supporting Rough Riders'* (author's italics).[42] Although that force was never formed, South Australians came to regard the Bushmen's Corps in the same way. It was their own personal contribution, raised, equipped and dispatched by their own efforts; in other words, an expression of the self-supporting principle.

Prior to federation, South Australia was to dispatch to South Africa one more contingent, the fourth, diametrically opposite in concept to that of the Bushmen's Corps. It was a mercenary unit, raised on behalf of the British government, which undertook to defray the pay and other expenses.[43]

Imperial pay at the Cape Colony and in Natal was 1/2d per man per day, and was only raised to 5/- during active service. The term of enlistment for the fourth contingent was 12 months or 'for the duration', whichever was the longer. The British government soon realised the pay was too low and asked the colonies whether they had promised the troops any other emoluments. Queensland had already undertaken to make up the pay to the level of the previous contingents, New South Wales was considering doing the same, but Victoria declined, as did South Australia, asking instead that full service pay be given from the day of departure. Eventually, a compromise solution was found: the pay was to be higher than normal imperial pay, but less than the pay awarded to the first two contingents.

The fourth contingent was raised on the population quota formula, which at that time was one soldier for every 1858 heads of population, thus —

	No. of people	No. to furnish
New South Wales	1,348,400	725
Victoria	1,162,900	625
Queensland	482,400	260
South Australia	370,700	200
Tasmania	182,300	95
Western Australia	171,000	95
		2,000 men

The organisation of this force (121 all ranks per company) was based on the Royal Warrant of 24th December 1899, the authority for the formation of a *Corps of Imperial Yeomanry.* Consequently, New South Wales furnished six companies, Victoria five, Queensland and South Australia two each, with Tasmania and Western Australia together, one. It was a brigade organisation of four battalions with four companies each. Thus, of two battalions, New South Wales and Queensland contributed one and a half and half a battalion respectively. Victoria furnished one battalion, while its fifth company, together with the two companies from South Australia, and the combined Tasmania/Western Australia company formed the last battalion.[44] Battalion staffs were furnished by the colony which supplied the major portion of the troops. Thus a South Australian officer, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Rowell, was given command of the fourth battalion of the brigade, eventually to be known as the Imperial Bushmen's Corps.

As a brigade exercise, the dispatch of the fourth contingent did not proceed as smoothly as had those of the previous, smaller, and almost independent, contingents. There was confusion regarding the funds the contingent was to take with it and regarding the scale of issue of forage, and no thought had been given to remittance arrangements.[45] The absence of federal control and coordination was making itself felt.

It was not only men that the South Australian military had to mobilise. For the second and subsequent contingents, horses had to be selected also. Contrary to British practice, where the colonels personally selected the horses,[46] the government appointed a *Remount Committee.* By May, 1900, the Committee had selected 196 troop horses and 16 transport horses, averaging £13.13.7 and £26.0.0 respectively.[47] As had happened on previous occasions, the business community was not slow to try to sell to the government anything from rifles and tea canteens, to jam and canned meat. [48:52]

Thus, in a matter of six months South Australia had contributed some 560 men and 450 horses for active service in South Africa and had incurred an expenditure, both fiscal and public, of some £30,000, of which transport was the major item.[53] There is no point in comparing this effort with those of 1914 and 1939, because the concept of total war was not recognised at the turn of the

century. It is merely suggested that the rapidity with which the contingents were raised, equipped and dispatched spoke well of an army organisation which was obviously prepared for imperial war.

References

(Legend: R = Register; O *Observer;* GD Government Despatches; HA Hansard; CSC Chief Secretary's Correspondence; * Secondary sources)

1. * A.P. Hayden, *South Australia's First War . . . .*, University of Adelaide, Hon. Thesis, 1962
2. * P.L. Murray (ed), *Official Records of Australian Military Contingents to the War in South Africa,* Melbourne, 1911
3. HA. 5.10.1899
4. O. 14.10.1899
5. O. 21.10.1899
6. *Ibid*
7. SA. Statutes 643/1895
8. HA. 17.10.1899
9. We bind ourselves from 17th October, 1899, and until discharged to be subject of the provisions of the Army Act . . . as if we had been severally attested for Her Majesty's Army for general services . . . and as if the South Australian Volunteer contingent formed part of Her Majesty's Army . . .
   (Attestation for South Africa October, 1899)

   O. 28.10.1899
10. CSC/1/286, 1109/1900
11. CSC/1/1185/1900
12. O. 6.10.1900
13. O. 24.11.1900
14. *Ibid*
15. O. 1.12.; 8.12.1900
16. GD/0/tel. 16.1.1900
17. CSC/1/40, 47, 262/1900
18. GD/0/tel. 22.1.1900
19. CSC/1/52/1900
20. CSC/1/1060/189
21. CSC/1/474/1900
22. O. 26.5.1900
23. This total included the following items

Return passage	£62.0.0
Uniform	18.0.0
Insurance	4.0.0
Emergency items	3.0.0
Salary	19.10.0
	$106.10.0

   From their salary, the nurses drew only £2 per month; the remainder was credited to their accounts as deferred pay.

   O. 3.2; 7.7.1900
24. *Ibid*
25. CSC/1/185/1900
26. CSC/1/14/1900
27. CSC/1/105/1900
28. E.G. Blackmore, *The Story of the South Australian Bushmen's Corps 1900,* Adelaide, 1900, p 5 (State Library of S.A. — Z Collection)
29. *Ibid.*, p 6
30. CSC/1/628/1900
31. E.G. Blackmore, *op. cit.* pp 10-11
32. O. 20.10.1900
33. O. 21.10.1889
34. O. 27.1.1900
35. * P.L. Murray, *op. cit.*, pp 343 ff
36. * R. Kruger, *Goodbye Dolly Gray,* London, 1959, p 186
37. Modder River, 28th November, Stormburg Junction, 9th December, Magersfontein, 10th December, Colenso, 12th December.
38. R. 15.12.1899; O. 19.12.1899
39. * A.P. Hayden, *op. cit.*, p 46
40. O. 10.3.1900
41. *Ibid*
42. O. 31.3.1900
43. CSC/1/270/1900
44. CSC/1/83/1900
45. CSC/1/270/1900
46. CSC/1/308, 314/1900
47. CSC/1/608/1900
48. CSC/1/330/331/1900
49. CSC/1/335/1900
50. CSC/1/1437/1900
51. CSC/1/63, 180/1900
52. CSC/1/1133/1899
53. The cost to the government of shipping the second contingent was about £4,820, made up as follows -

8 officers at £25 each	£ 200.0.0
110 other ranks at £14.2.0 each	1,552.0.0
142 Horses at £12.10.0 each	1,775.0.0
19,363 cubic feet cargo space at 50/- per 40 cubic feet	1,210,3.9
Extra accommodation	70.8.6
Loading expenses for horses	11.1.0
	£4,818.13.3

   CSC/1/478/1900

James Ritchie Grant

Awards of the Volunteer Officers Decoration and Volunteer Long Service Medal in Western Australia

The state of Western Australia was founded in 1829 as the Swan River Colony, and from this date until early in 1863 protection against attacks by natives was provided by small detachments of soldiers from regiments of the British Army based in New South Wales or Tasmania.

The garrisoning troops which were spread throughout the colony in small detachments were as follows:

63rd Regiment of Foot	1 coy	1829–33
21st Regiment of Foot	2 coy	1833–40
51st Regiment of Foot	2 coy	1840–47
96th Regiment of Foot	1 coy	1847–49
99th Regiment of Foot	1 coy	1849–56
12th Regiment of Foot	1 coy	1856–63
20th Company, Sappers & Miners		1854–62

The small size of these detachments was adequate as no external threat existed at that time.

The need for the raising of local defence forces did not arise until the middle of 1861 when the British Government announced its intention of withdrawing the last regular troops from Western Australia by 1862. These were the company of the 12th Foot under the command of Captain D. Downing and the 20th Company Sappers and Miners, under the command of Lieutenant H. Wray. The latter in addition to their rather nominal defence role had been responsible for the supervision of all major civil works projects carried out during the ten years that they had been based in the west.

Paradoxically the former apprehension of attack by Aborigines was being replaced by the fear of an invasion of the colony by a foreign power.

Six companies of volunteers were raised in the months following the announcement; of these, three failed to attain the necessary standard for acceptance and the surviving units, two infantry companies, one each at Perth and Fremantle, and one cavalry unit of about 40 men at Pinjarrah, two days ride from Perth, were gazetted on various dates during the latter half of 1862.

The first steps taken, the units settled down to acquiring a suitable degree of military proficiency and it was not until 12 years had passed that the issue of a medal for long service came to public notice. This was first suggested by a Fremantle volunteer in a letter which was published in the *Inquirer* on 18 February 1874. The writer proposed that volunteers who had served for at least 10 years, and whose conduct had given satisfaction to their Commanding Officer, ought to be issued with such a medal, subject to the approval of His Excellency the Governor, and the announcement of the award published in the *Government Gazette*.

A proposed design had been drawn up and was available for inspection in the newspaper's office. The medal was to be made of silver and of the same size as that issued to the Regular Forces, i.e. the British Army, for long service. The obverse was to bear the Queen's head and the legend 'Victoria. Dei Gratia. Brit Reg F.D.' and the reverse was to have a wreath of palm and laurel leaves surmounted by a crown. Above the crown were the words 'For God and Country' and below the wreath 'For long service and Good Conduct'. The recipients's name and date of the award would be engraved on the end of the medal which would be hung from a blue ribbon with a red central stripe, the whole to be suspended from a clasp bearing the name of the Governor of the colony at the time the award was made.

This was the sole mention of this medal and nothing further is known. The suggestion was not taken up by the Government of Western Austraia, although a local long service medal had been on issue in Victoria since 1863.

It was not until 24 May 1894 that the Royal Warrant of 25 July 1892 instituting a Volunteer Officers' Decoration for officers of the Volunteer Force in the United Kingdom was extended to the Volunteer Forces of the Empire. The colonial decoration differed from the United Kingdom issue in that the cypher read VRI instead of VR. The decoration and the subsequent long service medal both retained the dark green ribbon of the British issue.

Two days later, on 26 May 1894, Special Army Order 85 announced the institution of a medal for other ranks and for officers who did not qualify for the Volunteer Officers' Decoration. Eligibility for this medal was extended to the Volunteer Forces of

Volunteer Long Service Medal (photograph courtesy of Tom Bradshaw).

the Empire on 13 June 1896 and these two awards were on issue in Western Australia until replaced in the latter half of 1899 by the Colonial Auxiliary Forces Decoration and Medal. Although the colonial issue of the Volunteer Long Service Medal, which differed from the United Kingdom issue in that the obverse bore the legend 'Victoria Regina et Imperatrix', was not officially approved for the colonies until 1896, the Headquarters of the Western Australian Defence Force issued regulations on 2 November 1894 governing the issue of the medal in which it was stated that it had been approved for the colony. Notwithstanding this, no medals appear to have been issued until November 1896.

