

Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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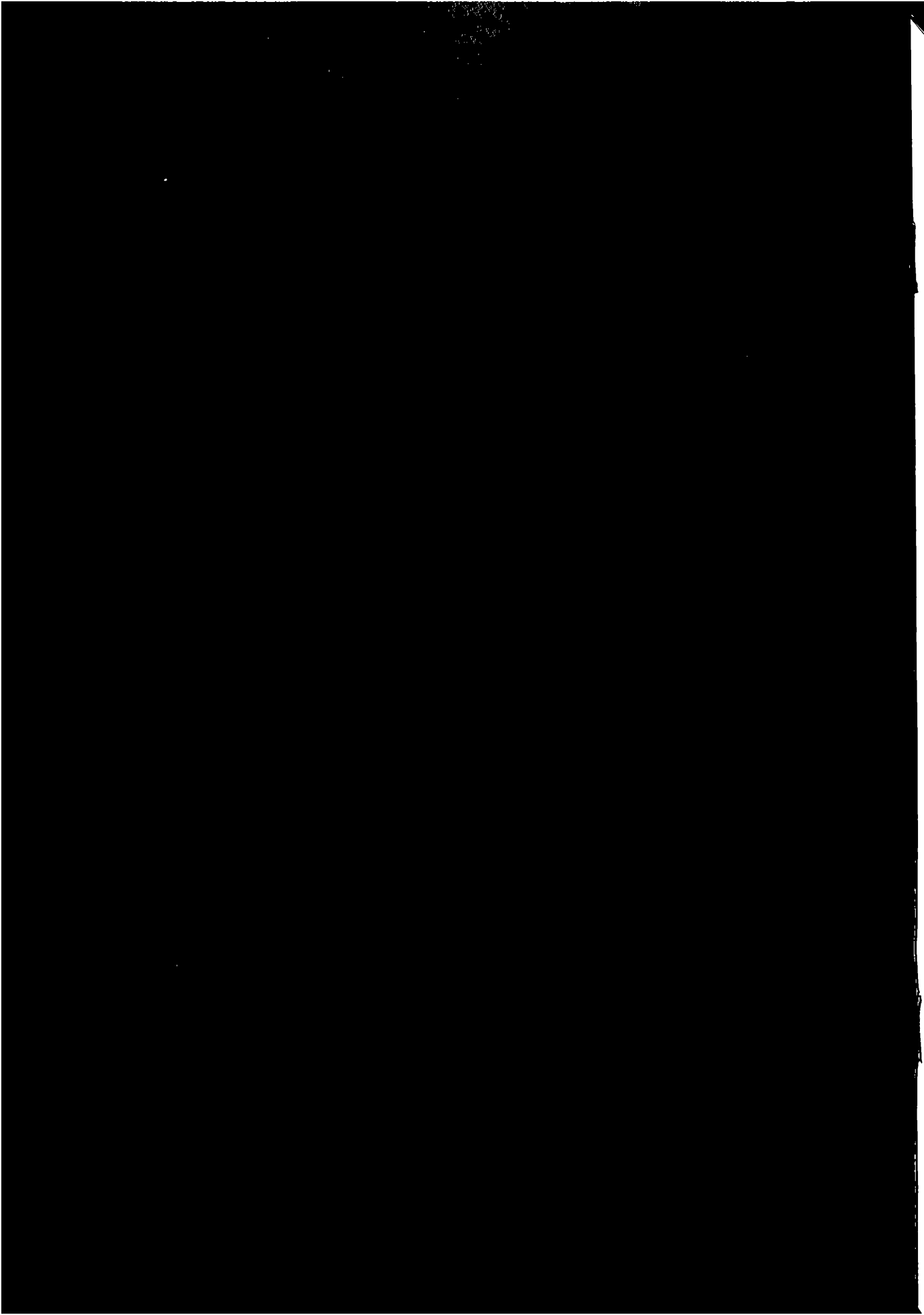
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SABRETACHE

VOL. XXXII JUNE/JULY 1992 NUMBER 3

Published by Phi Kappa Phi, 1000 University Hall, 60501



JANUARY—MARCH 1992
VOLUME XXXIII — NUMBER 1

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Contributions in the form of articles, notes, queries or letters are always welcome. Authors of major articles are invited to submit a brief biographical note, and, where possible, submit the text of the article on floppy disk as well as hard copy. 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 this journal are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the Society.



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

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SABRETACHE

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 Australia 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 appear below.

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.

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 \$150 per full page, \$80 per half page, and \$40 per quarter page. Contract rates applicable at reduced rates. Apply Federal Secretary, PO Box 30 Garran, ACT 2605.

Advertising material must reach the Secretary by the following dates:

1 January for January-March edition

1 July for July-September edition

1 April for April-June edition

1 October for October-December edition

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

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The Air War Over Darwin

Paul Rosenzweig

Although the Japanese occupation of Northern Australia did not eventuate, the Imperial Air Force ensured that the threat was ever present throughout 1942 and 1943. And if 19 February 1942 was a day of shame for the Royal Australian Air Force, the days which followed brought nothing but glory and honour for the many Allied airmen stationed in the north at that time. Many of these perished in their valiant efforts in the defence of Darwin, and the wreckage of their aircraft can still be located across the Top End. Indeed, there is perhaps no better memorial to their valour than the Cox Peninsula itself which is littered with the remains of an assortment of craft — a literal graveyard for both friend and foe.

Aircraft wrecks and airfields

Several books and studies on the Top End include details of aircraft remains, and some are even marked on topographical maps. One, for example, is a landmark on a vast tidal plain near the mouth of the Daly River. On the Cox Peninsula can be found the remains of the P-40 Kittyhawks of Lieutenants Andrews⁽¹⁾ and Burnett⁽²⁾, pilots of the US 49th Fighter Group who were shot down by Japanese fighters in the early battles of 1942. An American Liberator of the 380th Heavy Bombardment Group, who were nicknamed "The Jolly Rogers"⁽³⁾, a Japanese "Betty" bomber on the western fringe of the Peninsula, another Liberator bomber and a Japanese "Zero" fighter lie where they crashed nearly fifty years ago, on the coast of Dum-in-Mirrie Island.

Near the top of the escarpment in Petherick's Rainforest south of Darwin, lies the airframe and other remnants of a Spitfire which crashed in 1943. The pilot, W Ford, is buried nearby. Further afield, there are innumerable such relics to be found, from the Port Keats Crossing en route to the Catholic Mission⁽⁴⁾ to Gove on the northeastern tip of Arnhem Land, named after the pilot who crashed there during the war.

Captain Allison W Strauss was a fighter pilot of the 8th Pursuit Squadron of the 49th Fighter Group, belonging to the 5th United States Army Air Force (USAAF). He operated from a strip alongside the Stuart Highway just south of Noonamah, flying a P40 Kittyhawk, properly known as a Curtiss Hawk 87-M, P-40 Kittyhawk IV. It was a single seat fighter-bomber armed with four .50 inch guns in the wings, although the version which appeared later in the war bore six guns. Strauss was killed on 28 April 1942 after having scrambled to meet an incoming wave of Japanese fighters and bombers, making their fifteenth raid on Darwin

1. Lieutenant Andrews, 49th Fighter Group, shot down on April 27th 1942 and crashed on Gilruth Reef, 5 miles east of Charles Point lighthouse.

2. Lieutenant Burnett, 49th Fighter Group, shot down over Quail Island June 15th 1942.

3. "Milady" of the 380th, a B24 Liberator from Fenton Strip.

4. Vulte Vengeance which crashed in 1944 near the southern end of the Port Keats airstrip. The passenger, Wing Commander Parker Maloney was incinerated (Pye, "The Port Keats Story"). Brother John Pye also mentions another aircraft on the side of a hill near Pine Creek, and a Mitchell which crashed in the Fitzmaurice area but the wreckage was never found.

since 19 February. His wreckage was never found, nor was his body recovered.

It was not until 1985 that the whereabouts of his P-40 was discovered by a waterborne patrol of the North west Mobile Force operating out of Darwin. The patrol, comprising eight men in two inflatable Zodiacs, was conducting routine reconnaissance of the Cox Peninsula with a particular interest in finding gaps through the reef at low tide. As they probed the reef they were surprised to find a pair of .50 calibre guns protruding from the water, encrusted with oysters and marine fouling. Around them, the remains of Strauss' Kittyhawk were strewn across the reef, as well as numerous .50 rounds and empty cartridges. His four guns were salvaged and donated to the NT Aviation Museum for refurbishing, adding to an important collection of aviation artefacts.

On the northern tip of Croker Island lies another American Liberator bomber, now reduced to a rusted hulk. Those salvageable items have, of course, long ago been stripped from the body, as have those of souvenir value, particularly the guns. One interesting memento found in the wreckage is the identification disc or "dogtag", of one of the crewmen, Vincent Scalse from Reading, Pennsylvania.

The airfields used by the Allied airmen during WW2 were named to honour some of the earliest heroes of the war. Pell airfield for example, was named after Major Floyd Pell who was a pilot of the 33rd Pursuit Squadron, USAAF. He was killed while trying to take off in his P-40 Kittyhawk from the main airstrip in Darwin on 19 February, strafed by Zeros. He was awarded the American Distinguished Flying Cross posthumously for his gallantry that day. Pell airfield was named in his honour, alongside the Stuart Highway to the north of Adelaide River.

An Australian to be so commemorated was 30 year old Flight Lieutenant G Sattler of 13 Squadron, RAAF who was killed in his Hudson on 12 January, a week before the raids on the mainland commenced. The strip named in his honour became a base for Spitfires from 79, 452 and 457 Squadrons of the RAAF. The first Spitfires to arrive came to Australia in August 1942, and by the end of the war more than 400 had come into service, proving themselves to be highly effective in aerial combat against the Zero. The name Spitfire is almost inseparable from the name of one of their most distinguished pilots, Group Captain "Killer" Clive Caldwell, who formed, commanded and led Number 80 Fighter Wing at Darwin, and later at Morotai. He had been a fighter pilot in the Libyan desert and in the north of France before coming to play an instrumental role in the defence of Darwin, and by 1945 had claimed 27.5 "kills", 9 probables and 13 damaged, earning the DSO, the DFC and Bar, and the Polish Cross of Valour for his continued gallantry.

Just south of Sattler airstrip is Strauss airstrip, named after Captain Allison Strauss, which was used by P40 Kittyhawks, Spitfires and Boomerangs. Further south along the Highway is Hughes, named after the Director of the Department of Mines according to a sign posted there, but it could equally well have been named after Lieutenant Charles W Hughes who was Pell's Second-in-Command. He was also strafed and killed during take off on 19 February, and like Pell was awarded a posthumous DSC.

The next strip is Livingstone, named after 2nd Lieutenant John D Livingstone of the 9th Pursuit Squadron who died on 4 April 1942 when his P-40 crashlanded at that spot. Later in the war the strip was used by a variety of fighters and bombers of the RAAF, as well as Buffalo, Lightning and Lancer aircraft of No. 1 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit.

These airstrips have in recent years been renovated and signposted by members of the Aviation Historical Society, providing an historical record readily available to both the researcher and casual visitor alike. Most lie alongside or near the old Stuart Highway and North Australia Railway so there is no difficulty



Livingston Airstrip, adjacent to Stuart Highway

in locating them. Unfortunately with recent roadworks to upgrade the north's only road link with southern Australia, the Highway has been rerouted in some places with the result that a few of these strips may be doomed to die a forgotten death.

Wing Commander Archie Tindal

Just South of Katherine lies another airstrip used during WW2, although this one is not a bare dirt patch surrounded by encroaching vegetation, as are most of the others. Today, this is Tindal Air Force Base, home of Australia's most Modern fighter aircraft, the FA-18 Hornet. The proposed development of Tindal was announced by the Defence Minister Mr Gordon Scholes on 15 August 1984, a \$270 million project taking four years to complete. On 17 October the first stage of the project, costing some \$160 million, was officially launched by the Prime Minister, Mr Bob Hawke, who unveiled a plaque to commemorate the occasion.

The wartime fighter strip had been named after Wing Commander Archibald Tindal, an officer of the RAAF from Armidale, NSW. He had been born in Evesley in England on 15 June 1916, and in 1941 was commanding 24 Squadron, RAAF which was then based in Darwin. After this posting he was permanent Officer on the staff of Northern Area Headquarters, having qualified at an RAF Specialist Armament Course in 1938. It was this position he occupied on 19 February 1942 when the first waves of Japanese appeared overhead.

Archie Tindal was one of many Air Force personnel who took up firing positions to engage the enemy aircraft, to try and deter them from the very vulnerable airfield. As it was, they inflicted much damage with bombs and machine gun fire, and the RAAF base would afterwards take a long time to recover from this blow. Tindal gallantly employed a reliable Vickers machine gun which was mounted on top of a fire trench, pouring fire into any aircraft which came within range.



Headstone of Wing-Commander Archibald Robert Tindal

He maintained a continuous stream of fire until he fell, killed instantly by a burst of cannon shell from one of the strafing Zeros. He thus became the first member of the Royal Australian Air Force to be killed in combat on Australian soil. In his honour an airstrip just south of Katherine was named Tindal, this same strip being revitalised in the 1980's as increasingly more attention is today being paid to northern defence. By 1989, Tindal was projected to become the principal defence base in the north, home not only for the FA-18 Hornets of 75 Squadron, RAAF, but also for a significant Army presence including infantry and armour.

Streets and Parks

Many of Darwin's suburban streets and parks owe their names to Allied airmen who lost their lives over Darwin during WW2. Both Varney Crescent and Varney Park in Jingili honour Flight Lieutenant F L Varney, a British pilot of 54 Squadron, RAF who crashed into the beach near Kahlin Hospital after fighting off Japanese aircraft during their 53rd raid on 15 March 1943. He died in hospital the next day and was buried at Berrimah on 17 March. His remains were later moved to the Adelaide River War Cemetery. His headstone there bears the epitaph: "Born of the stars, for a while into the stars he flew".

Another Darwin street to honour a fallen airman is Wackett Street, named in memory of Squadron Leader Wilbur Wackett, son of the prominent aeronautical engineer and aircraft designer Wing Commander Lawrence Wackett, DFC, AFC, who was knighted in 1954 for his services to aviation.