A total issue of 30 awards have been traced — five decorations and 25 medals, and the breakdown of recipients, by units is as follows:

Perth Artilllery Volunteers

Captain William A. Stone	V.O.D.	27.12.1894

No. 1 Battery, Field Artillery

Major Edward W. Haynes	V.O.D.	22.06.1897

Fremantle Artillery Volunteers

Sergeant John McCarthy	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896

1st Infantry Regt. "A" and "B" Coys (Perth Infy)

Sergeant George Bandy	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Private W. Bicknell	V.L.S.M.	22.06.1897
Bugler Robert Houston	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Lieut. John F. Shaw	V.L.S.M.	1898
Hon. Major Thomas Sherwood	V.O.D.	27.12.1894
Colour-Sgt John T. Smith	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Colour-Sgt Henry Stokes	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Major John C. Strickland	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Corporal John R. Wallis	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Hon. Major Richard A. Scholl (R.L.)	V.O.D.	27.12.1894

1st Infantry Regt "C" and "D" Coys (Fremantle Infy)

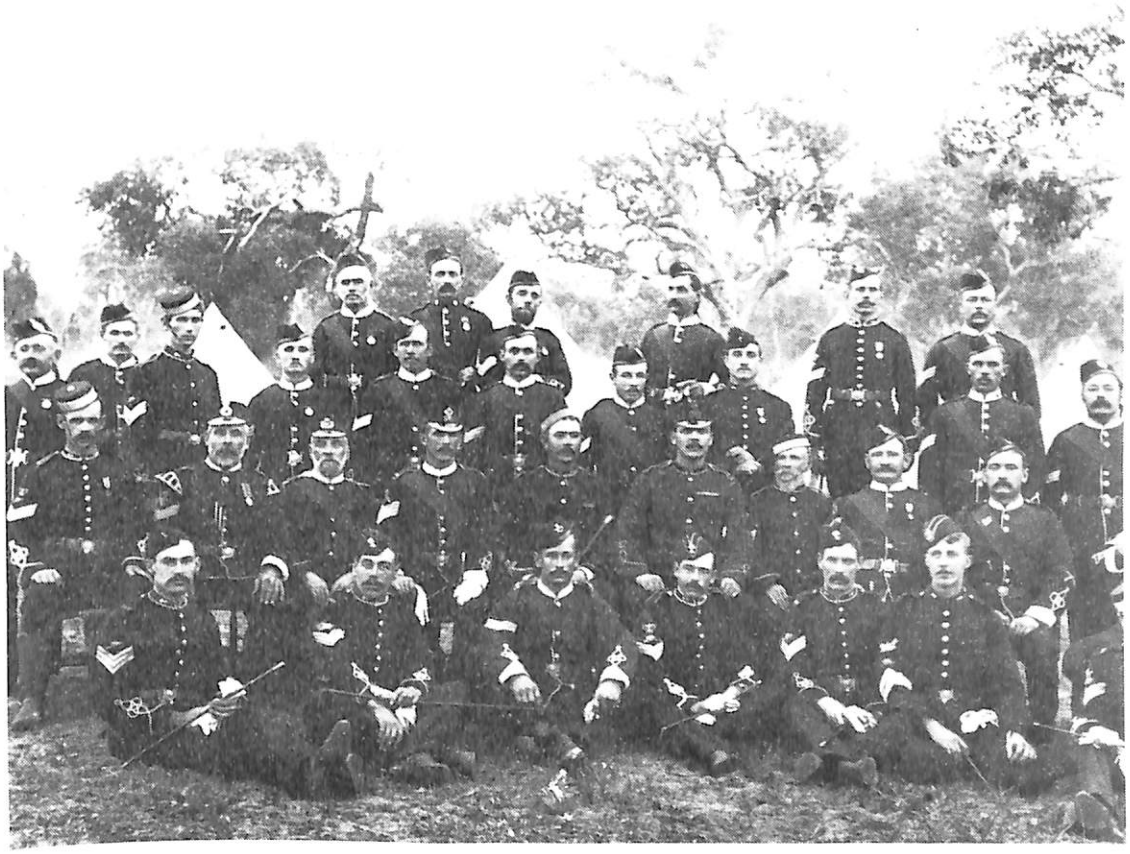
Colour-Sgt Henry J. Allpike	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Private George J. Bell	V.L.S.M.	24.05.1899
Sergeant Richard Birch	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Sergeant William Caple	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Bandmaster Patrick H. Fay	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Colour-Sgt William A. George	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Colour-Sgt William J. Nugent	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Hon. Captain Francis J. Townsend	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896

1st Infantry Regt. "E" and "F" Coys (Guildford Infy)

Major Stephen Gardiner	V.O.D.	27.12.1894
Corporal Henry Mead	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Captain James H. Munday	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
Captain Frederick J. Read	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896
QM Sgt William Young	V.L.S.M.	15.11.1896

Geraldton Rifle Volunteers

Sergeant Henry Critch	V.L.S.M.	22.06.1897
Colour-Sgt David Hepburn	V.L.S.M.	May 1898
Lieut. William Jose	V.L.S.M.	24.05.1898



NCOs of the Western Australian Defence Force, Karrakatta Camp, Easter 1898. Four men can be seen wearing their Volunteer Long Service Medals (back row, left-hand side) and a similar number with 1897 Jubilee Medals (photograph courtesy of the Army Museum of WA Inc.).

Headquarters Band

Bandmaster Thomas Bryan V.L.S.M. 15.11.1896

No. 1 Battery, Field Artillery was formerly the Perth Artillery Volunteers, and the Perth, Fremantle and Guildford Infantry were previously independent two-company Rifle Volunteer Corps. bearing their town names.

Twenty-seven of these were presented at special parades in Perth on the five occasions mentioned above. The presentation dates of the remaining three have not been traced.

At least three Volunteer Long Service medals have survived, these are the ones issued to Sergeants R. Birch and G. Bandy and to Lieut. W. Jose. The first two medals are named in engraved upright capitals thus:

HOSPTL SERGT R. BIRCH W.A. VOL. INFANTRY
SERGT G. BANDY W.A. VOL. INFANTRY

and the third in engraved sloping capitals

LIEUT. WILLIAM JOSE GERALDTON RIFLES

The small number of awards issued is commensurate with the low total strength of the Western Australian Defence Force. In 1862 it stood at 144 and in 1900, when it consisted of a mounted infantry regiment, two field batteries, one garrison artillery company and five infantry battalions it was still only 2111.

This small but well trained force was incorporated into the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 March 1901.

Sources:

Newspapers —
The Inquirer 18 February 1874
The West Australian 28 December 1894
16 November 1896
24 June 1897
4 June 1898
25 May 1899

Western Australian Government Gazette
21 December 1894
3 June 1898
2 June 1899

Western Australian Yearbook 1898

B.H. Travers

Some reflections on the defence of Australia 1900-1910 in the light of lessons from the Boer war

In the early years of the nineteenth century most colonists in Australia had been of the opinion that the defence and the foreign policy of the colonies were the responsibility of Great Britain alone. However, in the second half of the century, the growing wealth of the Australian colonies as a result of pastoral expansion and the discovery of gold, the drive towards self government and various international events, such as the Crimean war, the Maori wars of 1859, the American scares of 1859 and 1861 and the Franco-Prussian war, caused the more thoughtful citizens to express concern about the defence of the Australian colonies and to demand the establishment of volunteer forces. The public debates were translated into action particularly on three occasions: after the Crimean war; in the mid eighteen sixties; and after the withdrawal from the colonies of the Imperial regiments in 1970.[1]

The debates were ongoing. However, those in the New South Wales parliament at the time of the Soudan expedition in 1885, and in all the colonies at the time of the Boer war and Boxer rebellion fifteen years later, show clearly that many settlers in Australia were by then well aware that defence, particularly naval defence in the Pacific area, was now a matter of major concern.

The increasing spread of German influence in northern New Guinea and the Pacific islands to the east, the gradual 'awakening' of China and the demonstration of the growing power of Japan, as later revealed by the war with Russia in 1904-5, added to this apprehension. But in 1901 the young Commonwealth of Australia had many pressing problems, most of them considered to be more pressing than the difficult decisions of how to defend such a large continent. Not only were the military and naval decisions awkward to solve, but the related fiscal decisions necessary to execute any defence policy were sufficiently obscure to cause defence to be placed in the 'too hard' basket. Certainly expense played a large part in all early debate.

Moreover, the party political system was not yet so well established for any government to act with decision and despatch — hence there was almost a decade of seeming deferments and amendments before the Defence Act was to be finalised in 1909-10.[2]

Although in the first decade of the life of the Commonwealth there were eight changes of prime minister, and as many changes of minister for defence, all political parties basically saw the answers to defence problems in somewhat similar terms: compulsory military training for all young men; an Australian naval squadron but somehow within the Royal Navy; the creation of permanent and citizen forces (both army and navy) which would be 'liable to be employed on active service and in the defence and protection of the Commonwealth and of the several states'; the officers for these permanent forces to be trained at a military or naval college to be set up; the establishment of a separate school of instruction 'for the training of an instructional staff of non-commissioned officers'.[3]

Between 1901 and 1909 there were many defence debates in federal parliament. An act was passed in 1903, amended in 1904, argued about in 1906 and 1907 and finally amended in 1909. So the Act, cited as the *Defence Act 1903-1909,* was not a hurried decision. The debates, however, were marked by the inexperience of parliamentarians of all parties in defence matters and met at the same time by the fierce determination of all to keep control of Australian forces in Australian hands.[4]

To some extent there was a national dilemma. Australia wanted its own forces, as was demonstrated by the cultural nationalism aggressively being propagated by the republican approach of supporters of *The Bulletin* at the time of federation. Yet Australian society was still proudly of British origin and patently in favour of maintaining imperial links. Moreover, the deep concern about the 'yellow peril', as shown by the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901, made many Australians realise how isolated they were in the event of war; imperial assistance would be needed. Again, others could see solid advantages by remaining partly tied to the Empire, because a full scale separate defence would only be a drain on the new federal treasury. Others again even more realistically worked out that there would be very little left for the Commonwealth to spend on defence after section 87 of the constitution — the so-called Braddon clause — which required that, for the first decade of federation, three quarters of the revenue from customs and excise raised by the Commonwealth had to be returned to the states.[5]

It is against this historical background and in this political climate of the new federation that the lessons of the Boer war and the military experiences of the 16,463 Australians who served in South Africa should be considered.[6]

Writing in 1927 S.A. Palazzi, who was a saddler sergeant in the NSW Infantry Company which had gone to South Africa in October 1899, said: 'The South African war was a blessing in disguise. Had the South African war not taken place it is extremely probable that the great defects found by this war to exist in the organisation, training and equipment of the British Army would not have been disclosed. Had our forces been in the same unprepared state when the Great War came the result would have been immediate and irretrievable disaster. The South African war made it manifest to the whole world that Great Britain no longer had to fight its wars alone, but had become the Mother of many sons who were ready to spring to action when danger threatened. And what is probably unique in the World's history, the Boers themselves later became one of the integral parts of the Empire and fought side by side with their former enemies in the common cause'.[7]

Captain William Holmes, also of the NSW Infantry Company, in letters home gave three separate examples of the poor training of the British troops. About the Modder River debacle on 28 November 1899 he wrote that the British brigade was 'brought up in close order right on to the Boer position, the result being that two companies of the Black Watch were decimated . . . I was speaking to a young subaltern of the Gordons who was in the fight and he practically described the men as an army of lions led by asses'. Later, Holmes wrote about the 'culpable lack of dash and enterprise of the Cavalry and Royal Horse Artillery' and that in the opinion of the Australians the British cavalry were 'too slow to catch worms . . . our fellows call them the "wait a bits" '.On his return to Australia in August 1900 Holmes also told the press 'the British Tommy was an inferior soldier to the Australian. The former was a highly oiled piece of machinery who under good officers will do anything required of him, but placed on his own resources he often fails to wriggle out of tight corners. On the other hand the training and the nature of employment of the Australians enables them to use their own judgement at a critical time and so elude disaster'.[8]

Whether Holmes and Palazzi's comments are valid for the British Army is not really relevant to the consideration of Australian experiences. In so far as organisation was concerned the war had started with units raised on a *colonial* basis but had ended with the raising of several *Australian* units. Whether colonies had wished it or not, the earliest colonial units to arrive in South Africa had been amalgamated by the British commanders and treated as an *Australian regiment* for four months to simplify the 'administrative work of units from Australia . . . [but] as later contingents have arrived it has been thought desirable that in future troops from individual colonies should as far as possible work together'. So said the Official Records; as more troops arrived from each colony, the units would become larger and so *colonial* identity was 'desirable'. But all the colonial units were to become part of a mounted infantry brigade and treated as *Australian*.[9]

The belief expressed by some regular British officers and by certain officials of the British Colonial Office (prior to the acceptance of the offer of troops) that soldiers from the Australian colonies would be untrained and undisciplined was turned aside by the quality of the battle performance of many of the units. However, there were plenty of times where the Australian soldier did not take kindly to the leadership of, or orders from, British officers. Holmes' letters often spoke of this. The troops, though, showed a quick capacity to learn from experience and a quite disciplined approach to the performance of their duties — both qualities remarked upon favourably by senior British officers.

Also officers from Australia gained valuable experience in the art of warfare. Those who were later to hold senior ranks in the AIF in World War I included: as divisional commanders, Bridges, Legge, Holmes, Chauvel; as staff officers, White and Bruche; as brigade commanders, C.H. Brand and T.W. Glasgow; and as senior surgeons, W.D. Williams and N. Howse.

The tactical and administrative experience they gained was to be of great value in 1914. Bridges particularly fought very hard in 1910 at a conference of officers under the direction of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in pointing out that imperial training methods did not necessarily meet Australian requirements and that expeditionary forces contributed by Australia in wartime should 'not be tied to the protection of lines of communication unless they directly served their compatriots'. Obviously he was remembering the forces at Camp Enslin in early 1900! He also spoke strongly against the fragmentation of Australian contingents when they were scattered through British formations.[10]

In tactics it soon became obvious in South Africa that more attention had to be given to fire and movement by sub-units in order to cope with the accurate fire power of the new rifles (both Boer and British). Holmes particularly was to take up this feature in the musketry training of the infantry soldiers. The lesson of trench warfare demonstrated at Magersfontein, where 'barbed wire and trenches too long to be outflanked' forced a stalemate, was apparently not learnt by French, Haig, William Robertson, Wilson, Smith Dorrien, Byng,

Hamilton and Allenby — all of whom became senior commanders in the trenches of World War I.[11]

The difficulty of crossing open ground covered by accurate sniper fire and more so by 'pom pom' fire was shown for the first time. The various Australian mounted infantry units showed that the speed of horses could overcome it partly. But few among the senior commanders seem to have realised that mobility on the battlefield was being altered by improvements in the volume of fire from both magazine rifles and machine guns. By 1914 the machine gun was so developed as virtually to remove the cavalry from the battlefield until the tank was invented to counter the volume of fire and to restore some mobility.

Sniper fire too had shown that uniforms must be changed from glamorous cloth to purposeful khaki. And despite being ordered to leave swords and other such accoutrements behind at Cape Town in early 1900 and realising that this was sensible, the Australians were to go to New Guinea in 1914 with swords![12]

However, the major lesson learnt was that of man management. It is said that about 15,000 of the 22,000 men lost by the British died of disease, particularly enteric fever.[13] The lines of communication from Cape Town and Durban were very long and vulnerable to attack — as the Boer commandos often showed — and they were poorly organised, at least until 1901. The result was poor rations for men and little forage for horses, causing unnecessary illnesses to both. Medical arrangements were average; and although the Australian Medical Service was considered by comparison with the rest to be very good and well organised, it did have to rely on the assistance of Boer women for nursing duties. And although Hamilton was at the end of a very long and difficult line of communication for many months, apparently he did not learn the need for thorough organisation of such communications, if the Gallipoli campaign is considered!

Finally, the question of control of Australian troops in time of war was thrust into the foreground by the trial of Breaker Morant and Handcock. This was to be the last occasion Australian discipline was not under Australian control — though there were many attempts to alter that in both World I and World War II.

As Sergeant Palazzi said, 'the South African War proved a blessing in disguise' — for many future Australian soldiers and for the training of the militia which the new Commonwealth called up from 1909.

Notes

1. Material for this summary can be found in Manning Clark, *A history of Australia, Vol V passim*; Scott, *A short history of Australia*, pp 308-351; Meaney, *The search for security in the Pacific*, pp 1-44; C.D. Coulthard-Clark, *A heritage of spirit, passim*; D.M. MacCallum 'Some aspects of defence in the eighteen fifties in NSW', *Arts*, The Journal of Sydney University Arts Association, Vol 7 1972; Coleman and Knight, *Short history of military forces in NSW from 1788 to 1953*. Also debates in NSW parliament, especially Rev. J. Dunmore Lang, 20 Dec 1859, who stated that 'it is simply impossible for Great Britain to protect her upwards of fifty different colonies . . . he had no faith in a colonial militia . . .'
2. Meaney, p 42.
3. *Defence Act 1903-1909*, Section 45 and Section 152.
4. Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants*, pp 82 et seq. The census of 1891 showed that Australian-born sons and daughters made up the majority of the population.
5. Meaney, p 7 and p 42.
6. Meaney, p 36 gives the number as 16,463. Wallace, p 2, gives 16,175. Official Records, p 578 gives 16,463 with 16,357 horses and 188 guns.
7. *Back to Wagga souvenir*, issued 1927. The South African War 1899-1902, from notes supplied by courtesy of S.A. Palazzi, Esq.
8. William Holmes Papers (held by the author). Letters to his wife, 13 Dec 1899, 19 Dec 1899, 18 May 1900, 10 June 1900. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Aug 1900.
9. Official Records, pp 214-219.
10. Coulthard-Clark, p 86. Bridges was to fight this point hard for the AIF in 1914, passing the task to Birdwood. Later Blamey was to continue in 1939.
11. R. Kruger, *Goodbye Dolly Gray*, London 1959, pp 511-512.
12. The author's father wearing a sword landed outside Rabaul on 11 Sep 1914. After a few minutes he sent the 'bloody thing' back to the ship, only to find later that it was believed to have been the first German sword captured in World War I.
13. Kruger, p 507.

Trevor Turner

The Transvaal war — a Hymn

Much has been written about war and its many aspects, particularly during the last 80 years. Much of this has been in the form of the 'Official History', whilst others have taken form as souvenir books and specialist publications. Many others have appeared as personal reminiscences or unit histories, books by soldiers, about their particular war. Some, but much less popular today, it seems, have taken the form of poetry.

Indeed, during the nineteenth century, and in the earlier part of this century, it was a very popular form of written expression. During the first world war an AIF chaplain, Padre James Gault, noted that he had 'read some of the poems the boys had in their wallets' and that 'every soldier had somewhere, on his person, a copy of some poetry'.[1] During this terrible time many men were inspired to write verse. Wilfred Owen, arguably the finest war poet of the Great War, was himself a serving officer with the British Army, and was killed in action shortly before the war's end.

However, other wars have inspired other men to write verse. The Reverend A.E. Stephenson of Saint John's Vicarage, Weymouth, England, was no exception. So moved was he by the 'sacrifice' and 'justness' of the second Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902, that during its first year he penned a five stanza work titled 'The Transvaal War, 1899–1900'. Not surprisingly it is written as a hymn, and is to be sung to the tune of Sir Arthur Sullivan's 'Jubilee Hymn'. It is a well constructed and patriotic piece of writing, displaying all the Victorian ideals of 'righteousness' and 'noble sacrifice'.

The Reverend Stephenson leaves, in my mind, no doubt that Britain's cause is both right and just, and that her soldiers 'on battlefields have striven, for Queen and Country they, their lives have gladly given' could perform no greater sacrifice in defence of Queen and Empire. It would, undoubtedly, be quite a stirring occasion when sung by a massed congregation.

The hymn is printed on a small sheet of frail, yellowed paper, and appears to have been distributed as a single sheet or leaflet. It is quite probable it may have been issued to soldiers in South Africa, during church parades. It has obviously been kept as a souvenir. When it was discovered in Adelaide some years ago, it was found with a contemporary studio portrait of a young soldier. This particular photograph bears the studio mark of D. Taylor, Mafeking, but unfortunately it bears no other inscription. The soldier is wearing a slouch hat, turned up on the left side, with a thick folded puggaree, a standard British khaki field service jacket and monted troopers trousers, spurs and leggings. All would indicate a mounted trooper, most probably from a local irregular unit, and there were many Australians serving in the ranks of such units during this time.

It has not been possible to confirm if the soldier depicted is an Australian, though at the time of discovery it was purported that he was a young South Australian who returned home in mid-1902. The turn of the century saw many young, and some not so young Australians in South Africa. Most were hoping to make their fortunes on the goldfields, or other enterprises. At the outbreak of war many readily enlisted in local irregular units. Others enlisted after having completed their obligations with their various Australian contingents, and having elected discharge in South Africa. However, a great number of these men came from those who sailed to South Africa privately, to join local units, after having failed to secure a position in one of the various Australian contingents. It is not known how many Australians served in these units, but it is estimated at several thousands.[2]

Little has been written about the Boer War, particularly the Australian involvement, when compared to the other great conflicts of this century, even less has been written as poetry. I have seen no others in the form of hymns. Nonetheless, both items now provide an interesting link with a much neglected period of our increasingly distant military past.

References

1. 'Padre', Michael McKernan, Allen & Unwin, 1986
2. 'The Forgotten War', L.M. Field, MUP, 1979

TRANSVAAL WAR, 1899–1900

O Father Whose Almighty Arm
Doth govern all the nations,
Before Thy Throne we lowly bow
With strongest supplications,
Thou on Whose power Thy children lean
For strength and guidance ever,
O grant that in our hour of need
This faith may fail us never.

O Prince of Peace Whose rule supreme
Can never now be broken,
Whose outstretched Arms stand evermore
Of matchless love the token,
Look down in all Thy saving might
And go Thou still before us,
And in the battle's hottest fight,
Uplift Thy Banner o'er us.

O Holy Spirit, come in power
To heal the broken-hearted,
And strong enduring comfort give
To all whom death has parted
From those brave hearts who far away,
On battlefield have striven,
For Queen and country nobly they
Their lives have gladly given.

O let Thy Presence soothe and cheer
The wounded and the dying,
That they may rest in perfect peace,
On Thy sure help relying;
So steadfast still to wait and trust,
In fullest deep assurance,
Content in life or death to show
A soldiers calm endurance.

O Trinity of boundless love,
We pray Thee now uphold us,
And let Thine Everlasting Arms
Eternal God enfold us,
And grant that e'en the scourge of war
Thy purpose be fulfilling,
Till Thy blest Advent comes again,
All human discords stilling. Amen.

Unidentified soldier, reputedly a South Australian. Photograph from the studio of D. Taylor, Mafeking, circa 1902 (photograph courtesy Trevor Turner).

A.E. Stephenson

A.E. Denman

In the beginning

I was sixteen when I first tried to enlist in Perth but my efforts met with short shrift. I was told to go back home and wait. Early the following year I was advised by a workmate to try again at Fremantle, so I asked for a half-day off. (I was working at Cottesloe.) I caught the train for the harbour port and made my way to the Area Office. They wanted to send me back to Perth, as they thought I may have been a Cadet. It was only by telling a few 'white lies' and putting up my age that I finally got through.

The following Monday morning, I reported to headquarters at Francis Street and with a number of others was sent by train to Midland Junction. Here we were picked up by an army lorry and taken to the camp at Black-boy Hill, arriving in time for lunch.

We reported for a further medical exam after lunch, followed by a dental parade. Our next stop was at the Quartermaster's store. We were issued with a uniform, greatcoat, boots, giggle suit, hat, chinstrap, socks, puttees, shirts, hussif (housewife) which contained buttons, needles, cotton and wool underclothes. We were also issued with a full set of equipment and a rifle and bayonet.

Later we were given a paybook and made our allotments. We were issued with two identification discs and a leather boot lace with which to tie them around our neck. Each of us then made a will and were later given a hair cut, short back and sides, very short. We were now ready and willing to begin a syllabus of basic infantry training.

A few of the younger lads had been in the Cadets. But what little we knew counted for nothing as we all had to start as raw recruits.

All preliminary drill movements and rifle exercises, were taught by numbers, with the instructor first giving a practical demonstration. We were shown how to stand correctly to attention, with the head up, chin in and the eyes directed at the back of the head of the man in front. Fingers were clasped not clenched, we were told and thumbs should be in line with the seam of the trousers.

It was carefully explained to use in the early stages of our training that discipline began on the parade ground. How else could we otherwise hope to maintain it under enemy fire, the instructors asked? The logic of it apparently sunk in as our lads seemed to take kindly to the parade ground stuff.

We were told it was normal to march at the rate of one hundred and twenty, thirty inch paces to the minute or one hundred yards. We marched in fours in those days, so we were taught to form fours, by taking a step to the rear with the left foot and a step to the right with the right foot so as to cover the man in the right. The reverse action was used to form two deep. The movement was only made when troops were in two ranks, ranks were numbered from the right and the even numbers made the movement.

The British rifle, one of the finest in its time, the Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) was comfortable to handle and eminently suited to our series of rifle exercises. Some of these movements would be difficult to perform with today's more sophisticated weapons. A few months later in England we were shown training films of English troops at drill. Some of our chaps laughed, but they had no cause to, for the British regulars had no peers when it came to the parade ground stuff.

I once 'heard' a British regular army sentry 'present arms' as I walked past the gate of the fort at Trincomalee in Ceylon, with a Major in the second world war.

By this time we had passed through the numbers stage and had graduated to the monotony of squad and platoon drill. It was a matter now of marching to and fro and back across the hard packed gritty parade ground to the command of a Sergeant Instructor. He moved very little himself, but shouted his orders from the shade of a sapling gum.

There were nights off, during the week, when not on duty, and some weekend leave. The nearest railway station was Midland Junction four miles away. An enterprising fellow ran a shuttle service with an old Ford tourer. By letting down the hood he carried a maximum load of seventeen passengers. At sixpence a head he would have made pretty good money in those times, making several trips each night. We were given vaccinations and needles towards the end of our time at Black-boy Hill and a yellow band to wear on the vaccinated arm. A hearty slap or two on the affected arm however, forced many to wear it on the good arm. Some chaps could not bear the thought of a needle, especially if blunted towards the end of a long queue.

Those at the back, craned their neck, to see what was happening. Long before it was their turn, quite a few could not stand the strain any longer and collapsed in a faint.

A few days after our vaccinations we fired our musketry course at the rifle range at Osborne. In spite of this, most of us qualified and quite a number of us were classified as marksmen and entitled to wear crossed rifles on the left sleeve.