Born in Townsville on 19 February 1921, Wilbur Wackett first gained fame in the RAAF with 75 Squadron which had been raised in Townsville in March 1942. Within an hour of joining the Squadron in Port Moresby Wackett had downed a Japanese bomber — both his and the Squadron's first "kill". A month after his 21st birthday he was engaged by three Zeros during an attack on Lae and was forced to bring his aircraft down in the sea. The Official Historian has recorded that Wackett then swam for nine hours through

shark-infested waters, after which he trekked barefoot through mountainous jungle and swamp to Port Moresby, having crossed PNG from the north coast to the south.

By 1944 Wackett was flying Beaufighters with 24 Squadron based at Coomalie Creek. On 24 September, he and Flying Officer Keith Noble were returning to base after a mission over the Tanimbar Islands when radio contact was lost and their Beaufighter vanished from radar screens.

The wreckage was located thirteen months later in Wire Creek north of Goodparla Station, but no bodies were found. Another search in 1945 discovered a campsite at which a parachute had been used as a shelter. The revelation that one of the pair had survived the crash, at least for a while, prompted Wackett's father, himself a Flying Corps veteran of WW1 twice decorated for gallantry, to erect a memorial near the crash site.

One of the Top End's more remote memorials, unveiled on 3 August 1980, it includes biographies of both airmen, photographs, and the Wackett family coat of arms.

The Dutch in Darwin

Perhaps one of the more unusual units to take to the skies of Darwin during the war was 18 Squadron. a combined unit of Netherlands East Indies and RAAF personnel, although the 4,000 men who served in the squadron accounted for some 38 nationalities between them.

The unit was formed in Canberra on 4 April 1942, from whence it relocated to MacDonald, and later, Batchelor airstrips during December 1942 and January 1943. The history of Number 18 Squadron has been well documented by a former member Gordon Wallace in a series of privately published books.

Its formation was guided by the RAAF Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshall Sir Charles Burnett in conjunction with the Officer Commanding Netherlands East Indies Forces in Australia Major-General L H Van Oyen. Five Mitchell B-25 bombers arrived in Canberra during April, while the Squadron possessed nine when it departed for the north. The squadron had come under RAAF operational command on 1 December 1942, although it was commanded by a Dutch officer, Major B J Fiedeldij. The Squadron's aircrew and ground staff were predominantly Dutch, but there was a RAAF component, and the whole unit was supplied and maintained within the infrastructure of the RAAF. They operated from Batchelor air field flying reconnaissance and bombing sorties over such sites as Tanimbar and Ambon. In the middle of 1945 the squadron moved to Balikpapan in southeast Borneo where operations were then conducted against the Celebes, North Borneo and the Makasar Strait.

In their operations against Japan nineteen Mitchells were lost and 110 airmen lost their lives, of whom 25 were Australians. In 1985, a tree was planted outside the entrance to the Adelaide River War Cemetery during a reunion of veterans of No.18 (NEI) Squadron, to honour these 110 comrades who had died in the defence of Australia, eight of whom are interred in the War Cemetery itself.

It is interesting to consider the fate of the Dutch Squadron's aircraft handed over to the Indonesian Air Force on 6 July 1950 when the squadron was disbanded.

5. Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. In 1949 it became the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

6. Other RAAF radar stations were established elsewhere. An RAAF party travelled to Port Keats Mission in August 1942 for example, to establish a radar station at Mount Goodwin.



Distinctive shoulder patch of the 5th US Army Air Force

RAAF Radio Location

Radio Location, or Radar as it subsequently became known, was a new development during the early years of WW2. Designed by Dr J H Piddington at the CSIR⁽⁵⁾ Radio Physics laboratories in Sydney University, the first unit of early warning radar was flown from Sydney to Darwin on 5 February 1942⁽⁶⁾. It was to Australia's great regret that this important piece of equipment did not arrive in Darwin earlier so that it might be fully tested and calibrated.

Wing Commander A G Pither of RAAF Headquarters had preceded the arrival to select a site suitable for its installation. He chose a spot atop Dripstone Caves, overlooking Beagle Gulf, and the Director of Works, E W Stoddart, was responsible for erecting a building to house the radar unit. A graduate of both the Royal Military College Duntroon and Point Cook, Alfred Pither was one of our most accomplished radar experts.

He had been the Chief Radar Officer for the Allied Expeditionary Air Forces in the UK, and in 1944 was responsible for countering the German V2 rockets using radio. He held the position of Director of Radar at RAAF HQ in 19413 and again in the first six months of 1945, while after the war he was Liaison Officer for the Long Range Weapons Organisation.

He worked in conjunction with the Commonwealth Works Director Eric Stoddart who was a veteran of WW1, in which he had served as an engineer with the 6th Field Company, AIF. Despite their careful planning and setting up of the radar, minor technical faults meant that the set was not working properly when the first planes raided Darwin two weeks after the radar's arrival.

Nevertheless, by Easter the station, known as No.31 Radar Station, was fully operational under command of Pilot Officer H W Hannam, and was capable of giving 30 minutes' notice of an impending enemy attack.

Twentyfive years after that first bombing raid, Alfred Pither, by then an Air Commodore and Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), returned to the Top End to unveil a monument erected on the site of the radar station, near what is today the new suburb of Brinkin. The plaque atop the monument, erected by RAAF radar men and the Corporation of the City of Darwin, bears the names of Hannam, Piddington, Stoddart and Pither, as well as those of Colonel P B Wurtsmith (Commander of the US Fighter Group), Squadron-Leader R C Creswell (Commander RAAF fighter aircraft), and Air Commodore D E L Wilson (Air Officer Commanding).

The plaque further records that "RAAF radar men together with airmen of USAF and RAAF Fighter Squadrons achieved the defeat of Japanese raids on Darwin".

The 5th USAAF

The US Army Air Forces were created on 20 June 1941 prior to which there had existed various "Air Districts" in America and around the world. On 5 February 1942, what had until that time been known as the "Far East Air Force" was redesignated the 5th US Army Air Force (USAAF), coming under the operational command of the Army.

One of the first US units to arrive in the Pacific theatre was a component of the 5th USAAF, the 49th Pursuit Group, also known as the 49th Fighter Group, providing Darwin with a long awaited air intercept capability.

The Group comprised three Pursuit Squadrons (the 7th, 8th and 9th) flying Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawks, single seat fighter bombers. They operated out of airstrips such as Strauss, Livingstone and Batchelor, the former two actually being named after members of the 49th Pursuit Group who had been killed during the earliest days of their involvement.

A plaque unveiled in Darwin during a return visit of US airmen records that "Australia needed all possible help when the Japanese invasion was close on 19 February 1942. A Group of young men of the US Army Air Force, trapped in the air and on the ground by enemy planes, fought and gave all they could. For many more months, greatly outnumbered by the enemy, the 49th Fighter Group intercepted every attack taking toll far out of proportion to its own losses".

Members of the group made a return visit to Darwin in July 1979 and, following a street march on 30 July, unveiled this plaque near the Darwin cenotaph. It was unveiled by Major-General Donald Hutchinson, a distinguished American airman and holder of the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. The plaque, dedicated to the memory of the US airmen who gave their lives in defence of Australia during WW2, also acknowledges with gratitude the courage of those who survived. Their collective gallantry was such that the American government saw fit to bestow upon the 49th Fighter Group the Presidential Unit Citation.

This award has often been referred to as a "unit VC", recognising the courageous and gallant service of all members of the unit cited. It comprises a streamer affixed to the unit's colours or banner, while each member on the actual fighting strength of the unit during the time period for which it was cited is entitled to wear a blue ribbon within a gilt metal frame.

World War 2 Airstrips in The Top End

A. Adjacent to the Stuart Highway between Darwin and Adelaide River

1. Winnellie
2. Sattler (F/Lt G Sattler, 13 Sqn RAAF, KIA 12 Jan 1942)
3. Strauss (Capt A W Strauss, 8 Pursuit Sqn, 5th USAAF, KIA 28 Apr 1942)
4. Hughes (Director, Department of Mines)
5. Livingstone (Lt J D Livingstone, 9 Pursuit Sqn, 5th USAAF, KIA 4 Apr 1942)
6. Coomalie
7. Pell (Major F Pell, 33 Fighter Sqn, 5th USAAF, KIA 19 Feb 1942)

B. Located at Batchelor

1. Batchelor
2. Gould

C. Located south of Adelaide River

1. Long
2. Fenton
3. MacDonald
4. Pine Creek
5. Katherine
6. Manbulloo
7. Tindal
8. Birdum
9. Daly Waters

D. Located elsewhere

1. Millingimbi
2. Gove
3. Groote Eylandt

Note:

The majority of these operational strips have now been signposted with historical details of their use during WW2. There was one further airstrip in northern Australia: Truscott, located in WA.

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HALL, T (1980) *Darwin 1942*, Methuen.

LOCKWOOD, D (1966) *Australia's Pearl Harbour*, Rigby.

ODGERS, G (1984) *The Royal Australian Air Force*, Child & Henry.

WALLACE, G (1983) *Up in Darwin with the Dutch*, privately published.

WALLACE, G (1986) *Those Air Force Days*, privately published.

The text of the 49th's citation is as follows:

"The 49th Fighter Group, US Army, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action during the period March 14, 1942 to August 25, 1942. Charged with the air defence of the area near Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia, this unit, although greatly outnumbered by enemy aircraft, boldly intercepted the enemy on every attempted attack and extracted toll far out of proportion to its own losses. The fine record in combat and the number of airplanes kept in action under difficult field conditions was made possible by the determined courage, the uniformly high morale, and the technical ability of the group as a whole, which contributed in large measure to the successful defense of the area". (US War Department General Order No.50 dated 2 October 1942)

The 49th Fighter Group today exists as the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing of what is now known as the US Air Force.

The aerial defence of Australia in the north during 1942 and 1943 is worthy of volumes, and about the Top End relics abound to attest to the vigour and courage of the Allied airmen. Today, nearly half a century since the streets of Darwin echoed to firefights and cannonfire in the skies above, aircraft wrecks, airstrips and even street names recall the valiant efforts to repel the raiders. On almost any relatively isolated stretch of coast can be found rounds and cartridges scattered amongst the flotsam and beach litter. testimony to a longforgotten dogfight furiously contested overhead so many years ago during perhaps the most crucial days in the history of north Australia.



Strauss Fighter Strip, adjacent to the Stuart Highway, NT

The Track

Paul A. Rosenzweig

The development of the North-South Road by the visionary engineer D D Smith and its subsequent upgrading to highway status by American, Australian Militia and AIF engineers was a vital step in developing the defence of Northern Australia. Its importance following the bombing of Darwin, and the continued significance of the Stuart Highway today (in the continued absence of the promised North-South rail link), underscores the value of Smith's forethought and the labours of the engineers at a critical time in our history.

At the outbreak of World War 2, the Northern Territory was still a remote and largely undeveloped frontier province, nearly one quarter of Australia's land mass but with a non-Aboriginal population of less than 7,000. The South Australian government had constructed an Overland Telegraph line and a railway from Darwin to Pine Creek but in 1911 shed responsibility for the Territory to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth also began with a flurry of activity which soon died away to an atmosphere of hesitation and caution. In the years leading up to World War 2 there was still no north-south railway, the road network was minimal, and the only means of communication was still by morse on the Overland Telegraph.

This situation was not seen as a concern, for the wartime strategy for the Top End was that Darwin would never be anything more than a secondary base. The quick succession of Japanese successes — Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies — suddenly left Darwin as Australia's exposed and very vulnerable frontline, with an inefficient and illdeveloped road system to connect to the Mt Isa and Alice Springs railheads.

'The Track'

With the sudden advances of the Japanese, the North-South Road (later known as the Stuart Highway) from Alice Springs to Darwin took on a new significance. Dozens of military sites were established alongside the single-lane dirt road — stores depots, camps, airfields. Some of the staging camps for military convoys established at this time have continued to exist today (Elliott for example).

Private Vic Raymond recalls the numerous trips he made, shuttling between Larrakeyah Barracks, Adelaide River and various Top End camps, and the immense clouds of white dust, visible for miles, which would billow up from the road⁽¹⁾. Overnight temperatures dropped severely, especially on the last legs towards Alice Springs, making it

1. Vic Raymond,
Pers. Comm. 27 Apr 1986, 30
Apr 1986.

2. The Track. NT Transport & Works brochure.

impossible to sleep in the vehicle, so Vic would dig a hole in the ground beside his car and sleep beneath a pile of blankets. On the return journey he would call in to staging camps to see if any nursing sisters or others required a lift to Darwin, to give Brigadier Dollery and himself some company on the 8-day expedition to Darwin — a distance of about 1,500 kilometres.

It was the vision of a young engineer that saw the creation of an all-weather sealed road linking Darwin with the important Alice Springs railhead. David D Smith first came to the Northern Territory in 1926 as part of the Commonwealth's flurry of activity, to survey for proposed railway lines which were never built. He settled in Alice Springs, confident of the Northern Territory's potential — so confident that he resigned from the Commonwealth Railways to become the first Resident Engineer for Central Australia in 1929. He established a home and office in tents on the dirt crossroads and from this base began pushing a road through the McDonnell Ranges with a small crew using only manual labour and camel-train transport. They continued northwards and by the end of the 1930's had developed a significant road to Darwin.

Anticipating war and recognising the vulnerability and isolation of the north, D D Smith concentrated on making improvements to the North-South Road, straightening and widening sections. He overspent his budget by £67,000, and in response to an enquiry prompted by the Commonwealth Government and the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Smith's only reply was, "Too bloody bad!".⁽²⁾



D D Smith Park, Alice Springs

The threat of invasion startled the Commonwealth into action, and it decreed that an all-weather sealed road be constructed between Tennant Creek and Birdum,⁽³⁾ the southern terminus of the North Australia Railway from Darwin. This was August 1940, and D D Smith and his Civil Construction Corps had the 494 kilometres of sealed road completed by December. A little while later, the 808th US Engineers were largely responsible for sealing the highway between Birdum and Darwin, some 400 kilometres in just six weeks. In the space of two years the 1,500 kilometre Stuart Highway was completed, and the flow of troops and materials through Central Australia generated a new prosperity.