Our reinforcement was growing fitter as the days and weeks passed. Physical exercises, bayonet training, route marches round the hilly surrounds of the camp, regular meals and sleep all played their part. It was at about this time that my otherwise rather pleasant sojourn at Black-boy Hill was marred by an unfortunate incident.

I had enlisted with the object among other things of being a good soldier. I did not mind the discipline or the training at all. I was a volunteer and as such, I had no reason or right to object to, or to resent any part of it, and was prepared to go along with anything within reason.

But I was guilty of a serious breach. I fell asleep on sentry duty. It was in May and I had been a soldier for six or seven weeks. It was my first Headquarter Guard and I was on second relief. This meant that I mounted at 6pm, midnight, 6am and midday. My post was in front of the camp canteen, which was crowded when I began my first relief after tea. Lights were on everywhere, troops were passing by, backwards and forwards, for the night was still young. I knew several of them. Some spoke and others waved. But as a good sentry I could not respond to such greetings.

After being relieved at eight o'clock, we played cards and talked. We were a bit excited at our first guard and no-one felt like sleep. Midnight came around all too quickly and our relief was on its way. It was a different story now, there was a dim light inside the canteen and one camp street light was still on, otherwise the camp was in almost total darkness. There was not a soul about, lights out had long since gone and the place was deserted. The nearest post to mine was out of sight, a hundred yards away. It may have been a mile as far as I cared.

I began by marching across the front of my beat in regular style. It was cold, but I warmed up after a few minutes.I halted now and then, ordered arms and stood at ease. There seemed little glamour about it now, in the almost total darkness and with no-one about; and I was tired too. I began to march again, to keep warm and to keep awake. A raised wooden verandah floor ran across the front of the canteen. It was invitingly close, but I kept strictly to my beat, back and forth, back and forth. The next relief will be round in less than an hour, I thought. I held up my wristwatch, a present from Mum and peered closely at the illuminated hands. Heavens, I muttered, I've only been here a little over half an hour. I marched and halted and marched again. The night seemed even darker now and quieter too, and I was growing more tired by the minute. I tired myself out and sat down for what seemed a few seconds, but feeling guilty I was up and marching again. Minutes later I sat down again, a little longer, this time. I was confident now that I had things under control. A few more turns along my beat and I stopped again, then marched. But the night seemed to drag on. Once again I sat on the edge of the board walk, this time alongside a verandah post. I leaned my head against it. I was awfully tired.

The next thing I remembered was someone shaking my shoulder. A quiet voice penetrated my consciousness. 'Come on son, you can't do that, you know'. I was awake in a flash. The hand that shook me and the admonishing voice, belonged to the Sergeant of the guard, a kindly elderly chap, Sgt Johnson. Filled with remorse and shame, I took my rifle, muttered, 'I'm sorry Sarge', and began marching.

I agonised for the remainder of our time on guard, especially through my next two reliefs. I wondered what would happen, when I was reported for I knew it was a serious offence. I kept out of the Sergeant's way and said nothing to my mates for I was not proud of what had happened. I got through that day all right, and the guard was relieved. I went to Perth in the evening but said nothing to them at home. I expected to hear something the next day, but nothing happened. Another day passed, two days, then a week, when it dawned on me that great old Sergeant Johnson had not reported me at all. I still felt too ashamed to approach him, but determined to do all the right things in the future. I never forgot the incident, which had an unexpected sequel for me at Darwin 25 years later.

A rather excited young Lieutenant came into the orderly room (tent) one morning. He explained that he had found one of his lads asleep at his post the night before. He was looking for a Form 4(a), a charge report. I said, 'don't do it, do you know it could mean a Court Martial?' He looked a bit blank, so I continued, 'why don't you give him a couple of extra guards, he'll never forget and will never do it again'. Even as I spoke I felt guilty as I remembered how dear old Sgt Johnson treated me a quarter of a century before.

Several weeks later we were granted three days pre-embarkation leave. We knew things must have been getting close. Four days later we embarked at Fremantle on the S.S. *Borda* (7000 tons) on a journey which was to last for eight weeks and one day before we disembarked at Plymouth.

Troopships — first world war

We embarked at Fremantle on the SS *Borda* (A 30) 7000 tons, on the afternoon of June 29th, 1917. Half

an hour later, I was standing at the rail as I watched the coast line facing over the horizon, when I heard a voice over my shoulder. I turned to face an elderly chap about as old as my fater. 'Jack' spoke again, 'You're not getting much money, are you?' His surname began with the same initial as mine and as we did most things in the Army in alphabetical order, he could well have seen the amount I drew each pay day. He went on, 'I'm only getting a bob a day, (married rate) but I've got a lot of tobacco. If you like to buy the papers, I'll roll you enough smokes to keep you going on the trip'. I though quickly, it sounded too good to be true, but if it was, I had nothing to lose, so I agreed.

The ship's canteen was already open and as we were outside the three mile limit all the stuff was duty free. A tin of Capstan cigarettes (fifty) only cost one shilling and threepence (about eleven cents), 'Three Castles', bigger and better smokes were one and ninepence. Cigarette papers were a penny a packet. I paid for a dozen packets and handed them to Jack.

He came to me next morning with a small, flat, hinged tobacco tin containing ten neatly rolled cigarettes and true to his word he kept it up for the rest of our long voyage. I was only seventeen at the time but I had enough commonsense never to ask Jack where he got the tobacco. The dear old fellow would have long since passed on. Training on the *Borda* was restricted to physical exercises and a few talks by some of the officers. There was a library on board and plenty of time to read. Boxing tournaments were held on one of the well decks.

Food seemed plentiful but was not always the best. There was plenty of bread and lots of tasty but crumbly cheese and 'Crosse and Blackwells' jam, plum and apple and apple and raspberry in five pound tins. Breakfast always included a big helping of thick porridge on a deep enamel plate, without milk or sugar, but with a great dollop of molasses in lieu thereof. This was followed mainly by sausages in thin gravy, bread, margarine and jam. Tea, already milked and sugared was served in enamel mugs from the end of the table.

The port holes were left open one humid morning. The ship ran into an oily swell and when she rolled into it, great spouts of water swept the entire breakfast away.

As we got well in the Indian Ocean, we ran into mountainous seas. Watching from the promenade deck was fantastic. One moment we were leaning way out over the rail to see the water below. Moments later as we rolled back we were looking directly into a great wall of water, directly in front, and towering above us. Most of us by this time had 'found' our sea-legs, and were able to enjoy it.

Smoking on deck was *not* allowed at night, nor lights of any sort. A crowd of the younger chaps used to gather in the alcove of the entrance from the promenade deck, in the dark and out of the wind. We would tell yarns and sing or croon many of the old 'darkie' songs. We slept in hammocks swung above the mess tables. It was a work of art, to adjust a blanket and climb into the silly thing. A few practical jokers with a perverted sense of humour, tipped others out by walking beneath them and then standing up quickly. The practice died out quickly as some were hurt falling on a table edge and as a few of the early victims retaliated.

There was a funeral service one day on the promenade deck outside the officer's mess. Two dixies of tainted sausages wrapped in a Union Jack were buried with honours while a bugler played the last post, to the accompaniment of ironic cheers.

Our first land fall was Durban, where we coaled. There were no gantries so a wooden scaffolding was erected alongside the ship, with stairs. Hundreds of natives ran up and down like ants each with his basket of coal and singing all the way. Rickshaws abounded in Durban, each pulled by a big powerful Zulu. Most of them wore a spectacular headdress of bullocks horns and other decorations. We were granted shore leave for the three days we were there. Most of us had our first experience of bargaining or haggling with souvenir vendors over the prices, which always dropped dramatically as the time for departure approached.

With the coaling completed we were on our way round the Cape Of Good Hope to Capetown. We were fortunate to see the 'table cloth' over Table Mountain as we came into the harbour. There was shore leave here for a day and we were off again.

The only land we saw for the next few weeks was, in the distance, St Helena and Ascension Island. Our next port of call before Plymouth was Freetown (Sierra Leone) up past the Ivory Coast. It is not easy to describe the breathless feeling of excitement in a young fellow at his first sight of a really foreign port. It is just something which has to be experienced to appreciate. Freetown, from the sea, is one of the loveliest sights ever. White sandy beaches, red roofed, white walled houses, set among palm trees. There was no shore leave here, but the ship 'hove to' for a day and a night, half a mile offshore.

It was here that I went down with tropical fever and spent three days in the ship's sick bay, the first hospital I ever remembered. Much of the reason for our longer than usual voyage was that there was a German raider out in the Atlantic.

The only gambling game allowed on the *Borda* was Housie Housie (Bingo). A lot of it was played but, it was awkward in the wind which always seemed to be blowing. Many of the chaps pestered the cooks in the galley for raw potatoes. Cut into solid dice, they were placed on the numbers as the card was called.

About two weeks after leaving Freetown, we berthed at Plymouth. My elder brother was on a hospital ship in the harbour when we arrived. He was waiting to leave for home after having been shot through an ankle on Easter Sunday. He was a Corporal in the 12th battalion, having transferred from the 10th, his original unit.

A year and four months later, I embarked on the SS *Aeneas* (9000 tons) at Liverpool two days after my nineteenth birthday. We had been at a convalescent camp at Hurdcott, for some weeks, where many of us were making good progress towards recovery from our wounds and would have soon been returning to our units. But the Armistice was declared while we were there. There was a great deal of rejoicing and relief, that at long last it was all over. Some of the 'hard heads' however, 'let down their hair'. At least one camp canteen was broken into and barrels of beer rolled out into the open. They were upended and the tops bashed in. Tin pannikins appeared as if by magic and toasts were the order of the day (or night). There were several thousand troops in the general area, but the offence could not be sheeted home to anyone. The authorities assessed the damage and decided that all should contribute towards it. We were paid the day after, but that was too late for any action. The next pay day was three weeks hence on 2 December. There were two entries in all paybooks. The second one was a debit and mine reads: '2.12.18. Barrack damages 4', four pence (about three cents).

We entrained at Hurdcott and arrived at Liverpool in pouring rain, just as it was when we first arrived in England.

The first boat of its kind to leave for Australia after the armistice, the *Aeneas* was not a hospital ship. But practically every man came from a convalescent camp where he had been recovering from a wound or the effects of sickness or gas or illness. These troops however were just not the same as when they left home a year, two or three years ago. They were older now, but far older than their years, for they had seen things which no ordinary man would see in a life time. They had faced death many times and had themselves suffered and seen their mates suffer, wounded, gassed, maimed and killed. These things just had to leave an impression on their minds, their very lives and would live with them for many a long year. But time and circumstances are great healers and there was some hope for the future.

The *Aeneas*, in contrast with the *Borda*, was a veritable Monte Carlo, floating casino. They gambled at poker, banker, pontoon, crib and bridge. They played two-up (swy) and three up (sudden death) with pennies on the deck, or with silver three-penny pieces, thrown from a dice shaker on to a blanket, and crown and anchor and a race game, and little if any attempt was ever made to stop them. This in my opinion was another indication of the changed attitudes of younger men of other years. Besides, practically every junior officer aboard, would have risen through the ranks, which speaks volumes.

On her most recent voyage, *Aeneas* had carried American troops. I dropped my fork one day at lunch and stooped down to pick it up. As I was rising I looked up. I was amazed to see in front of each man's place at the table a tiny mountain of chewing gum (inverted), used, of course. Each inverted cone was about two inches deep.

We passed through the Suez canal and called at Colombo, but were not allowed ashore. Several swam in the harbour, or at least some did. I had the best of intentions, but fell off a rope ladder, narrowly missing a coal barge. I went down several feet and when I surfaced I managed to grasp a thick rope and hauled myself on to the barge. I climbed the rope ladder to the promenade deck but I was exhausted and had had enough.

We dropped anchor in King George's Sound opposite Albany five and a half weeks after we left Liverpool and went into quarantine on an island in the harbour for three days. It was an idyllic midsummer holiday; on a long white sandy beach, swimming, sunbathing and playing cards. Each morning we were crowded into a hut, in batches and fumigated. We were eventually given the all clear and re-embarked for Fremantle and on to Perth for discharge.

Second world war

Nearly twenty three years later (on 12 September 1941) I boarded the *Marnix Van Sint Aldegonde* (HMT11) at Port Melbourne, in charge of an advance party from Woodside. Later in the day, I was given an allocation of cabins for the officers and sergeants of the two groups of reinforcements from South Australia. There were two Majors, four Captains, and a number of reinforcement officers (Lieutenants). There were about a thousand men in the two groups. Messing and training areas, emergency lifeboat stations and stowage for rifles and kits were also allotted.

Heavy baggage, trunks and valises, arrived the following day and were taken to the officers' cabins. I attended a number of conferences during the next three days.

On Thursday the eighteenth, troops began to arrive at 0200 hours and began to embark immediately. The last train arrived at 1120 and the men were taken aboard without delay. We pulled out of the wharf area three hours later and anchored in the bay. The following morning we sailed at 0745 and I mounted as 'Ship's Captain' of the day (the equivalent of Field Officer). Each Group appointed its Orderly Officer each day. Two other transports

made up the Convoy, the *Johan Van Olden Barneeveldt* and a smaller vessel the *Seiberjuk*, the slowest of the three, whose speed governed that of the convoy. The *Johan Van Olden Barneeveldt* was also 19000 tons and a sister ship to ours, HMAS *Sydney* was our escort. I had not sailed for many years and was slow to find my sea legs, and was pleased to dismount after my first tour of duty.

It was very rough over the next few days, especially when crossing the Bight. It was my sixth crossing and as rough as any of the previous trips, and many of the men were quite sick. The *Sydney* with three hundred 'rookies' on board took a buffeting. She ran into some big waves which swept her decks from stem to stern. We pitied the poor rookies. We berthed at Fremantle at 2000 hours on the Thursday. I caught a train to Perth the following morning and met my mother whom I had not seen for nine years. I also called at the GPO and looked up my old platoon commander, Bill Creech whom I had not seen since June 1918 at Sailley-Le-Sec.

We left Fremantle on Sunday at 0900 in 'line ahead' with *Sydney* leading. We had lost a man at Fremantle. The two sister ships lying at the long wharf, one behind the other were like two peas in a pod. This was too much for the absentee, when he arrived from Perth in the early hours, a bit under the weather. He walked on to the wrong ship and made his way to his appropriate deck and fell asleep. The ship was full of New Zealanders, but we got him back at Colombo.

Sporting gear had been drawn by the troops on the Saturday. Physical training, lectures and training films comprised most of the syllabus. Games included netball, volleyball and 'cyclos' (deck tennis) played with a rubber ring. Individual training areas (group) had to be respected by others. No one could pass through unless in case of extreme emergency, and sometimes a detour was a long way round.

There was a burial at sea from the *Seiberjuk*, four days after we left Fremantle. The *Sydney* provided entertainment for the convoy, the following day. She put on a turn of speed and after catapulting her plane, laid a smoke screen. The plane later 'bombed' a target towed by the mother ship. The *Seiberjuk* left us on the Friday for other parts, escorted by the *Sydney*.

We were taken over by a new escort that day, the cruiser HMS *Glasgow*. She had seen recent action, evidence of which was a well defined ripple in her hull near the bow, from the deck to well below the water line. Her skipper also entertained the convoy. He steamed at speed between us and the *Johan Van Olden Barneeveldt* with her band playing on the quarterdeck to the cheers of the men on both troopships. Next day she towed a kite down starboard and up port side, at about a thousand feet. All boats in the convoy opened up with 'Pom-Poms' and many hits were registered.

There was a stand to at 0535 next day, a false alarm for practice at lifeboat drill. The big problem was to get the practice first of them away from the exits, and along to their respective emergency stations. More talks saw a big improvement at the next emergency.

We dropped anchor in Colombo harbour on Tuesday 13 October. With another Captain, I took a piquet of forty ashore at 1300 hours.

Troops were sent ashore in lighters and were urged to return in the same order, but human nature does not always work that way and many ignored the instruction, which made things rather chaotic later in the evening. Many of them wanted to return on the last lighter. We established piquet HQ at the largest city police station. What cells there were, had been filled early in the evening with mostly petty thieves and pickpockets. Seventeen of them were led away roped together by the wrists to a suburban station to make room for others. Colombo was a violent city at that time averaging a murder a day. The piquet got busier as the evening drew on, there were fights, a near riot and a lot of 'arak' was being consumed. As it got later, about a hundred of our chaps had been rounded up and were being held behind a barricade on the wharf; some of them were placed on a lighter when one was available. Others however pushed past a sergeant on guard at a narrow gate and wandered towards the street again. I decided to stand at the gate myself and no one tried to push past. I did however let one man go. His story was that he was a New Zealander and had changed uniforms with a digger. If it was true he was in a lot of trouble, so I gave him the benefit of the doubt. My experience in the second world war was that troops of all ages, had a marked respect for those who had seen active service and had the ribbons to prove it. As far as I was concerned it was history repeating itself. As a young soldier in the first world war I too respected the sprinkling of old Boer war soldiers who wore their campaign ribbons.

The piquet did a good job and we were all back on board before midnight. We'd had nothing to eat since we went ashore and were glad to tuck into hot mugs of tea and cheese sandwiches on our boat. The following day, members of the piquet were granted shore leave as well as a number of others.

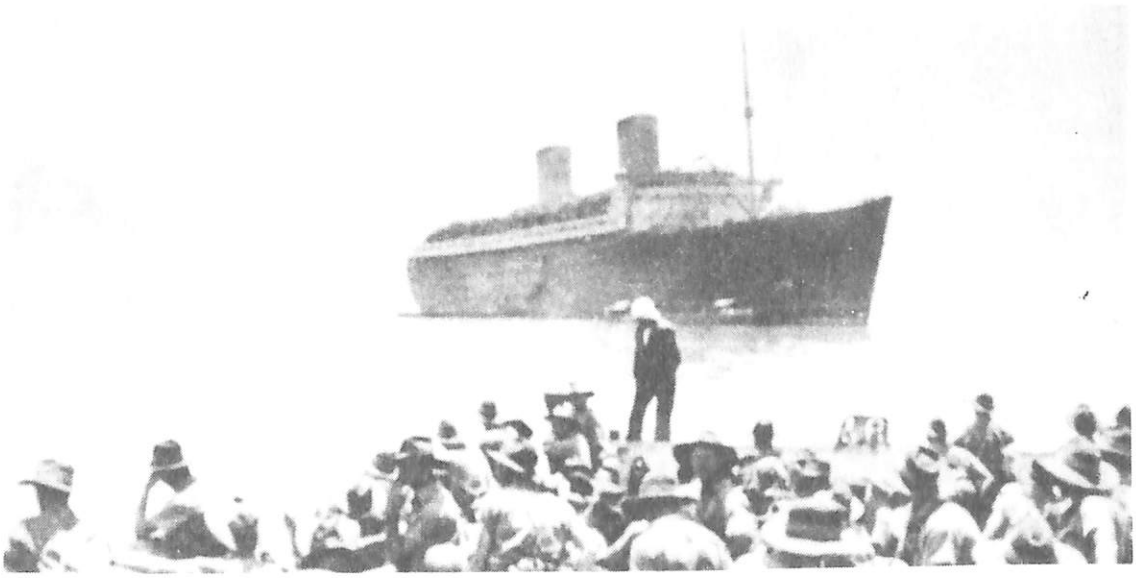
We had lunch at the Galle Face Hotel overlooking the harbour. The Manageress was Miss Ffora Clarke, who went to school in Adelaide with one of our DCOs, Captain Eric Inglis. After lunch, she made her car and Singalese driver available for the rest of the day.

He took us through the 'Pettar' (native quarter) where we watched a butcher serving customers. He approached a side of meat and flicked at it with a heavy cloth, at which a black swarm of flies arose while he cut off a prime slice for the waiting housewife.

This was the signal for the myriad of flies to again settle on the hanging meat. We did not notice any blow flies among the others. We visited a fish market which we could smell long before we saw it. We watched a water buffalo being shod as it lay on its side and then drove through several plantations of young coconut trees. A number of trees were adorned with a painted figure of a serpent, which our driver assured us, really kept the rats away. The driver took us as far as N'gambo a fishing village twenty odd miles from Colombo, noted for its catamarans. The day was quite hot and we were glad to sit in the rest house and enjoy a few long cool drinks. A group of natives with a Cobra and flute entertained us as we sat and watched. We returned to Colombo by the Kandy road.

We sailed the following day and over the next few days training films were shown and boxing tournaments continued. I presided at a Court of Inquiry. One of our chaps had dropped his rifle in the harbour when being relieved on gangway guard. The recommendation of the Court was that the OC Troops, Colonel Wright write off the value of the rifle. He had the power to do so and agreed. I mounted as Captain of the Day, several times on the voyage. It was not an enviable job as the ship's officers and crew were not very co-operative. The troops were not allowed to smoke between decks, yet crew members passed back and forth and up and down many times each day smoking as they went. The troops could sleep on deck so long as they did not smoke after dark, which was quite understandable. The OC Troops took me to task when I mounted one afternoon. I was a bit testy about it. I suggested respectfully, that a German submarine commander (Japan was not yet in it) would not stop to query whether it was a digger smoking on deck or a ship's officer smoking on the bridge. His response was, 'I assure you Captain Denman, these people are hard to handle'. The facts were that our troops were furious that they could not smoke on deck, yet the ship's officers smoked on the bridge, with abandon. The diggers remonstrated at this churlish behaviour but the officers came to the front of the bridge and puffed furiously to further antagonise them. The troops responded with cat calls, jeers and abuse. One could have been excused for thinking the crew and their officers were enemies!

On the Saturday after leaving Colombo, there was more kite flying by HMS *Glasgow* and 'ack-ack' practice for machine gunners on the troopships and our escort. Three days later kit bags were withdrawn from the hold. On Thursday we entered the Gulf of Aden and soon after were ordered into port by the Navy, but afterwards resumed our original course. Our escort had left us that morning. We passed the



The Transport **Queen Elizabeth** *at Port Tewfik, Egypt, April 1941.*

'Twelve Disciples' after coming through Perrin Straits. I mounted as Captain of the day on Sunday for the last time. I was still on duty in the morning up until disembarkation at Suez at 1430. We marched to the transit camp on the outskirts of the city.

With a number of other Draft Conducting Officers, I embarked on the *Queen Mary* at Port Tewfik, on Sunday 23 November. We had just spent a crowded five weeks in Palestine, based at a camp at Beit Jira. The Captains amongst us had been kept pretty busy on Courts Martial, some times even working at night. We had still found time over some weekends, to have a good look round. We visited Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Haifa, Tel-Aviv and Gaza, and a long weekend to Lebanon, sleeping at Beirut and Tripoli. Our first duty on the *Queen Mary* was to search some civilian POW's who had been 'taken' in Middle-East countries. Two South Australian Majors, Howard Scudds (M.C. and bar), Griff Place and I were allotted a deluxe cabin. It was a luxury cruise as we had no duties and had the run of the ship. There was a large swimming pool, an extensive library and a luxurious lounge. An ornate mens' hairdressing saloon was still operating, but an arcade of shops below had been closed for the duration of the war. There was also deck tennis, shuffle board and bridge in the lounge. It was all too good to last, as we found after a week of luxury living.

On our last day aboard some of us were taken on a 'Cooks tour' over the ship, down into the very bowels, the capacious engine rooms. We passed through air locks so that we could adjust to the different pressures. The two central shafts were two hundred feet long and twenty seven and a half inches in diameter. They were in twenty five foot lengths, coupled together, with two great bearings between couplings. They took us to the stern, where the four shafts disappeared into the sea. I met an Englishman who worked on casting the propellors of the *Queen Mary*. They were of solid brass and each weighed fifty tons. A spare 200 foot main drive was carried on the promenade deck, firmly bolted down. My constitutional each morning was four times round the promenade deck (approximately one mile). A week after leaving Port Tewfik we arrived at the almost land-locked harbour of Trincomalee on the North-east coast of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). We went ashore for four hours leave, had a look over Fort Frederick (built in 1675), shopped around for souvenirs and did more sight-seeing. When we returned aboard, orders were out for us to tranship to the *Queen Elizabeth*. We crossed over the following day, and oh what a contrast! From a three berth deluxe cabin to a two-tiered ten bunk area shared with Major Place. We were taken ashore later that day by the ship's boat where I picked up several packets of good quality tea and travelled back to Admiralty Wharf by rickshaw. There were one hundred and thirty five on the ship's boat on the return trip. Next day, 3 December, there was no leave. The *Queen Mary* moved up China Bay while the *Queen Elizabeth* swung with the tide. A six thousand ton tanker working all night, pumped five hundred tons of oil an hour into the *Queen Elizabeth*. We left Trincomalee at 0702 on Thursday, steaming south-east. Our recent escort, *Glasgow*, passed us going into port as we were leaving.