The Stuart Highway made Darwin's defence possible, and its timely completion was due largely to the foresight and determination of D D Smith, who continued on as Resident Engineer until 1957. He continued to serve the community as the Member for Stuart in the Legislative Council of the NT from 1962 until 1965. A park on the corner of Parsons and Hartley Streets in Alice Springs was named in his memory on 16 May 1980, and in the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 1981 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.⁽⁴⁾

Australian Engineers

The Stuart Highway's completion also owes a great deal to the many Australian engineers who were employed on road construction duties during World War 2. It was largely due to their efforts that the Territory not only gained a number of abattoirs, hospitals, buildings and other facilities for wartime use, but today has a network of sealed roads through some of its more remote localities. They came to the Territory when the link between Darwin and Alice Springs comprised little more than a rather rough track, and the railway did not exist between Birdum and Alice Springs. The Army in fact, shifted the southern terminus from Birdum some six kilometres north to Larrimah at the end of 1940 because the Birdum area flooded in the Wet. Mrs Hilda Abbott, wife of the wartime Administrator of the Northern Territory, recorded in her diary some of the highlights of her evacuation from Darwin following the first bombing raids:

21st February 1942

After driving from Darwin to Adelaide River and there catching the train to Larrimah, "I meant to take my little group to the Birdum hotel and there await the cars. I was told they mightn't be down for some days; also that the road to Birdum was impassable, a black soil Plain in between us was quite hopeless".⁽⁵⁾

The train with their cars arrived on the afternoon of the 21st and they set off for Alice Springs, arriving on the evening of the 23rd.

3. The sealed road from Alice Springs to Tennant Creek had been completed during the 1930s to cope with traffic resulting from the mining boom in Tennant, but there were still unmade sections and at most creek crossings the road was subject to flooding.

4. David Douglas Smith, OAM, JP. Awarded the OAM in Commonwealth of Australia *Gazette* S114, 13 June 1981. Passed away in Alice Springs on 7 July 1984.

5. Abbott, Mrs H.(1942) Personal Diary. p.59.

6. Ibid, p.64.

7. *Teeth & Tail — The RAE 1919-1945*, p.144 (available from the RAE Corps Committee, Directorate of Engineers, Army Office, Canberra)

8. See *Sabretache*, XXX(2) Apr-Jun 1989. pp.23-29

9. Frank Cridland, *Pers.Comm.*, 26 Apr 1986.

24th February 1942

“By five o’clock all the women in Alice Springs awaited the Convoy from Darwin ... Thirty of us waited to welcome them and presently the Convoy drew up ... They had come down the long roads sitting in the back of Army lorries and the sun had beaten down on them without mercy. The kindly camps had gathered them in at nights, and it must have been this that kept them cock-a-hoop, for that’s how they were — in the main ... They cheered as they came in — one girl waved a tin hat. The soft powder-like dust of the Centre had made all their faces reddybrown, and their eyes stared out of white, stark rings”.⁽⁶⁾

The 2/1st Australian Mechanical Equipment Company, AIF, had been raised in NSW in late 1941 — the Royal Australian Engineers’ first plant company and the Commonwealth’s third. Its personnel were drawn from the roads departments of the various mainland States — a total of 356 all ranks commanded by Captain (later Major) DA White, with Captains as the four section commanders.

After initial training at the School of Military Engineering at Sydney, one field section went to Port Moresby while the remainder of the company travelled to the Northern Territory. Sapper Frank Cridland was with the company from 12 January 1942, working on the all-weather road which was to become the Stuart Highway. Headquarters, including the workshop, was based at Katherine, with two field sections near Katherine and Adelaide River and another at Larrimah, 173 kilometres to the south. It is recorded that “all three were sorely tried by the heat, the all-pervading dust on the road, and the unreliability of their second-hand plant”.⁽⁷⁾

Towards the end of 1942 the 2/1st AME travelled to Kapooka to refit for active service in the southwest Pacific, finishing in Borneo in 1945. By then a Sergeant, Frank Cridland had meanwhile served with the Commonwealth Department of Post-War Reconstruction under Dr H C Coombs, training exservicemen for a trade back in civilian life, and with the Australian Military Mission after the occupation of Germany and Italy, under “Black Jack” Callaghan. His recollections of Service life in the Top End suggest that the average young sapper spent rather more time suffering the ravages of a variety of tropical diseases and illnesses than working on engineer tasks: “... the medics downgraded me to A2 — unfit for tropical service. The main reason for this was that along with 31 others from various units, I was admitted (in about June 1942) suffering from yellow jaundice to Katherine Hospital, 121st AGH.⁽⁸⁾ I heard that 4 died. I know that the rest of us were pretty damned sick ... What with the effects of tropical skin ulcers, duodenal ulcers cured, then relapsed 3 times, rosacea, amoebic dysentery, etc. etc., the remainder of my Army career until discharge in November 1945 was not fraught with much danger from shot or shell!”.⁽⁹⁾

After the bombing of Darwin large numbers of local residents were enlisted into the military, often with a little coercion being necessary. Lockwood (1984) relates the tale of Oswald ("Ossie") Jensen, an electrician and Darwin's biggest electrical contractor to the defence forces, who joined in the evacuation of Darwin by train.⁽¹⁰⁾ He was stopped by provosts in Katherine and returned to Adelaide River where he and all others of military age were detained in a paddock under the wrongful assumption that martial law had been proclaimed. Jensen and others were inducted into the RAE and given regimental numbers prefixed with "DX".

Two field companies of the Corps Troops Engineers were sent north immediately from Adelaide to be employed on the construction of the Highway — the 2/9th and 2/15th. The 2/9th Field Company was commanded by Major Alex Slater and was based at Adelaide River, working closely with the 2/4th Pioneer Battalion (963 all ranks stationed at Adelaide River, Winnellie, Batchelor, Noonamah, Berry Springs and Darwin's Left Sector from Ludmilla to Rapid Creek). As well as road construction, they were responsible for the building of a 600 bed hospital for the 119th AGH in virgin scrub on the northern side of Adelaide River. The 2/15th Field Company was based in Central Australia and was commanded by Major Oscar Meyer, later Lieutenant-Colonel and Chief Engineer for NT Force. After the war he was Director of RAE at Land HQ (194649) and Victorian Railways Commissioner.

The 2/9th and 2/15th, together with the 4th and 10th Army Troops Companies and the 20th Field Company, belonged to the 11th Lines of Communications SubArea which had its headquarters at Alice Springs. The 20th Field Company, a Militia unit, arrived in Katherine from Victoria late in the evening of 29 May 1942, from whence the platoons were deployed within the Territory. Its headquarters was later moved to Larrimah so the unit could concentrate on road construction.⁽¹¹⁾

Sapper Ray Irving, with 2 Platoon, constructing an abbatoirs at Manbulloo Station near Katherine, recalls the conditions in the Territory in 1942-43: "The Army seemed to think we could live on fresh air. NT beef was then worth 20/- per 100 lb. — about half Newmarket value. If we wanted any we had to steal it. The troops were known to do this. When we went to the NT, I weighed eleven and a half stone. When we left 10 months later I was less than nine stone. We arrived back in Kapooka on 13 March 1943. We couldn't eat the meals — our stomachs had shrunk. In the NT in 1942-43 it was Army policy to stockpile food rather than feed it to the troops. I believe that much of the illness suffered by the troops in 1942 in the NT was caused by malnutrition."⁽¹²⁾

They were responsible for an assortment of building construction tasks at Manbulloo, Mataranka, Katherine and Larrimah during which time they attained AIF status. They had arrived in Katherine after the bombing

10. Lockwood, D (1984) *Australia's Pearl Harbor*, Rigby, pp.156, 159, 173.

11. For full details on the actual construction of the Stuart Highway refer to Chapter 21, *Teeth & Tail*,

12. Ray Irving, Pers.Comm. 8 Aug 1986.

13. Ray Irving, Pers. Comm.
9 Feb 1988.

14. Sutcliffe, Major C (1985)
In Powell, A (1988), *The
Shadow's Edge*, Melbourne
University Press, p.275

on 22 March, and left the Territory unscathed, to receive their baptism of fire in New Guinea in late 1943. Hut despite being stationed over 300 kilometres inland there was still a little apprehension about the intentions of the Japanese. John Irving recalls, "My own feelings were that if the Japs came they would come up the Roper River [from the Gulf of Carpentaria westwards to Katherine] and try to isolate the garrison at Darwin".⁽¹³⁾

There were a number of other engineer units stationed in the Northern Territory during the war, each having some responsibility for maintaining or improving the North-South Road as well as innumerable other works projects.

The 2/11th Field Company operated mostly in the Darwin fortress area under the command of Major W Varney, rebuilding itself after having lost two sections in heavy fighting in Timor and Ambon. Sapper CG Boulter died in Darwin on 17 December 1941 and was buried in the Gardens Road Cemetery.

The 23rd Field company was a Militia unit, commanded by Major FC Stevens. It first had its headquarters at Winnellie, but after the bombings moved to a position alongside the Stuart Highway at the 28 mile, from where its three sections supported units positioned between Darwin and Adelaide River.

The 2/2nd Field Company moved to Pine Creek in June 1942 where it was responsible for building an abattoir, a forward supply depot, and a convalescent depot, as well as a refrigerating plant at Adelaide River. It later underwent training in guerilla warfare before returning to works at Pine Creek. It eventually replaced the 1st Field Company, which had been stationed at Batchelor. The 2/2nd went south in April 1943 for re-equipping.

These units came under the 14th Lines of Communications Sub-area which had its headquarters at Adelaide River. The 2/1st Boring Section under Captain Frame spent a year in the Top End locating and drilling for water. Other engineer units under command were the 18th Fortress Company, the 65th and 70th Anti-aircraft Searchlight Companies, 6th Army Troops Company and the 9th Workshop & Park Company, all Militia units based in Darwin or alongside the Highway.

Worthy also of brief mention are the men of the Darwin Overland Maintenance Force (DOMF), who were responsible for resupplying the road gangs along the Highway. Commanded by Brigadier Noel Loutit, and based in Alice Springs beneath ANZAC Hill, the DOMF grew to an enormous size, with an eventual strength of some 8,000 personnel and 3,000 vehicles.⁽¹⁴⁾

The Convoys

In 1942-43 Darwin became a military fortress with the civil administration relocated to Alice Springs, boosting its population from about 100 to 6,000. The bitumen highway to Darwin became a lifeline with an almost continual flow of convoys carrying men, supplies and equipment. The survivors of those who came north during the war years will have, in 1992 (the 50th Anniversary of the "Battle of Australia" and the Northern Territory's War Service Memorial Year), a rather more comfortable return journey to Darwin. Alice Springs to Darwin is today a two or perhaps three day trip on a good quality highway although it does not follow exactly the route of the wartime North-South Road. A portion of the old highway still exists between Adelaide River and Katherine, known as the "Scenic Route".

When the 27th Battalion came north in December 1941, "it was a hot, dusty, and a tough trip in lorries and cattle trucks and, changing water and poor rations took a miserable toll: A diarist noted:⁽¹⁵⁾

Day 4 — Barrow Creek, tea and flies.

Day 5 — Mataranka, flies and tea.

Day 6 — Larrimah, tea, dysentery, Woodside throat. Aspirin Order of the Day.

Day 7 — Pine Creek, tea for those in condition to eat.

By comparison, when Corporal Ralph Colman of the 45th Cipher Section, NT Force, travelled north with reinforcements in December 1942, they had the luxury of a bitumen road from Alice Springs to Larrimah. That the journey was tolerable, if not even enjoyable, can be seen from the fact that, instead of taking the train from Larrimah, the troops remained in the trucks for the final leg.⁽¹⁶⁾

The trip north for Private John Egan of the 8th Battalion was less inspiring. Four weeks after the Pearl Harbour raid he found himself travelling the endless dusty highway with no destination given. Only upon arrival at Noonamah were the men told, "This is it!"⁽¹⁷⁾ Some 46 years later he repeated the journey and recorded some observations and recollections: "At many Points the old road is visible and one must admire the engineering that went into its construction ... with one dozer and one grader over section of 20 kilometres: any gully or low area was built up with local stone and bound by a 6" concrete capping, and these are still visible. From Larrimah north the road takes a much more diverse path. The original one tended to avoid any high rises. This would have been a wise decision with the equipment available at the time. My earliest trip north 1942, there was no bitumen at all — can you imagine 5 days

15. The 27th Battalion Centenary Commemorative booklet (1977), p.21.

16. Ralph Colman, Pers.Comm. 2 Oct 1987.

17. John Egan, Pers.Comm. 21 Jan 1988.



S14618 (later SX29117) Sergeant Cyril George Martin enlisted in the Engineers (Militia) on 7 September 1940 and transferred to the AIF on 19 June 1941, serving with NT Force at Adelaide River. He was discharged on 5 December 1945.

18. Ibid.

19. David Carment (1984)
On Australia's Front Line:
The Military Heritage of
Adelaide River. *Journal of
the RUSI*, November 1984.

Acknowledgements:

I am indebted to those people mentioned in the notes who have assisted my researches; also Mrs Dylis M Smith of Alice Springs.

Alice to Larrimah on semi-trailers, sitting on your kitbag then mess duties, etc. (if unlucky) at staging camps".(18)

Prime position on the Highway was Adelaide River, where the smooth flow of convoys was coordinated by the staff of NT Force. In addition to the regular flow of material and men there was an express convoy between Alice Springs and Adelaide River carrying perishables — these vehicles had priority and were authorised to overtake any other convoys (which were restricted to 25 miles per hour). North of Larrimah, only vehicles of three-ton capacity or less were used, allowing greater speed and mobility in the event of an air raid.(19)

Today's Stuart Highway, still affectionately known by Territorians as "The Track", is fully sealed and of world standard. Many wartime sites are readily accessible, and for the 1992 commemoration a number of trails and new sites are being presented by the NT Government, signposted and with explanatory brochures.

Postscript

It is worthy of note that the engineer presence in the north today still includes a Chief Engineer on the staff of the Headquarters, now Northern Command (NORCOM). In addition there is an Army Works Branch (ARA) and, since the raising of NORCOM in 1988, an Engineer Plant Troop (Army Reserve), known since 1991 as 7th Field Engineer Troop.



Inscription by engineers who built Howard Springs Pool

South African War Service of Pupils and Staff of the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, 1899—1902

John E Price

Service of pupils and staff of Melbourne Church of England Grammar during the South African War is indicated after each name, with any subsequent service in square brackets.