The *Queen Elizabeth*, slightly larger and built later than *Queen Mary* was converted into a 'trooper', but *Queen Mary* was left in all her glory, hence the marked difference in some of the accommodation. They each travelled without an escort as they could outdistance most surface craft. They were both heavily armed, with low angle guns for defence against surface craft, and high angle weapons for anti-aircraft defence. Each had a 'rocket' gun mounted in the stern, it fired a rocket some six feet long, with a 'ceiling' of five thousand feet and a wide bursting area. When at anchor, usually a mile offshore, each great liner had barrage balloons moored above to prevent dive-bombing attacks.

The *Queen Elizabeth* could carry up to nearly seven thousand troops and a crew of more than a thousand. There were only two meals a day, eaten in relays. If sausages were on the menu, the chefs cooked one ton of them for breakfast. She was air conditioned throughout, and had a theatre in the stern with upholstered, tip-up seats for three hundred. There were three programmes each week.

We once entertained Sir James Bisset, skipper in turn of the *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth* at our Murray Bridge RSL sub-branch after the War. He was quite an entertaining fellow and held the attention of ex-diggers for some two hours. He told us how the two ships carried thousands of GIs who were duly impressed with the size, speed, comfort and performance of the vessels. One early trip on the *Queen Elizabeth* he overheard two GIs talking. They were full of admiration for the great vessel and concluded that as it was the then biggest in the world it must have been built in the USA. He found to his extreme annoyance that it was the general opinion amongst all American troops. Without further ado, he sent for his carpenters and sign-writers. He instructed them to make several notices showing the dimensions of the *Queen Elizabeth* and that it was built at Clyde Bank. He then had them displayed in prominent positions in several places around the decks, much to the disappointment of the GIs. On that trip home from Trincomalee the *Queen Elizabeth* carried some three hundred prisoners of war, German and Italian. But there were no 'other ranks' to guard them. There were no Lieutenants aboard, only Draft Conducting Officers, Major and Captains. So the Captains were duly organised into a guard. It had its compensations however. I found myself on duty on the Bridge several times, a privilege not reserved to many. We were 'on' every other day for the whole voyage, to Sydney. On our

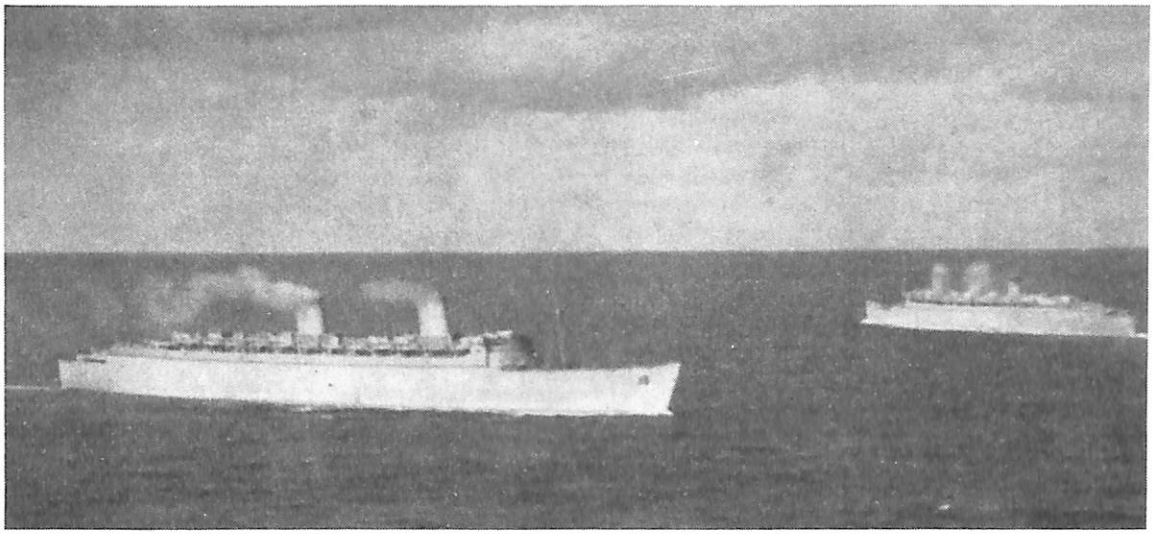
part days off we enjoyed the available amenities, deck tennis, sunbathing and bridge for there were no other duties. So we managed to keep pretty fit.

On Saturday night, 6 December, we passed through wreckage, purported by some of the ship's officers to be from the *Sydney*, but not confirmed. It was estimated that we were three hundred miles west of the disaster area. We had steamed due south all day and were six hundred miles west of normal course. Two enemy raiders were known to be out.

On Monday we were attending a lecture on Greece by a New Zealand Colonel, when the old girl clapped on speed and began a zig-zag course of up to fifty to sixty degrees. She was steaming S.E. and maintaining a forward speed of twenty five knots. Word was received next day of the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*.

We arrived at Fremantle on Wednesday morning, but there was no leave, even though I tried. We took on ninety members of the RAAF and sailed at midnight. We dropped the pilot at three o'clock next morning Thursday, and at six o'clock were still steaming south-west and still zig-zagging and beginning to veer towards the East. Friday morning we ran through a school of porpoises. The sea was calm with a misty rain. The Captains still maintained the guard on the prisoners. On Sunday we passed Cape Otway early in the morning and later Wilson's Promontory. I was on guard on the bridge early next morning for the last time. We passed through the Heads at half past four in the afternoon, but there was no disembarkation.

We were at anchor in the harbour all next day with nothing to do. We disembarked at eleven next morning on my forty second birthday and were taken to the Showgrounds for morning tea, prior to departing for our respective states.



The transports **Queen Elizabeth** *and* **Queen Mary** (furthest from camera) in wartime grey camouflage. As a draft conducting officer, Bert Denman had the unique privilege of travelling aboard both of these great vessels in 1941 (AMW).

B.J. Videon

Busy Bees: War efforts of the children of Victoria in the Second World War

Shortly after the outbreak of the second world war, a meeting was held of officers of the Victorian Education Department, for the purpose of forming a war relief organisation, similar to the one that had operated successfully in the first world war.

On 17th October, 1939, the *Education Gazette* notified members:

> 'With the approval of the Honourable the Minister for Public Instruction, it has been decided to organise a special effort in the schools of the Education Department for relief purposes. Schools can assist this effort by contributing to a special departmental fund and by organising their Junior Red Cross circles and needlework and handwork classes for the production of serviceable articles for members of the Australian Defence Forces on service or in hospitals...'

The notice went on to detail the aims of the organisation, and nominated the members of the committee proposed to control the fund, of which the Accountant of the Department was to be the Treasurer. It ended with the following words:

> 'Having in mind the magnificent service rendered by the schools in Victoria during the Great War and their gratifying response to the bushfire appeal, the Director is confident that they will again display the same unselfish spirit of patriotic effort in this time of national emergency.'

Following the passage of the *Patriotic Funds Act*, members of the Executive Committee met on 29th February 1940, to discuss the task that lay before them; those present being Mr J.A. Seitz (Director), Mr W.W. Ellwood (Chief Inspector of Primary Schools), Mr R.C. Potter (Accountant), Mr J.S. Bacon (representing Inspectors of Schools), Mr H.E. Loader (President of V.T.U.), Mrs M.G. McNaughton (representing Federated Mothers' Clubs), Mr N.G. McNicol (Teachers' Sub-Branch of the RSSAILA), Mr W.O.E. Vroland (representing Head Teachers), and Miss Eileen O'Neill (representing Infant Mistresses).

The General Committee of the Victorian State Schools' War Relief Fund at this time comprised the Minister of Public Instruction (Sir John Harris), the above persons, and ten other senior persons; while the Finance Committee consisted of four members of the General Committee. In March 1940, the General Committee discussed the establishment of needlework and woodwork depots; materials were to be bought by the Fund, using the purchasing facilities of the Department, which would fill the orders sent in by the participating schools.

A needlework depot was soon established at School No. 1895, Collingwood, and a woodwork depot at School No. 1213 at Brunswick. The Red Cross supplied patterns for needlework articles, and these were published from time to time in the *Education Gazette*. Requests were received from the Red Cross and the Australian Comforts Fund for pullovers, socks, balaclavas, gloves and scarves; and soon hundreds of schools were involved in the manufacture of these necessary items. The variety of activities necessitated the setting up of an adequate recording system, and receipts were sent to the schools, with comments on the quality of the work received. Throughout the war, the Australian Comforts Fund expressed satisfaction with the quality of the work performed, and of its packaging for transportation. The Collingwood needlework depot is credited with handling 442 576 articles for the above organisations, and sometimes small extra gifts were tucked into the manufactured items.

The woodwork depot received its working diagrams and measurements from army medical officers, and its orders from the Red Cross. Items made included thousands of walking sticks, as well as stationery containers, bandage winders, backing boards, chopping boards, deck-chairs, crutches, camp stools, and similar needs; while recreational requirements were represented by dart-boards, and boards for draughts, checkers, solitaire and the like. A total of 15 000 articles was sent to the Red Cross, involving the use of material worth 64 535 pounds.

In addition to handcrafted articles, donations of money were made to the YMCA Services Appeal, to Army Education for mobile education units, and to the RAAF for a similar unit. Pianos were supplied for unit welfare, and vehicles were donated for the transport of convalescent patients. Christmas parcels were sent to servicemen, whose addresses were sent to all schools in the State; and, later in the War, parcels were sent to prisoners of war. Books were collected and despatched to units through the Australian Comforts Fund, and the Finance Committee

voted 500 pounds to purchase books for Army Education. A donation of 200 pounds was also made to the 'All Services Canteen', at Mackay, Queensland. Donations totalling 150 000 pounds were made to the Red Cross, and 160 280 to the Australian Comforts Fund.

In support of the above efforts by the Department, the General Committee, at its March 1941 meeting, resolved to establish a 'Young Workers' Patriotic Guild', along the lines of that which had existed in the first world war. Its objects were stated, again, as in the Great War, to be '...to augment the State Schools' War Relief Fund or the funds of the Social Service League; to promote habits of industry and to add to the productive capacity of young workers; to give a practical application to handwork, needlework and horticulture; and to stimulate children to think how they could utilise their opportunities to assist the community in both peacetime and wartime activities'.

Membership was open to children who were involved in working for the State Schools' War Relief Effort or for the Social Service League. It could be visibly demonstrated by the wearing of a special 'Busy Bee' button, available from the Department for one penny each. Guild members were set the task of raising one pound by their own efforts, and this achievement was commemorated by the issue of a coloured certificate. If the child managed to raise five pounds, an embossed gold seal was added, with an additional seal for each additional five pounds. In this way 35 482 members succeeded in raising the minimum of one pound, while the collective amount raised was just under 60 000 pounds.

The means adopted involved almost every type of endeavour, and included some very mature examples of enterprise — included were fetes and bazaars, sale of own handcrafts, sale of home-grown vegetables and stock, and the sale of their 'catches' by young hunters and fishermen. One East Kew schoolgirl raised over 281 pounds, by running bazaars and tuckshops at which she sold cakes and sweets which she had made, while a Coburg East boy made and sold 30 000 toffees at one penny per toffee, to make, in two and a half years, a profit of one hundred pounds. Others made stuffed toys, sold bottles and papers, and arranged concerts, to earn their contributions to the war effort.

In the activity of vegetable growing, 1339 schools took part, and the sale of vegetables resulted in a total of over 7140 pounds being raised for the Fund.

When children earned the fourth Gold Seal to their certificate they received a letter of congratulations from the Secretary of the War Relief Fund; while, in the case of those who exceeded fifty pounds, a further special letter was forwarded.

Examples of the certificates and 'Busy Bee' buttons may still be found occasionally, and perhaps specimens of the lettrs are still held in some family papers. Less plentiful are the 'Busy Bee Award' badges of the first world war, which were more solid metal construction, but, which, because of their design, have been likely to be overlooked or discarded by the average collector.