- Peter Alexander Allan: 31531 L.Cpl. 2nd Scottish Horse—[WW1]
 Claude Alexander Anderson: L.Cpl. Australian Commonwealth Horse (ACH)
 Clifford Harry Anderson: 631 L.Cpl. 2nd ACH — [WW1]
 Edgar Oswald Anderson: Lieut. 2nd Victorian Mounted Rifles (VMR)/Royal Field Artillery—[WW1]
 Herbert Alfred Anderson: Lieut./Adj. VMR/RA — [Kelantan Police]
 Bertram Armytage: Lieut. 6th Dragoon Guards
 Archibald Henry Barclay: Lieut. 2nd Western Australian Mounted Infantry
 Arthur Bishop: French's Scouts
 Robert Blyth: 917 Cpl. 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles
 Arthur Hogarth Boake: 784 CSM, 5th VMR Wounded at Wilmansrust
 Charles James Kingsley Boyd: Lieut. 4th Victorian Imperial Bushmen
 Arnold William Brissenden: Tpr. South African Light Horse
 Vernon Bissett Brodie: 124 Pte. 4th QIB/Lieut. 7th ACH
 George Owen Bruce: Lieut 2nd VMR — [WW1 (KIA)]
 Percy Thurlow Bull: 770 Sgt. 5th VMR
 Arthur Gerald Button: 40090 Tpr. 2nd Scottish Horse
 Horace F. H. Dacre Button: 9 Cpl. NSWLB
 David Duncan Cade: Civil Surgeon/ Hon. Capt AAMC
 Charles Calcutt: Tpr. Imperial Light Horse — [WW1]
 Alexander John King Caton: 140 L.Sgt. 2nd VMR
 George Griffith Floyd Chomley: Lieut. 1st VMI/Capt. 5th VMR — [WW1]
 William Burgh Chomley: Lieut. 4th VIB
 James William Christie: 491 Tpr. 3rd VBC (died of disease)
 Lancelot Arthur Cleveland: Lieut. 4th VIB/Capt. 5th VMR
 Victor Ernest Cobb: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles
 Arnold Mercer Davies: 454 Pte. 3rd VBC — [WW1, WW2 (died POW)]
 Edwin Zerubabel Davies: Civil Surgeon (died Colombo, Nov 1902)
 Herbert Major Downes: Capt. 4th VIB/Major 5th VMR — [WW1]
 Tyrrell George Evans: 572 L.Sgt. 4th VIB/Lieut. 3rd NSWLB
 William Tyrrell Evans: 573. Cpl. 4th VIB — [WW1]
 Evelyn Alexander Wilson Ffrench: Lieut. 4th VIB/RA — [WW1 (Killed)]
 Maurice Dawson Fitzgibbon: 1583 Pte. 5th VMR
 Cecil Robert Gaunt: Capt. 4th Dragoon Guards — [WW1 — 3rd Afghan War]
 Seymour Farrage Gibbs: Civil Surgeon
 George Augustus Glenn: 76 Pte. 3rd WABC (Wounded, Koster River)
 Henry Chaplyn Grover: Lieut. 5th VMR
 Henry Campbell Gordon: 239 Sgt. 4th VIB — [WW1, WW2]
 Henry John Goodman: 395 Sgt. 3rd VBC (Killed, Koster River)
 John Heitland Godby: 1682 CQMS. 5th VMR
 Frank Goodwin Green: Service unknown
 George Grice: Lieut. Scottish Rifles Capt./Adj. 11th Imperial Yeomanry (died of wounds, Tweefontein)
 Stamer Gubbins: Lieut. 5th VMR — [WW1]
 Samuel Harris: Lieut. 2nd WAMI/DAAG to Gen. Bethune — [WW1]
 Stanley Forrest Hammond: 593 Pte. 3rd VBC
 Frederick Grant Hammond: 299 Pte. 3rd QMI
 James Reginald Henty: 564 CQMS 3rd VBC/Lieut. 6th ACH
 George Hamilton Hood: Lieut. 2nd VMR
 Daniel Shaw Hughes: 1st Kitchener's Fighting Scouts
 Richard Charles Hutchinson: 126 Pte. 4th QLB (Mentioned in C-in-C's Despatches)
 Albert Henry James 497 Hon. Sgt. 3rd VBC — [WW1]
 Henry John Temple James: Army Service Corps—[WW1]
 Eden Hermiston Jones: Kitchener's Fighting Scouts (Wounded, Pienaar's River) — [WW1]

- Alexander Trevelyan King: 236 Pte. 4th VIB/2nd Lieut. RA — [WW1]
 Hedley John Kirkpatrick: 1079 Tpr. 1st Australian Horse/Capt. 6th Dragoon Guards, CB, DSO — [WW1 WW2]
 Frederick Thomas Krcrouse: 31644 Sgt. 2nd Scottish Horse — [WW1]
 Ernest John Williams McCarron: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles
 John Coleridge Patterson McClausland: 706 CQMS. Cameron's Scouts
 Richard McCloskey: 19th Bn. Imperial Yeomanry (Paget's Horse) — [WW1]
 Edward James McKaige: 241 Sgt. 4th VIB/Lieut. VMR — [WW1]
 John William Herbert McKinery: service unknown — [WW1]
 Farquhar Hugh McKinnon: Lieut. 5th WAMI (wounded, Vaal Bank)
 Wilfred Madden: 29 L.Cpl. 4th VIB
 Francis Raynes Martin: Surg. Capt. South African Constabulary
 John Stuart Manton: 267 Pte. 5th WAMI
 Bertram Cecil Merrilees: 31644 Tpr. 2nd Scottish Horse (died of disease, 8 May 1901)
 Frederick Thomas Moorhouse: 1382 Pte. 5th VMR
 Herbert Dyce Murphy: Field Intelligence Department
 Alfred Benjamin Ncedham: Bdr. 10th Mountain Bty RA (wounded & POW) — [WW1, KIA]
 George Hodgskin Nethercott: 229 Tpr. Rhodesian Regt (killed near Tuli)
 Frederick William Osborn: Major 8th ACH
 Joseph Guy Outhwaite: 1255 Sgt. 5th VMR
 Arthur Hodgskin Parkes: Cpl. Ceylon MI Vol Corps — [WW1]
 Harold George Parsons: Lieut. East Kent Imperial Yeomanry
 James Harold Patterson: Capt. 5th VMR
 William Lockyer Potter: 358 Pte. 5th VMR
 Herbert Hely Pounds: Lieut. 4th VMR — [WW1, wounded]
 Samuel Henry Ramsden: 71 Pte. 2nd QMI
 Paston Herbert Ludovic Rede: 2nd Commonwealth Contgt. — [WW1, DCM]
 William Arter Rolls: 70 Pte. South African Constabulary (died of disease)
 Angus Mackintosh Robertson: Tpr. 2nd Johannesburg Mounted Rifles
 Robert Patrick Norton Robertson: 1344 Cpl. 5th VMR (killed, Middle Kraal)
 Hercules Arthur Temple Robertson, 2nd Baron of Rosemead and Tafelberg: Lieut. Royal Irish Fusiliers, ADC to Maj-Gen. Sir ETH Hutton
 Cyril Warrington Rogers: L.Cpl. Imperial Light Infantry (killed, Spion Kop)
 Archibald Hamilton Rowan: Lieut. 6th ACH
 Andrew Percival Rowan: Lieut 5th VMR — [WW1, KIA]
 Harold Sugden Rudduck: Vet.Capt. 2nd VMR/OC Veterinary Field Hospital, Pretoria
 Robert Ballantyne Sanderson: Lieut. RFA/Capt. Imperial Yeomanry — [WW1]
 Norman Winter Scott: 41117 Tpr. 2nd Scottish Horse
 Thomas Wilson Serjeant: NSW Bushmen's Contingent/Lieut. 4th Rifle Brigade (died of disease)
 Richard Gauntlett Shuter: Capt. Manchester Regt. (DSO, MID) — [WW1]
 George Frederick Belcher Smith: Imperial Yeomanry Field Hospital, RAMC
 Thomas Hope Smith: 324 Pte. 4th QMI
 Robert Christian Holmes Smythe: 1958 Tpr. South African Light Horse (died of wounds, Thaba N'chu)
 Samuel Thomas Staughton: Capt. 1st VMI (DSO, MID)
 Edward Henry Merric Stevenson: 1244 Pte. 5th VMR
 Percy Bertram Stevenson: Lieut. 2nd Scottish Horse
 Frank Malcolm Tolmie: 166 Far. Cpl. 2nd Tas. Bushmen
 Henry Freame Trew: Lieut. 3rd VBC (wounded)/Capt. 5th VMR — [WW1]
 Francis Dashwood Tyssen: Lieut. 2nd Scottish Horse, East African Police — [WW1]
 Oscar de Wit Vaughan: 81 Pte. 1st Tas—[WW1, wounded twice, KIA]
 Edward John Vercoc: 1221 Pte. 5th VMR (wounded)—[WW1]
 Neville Verdon: 39 Pte. 1st QMI
 Harry Kirke Vere-Hodge: Natal Mounted Rifles
 Herbert Cresswell Walter: Lieut. 3rd Tas (IB) (killed, Pietersburg)
 Ernest Herbert Wyndham Westwood: Royal Engineers
 George Nicholas Gustave Vauser Wiedemann: 109 Cpl. 4th VLB
 Geoffrey Edwin Winchester Wilmot: 364 Pte. 4th VIB/Bechuanaland Rifles. Lord Methuen's Bodyguard (died of disease, Mafeking)
 Ernest Moore Wilson: L.Cpl. Houw Hoek District Mounted Troops
 Gordon Chesney Wilson: Capt. Royal Horse Guards ADC to Col. RSS Baden-Powell, Mafeking (MVO, MID 2, Legion of Honour) — [WW1, KIA]
 Henry Newton Spencer Wollaston: Capt. 4th VIB
 William Henry Young: Lieut. 6th WAMI (wounded, Badplaats)

Recent News Releases from the Department of Defence

Australia's Unsung Coral Sea Hero

An old Victorian mansion outside Canberra, currently occupied by the CSIRO's Division of Wildlife and Ecology, might seem an unlikely genesis for a naval battle which might well have saved Australia from even more direct threat in World War Two. But the fierce fight put up by an Australian admiral commanding one of the Allied task forces at the Battle of the Coral Sea, 50 years ago, may have been crucial in stemming the Japanese Navy's drive south.

Confusion among Japanese pilots that the squadron commanded by Rear Admiral J G Crace, RN, contained "battleships" was responsible for the withdrawal of the Japanese occupation force bound for Port Moresby. They had also been subjected to bombing by US Army Air Corps B-17s operating from Townsville through Port Moresby.

Born at Gunghalin, then in NSW but now part of the ACT, in 1887, Crace joined the Royal Navy before the Royal Australian Navy was established in 1911. It was not uncommon then for members of British Empire and Commonwealth nations to serve in each other's forces.

In April 1942, as an Allied fleet was being assembled to contest Japanese passage of the Coral Sea, Rear Admiral Crace, who was serving with the RAN, was designated commander of a support group comprising the cruisers HMAS *Australia*, HMAS *Hobart* and USS *Chicago*, and the US destroyers *Perkins* and *Walker*. Though Crace was the senior admiral, operational command of the fleet was assigned to Rear Admiral F J Fletcher, USN, with his flag in the aircraft carrier USS *Yorktown*. He had with him also the aircraft carrier USS *Lexington*. There were, as well, groups of US cruisers and destroyers, tankers and submarines and land-based aircraft.

Fletcher had available valuable intelligence from US and Australian Code breakers who had penetrated the Japanese naval wireless traffic. He struck first on 4 May at Japanese lodgements on Tulagi which his bombers virtually eliminated. On 7 May, he made a decision which altered the course of the battle, and possibly the war, by detaching Crace and his group to block the Jomard Passage east of New Guinea through which the Japanese force to invade Port Moresby was anticipated.

Ordered into diamond pattern, which gave maximum covering firepower and room for manoeuvre, Crace's force sailed to intercept, every mile taking them closer to Japanese land-based aircraft at Rabaul.

In the afternoon, Japanese torpedo bombers attacked at low level but all their weapons narrowly missed the violently manoeuvring Allied ships. This was followed by accurate high level bombing which bracketed Crace's HMAS *Australia* which, however, was undamaged. The ships claimed five bombers shot down.

When they got back to Rabaul, the Japanese pilots claimed to have seen two battleships— one of which they sank and the other they damaged. They had, in fact, scored no hits at all — nor had a formation of

USAAC B-17 Flying Fortress bombers which mistakenly attacked the ANZAC ships just after the Japanese left. Alarmed by intelligence of Allied battleships in the region, and concerned what they might do to the proposed Port Moresby invasion force, the Japanese Admiral in command, Admiral Inouye, ordered the transports and their escort to reverse their course as he attempted to sort out the situation.

Meanwhile, far to the east, the aircraft carriers of the respective fleets launched their aircraft which would see before the end of the flight one aircraft carrier on each side lost and others damaged; the US a tanker and a destroyer sunk, and the Japanese a number of valuable scouting aircraft, a considerable number of their most experienced bombing pilots and some light craft at Tulagi. The absence from the Battle of Midway a month later of the damaged Japanese aircraft carrier, and another having to replace its aircraft losses, might have made the difference. The American carrier, through a prodigious effort at Pearl Harbor, was repaired in time to take her place in the second naval battle in history in which the ships of the contending sides never sighted each other.

Crace's complaint that US bombers had attacked his ships annoyed the Americans though he obtained photographs. He requested transfer back to England where he completed his service, was knighted in 1947, and died in 1968. Never invited back to his native land to attend a Coral Sea commemoration, Admiral Crace has not been greatly acknowledged in Australia — possibly because he was a member of the Royal Navy rather than the Royal Australian Navy.

The closest link between Crace and the Coral Sea battle is probably the huge RAN radio transmitting towers at Belconnen, in Canberra. They are in clear view of the old Gunghalin homestead where he was born. They transmitted too to the Allied fleet during the critical action and stand within sight where Crace spent his youth in a country in whose defence he would one day play such a vital, if unsung, role.

Eureka Memento Unearthed in Defence Department Dig

A brass button found during archaeological excavations at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, was misplaced nearly 150 years ago by a British soldier whose Regiment helped put down Australia's only civil uprising at the Eureka Stockade. The button, from the tunic of a soldier of the 40th Regiment, was located in a soil fill beneath buildings constructed about 1859. Still in good condition, the old inscribed button is but the most impressive of hundreds of artefacts unearthed during diggings at the E Block site of the historical Department of Defence complex. Other relics include bullets, leather leggings, boots, a bottle manufactured around 1851, and a plate made after 1834.

The 40th Regiment had close ties with Victoria Barracks. It built its accommodation at G Block which contained, for its time, amenities considered modern such as a library and a smoking room.

Based on the remains found, the excavation has established a chronological sequence from all periods of construction and occupation at the Barracks, and recovered artefacts militarily and historically significant.

For 60 years following Federation, in 1901, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, was the headquarters of the Department of Defence. The complex was the centre of military involvement in the Boer War, World War I, World War II, Korea and the Malayan Emergency, and housed the War Cabinet during World War II.