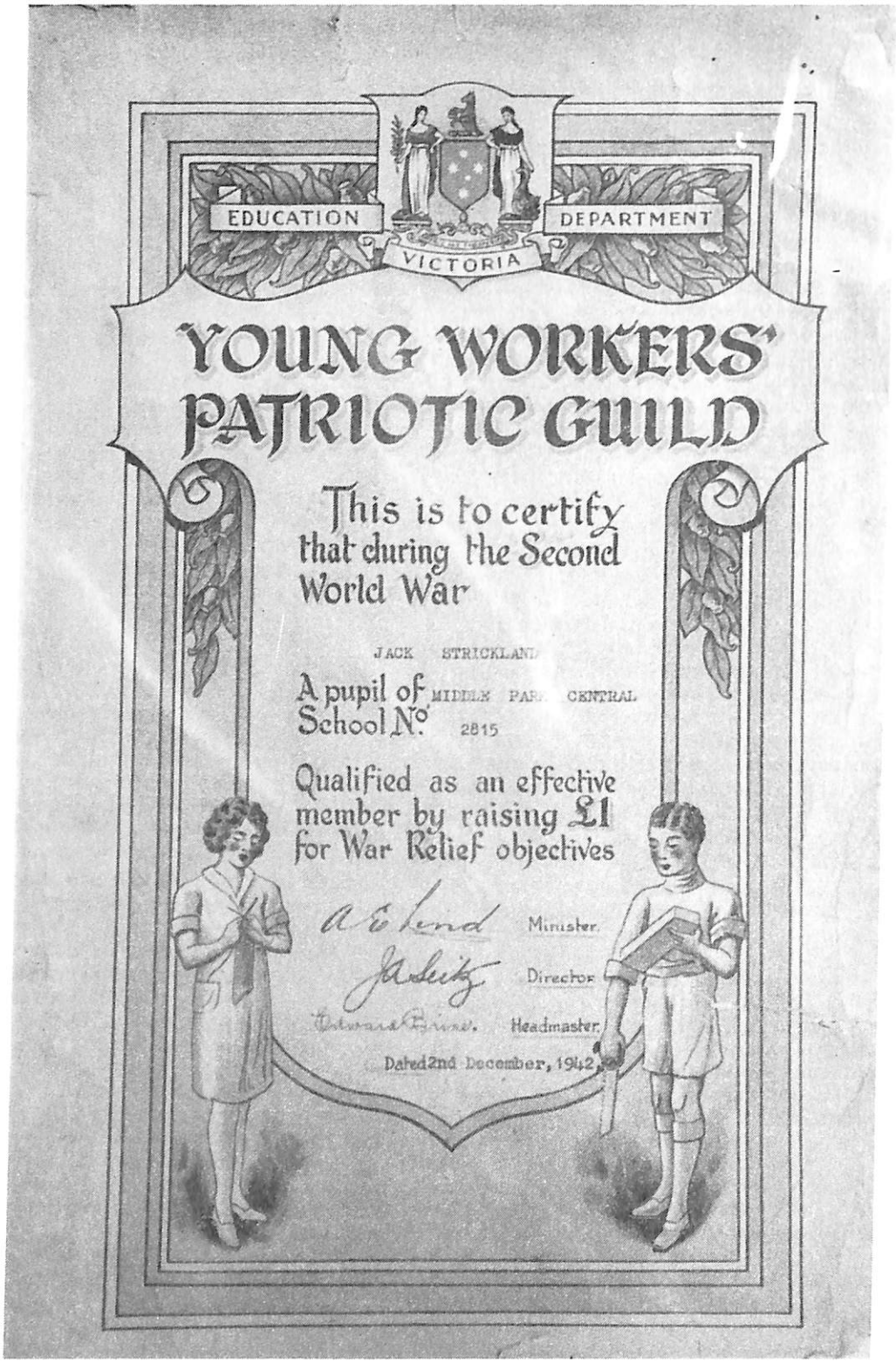
Victorian Education Department 'Busy Bees' membership badge.

Although less attractive (and, of course, less costly) than the insignia awarded to South Australian members of their Schools' Patriotic Fund, the insignia and Certificates of the Young Workers' Patriotic Guild represent the valuable contributions of Victorian schoolchildren to the war effort, and, therefore, are eminently collectable.

The Guild finished its second world war activities on 31st December 1945, having contributed over 59 500 pounds to the War Relief Fund. Some 45 000 children participated, and the school credited with raising the largest sum was No. 1409, North Williamstown, with a total of over 1053 pounds. The highest individual fund-raiser was Beryl Blair, of No. 3161, East Kew and later of University High School, with a total of over 281 pounds.

Following the end of the War, members of the Guild turned their energies to social service work, including helping Victorian hospitals, and sending food to Britain.

(Reference: 'War Service Record 1939–1945', Education Department, Victoria.)



Young Workers' Patriotic Guild Certificate, 1939–45 War.

John E. Price

Some thoughts on researching

For the researcher there is no simple way to seek information, it is just a case of slog, slog, slog. All too rarely do the required facts fall into your lap. On rare occasions it is possible to fluke it and go straight to the file you need, but more often than not it is solid hard work. Should a motto be needed for a researcher an appropriate one would be 'If at first you don't succeed...give it away!' By this I mean that if the answer to some problem constantly eludes you, do not pursue it. Try another angle, look at an alternative, change over to some other topic. Sometimes, often without seeking it, the answer to your original query will appear from an entirely different source.

Maybe you will never find the answer; it is possible that no one can advise you where to look. Perhaps, for some reason best known to themselves, a librarian may be reluctant to impart the necessary information, probably the data was not filed correctly in the first place.

Many times I have returned home completely drained after an exhaustive day of reading through dusty volumes with little, or nothing, to show for some six-eight hours of tedious work. It would have been wiser, after two fruitless hours, had I decided to research some other subject; or gone for a walk. Possibly the result may have been different.

I cannot recall a time when I have not been researching. An early memory is of sitting on a bus in my home town, next to a soldier who was dressed in the smart khaki walking out uniform of the 1930's period. His gilt buttons and cap badge were immaculate. I noted his metal shoulder titles bearing the initials RASC. I later enquired of my father what the letters stood for and was told of the duties and responsibilities of the Royal Army Service Corps. Seeking further knowledge I went to the local library and studied the origins of the corps, its history, its rank structure and numerous changes of title.

This is research at its basic, for having seen something which takes your interest you ask questions, then read up on the topic.

What are the requirements of a researcher? Firstly you have an enquiring mind; plus infinite patience. You must have the ability to analyse the material researched, placing it in its right perspective. There are few short cuts but you must know how to utilise every one.

You must build up a personal reference library, buying books from military bookshops, second hand dealers, opportunity shops, trash and treasure markets, church fetes and bazaars.

Whatever your interest, be it battles, bayonets, firearms, insignia, medals, or uniforms *et al*, build up your library in your specific field first. *But do not stop there* — widen your horizons. If your subject is edged weapons there are books to tell you of the evolvement of the bayonet, the decline of archery, how armour has changed down the centuries; how it is used today.

At sometime in your life it is possible to have an enquiry about some obscure military operation such as the unification of Italy by Garibaldi, or the United States' Philippine campaign of 1898. It is then that you realise the limitations of your resources, therefore causing you to look further afield. Your own local public library is ideal for a start. There you will find untold wealth to be given away, or at least loaned for a limited period.

In the Melbourne metropolitan area each municipal library specialises in a different field. A list may be obtained from the Chief Librarian at the central branch. If you discover that a municipal library, in a district where you are not resident or employed, has a particular volume needed for your research you may apply for it on inter-library loan, which means that the book is sent to the branch library nearest your home to be borrowed for a specific time.

There are, however, drawbacks. The Latrobe Library and State Reference Library seldom send books out on inter-library loan; in fact books are never allowed out to individuals. Sometimes it takes weeks for the book to reach you.

An alternative is to go to the library where the volume is housed and apply for reciprocal membership. You will need a letter from your own municipal Chief Librarian, which is usually given, plus some means of identification. You will be required to fill in a form at the 'foreign' library and then take out the books needed. There are, however, libraries which do not agree to reciprocal membership in which case you can either get a friend, who lives in the area, to obtain the volume for you, or wait patiently for the inter-library loan to arrive, having advised the library of your pressing need.

All Australian public libraries work on the Dewey Decimal system, a classification which enables borrowers to go straight to the section they are studying, or are interested in, immediately.

The range is thus:

General Works	000
Philosophy and Psychology	100
Religion	200
Social Services	300
Philology (Languages)	400
Science	500
Technology	600
Fine Arts and Recreation	700
Literature	800
Geography, History, Biography	900

The system is broken down further, so therefore it is possible to find Government and Armed Forces under 350 in Social Services. The First and Second World Wars under 940; Europe, the Boer War under 960; Africa in the Geography, History, Biography category. Of course this system is not altogether infallible relying heavily on the librarian doing the classification.

If for instance you need information about Australian Military Law it is advisable to look up Military Law in the Social Services section 340 then for the sub section 'Australia'. Alternatively find Australia in sub section 990 of Geography, History, Biography and seek out Military Law. This is only an example but shows that it is essential to cross reference every step of the way.

If you are uncertain of the Dewey Decimal category of your subject, but the librarian is busy, check the subject out in the branch's catalogue. You may also find the topic listed in other categories.

The Reference section is prominently sited in most libraries, but, usually, the volumes on the shelves are not for general borrowing. In special cases the Librarian may allow an overnight loan but there must be extenuating needs. A 'rule of thumb' for checking out general themes is thus: British campaigns and military history etc. — look up the relevant section in the Encyclopaedia Britannica; for United States wars and military subject matter, etc. — the Encyclopaedia Americana; the New South Wales Contingent to the Sudan, Australian involvement in the Boxer Rebellion, the Boer War, the two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam — the Australian Encyclopaedia. These should be studied before one concentrates on books in the specialist section shelves.

Assuming the researcher needs information about the Roman Army it would be prudent to read relevant material from the Junior section first. These books are recognised by the letter J above the Dewey code number. Nowadays in most libraries they are on the same shelves as adult books. Books aimed at schoolchildren are written in a simpler language with ample sketches and photographs. There is usually a bibliography, advising of other works covering the same topic, which may be referred to. Books in the adult section may be consulted but do not neglect the folio section — including both junior and adult works — these are large sized tomes far too large to fit on the general shelves.

These are identified by the small case letter f over the Dewey number and are arranged, as the other books, in Dewey numerical order.

Many old newspapers are now on microfilm and reading them is a tedious task. Unless you know the exact date in which you hope the information may be found, staff at the Latrobe and Victorian State Libraries will not let you peruse original newspapers. Also constant use over many years has done irreparable damage to valuable archives.

Commonwealth and all State Government Gazettes are readily available at the Latrobe Library in Melbourne. The *London Gazette* is housed at the State Library of Victoria — I have also seen them at the National Library, in Canberra — but unless you know the index volume for the specific person you are researching this can be a time consuming task, not popular with the staff who have to bring them down from the 'stack'.

Always mark your notes with the page number, the date and the source, quoting your source. If this is not available give some reference. Whilst it is expected at most institutions it is always advisable to use pencil rather than ball point pens.

Photocopying is a ticklish subject, mainly through breach of copyright, and should be limited to less than 10% of a book.

Generally speaking most librarians and library staff are happy to help and can often come up with constructive ideas or suggestions. It should be constantly remembered that they are human and subject to work stress!

These notes have been compiled by a layman with no academic training in specialist research. All this information has been gleaned the hard way and, in all probability, contains many naive statements and many gaps. Nevertheless it is aimed towards the amateur researcher whom I am positive will derive much satisfaction from acquiring knowledge.

The appended list is slanted heavily in Victoria's favour but will assist researchers in other States to utilise their region's resources.

SOME SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Who's Who in Australia
Who was Who
National Dictionary of Biography
Encyclopedia Americana
London Gazette
Who's Who
Australian Dictionary of Biography
Encyclopaedia Britannica
Australian Encyclopaedia
Commonwealth Gazette
Various State Government Gazettes
Australian Archives may be found in all capital cities.
Victorian Government Public Record Office:
1. City Reference Room, 1 Little Collins Street, Melbourne 3000.
2. Laverton Reference Room, 57 Cherry Lane, Laverton North 3026.
3. Ballarat Repository, Mair Street, Ballarat 3350.
Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies. Check telephone directory.
Genealogical Society of Victoria, Block Arcade, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.
State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne (General)
La Trobe Library, La Trobe Street, Melbourne (Australiana).
University of Melbourne Archives (Check with University).
Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.

* Talk given to the Victorian Branch, Military Historical Society of Australia.

T.R. Frame

The museum of HMAS *Cerberus*

The history of the musuem

There have been several attempts at establishing a museum in the Navy's largest training establishment, HMAS *Cerberus*, located at Crib Point on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. The first attempt was made at the suggestion of the British Admiralty who sent three ships' figureheads from England to Flinders Naval Depot (as *Cerberus* was formerly known) in 1928. These were taken from HM Ships *Pearl, Pylades* and *Encounter*. The figureheads were featured in the museum with a number of other items which had been transferred from Williamstown Naval Depot when the Training Establishment was transferred to Flinders in 1921. Most of these items were relics from the colonial period of Australian naval history held at Williamstown when the various colonial warships were paid off and stripped prior to disposal. The major items of this collection consisted of the ship's wheel, binnacle, bell, personal possessions and wardroom china from the monitor HMVS *Cerberus* (now sunk as a breakwater at Black Rock in Port Phillip Bay and awaiting possible raising and restoration by the National Trust); the ship's badge and personal items from the sloop HMCSS *Victoria* and relics returned to Australia from the expedition of the Naval Brigades — the 'bluejackets' — to the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, to mention only a few items in the collection.