The recently discovered artefacts are housed in a former cell in the Barrack's Guard House, with other finds such as pistols and handcuffs found in previous excavations.

The Colonial Lilywhites

The 17th (Leicestershire) Regiment New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1830 to 1836

Punishment of Soldiers

David Murphy

Punishment of soldiers in the Penal Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land was somewhat eased during the 1830's, following the arrival of Richard Bourke, in December 1831 as Governor of the Colony of New South Wales and its dependencies. The previous Governor, Ralph Darling, had been particularly hard on soldiers especially in 1826, when two soldiers, Sudds and Thompson, of the 57th Regiment, thought that the life of a convict was superior to that of a soldier and they devised a plan to steal some cloth and had allowed themselves to be apprehended. Their plan appeared to have worked when they were sentenced to a relatively easy sentence.

Darling thought that if he did not act harshly then many other soldiers would try the same tactics and discipline would suffer, especially in a penal colony. Subsequently, Darling intervened and the two miscreants were far more severely punished by having to serve their sentence in special irons that were particularly heavy and uncomfortable. These irons were attached to spiked collars, which made it very difficult to work, move or lie down. From these collars the chains passed through a metal belt and clamped on to the legs. The Sydney press of the day and in particular the Editors of the *Australian* and *Monitor* newspapers, (Wardell and Wentworth), made much of the fact that Darling had interfered with the case and thought that the sentence given was inhumane and severe in the extreme. Sudds, unfortunately was seriously ill and died shortly after sentencing. This gave the press, more ammunition to accuse the administration of Darling with causing the death of Sudds. Thompson was subsequently sent to Moreton Bay to finish his sentence without irons.

The Sydney Press also complained much of Darling's administration inefficiencies, focussing on the failure of the Mounted Police to capture the original Wild Colonial Boy, Bold John Donahoe. Donahoe roamed around the outskirts of Sydney robbing the richer travellers at will. Darling tried every means at his disposal to capture Donahoe and his gang of bushrangers and also to reduce the prevalence of bushranging throughout the interior of the colony especially in the remote areas such as the Bathurst, Goulburn Plains and Hunter river districts. In September 1830 Donahoe was shot by a Mounted Policeman, John Mugglestone of the 39th Regiment, at Bringelly and allowed to bleed to death. Legend has it that the police tried to find out the location of his loot but failed. Shortly thereafter, his gang was captured one by one and hanged or transported.

During this period much was made in the Sydney press, of the failure of the Mounted Police to control these criminal activities, despite several successes by them, that led to the Mounted Police being augmented in October 1830 to over one hundred men and a Captain Commandant being appointed to lead them.

Such was the furore by the Sydney press, led by Wentworth and Wardell, against the administration of Darling, that the Minister for Colonial Affairs finally had Darling relieved as Governor. Consequently, he returned home to England in August 1831, per the ship *Hooghley*, leaving Lt. Gov. Lindsey as Acting Governor until Bourke, the new Governor, arrived. When Darling left the colony, Wentworth and his friends threw a party with fireworks blazing and grog running freely, while his newspaper cheerfully announced that the "TYRANT WAS GONE". Darling was the last of the Governors to exercise the Vice-regal authority in such an autocratic manner.

Darling also attempted to downplay the deeds of bushrangers such as Donahoe, and many songs and poems known as "pipes" sung by the "peasants" were banned to little avail. Even the little theatres were closed down in a feeble attempt to stop these pipes from being sung and passed on to others. These attempts earned Darling the tirade "Three boos for Darling".

Under Darling the treatment of soldiers was very harsh and although much has been written about the ill treatment of convicts little notice is taken of just how severely the soldier was treated. A soldier in many ways was more of a prisoner than the convicts he was guarding. There was no "ticket of leave" or a pardon to look forward to after a few years. In the 1820's a form of Limited Service was introduced of 7 and 10 years but by 1830 this had been discontinued. In fact, the most a soldier could look forward to was a free discharge after 15 years service, or if he could afford it, he could purchase his discharge after a minimum of 7 years service. But these had conditions upon them, one of which was that he be of good character. If so, he could claim it as an indulgence but not a right. Subject to stringent conditions, once a soldier had satisfied the conditions for a free discharge after 15 years service, he could receive a bonus of so many days pay, according to a certain scale.

From the Standing Orders of the 17th Foot, printed in Sydney in 1831, it is noted that there were specific instructions regarding punishments, that these "must be carried through with decision and firmness, but without either unnecessary harshness, or irritation, and by that means convince the soldier, that his punishment arises from the necessity, of supporting discipline and good conduct, and not from any pleasure that is felt in seeing him punished."

The use of the lash was the easiest method of keeping soldiers under control and the Drum Major was in charge of the instruments of punishment. It was his responsibility to see that they were made strictly according to custom. The lash used to whip soldiers was much heavier than that used on convicts and the sentence could be administered quickly in the presence of a captive audience.

Soldiers were also under military rule and subject to the articles of war. These articles were printed in the soldier's account books and were given to each soldier upon enlistment. They were also read to them on parades periodically. A summary follows:

OBEDIENCE IS THE FIRST DUTY OF A SOLDIER!

(A): For the following offences, the articles of war inflict on the soldier the penalty of DEATH, or other such punishment as a Court Martial may award.

Mutiny: Desertion: Cowardice: Bolding correspondence with the enemy: Quitting his post in search of plunder: Personal violence to a Superior, or disobedience of his lawful commands: Forcing a safeguard: Betraying the watchword: Giving false alarms: Casting away arms or ammunition: Sleeping on or quitting his post.

(B): For the following offences, a soldier is liable to be punished by transportation, or general service, or corporal punishment, and in addition to any other punishment, by forfeiture of all claims to pension on discharge and of all additional pay whilst serving.

Using traitorous words against the King, or Royal Family: Persuading to desert, or harbouring a deserter: Being drunk on duty: Breaking arrest: Giving a different watchword: Spreading false reports in the field: In action, or previous to action, using words tending to create alarm: Quitting ranks without leave: Being made prisoner by neglect: Seizing supplies: Disgraceful and vicious conduct: Refusing assistance to or impeding the Provost Marshal: Embezzling, or misapplying money, or stores.

(C): For the following offences, a soldier is to be punished according to the nature and degree of the offence.

Speaking to the hurt or dishonour of the General, or other Commander-in-Chief of the Forces: Neglect of orders or duty: Hiring another person to do his duty without authorisation: Absence from parade: Giving false alarms by discharging firearms, etc.: Lying out of quarters: Being found 1 mile from the camp without leave: Permitting Baggage Waggon or carriages to be overloaded: Selling, losing, or spoiling his arms, accoutrements, or necessaries: Selling, losing, or ill treating his horse: Committing waste, or destroying property: Non commissioned officer striking or ill treating a soldier: Vexatious appeals from a regimental court martial.

From perusal of the Judge Advocate's indexes held in the AJCP section of the National Library of Australia it is possible to identify types of punishments handed out to soldiers of regiments stationed in New South Wales in 1830 - 1832, and to see the subtle changes brought forward by Governor Bourke after the harsh regime of Darling. Flogging of soldiers was very prevalent before the arrival of Bourke, and indeed there are some notable instances of severe floggings being handed out to soldiers of the 17th (Leicestershire) Regiment by Garrison Courts Martial. However, after the arrival of Bourke, the floggings were practically non-existent, with only one case reported in 1834.

For example Private James Haughey received two sentences of 400 lashes between 29 March 1830, (in Chatham) and 29 December 1830, (Parramatta). The first crime was for desertion and losing his necessaries prior to leaving England for New South Wales and the second was for stealing. In September 1830, Private Patrick Cleary was sentenced to 500 lashes for abuse, while stationed at Parramatta and Private David Melville was sentenced to 400 lashes for being drunk at Parramatta in December 1830. In June 1832, Private Joseph Heywood received 300 lashes for stealing while stationed at Sydney.

The crime which seemed to be the most common for soldiers, was that of drunkenness and a common sentence, after 1831 for this type of crime, was solitary confinement of up to 8 weeks. When a soldier was found to be drunk he was confined in the "Black hole" so as to ensure that he couldn't be teased by the other soldiers.

Soldiers were also punished if, while handling his weapons, he accidentally maimed himself, by for example a weapon going off and shooting himself. He would immediately be placed on a charge and subjected to a Garrison Court Martial. An example of this was when Corporal Patrick Coleman was sentenced to two months imprisonment for maiming himself whilst cleaning a musket he was unfamiliar with, when stationed at the Sydney barracks. In June 1833, Private Patrick Gill was found not guilty of a similar

charge in March 1832 and was subsequently invalided to England in 1833, due to the injuries he received from this accident.

During the 17th Foot's tour of duty in New South Wales, from 1830 to 1836, there were only nine soldiers transported for various terms. Of these, only one was transported for life, and one was known to have died at Norfolk Island in 1834. Three were listed as having been nominated to the Major-General Commanding to be returned to the regiment by the end of 1837. There were two other soldiers transported in 1829 and 1833, but these were from duty in England.

A soldier was discharged with ignominy from the regiment in March 1834 while stationed at Newcastle and following corporal punishment. In keeping with the custom of the British Army of the day, he would have been branded or tattooed with the letters BC which stood for Bad Character. These letters were tattooed on the soldier by the Drum Major in the presence of the Adjutant, about two inches (50mm) below and one inch (25mm) to the side of the left nipple on the breast of the soldier. The reasoning behind this was that if he decided to enlist in the army again he would be instantly recognised and prevented from doing so.

Similarly, if the offender was a deserter a letter "D" denoting deserter would be tattooed on in a similar location. This type of punishment seemed to cause more pain than being flogged.

The letters were first painted on in the required location by the use of a stencil placed on the chest. The skin was then punctured by means of needles which penetrated the flesh to a depth of one eighth of an inch (3mm) held in a wooden instrument. Indian ink was then rubbed into the wounds.

The main reason for the easing of punishments for soldiers during this period of New South Wales' history is due to the more humane treatment and methods applied by the Administration and Governorship of Richard Bourke, who arrived per the ship *Margaret* in December 1831.

In the case of the 17th Regiment the reason for the easing of punishment was also due to that of its Commanding Officer Lt. Colonel Henry Despard, who arrived per the ship *York* in February 1831. Despard, who was a long serving officer of the 17th, was a very kindly and considerate officer who actively pursued a fatherly interest in his officers and men. He was ably backed up in this regard by first class officers of the calibre of Captains James Oliphant Clunie, Phillip Nicol Anley, Robert Gerald Moffatt and George Romney. Indeed, during the voyage of the ship *York* to New South Wales, Despard spent many hours rewriting the regimental standing orders, which were reprinted in Sydney during March 1831. It should be stated that during the 17th Regiment's tour of duty in the Australian Colonies, that not one case of desertion is listed in the Regiment's musters. However, there were cases of men of the 17th deserting in England prior to embarking for the colonies. The case was not the same for the other regiments then stationed in New South Wales, particularly the 4th, 39th, 57th and 63rd Regiments.

However, in the first year of Richard Bourke's term as Governor, no less than three soldiers on the New South Wales command were sentenced to death for various offences. Two soldiers were from the 39th Foot and one was from the 4th Foot. However, only one soldier, Brennan of the 39th Foot actually had this sentence carried out, and his case is probably the first military execution held in the Australian Colonies since 6 Marines were executed for stealing food from the stores in 1790.

The execution of Thomas Brennan, and the events leading to it, are described in the pages of the *Sydney Gazette* of March and April 1832 and culminating in an article dated 10 April 1832. Thomas Brennan was

a native of Castlebar, Ireland who joined the 39th (Dorsetshire) Regiment as a recruit in Ireland, on 10 August 1825, attached to No.3 Company. Later he was attached to No.9 Company, where he remained for the rest of his service. Shortly after his enlistment the 39th was ordered to perform duty in New South Wales. In November 1827 Brennan was sent to Norfolk Island, remaining there until December 1829, when he returned to Sydney. In June 1830 Brennan was sent to Emu Plains and it was here that the incident took place which was to cost him his life.

Sergeant Millwood had found Brennan lacking in his duties and had reprimanded him for disobedience or neglect of duties, whereupon Brennan, had attempted to kill Millwood by discharging his musket at him. Millwood had escaped by running up some stairs but Brennan had chased after him and was attempting to reload his musket to have another shot at Millwood, when Brennan had been seized by his comrades and arrested. On 20 March 1832 Brennan was marched from Emu Plains to Sydney a prisoner. Upon Brennan's arrival at Sydney a Garrison Court Martial was convened. He was found guilty and sentenced to be executed by a firing squad.

Despite a further sitting of the Court Martial it was found impossible to consider any mitigating circumstance that would allow the sentence of death to be remitted. (Note this is despite any evidence found by this author in the musters of the 39th Regiment for the period that the regiment served in New South Wales, of any period of imprisonment for any reason against Brennan). Subsequently the sentence of the Court Martial was confirmed by the Governor, Richard Bourke.

On 6 April 1832 at 5.30am when all the troops in garrison had formed line, the Town Adjutant with the firing party marched Brennan from the Guard House to the Barrack Square, and from there the 39th Regiment marched in the following order:

“The Band of the regiment, not playing; The prisoner, Brennan, in his red coat and forage cap, attended by the priest escorted by the guard; The Grenadier company; Followed by the rest of the troops, four deep.”

Upon arrival at the end of George Street the procession passed around the Dawes Battery and formed up into 2 squares on the parade ground. The prisoner was then escorted inside Fort Phillip, where he changed clothes from that of a soldier to that usually worn by criminals at executions. Upon entering the parade ground from Fort Phillip, the prisoner was marched forward to the spot selected as his grave, the band playing the *Dead March*. Here he spent about half an hour in religious, devotional exercises, after which the Town Adjutant read the sentence of the Court Martial to those present, while Brennan knelt by the side of his coffin. The firing party then marched to within 12 paces of Brennan, when the signal to fire was given and they instantly fired at him, whereupon, Brennan fell and expired without a struggle. The priest then read the burial service over the body and the band then advanced to the body and again played the *Dead March*. The troops assembled there were then marched back to the barracks leaving the body of Brennan to be interred by the Pioneers of the 39th Regiment.

On 10 April 1832, the *Sydney Gazette* commented upon the execution stating that the execution was just but that it was strange to see a military procession in Sydney different to that normally seen there. Usually such a procession in peacetime was to excite the watcher, but in this case the glitter of the burnished arms, the shrill of the fife and the strains of the *Dead March* were not for somebody who had died in arms but rather to execute a soldier. The article ended with “poor Brennan his crime was great his expiation simple. To his mourning friends and comrades this only consolation remains ‘He died no felon’s death.’ A warrior fired a warrior’s tool!”

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

Most of the research into this matter of punishments to soldiers has been performed by using original research.

This research has been based upon the War Office 12 series of Muster Books and pay Lists, held at the National Library in Canberra. Supplementing the above have been many other records, including the following:

War Office 86 Judge Advocate General's Office.
Courts Martial.
District Court Martial.
War Office 89 Judge Advocate General's Office.
Courts Martial.
General Court Martial.

All of the above including the War Office 12 series are part of the Australian Joint Copying Project, (AJCP).

Newspapers of the period 1826 to 1833:

Sydney Gazette
Australian
Sydney Monitor
Sydney Herald

General Orders to Naval and Military Officers in the Colonial Secretary's despatches, held at the New South Wales Archive Office.

Account and pay Book of William Keever held in the Australian War Memorial.

A poem followed:

“Soldier rest, thy warfare's o'er
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking;
Dream of battle fields no more”

John Connell was the other soldier of the 39th Regiment to be sentenced to death by a Court Martial because he had stabbed Sergeant King of the 39th Regiment in the groin with his bayonet during a fracas in a private house in George St., Sydney, late in March 1832. A quarrel arose between the soldier and a mob of civilians. The constables attended but were beaten off and the Officer of the day Lt. Miller, of the 17th Regiment was asked to assist the soldier. Sergeant King was despatched with four men, from the Main Guard with Lt. Miller in attendance. Upon arrival at the house, the Sergeant advanced with the intention of securing the soldier, but the soldier maliciously stabbed King in the groin and he fell to the ground. Whereupon Lt. Miller rushed forward with his drawn sword and arrested the soldier, who made no further attempts to resist. He was conveyed to the Main Guard and later placed in arrest of the Civil Power. His sentence was later reduced to one of transportation for a period of 14 years.

Private Joseph McNab of the 4th Regiment, was found guilty of striking a superior officer while on parade at Parramatta. McNab had moved out of line and struck his officer, Lt. William Lonsdale. Whereupon McNab's comrades had rushed over and had subdued him and placed him under arrest. He was sentenced to death and was told by his officers that his case was hopeless and he should not expect clemency but to accept his punishment accordingly. However, following representations made to King William IV, by the regimental officers, his sentence of death was remitted to one of transportation for life.

It appears that these cases were to drive home to the soldiers then present in New South Wales that it was futile to try and break the law. Any crime committed by a soldier would be dealt with very severely by a Court Martial, but that any sentence would also be dealt with in a humane manner. As the 39th Regiment was to depart for India later in 1832 it was also reasoned that a military execution would stimulate discipline to an acceptable standard, given that this regiment was renowned for its lack of discipline while in the Colony. Furthermore, the 4th Regiment had only just commenced its tour of duty in the colony and it was probable that another military execution would not be acceptable in this case.

From the above it can be seen that the Administration of Bourke and the officers of the Colonial Secretary's Department, consistent with Bourke's attitude towards the convicts and emancipists in general, eased the harsh treatment towards soldiers.

The 1st Infantry Volunteer Regiment Western Australia 1893 to 1900

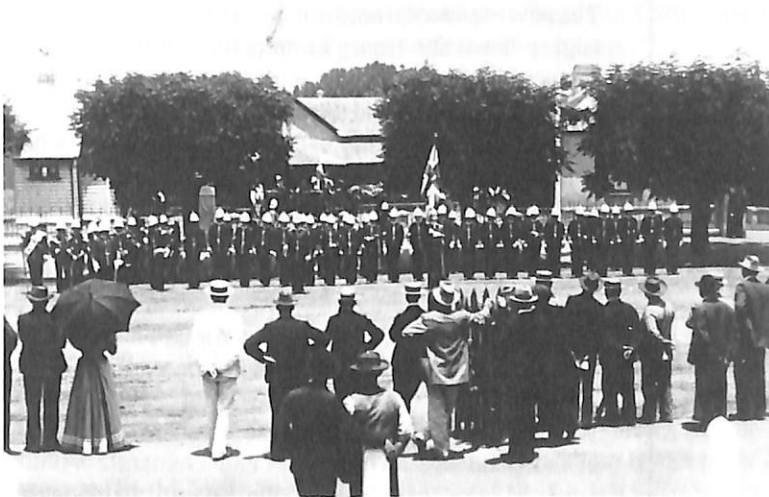
James R Grant

In November 1893 a General Order was issued which ended the separate and independent existences of the Metropolitan, Fremantle and Guildford Rifle Volunteer Corps and amalgamated them to form the 1st Infantry Volunteer Regiment.

The exact date of the General Order cannot now be ascertained but the Fremantle Rifle Vols were advised of the change on 15 November 1893, and the Metropolitan corps on the 17th. The Guildford Rifle Vols were presumably advised at a parade close to this date. The three corps had started life in 1872, the Metropolitan Rifle Vols, including a Guildford subsection, on 17 June and the Fremantle Rifle Vols on 5 October. On 22 January 1874 the Guildford section was formally sanctioned as an independent corps but it was not until 20 November 1874 that it was detached from the Metropolitan Rifle Vols.

The three corps suffered all the problems attendant upon volunteer units of that period: shortage of money, equipment, and fluctuations in strength. However as the years passed efficient units developed under the command of officers such as John Hillman, Robert M Sutherland and Stephen Gardiner. On 21 August 1883 the Metropolitan Rifle Vols was reorganised as two company corps under the overall command of a Captain Commandant, who was subsequently promoted to the rank of Major. The Fremantle Rifle Vols were similarly reorganised on 1 May 1885.

The main difficulty of the independant corps concept, while suitable to early years of development, was the problem of efficient training of both officers and units at a level higher than that of the company. Despite many battalion parades from 1874 onwards it was decided that a regimental structure was the best way of continuing the development of the state's infantry, hence the 1st Infantry Volunteer Regiment,



1st Infantry Regiment, Perth, c.1897

Sources

The Western Australian
Government Gazette:
18 June 1872
15 October 1872
24 November 1874
28 August 1883
7 May 1885
14 September 1900

The West Australian:
17 November 1893

although the word "Volunteer" tended to be omitted on most occasions in both official and unofficial references to the unit.

Under the new command structure the Metropolitan Rifle Vols became A and B companies, the Fremantle Rifle Vols C and D companies and the Guildford Rifle Vols E and F companies. The three regional sub groups were also known as the Perth, Fremantle and Guildford Infantry.

The authorised complement of officers was two Majors, six Captains and twelve Lieutenants, and the staff consisted of an Adjutant, a Sergeant-Major and a Quarter Master Sergeant.

The location of the companies remained static until early in 1900 when the Guildford Infantry lost F company due to declining numbers. New companies were raised in Fremantle and Perth at this time and these were designated F and G respectively.

The Regiment was disbanded on the 3rd September 1900 when the Western Australian Infantry Brigade was formed. A, B and G companies, plus an additional company raised in Subiaco, became the 1st Battalion, Infantry Bde. C, D and F companies, plus an additional company raised in Fremantle, became the 2nd Battalion, and E company became A company of the 3rd Battalion.

When amalgamated in 1893 the three units wore differing uniforms. Although all wore scarlet tunics and blue trousers, the Metropolitan and Guildford corps had medium green facings, collar and cuffs, as opposed to Fremantle which wore blue facings. helmet plate designs, buttons and waist belt clasps also differed.

The new regimental uniform decided upon was a scarlet tunic with white edging down the front; white collar, cuffs and Austrian knots on the sleeves, red shoulder straps with "1 WA" embroidered in white. Trousers were dark blue and had a 1/4 inch red stripe down the outside seam. The helmet was of Mediterreanean pattern covered with white cloth, the helmet plate, buttons and belt clasp were of white metal. Belts, pouches and slings were to be of brown leather. The helmet plate consisted of an eight pointed star surmounted by a Guelphic crown, in the centre of which was a circle bearing the regimental motto "Vigilans" on the upper portion and five stars on the lower half. In the centre of the circle was a black swan sitting on water. This design, less the crown, was repeated on the buttons and the waist belt clasp.

With a life of only eight years the regiment was merely a temporary loss of independence for the Perth and Fremantle Volunteers, which they regained with the advent of the Infantry Brigade, but it had been an essential step in the creation of an army suitable for late 19th century warfare.

The Supporters

James Ritchie Grant

For the last 134 years the visible distinction for the most conspicuous bravery bestowed upon the fighting men of the British Empire and Commonwealth has been the Victoria Cross. In aerial operations some, but by no means all, cases the decoration has been won by men fighting as individuals but in the case of bombing operations the recipient has usually been operating as part of a team.

Edwards, Middleton and Newton, Australia's World War 2 Victoria Cross winners were all team leaders ably supported by men for whom fate held a variety of "rewards" for their gallantry. It is interesting that these three Australians represented the differing categories of service available to the airmen of that nation. Edwards served as a regular member of the Royal Air Force having joined prior to the outbreak of war. Middleton was a Royal Australian Air Force "hostilities only" enlistment flying with a RAF squadron. Both took part in the European Theatre. Newton served in New Guinea in a squadron of his own air force.

Hughie Edwards won his Victoria Cross in 1941 while flying a Bristol Blenheim of No.105 Squadron. His crew consisted of Pilot Officer Alister Stewart Ramsay, navigator, and Sergeant Gerard Douglas Quinn DFM as an air gunner. These three had an exciting 4th July when, as the lead aircraft of a small force of twelve Blenheim bombers of Nos.105 and 107 Squadrons, they made a low level attack on Bremen. The attackers came in from the north, in a loose line abreast formation at a height of 50 feet (17 mtrs) dodging balloon cables and flak batteries as they swept across the city. Four of the aircraft were hit and crashed into the city and some of the others brought back pieces of telephone line as a souvenir of their day trip to Germany. Edwards aircraft was repeatedly hit during his ten minutes over the city and Quinn was wounded in the leg.

Apart from Edwards' award, Ramsay received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his accurate dead reckoning navigation to and from the target. This contribution was particularly notable as almost the entire operation was carried out in poor visibility. Quinn was awarded a bar to his Distinguished Flying Cross "for remaining at his post maintaining wireless watch and assisting Pilot Officer Ramsay materially in navigating the aircraft back to base he showed great coolness and courage."

Gerard Quinn had been awarded his original Distinguished Flying Cross in 1940, London Gazette 9.7.1940, "for gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations." He was a Leading Aircraftman when he received this decoration and the timing would appear to indicate that it was made for service during the brief battle for France.

Flight Sergeant "Ron" Middleton died in the English Channel at the end of an arduous flight back from Turin, having decided to forsake the safety of internment in Switzerland for an attempt to get home. Middleton was on his 29th operation, an experienced pilot almost at the end of his tour and his three gunners had volunteered to stay with him until he completed his thirty. The squadron, No. 149 equipped with Short Stirling four engine bombers, attacked Turin on the night of 28/29 November 1942. Middleton's aircraft was first hit as it approached the city. A second shell bursting alongside the aircraft's cockpit seriously wounded Middleton and knocked him unconscious. Shrapnel hit Hyder in the legs and head and Skinner was also wounded by this shell. The aircraft was repeatedly hit as it fell out of control and dropped to 800 feet before Hyder was able to regain control, drop their bombs, and turn for home.



Douglas Boston bomber on patrol

The story of the epic return flight is well known and need not be repeated in detail here. Middleton regained consciousness and took over control again and, assisted by Hyder who insisted on staying in the cockpit with his captain, got the aircraft back to the English coast where Hyder, by now barely conscious, Royde, Cameron, Gough and Skinner successfully parachuted to safety. Mackie and Jeffery also

bailed out but drowned in the English Channel. Their bodies were recovered that afternoon. Middleton died when the Stirling, now out of fuel, crashed into the sea. His body was not recovered until 1 February 1943 when it was washed up on the beach near Dover. At the time of his death he had been promoted to Pilot Officer with effect from 14 November 1942 but he had not been advised of this at the time of his last flight.

In addition to Ron Middleton's well earned Victoria Cross the five surviving crew members received awards for their efforts. Flying Officer George Reicher Royde and Pilot Officer Norman Edward Skinner were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross; Royde's "skillful navigation enabled the aircraft to be brought back to this country" (U.K.) The three Non Commissioned Officers, Flight Sergeants Leslie Anderson Hyder, Douglas Cameron and Sergeant Harold Wry Gough each received the Distinguished Flying Medal. Hyder's contribution has already been mentioned and Cameron and Gough "assisted the pilot to maintain height by jettisoning all movable equipment." As the citation states "the aircraft crew displayed courage, fortitude and dedication of a high order." It would have been so easy to have turned for Switzerland, medical attention and a comfortable internment.

The last crew were the unluckiest, all were to die. On the 18 March 1943 Bill Newton, a close quarter fighter who habitually disregarded the opposing flak defences in pressing home his attacks, with Flight Sergeant John Lyon and Sergeant B G Eastwood took off in their No. 22 Squadron Douglas Boston to attack Salamauu on the north coast of New Guinea. On this his 52nd operation his luck ran out. His aircraft was hit by ground fire and as he pulled away from the target with one engine ablaze, it was obvious that the aircraft was finished. Newton brought the Boston down in the adjacent bay but only he and Lyon managed to get ashore. Whether Eastwood was killed in the attack or subsequently drowned has never been established.

The Japanese interrogated the two men and ten days later made their awards to a gallant enemy, Newton as an officer was beheaded, Lyon merely rated a bayonet in the back. It was not until some time later, when it was known that Newton was indeed dead that the announcement of the award of the Victoria Cross was made. While it can be argued that the crew of an aircraft have no choice but to follow their pilot an examination of the actions briefly described in this article show that crews did contribute greatly to the success of the operations in which their pilots received the ultimate award for courage in battle.

The Victorian Mounted Rifles Regimental Collection

Robert Morrison

The Victorian Mounted Rifles Regimental Collection is housed at Buna Barracks, Victoria Street, Albury, and will be the focal point for the Military Historical Society of Australia 1992 Biennial Conference being conducted over the Queen's Birthday weekend in June.

Scope of the collection

The VMR collection relates specifically to those units that have borne the title Victorian Mounted Rifles from their foundation as a colonial force to the present day unit which performs its duty as a Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron as part of the Australian Army Reserve's 4th Brigade.