After a long period of neglect the museum received a new lease of life in the mid-1970s. This enthusiasm for the preservation of our naval heritage continued into the 1980s when the museum took lodgings in one room of the former Supply School — itself an historic building constructed in 1926. With the rapid acquisition of more items for the collection the museum's exhibitions and displays gradually expanded to occupy more floor space in the large historic building. At the close of the RAN's 75th Anniversary year the museum's expansion was completed with the entire building being utilised for public exhibition in addition to the creation of several externally mounted displays.

The aims of the museum

The primary objective of the museum is to research, record, preserve and present the history of HMAS *Cerberus* and the Victorian colonial naval forces. The museum has clearly established itself as the focus for naval history and naval historical study with the establishment.

The additional aims of the museum are to preserve and present the general history of the RAN; to assist personnel within *Cerberus* to appreciate the history of the establishment and the RAN; where possible to offer assistance with projects, events and training which have some connection with naval history; to publicise the history of *Cerberus*, the RAN, the museum and its collections; to respond to enquiries related to naval history; to assist researching historians and to provide presentations on naval history including mobile exhibitions and displays.

The museum collection

The museum collection includes relics, uniforms, photographs, paintings, prints, models, medals, ships' badges and assorted memorabilia. These are displayed either thematically or chronologically throughout the building. The visitor enters the museum and passes through the Colonial Room which features outstanding relics from this period of Australian naval history. The history of HMAS *Cerberus* is presented in a departmental arrangement; gunnery, seamanship, communications, naval police, engineering, etc. Coverage is also given to allied areas of interest such as commanding officers, civilian staff, naval wives association and building and construction. The WRANS have a separate section in the display, as do chaplains and the religious history of *Cerberus*. A feature of the latter display is a reconstruction of the old Drill Hall Chapel, which served naval personnel between 1924 and 1952, utilising many of the relics and fittings from the old building. The Memorial Room includes one of Australia's largest collections of cap tallys, medals and decorations, ships' badges and photographs of the RAN vessels which have been lost while in service. Running through the centre of the display is The Gallery which includes paintings, sketches and models of RAN fleet units dating from the earliest years of the service. One of the most interesting areas in the museum is the Uniform Room containing models dressed in uniforms dating from before the creation of the RAN: officers, sailors and WRANS uniforms; working uniforms, formal attire, ceremonial dress and com-

bat outfits. The visitor leaves the museum building through the 'RAN Through The Years' Room.

The operation and administration of the museum

The museum does not receive official financial support. Funds necessary for the maintenance of the collection and general development are obtained from generous donations by the public, particularly the naval ex-service associations. Two staff members manage the museum's operations and administration. The writer, as Museum Officer, is in overall responsibility to the Command for the running of the museum. The Curator, Mr Derek Berry, AM (ex-WOQMG), performs the usual curatorial functions in addition to maintaining the museum's extensive archives and supervising volunteer labour. The museum is normally open during weekdays and on Sundays between 10 am and 5 pm. Special tours can always be arranged through the Museum Officer (059) 83 7264. Society members are most welcome while Chapters are invited to hold their meetings in the Museum Conference Room.

Lieutenant Tom Frame RAN pictured with Mr Derek Berry AM, Curator of the Museum of HMAS **Cerberus**, *examining a model of the former RAN Fast Fleet Tanker HMAS* **Supply**.

BOOK REVIEWS

Lloyd, Tann, *2/5th Australian Field Ambulance AIF: Unit History 1940–1945,* 2/5th Field Ambulance AIF Association, Melbourne, 1987, ix and 125 pp, photographs, appendices, approx. $30.00.

The history of this unit has been written by Lloyd Tann, who served with the 2/5th, from its inception to disbandment. He has recorded the unit's proud record of service in the Middle East and the South West Pacific area.

Presented in a perfect bound edition, this history represents an attractive and affordable format for the many unit associations and societies which are unable to contemplate publication of a high-cost and high-quality case bound volume, due to low print runs and inherently high costs.

Primarily intended for unit members and their families, publication will be limited. MHSA members interested in acquiring a copy of this unit history should contact the unit association's secretary, Alan Eldridge, C/o 12 Woodland Street, Essendon, Vic. 3040. Telephone (03) 379 6245.

Stuart Rintoul, *Ashes of Vietnam: Australian Voices,* William Heinemann Australia, Richmond, 1987 in association with the Australian Broadcasting Commission. 246 pp, rrp $29.95 Hardback.

Stuart Rintoul, a freelance journalist from Melbourne, has produced a disturbing account of the Vietnam experience in his book *Ashes of Vietnam* and the associated radio programmes broadcast on the ABC.

The book is based on a series of interviews with over one hundred Vietnam veterans and much of it will trigger vivid memories for anyone who served during that war. But, the really disturbing aspect of this book is that Rintoul has used this small number of carefully selected interviews to support some sensational allegations about Australia's Vietnam experience. One of these allegations is the general statement that 'Australians in Vietnam were guilty of acts of barbarity'; others related to homecomings and veterans' problems since the war.

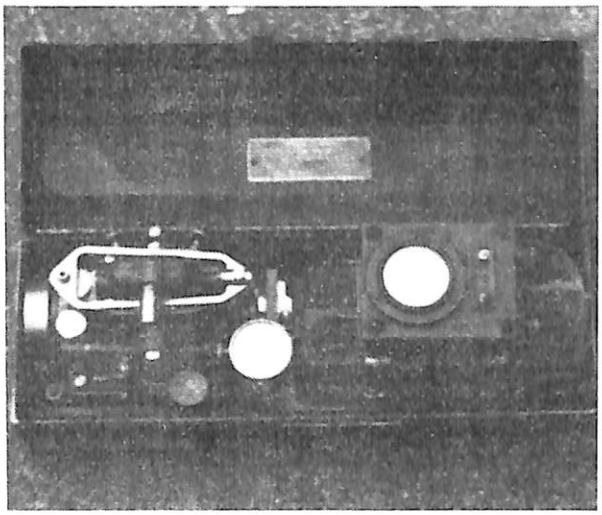
Rintoul has produced a lop-sided version of the reality of the Vietnam experience. He has taken the stories told to him, repeated them as though they were all true, and based his general conclusions upon them. However, some of the stories are not true and the authenticity of others is doubtful. He has not followed good journalistic practice and produced corroborative evidence, nor has he recognised that some of the stories are based on apocryphal tales and legends which could have been identified quite easily with the minimum of objective research.

The stories are taken from a very small population sample and consequently there is no balance in the book. There is no mention of the majority of the nearly 50,000 veterans whose tours of duty in Vietnam were largely untouched by the sensational or the horrifying, whose actions were characterised by a professional approach and compassion rather than barbarity, and who returned home to lives without 'violence, alcoholism, divorce, (and) self destruction'. Many of these veterans will find the allegations in this book insulting and some will wonder at the insensitivity of launching the book on the same weekend as the 'Welcome Home' march in Sydney.

Ashes of Vietnam is not a good piece of journalism and it lacks the academic balance and objectivity necessary to qualify as social or military history.

Rick Haines

Letters to the Editor



ALCO 'Firefly' steam powered battery charger.

(The following letter has been passed on to *Sabretache* by Chris Fagg.—Ed.)

2301 Meadow Lake Circle
Virginia Beach, VA 23454
USA

Dear Mr Fagg,

As a fellow member of Orders and Medals Society of America (OMSA) I would appreciate your assistance. I am an avid US Marine Corps insignia collector, but missing from my collection are a pair of USMC service collar ornaments described below. I have xeroxed a photo/description of exactly what I am looking for below — as you can see (although I apologize for the poor quality reproduction) they have an unusual pin back and are marked 'K.O. Luke Melbourne'.

Any information you could send me concerning these insignia would be most welcome.

Sincerely,
Col. J.E. Goodrich
OMSA Member 4126

1 Pental Road,
North Caulfield,
Victoria, 3161
Australia.

15 September, 1987

Dear Sir,

Recently I acquired a most interesting and rare item, and I am seeking information or leads on same in order to completely restore it.

I wonder, can you help?

It is an ALCO "Firefly" *steam* driven battery charger, 6 volt, hand-portable, made in England in 1944, and was most likely intended for clandestine martial use.

My particular interests are as follows:

1. Detail of missing hand-portable boiler, hose and fuel.
2. Lubricator — if any.
3. Martial history and useage.
4. Instruction manual, book references, etc.

Hoping you can help,
I am yours sincerely,
J. MILLS

7 Quirk Road
Manly Vale N.S.W. 2093
26 October, 1987

Dear Sir,

I wish to correct some information published in the July/September issue. The article concerned is 'Darwin — 19 February, 1942' by Christopher M. Fagg. The two maps published with the article on page 33 are not correct if they are meant to be the 'locations of Coast Artillery' and 'Anti Aircraft Defences' on 19 February, 1942.

Firstly the only Coast Artillery on that date was as follows:

2 x 6" Mk XI	Emery Point
2 x 6" Mk XI	East Point
1 x 6 pdr. Q.F.	West Point

All the others mentioned did not come until later.

Secondly the Anti Aircraft Defences were as follows:

14 Heavy A.A. Bty—

2 x 3" A.A. Guns	Elliott Point
	(not Larrakeyah Barracks as shown)
4 x 3.7 A.A. Guns	The Oval
4 x 3.7 A.A. Guns	Fanny Bay
4 x 3.7 A.A. Guns	McMillens
	(not 2 A.A. Bty as shown)
10 x .303 Lewis Guns	Oil Tanks

2 Heavy A.A. Bty—

4 x 3.7 A.A. Guns	Berrimah
4 x 3.7 A.A. Guns	Quarantine
(not operational — no instruments)	

There were no Bofors Guns in Darwin on this date and the Vickers-Hotchkiss and Lewis Guns (except on the Oil Tanks) were not part of the A.A. Defences of Darwin, although they were possibly used during the raids on 19 February. Each of the Heavy A.A. Gunsites also had Lewis Guns for use in ground defence and low flying aircraft attacks.

Trusting you will inform Mr Fagg and your readers of these facts. I am researching A.A. History and was also in Darwin as an Anti Aircraft Gunner on 19 February, 1942.

Thanking you,
Arthur Kennedy

Dr D.M. Loveridge would like to acquire a copy of the Society's 1972 publication *Australian Imperial Forces, 1914–1920 Data*. If any member is able to assist Dr Loveridge, he can be contacted at:
31 Wayside Avenue,
Christchurch 5,
NEW ZEALAND.

Notes on contributors

Hans Zwillenberg has made a number of significant contributions to the study of South Australia's defence policies and forces. He is a past president of the MHSA, currently vice president, and is a frequent writer for *Sabretache*.

James Ritchie Grant has been a long time member of the MHSA, currently being a member of the W.A. branch. He has contributed several articles for *Sabretache*, with a particular interest in pre- and post-federation military history.

B.H. Travers was formerly Headmaster of Sydney Church of England Grammar School. Among his teaching subjects was history. Since retirement he has been working on a biography of Major General William Holmes with the help of a grant from the Australian War Memorial. He served in the 2/2 Australian Infantry Battalion during World War II, was ADC to General Sir Iven Mackay and later Brigade Major of 15 Australian Infantry Brigade.

Trevor Turner has been a member of the MHSA for eight years, and is a past contributor to *Sabretache*.

Bert Denman served in the army in both the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars. He is currently contributing a series of articles to Sabretache on his experiences as an infantryman in England and France in WW1.

Barry Videon has been an active member of the MHSA for many years. He has served as society Vice-President and as editor of *Sabretache*, as well as being a prolific contributor.

John Price has wide interests in history and is the author of a number of books and articles. He is a regular contributor to *Sabretache*.

Lieutenant Tom Frame is currently the Officer-in-Charge of the Museum of HMAS *Cerberus*. A contributor to the MHSA Journal, Lieutenant Frame was initially trained as a Seaman Officer before transferring to the Instructor Branch in 1984. With a BA(Hons) degree in history from the University of NSW, Lieutenant Frame is currently working on a doctorate on Australian-American naval relations between 1930–1950.

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 the title page.

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 last week of March
Apr.-Jun. edition mailed last week of June
Jul.-Sept. edition mailed last week of September
Oct.-Dec. edition mailed 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 April for April-June edition
1 July for July-September 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 'Notes and Queries' section of the Journal.

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Society publications advertised in *Sabretache* are available from:
Ken Kindness, G.P.O. Box 1052, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601.
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.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I/We ..... of .....
(Name, Rank, etc.) (Address)

.....

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ISSN 0048-8933

Price $6.00