The earliest items of memorabilia date from the formation of the VMR as a colonial force on 1 May 1885. Boer War service, 1899-1902, by five contingents is covered by original material, as is the incorporation of the VMR into the Commonwealth of Australia Military Forces in 1903.

Further displays illustrate the history of the Australian Light Horse Regiments (Victorian Mounted Rifles) raised from the existing VMR companies, located in North-East Victoria/South-East NSW, Central Victoria/South-Central NSW, and Gippsland, during the period from Federation to the outbreak of the 1st World War.

Diaries, photographs, and official histories are contained in the section devoted to the 1st AIF Light Horse Regiments in which volunteers from the VMR Regiments served in the Middle East, Gallipoli, France and Flanders during the 1st World War. The collection also contains memorabilia and equipment from the 13th Albury Battery, Australian Field Artillery which distinguished itself at the battle of Noreuil.

The Militia Light Horse Regiments of 1919-1942, the 8th Indi, the 13th Gippsland, and the 20th ALH (VMR) are represented by their own regimental displays. Units of the 2nd AIF with direct links to those militia light horse regiments, such as the 20th Motorised (VMR) — ultimately the 20th Pioneer Battalion AIF — the 2/8th and 2/13th Armoured, and the 2/8th Cavalry Regiments have made contributions to the collection, as have members of the 2/23rd (Albury's Own) Infantry Battalion. Complementing the 2nd World War display is a tribute to the Albury Volunteer Defence Corps unit.

Major equipment used by the 8/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles since 1948 make up the outdoor displays, and include a Centurion Tank and working Ferret Scout Cars. A comprehensive photographic collection covers the more recent history of the Victorian Mounted Rifles.

Thus the Victorian Mounted Rifles Regimental Collection represents and preserves 107 years of heritage, tradition, and equipment of one of Australia's oldest continuously serving units, as well as the memorabilia of 1st and 2nd AIF units associated with the Regiment and the City of Albury.

Displaying the Collection

Until 1986, much of the collection was stored in boxes, with only major items on display in the Regimental Officers' and Sergeants' Messes. This was due to the lack of a suitable building being available that could accommodate the collection as a whole.

Two events occurred in 1986 which culminated in the establishment of the permanent display of the VMR Regimental Collection. The first was the availability of a suitable building at Buna Barracks, Albury, and the second was a grant from the Commonwealth Employment Project Scheme which enabled the VMR Collection Trust to employ two young people full-time, over eight months, during 1987, to prepare the displays and catalogue the entire collection. To administer the grant it was necessary to form an incorporated body, thus the VMR collection trustees ceased to be an ad hoc organisation, and, under the chairmanship of Capt. Tom Douch, appropriate objectives for the permanent display of the collection were set and specific duties allocated to individual trustees.

The Works Subcommittee

Subcommittees were established to supervise finance, restoration, and works. The most important being the works subcommittee. Under the guidance of the Honorary Colonel of the 8/13th VMR, Col. John Neale, with two former Squadron Sergeant-Majors of the 8/13th VMR, Mr Lou Madjeric and Mr Bill Woolford, this subcommittee was responsible for the day by day supervision of the two CEP employees, and for the layout and format of the various displays. Further expertise was co-opted to this subcommittee with the addition of Mr Don Campbell, President of the Albury/Wodonga Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia.

The Works Subcommittee has guided the displaying and maintenance of the collection through a number of phases: from the initial setup occupying two rooms in 1986; the supervision and training of two CEP employees for eight months during 1987; preparation for the official opening ceremony by Col. Geoff Howard, Director of Armour, on 1 May 1988; to the expansion of the display area during 1989-90.

Their efforts culminated with the recognition of the completed displays as an official military collection on 23 April 1991, just seven days short of the 106th anniversary of the formation of the Victorian Mounted Rifles.

Future directions

The VMR Regimental Collection now occupies five rooms of the building allocated to it in 1986, with extensive outdoor equipment displays and a memorial garden. The sixth room in the building has been set aside for use by members of the Albury/Wodonga Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia to mount and display their own collections. In this way, the VMR Regimental Collection Trustees are able to say thank you for the valuable support freely given by MHSa members. Their expertise and advice assisted in the presentation of the collection in a format that is both historically accurate and aesthetically pleasing. Their broad range of expertise will be further utilised by the trustees when the collection is opened for public viewing — MHSa members have agreed to act as volunteer guides — thus enhancing the understanding and appreciation of this region's place in Australian military heritage.

Military history, being dynamic, the VMR Regimental Collection will continue to grow as long as the title "Victorian Mounted Rifles" remains on the Australia Army's Order of Battle.

Biennial Conference of the Military Historical Society of Australia

Albury/Wodonga

Queen's Birthday weekend, 6 — 8 June 1992

The Albury/Wodonga Branch is endeavouring to make the conference and Queen's Birthday weekend generally as pleasant and interesting as possible for Society members and families. A combined Navy, Army and Air Force Cadet Guard of Honour will parade at the opening ceremony. This will be followed by a light lunch.

The evening will be a highlight of the weekend and will take the form of a formal dinner, to be held in the Albury Club, Kiewa Street, Albury. Cost, including pre-dinner drinks, dinner wines, coffee and port will be \$40 per head. Dress: Gentlemen — mess dress, mess undress, dinner suit, miniatures may be worn, lounge suit. Dress: Ladies — evening attire, miniatures may be worn.

Sunday will be an open day at the district military museums. The area Commander, Col. J Campbell, has agreed to open museums to the public this weekend. Society members will have a guided tour which will include a barbecue lunch.

Accommodation: contact Dot Turnage, "The Crossing Place", Tourist Information Centre, Wodonga Place, Albury 2640, phone (060) 21 2655 (available 24 hours, 7 days a week). Dot will discuss your requirements and arrange your Accommodation at no cost to you. Please book early as there are several other attractions competing with us over the weekend.

Finally, there will be ample room and security for personal displays. Please bring your material. There will be a judging panel selected at the weekend and prizes will be awarded for:

- Best overall display; and
- Best theme.

This is your opportunity to display your collection. Please let us know the space you will require when returning the application form. Please be prepared to leave your material on display over the open day on the Sunday.

The Albury/Wodonga Branch looks forward to seeing you!

Posthumous New Zealand George Cross Award

Anthony Staunton

New Zealand policeman, Sergeant Stewart Graeme Guthrie has been posthumously awarded the George Cross. It is the second award of the George Cross in thirteen months, after a gap of 11 years without any awards. It is the 153rd original George Cross to an individual for a total, with exchange awards, of 398 awards.

On 13 November 1990, at the New Zealand seaside resort of Aramoana, on the outskirts of Dunedin, a young man named David Gray ran amok with a firearm and massacred twelve people before being fatally shot by police the next day. Sergeant Guthrie was officer in charge of the Port Chalmers Police Station and was the sole duty officer at the time the incident was reported. Armed, he went to Aramoana alone and on arrival took immediate command of the situation. He armed another Constable with a privately owned rifle and the pair reconnoitred the village. Sergeant Guthrie deployed the Constable to cover the front of the house while he located himself at the more dangerous position at the rear. A thin cordon of the Gray's house was later completed by the arrival of a Detective and two Constables.

Sergeant Guthrie could see Gray inside the house and became concerned that he might soon move as he had blackened his face and taken up a backpack. He reported his concern that he had lost sight of Gray and warned the Detective to advise staff to be on the alert. Gray moved to the front of the property and when challenged by a Constable retreated to the rear. Unaware of this movement, Sergeant Guthrie who had taken cover in sand dunes was suddenly, out of the darkness confronted by Gray. Sergeant Guthrie very courageously challenged him, saying 'Stop David. Stop or I shoot'. He discharged a warning shot from his .38 calibre police revolver and was killed instantly in a volley of shots. The George Cross citation ended saying:

Throughout this ordeal Sergeant Guthrie displayed conspicuous courage. His actions in placing himself in danger to protect his staff and members of the public at the cost of his own life were selfless acts of heroism. His bravery and courage were in the highest traditions of the New Zealand Police.

Four members of the Dunedin Armed Offenders Squad were awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal and four members of the anti Terrorist squad were awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct. In addition to the awards to the police, the George Medal was awarded to Mrs Eva Dickson, aged 72, who tried valiantly to save a seriously injured victim. A posthumous Queen's Gallantry Medal was awarded to Victor Crimp and 9 year old Miss Chiquita Holden was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct.

The award to Sergeant Guthrie was the third original George Cross award to a New Zealander. In 1948, Lance Corporal David Russell of the 22nd New Zealand Battalion was posthumously awarded the George Cross. Born in Scotland, he had been captured in Egypt in 1942 and escaped in Italy in 1943. Recaptured in February 1945, he refused, despite being beaten up, to betray who sheltered him and was shot. In 1974, Vietnam veteran, Sergeant Ken Hudson was posthumously awarded for the George Cross for his gallantry in a grenade accident at a New Zealand military training camp.

The official citation is as follows:

THE GEORGE CROSS (POSTHUMOUS)

Sergeant Stewart Graeme Guthrie

New Zealand Police

[Next of kin: Mrs Sandra Jean Guthrie, 1 Magnetic Street, Port Chalmers, Dunedin]

On 13 November 1990 at the seaside resort of Aramoana, located on the outskirts of Dunedin, a young man ran amok with a firearm and massacred twelve people before being fatally shot by Police the next day.

Sergeant Guthrie, the officer in charge of the Port Chalmers Police Station, was the sole duty officer at the time the incident was reported and was able to identify the gunman as a person he knew. Sergeant Guthrie went to the Aramoana township alone and armed. On arrival he was able to call on the services of another Constable. Sergeant Guthrie took immediate command of the situation, armed the Constable with a privately owned rifle and the pair reconnoitred the village. Their every movement was fraught with danger as they moved about the village being constantly reminded of their own danger by the extent of the visible carnage, the gunman having already killed twelve people.

With limited resources available to him and impending darkness Sergeant Guthrie had the task of locating and containing the crazed gunman, dealing with the wounded and preventing further loss of life. On arrival near the gunman's house Sergeant Guthrie deployed the Constable to cover the front of the house while he located himself at the more dangerous position at the rear. A thin cordon of the gunman's house was later completed by the arrival of a Detective and two Constables.

The gunman had been sighted within his house and it can only be presumed that Sergeant Guthrie chose the dangerous position based on his sense of responsibility and the fact that he knew the area and the gunman. The Sergeant had given clear and concise situation reports to Police control and clearly indicated his intention to contain the gunman. Sergeant Guthrie could see the gunman inside the house and became concerned that he might soon move as he had blackened his face and taken up a backpack. The Sergeant reported the gunman breaking windows and endeavouring to throw what appeared to be an incendiary device into the house. After spending some time moving about his property, the gunman moved towards a Constable's position. Sergeant Guthrie reported his concern that he had lost sight of the gunman and warned the Detective to advise staff to be on the alert. A Constable had now sighted the gunman approaching him and issued a challenge, the gunman retreated in haste passing to the rear of his property.

Due to lack of communication Sergeant Guthrie was unaware of this movement. Sergeant Guthrie had taken cover in sand dunes at the rear of a crib (seaside cottage) next to the gunman's house when suddenly out of the darkness he was confronted by the gunman. Sergeant Guthrie very courageously challenged him, saying "Stop ... stop or I shoot". The Sergeant then discharged a warning shot from his .38 calibre police revolver. The gunman then moved around and down upon the sergeant killing him instantly in a volley of shots. The gunman then took the Sergeant's revolver. Throughout this ordeal Sergeant Guthrie displayed conspicuous courage. His actions in placing himself in danger to protect his staff and members of the public at the cost of his own life were selfless acts of heroism. His bravery and courage were in the highest traditions of the New Zealand Police.

Tasmanian Contingent Members Who Died on Service During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902

John Price

1st Tasmanian Contingent

71. Pte. Elliott Henry BAILEY

Next of kin: Thomas A. Bailey, Avoca, Tasmania

Killed: Witkonsk, 11 September 1900

Clasps: Cape Colony; Orange Free State; Johannesburg; Diamond Hill.

56. Pte. Thomas William BARKER

Aged: 25 years and 11 months

Born: Forth, Tasmania

Farmer and road worker

Religion: Christian Endeavour Society

Died of disease at Deelfontein, 15 June 1900

Clasps: Cape Colony; Orange Free State.

12. L.Cpl. Henry Allwright BETTS

Born: Hobart, Tasmania, 23 January 1878.

Next of Kin: Father and Mother — John Richard Betts (Teacher) and Fanny Elizabeth Betts (nee Wilkinson)

Betts had been a member of the Brighton Detachment, Tasmanian Local Forces. He was a teacher in his third year of training, on leave from the Tasmanian Education Department.

Killed: near Donnepoch, 20 June 1900.

Clasps: Cape Colony; Orange Free State; Johannesburg; Diamond Hill.

46. Pte. Henry BLACK

Born: New Norfolk, Tasmania, 23 September 1879

Next of kin: Father — William Black, Cressy, Tasmania

Died of disease at Bloemfontein, 18 April 1900, Aged 22 years

Clasps: Cape Colony; Orange Free State.

30. Pte. Alfred BUTTON

Next of kin: W E Button, Fingal, Tasmania

Killed in action near Jasfontein, Rensburg, 9 February 1900

Clasp: Cape Colony

80. Pte. Atherley GILHAM

Born: Stawell, Victoria

Killed in action at Rensburg

9 February 1900

Clasp: Cape Colony

Draft

76. Cpl. Robert Percy DOOLIN

Previous Service: Southern Tasmanian Artillery, later joined Imperial Railways Department, also Corps of Cattle Rangers.

Died of disease at Pretoria, 24 September 1901

104. Pte. Joseph BUTLER

Farm labourer

Died of disease at Germiston, 1 June 1900

Aged 25 years

Clasps: Cape Colony; Orange Free State; Johannesburg; Diamond Hill.

96. Pte. Thomas GALVIN

Next of kin: Joseph Galvin, Launceston, Tasmania

Died of disease at Pretoria, 18 August 1900

Clasps: Cape Colony; Orange Free State; Johannesburg; Diamond Hill.

119. Pte. Roland Phillip PITT

Born: Hagley, Tasmania, 14 September 1874

Previous Service: Deloraine Company, Ulverston Company of Volunteers

Next of kin: Father — Frank Pitt, Deloraine, Tasmania

Died of disease at Norval's Pont, 11 June 1900

Clasps: Cape Colony; Orange Free State.

2nd (Tasmania Bushmen)

143 L.Cpl. Edward Roger Jacson

Next of kin: Mother — Mary Jacson, Invermay, Launceston, Tasmania

Killed: Ottoshoop, 22 August 1900

Mentioned in Commander-in-Chief's Despatches, 2 April 1901

3rd (1st Tasmanian Imperial)

Capt. Arthur Arnold SALE

Next of kin: Father — J. T. Sale, St Leonards, Launceston, Tasmania

Died of wounds at Pietersburg, 9 April 1901

2nd Lieut. Creswell Herbert WALTER

Born: Caulfield, Victoria, 7 October 1873

Educated: Melbourne Grammar School

Purser, Union Steamship Co. of NZ

Next of kin: John C Walter, Caulfield, Victoria

Killed in action at Pietersburg, 9 April 1901

106. Cpl. Gustav Henry WEBER

Discharged in South Africa, 24 July 1901

Died of disease, Johannesburg, 23 December 1901

30. Pte. Godfrey Hugh BROWN

Next of kin: Mr W. H. Brown, Penguin, Tasmania

Died of disease at Pretoria, 18 October 1900

81. Pte. Louis Francis John LETTE

Next of kin: Father, W. D. Lette, Penguin, Tasmania

Died of disease at Pretoria, 18 October 1900

87. Pte. Percy McLaren

Born: Oatmands, Tasmania

25 December 1875

Next of kin: Father — Robert McLaren, Ulverstone, Tasmania

Killed in action near Bronkhorstspuit, 22 January 1901

114. Pte. William Isaac WADLEY

Born: 5 December 1879

Next of kin: Father — William Wadley, "Como", Bishops Bourne, Tasmania

Died of disease at Pretoria, 18 April 1901

4th (2nd Tasmanian Imperial)

193. QMS Douglas Morton LYNE

Born: Swansea, Tasmania, 28 May 1977

Employed by Bank of Australasia

Next of kin: Henry Lyne, Fingal, Tasmania

Died of disease at Norval's Pont, 4 May 1902

Mentioned in Commander-in-Chief's Despatches, 8 November 1902

213. Cpl. John ORR

Born: Moor Row, Cumberland, England, 23 April 1880, arrived in Tasmania c.1884

Farmer, Underwood, near Launceston, Tasmania

Next of kin: Father — William Orr, Underwood, Tasmania

Killed in action at Rietpoort, 15 November 1901

344. L.Cpl. Francis Joseph COWELL

Born: Bringalbert, Victoria

Next of kin: Arthur A. Cowell, Cam River, Somerset, Tasmania

Died of disease at Deelfontein, 25 November 1901

172. Pte. Leonard Percy HUTTLEY

Born: Launceston, Tasmania, 12 August 1878

Next of kin: James Huttley, St John Street, Launceston, Tasmania

Died of disease, East London, 14 February 1901

359. Pte. James PHEGAN

Joined in South Africa

Next of kin: Father — Andrew Phegan, Belstead Street, Keehan, Tasmania

Died of disease at Dordrecht, 3 December 1901

252. Pte. John Edward WARBURTON

Next of kin: Elizabeth Warburton, Westbury, Tasmania

Dangerously wounded at Mortimer, 9 May 1901. Murray states that he died the same day. SAFF states that he died on 11 May 1901.

E Coy 1st Australian Commonwealth Horse

1184. CQMS Frank Edward "Sancho" MORRISBY

Had served as Pte., 1st Tasmanian Contingent

Born: Glenorchy, Tasmania, 10 March 1874

Educated at Mr McArdle's Mornington School, Bellerive, Tasmania, and Scotch College, Hobart

Clerical Branch, Tasmanian Public Service

Next of kin: Father and Mother — William Edward Morrisby and Mary Morrisby (nee Consett)

Died of disease at Klerksdorp, 25 June 1902

1212. Pte. Albert Edward FITZALLEN

Aged 20 years

Blacksmith

Next of kin: Mr J. Fitzallen, Ross, Tasmania

Died of disease at Elansfontein, 30 May 1902

One brother had served with the 1st Tasmanian Contingent and another with the 4th (2nd Tasmanian Imperials).

E Coy 3rd Australian Commonwealth Horse

2065 Pte. Charles Cundy

Aged 20 years

Born: Hobart, Tasmania

Previous service: D Coy 1st tasmanian Infantry Regiment

Next of kin: Mr W Cundy, Ballarat, Victoria

Died of disease aboard *Drayton Grange*, 2 August 1902

2026. Pte. Vincent Lade HODGMAN

Next of kin: Father — W L Hodgman, St Helens, Tasmania

Died of disease aboard *Drayton Grange*, 5 August 1902

Sources and acknowledgments:

Mr Athol Chaffey, West Launceston, Tasmania

Mr Reg A Watson, Sandy Bay, Tasmania

On the Veldt, Major R. C. Lewis, Hobart, 1902

Tasmanians in the tRansvaal War, J. Bufton, Hobart, 1905

Records of Australian Contingents to the War in South Africa 1899-1902, Lieut-Colonel P. L. Murray (Retd), Melbourne, 1911

Liber Melburnesis (centenary edit.) Melbourne CEGS South Yarra, 1964

South African Field Force Casualty List 1899-1902, Oakland Press, Ilford Essex, 1972

The Australians at the Boer War, R. L. Wallace, Canberra, 1976

They proved to all the Earth, J. E. Price, Melbourne, 1981

David St. Albans Dexter

The Society lost a distinguished member with the death in Canberra on 15 March 1992 of David St Albans Dexter. David had been a member of the MHSA for many years but he will be better remembered as the author of *The New Guinea Offensives*, Volume six on the Army series in *Australia in the War of 1939-45*. He had, himself, played no small part in the campaigns against the Japanese as a member of the 2/2nd and 2/5th Commando Squadrons. As David's death occurred as this issue of *Sabretache* is being typeset, it is intended to produce a fuller account of his career in the next issue of the journal.

To Mrs Dexter and her family the Society extends its deepest sympathy.

Letters to the Editor

Wardmaster

In the Letters to the Editor in the July/September edition of our Journal I noticed a query regarding the position of Wardmaster. Having served in the Royal Army Medical Corps between 1936 and 1948 I thought that I might be able to help. A Wardmaster is usually responsible for the administration work and discipline of a group of hospital wards which make up a division such as, surgical, medical, skin diseases or psychiatric, etc. He is usually a sergeant or staff sergeant of the Medical Corps. A Chief Wardmaster is responsible for all divisions of a hospital and is usually a Warrant Officer Class 1.

The title, Wardmaster, is something of a vestige which dates back to the old Army Hospital Corps whose members held no precise military ranks but were known as, in order of seniority, Orderly, Steward, Dispenser and Wardmaster. At this time medical officers did not hold military ranks either but were known as surgeons of various class and the senior members known as Inspectors of Hospitals. All ranks became military after the formation of the Royal Army Medical Corps in June 1898.

Ron Montague
169 New England Highway
Rutherford NSW 2320

Correction

In your October-December 1991 edition you published a letter from me. Unfortunately, an error occurred at the very end as you printed my name, "ex DInf", instead of "ex DMF", as contained in my letter.

I have never held the appointment of Director of Infantry (DInf), but I am an ex-member of the Darwin Mobile Force (DMF).

I would be grateful if this could be corrected. Thank you.

Maj Gen RL Hughes
Mawson ACT 2607

Colour patches

On the subject of colours of colour patches, I refer to two recent articles in *Sabretache*.

In Vol XXXII, No.3, July-Sept 1991, Peter Ford's "59 Variations" refers, in the penultimate paragraph, to red and blue being the correct colours for the 58th Battalion. If the "colours" referred to are the colour patch colours, those of the 58th Battalion were purple and red, in a vertical rectangle divided vertically. The original authority is Headquarters Australian and New Zealand Forces Circular Memorandum No. 17, dated 25 February 1916, subject: "Distinctive Colours of Units in 4th and 5th Australian Divisions". Standard Orders for Clothing 1922, 1925 and for Dress 1931, 1935 maintain these colours and pattern. The Master General of Ordnance (MGO) drawings (Sheet 10) of World War 2 colour patches vary the "red" to "scarlet".

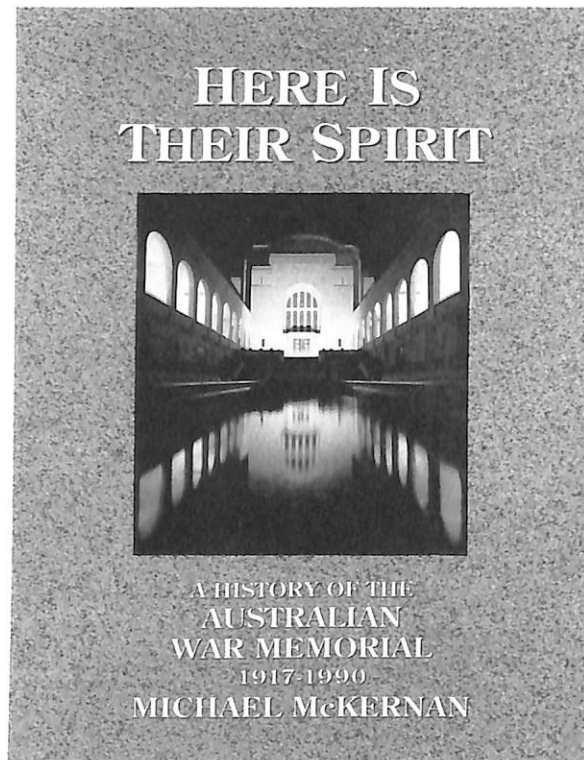
In Vol XXXII No.4, Oct-Dec 1991, footnote 6 to Peter Ford's "Presented to Shepparton" refers to a "flag comprising a blue over black diamond" — the colours of the 2/25th Bn". Again, if the colour patch is the subject of the quotation, the original 25th Battalion colour patch was a black over light blue diamond. The authority is the 2nd Australian Division instruction of 3 August 1915. The Standing Orders referred to above maintain these colours and pattern. The MGO drawings on Sheet 9 vary the "light blue" to "sky blue" for the 25th Battalion, and on Sheet 12 the same variation, as well as placing that colour patch on a battleship grey circle, for the 2/25th Battalion.

David Chinn
Fisher ACT 2611

Book Reviews

Here is Their Spirit — A History of the Australian War Memorial 1917-1990, Michael McKernan, University of Queensland Press 1991, recommended retail price: \$39.95

Michael McKernan, one of the Australian War Memorial's senior staff, has "attempted to provide a critical, rather than a flattering portrait" of it in this history, commissioned by the Council of the Australian War Memorial for the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Memorial building in Canberra in 1941.



In his introduction, the author acknowledges the Council's support, records his gratitude for their observance of the appropriate freedom given him in determining the shape and direction of his work, but notes that with only a short time to research and write it, he had to make omissions: there is less about the Memorial's collections than he would have wished and less, too, about past and present staff. He stresses that it is an *institutional* history.

Judged against the author's aim, this is a fascinating book for any military historian, or indeed for anyone with an affection and respect for the Memorial. The Memorial, McKernan notes in his epilogue, "provokes opinions", among them being: that it glorifies war and restrains the development of other museums of Australian history; that it **should** not change, lest interference with the way it has always been is seen,

particularly by veterans, as reducing in importance the part in history they and their mates played. Reading this book may not change the most extreme of those opinions, but it will help to put all our opinions about the Memorial on a firmer basis of facts and understanding and to see that what was attempted in its establishment — commemoration through understanding — is still how the Australian War Memorial is meant to work, though the presentation must change as the nation changes.

Two small references may tempt the military historian to read the book: the story of the theft of the bell from the German battle-cruiser *Emden* from the Museum (then in Sydney) in 1933 and the detective work by the Director, John Treloar, which led to its being dug up in Royal Park, Melbourne, and the conviction of the thief (pp. 139-140); and the same John Treloar, returned to his work as Director in Canberra in 1946, living in a room at the Memorial (and cooking lunch for his daughter on his primus stove) and collapsing there just prior to his death in 1952, having been Director, with several interruptions, since 1920. Treloar prided himself on his anonymity. I found the book's revelation of this complex and dedicated character's life's work at the Australian War Memorial a fascinating part of a fascinating book. — A R Roberts

Duty First — The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace, edited by David Horner, Allen & Unwin, 1990, 525 pages.

The first 13 chapters of this history of the Royal Australian Regiment are a chronological record, commencing with the raising of the first three battalions at Morotai in 1945-46 and ending with the relocation of the Director of Infantry and the RAR regimental headquarters to Singleton in December 1989. Each chapter has been written by a well known member or ex-member of the Regiment. Major General Alan Morrison, in his preface, pays well deserved tribute to the manner in which David Horner has blended them into a coherent and readable narrative.

Chapter 14 consists of nine "individual views" of service in the Regiment, ranging over Brian Betts' experience from private soldier (1953) to WO1 (1983) to General Sir Frank Hassett's description of commanding 3 RAR in Korea. Each in its own way is a vivid account and rewarding to both the general reader and the military historian.

Until an official history of the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation in Malaysia and Borneo 1960-66 is available, chapters 5 and 7 of this book are particularly useful to readers looking for detailed descriptions of those periods of operations. However, they, and the book generally, suffer from an absence of detailed maps which would have made them more intelligible. On the other hand, there are a number of appendices which will prove very useful to the military historian: Awards and decorations to members on active service with the RAR (with the date of the action or the period in respect of which



the award was made); lists of Commanding Officers and Regimental Sergeant-Majors of each battalion, with their periods of service in those appointments; a brief outline of actions which earned regimental Battle Honours; and the full texts of unit citations awarded by the United States of America and the Republic of Vietnam. There are also comprehensive Notes to each chapter, a full bibliography, and a useful index.

The RAR has carried the main burden of Army active service since the Second World War. This first complete history is an important addition to the record of the development of Australia's post-war defence as well as of individual contributions: over 60,000 Australians have served in the Regiment and 651 men gave their lives during that service. — A R Roberts

Victorian Land Forces 1853—1883, George E Ward, \$25

George Ward is a member of the Australian Military Historical Society whose interest is Victoria's Colonial Military history. He has had printed privately the results of much of his study in *Victorian Land Forces 1853—1883*, which covers the period that Victoria exercised its responsibilities for internal defence by using volunteer forces.

In 1883, Victoria, unlike the other Australian colonies, reviews its defence responsibilities. The small regular forces, mainly artillery which had been established following the departure of British troops in 1870, were incorporated into the respective colony defence forces, where the major component of the Defence Force was militia who received part-payment. These colonial forces were incorporated into the Australian Land Force in 1903 following the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

The recently published books on the military forces of Queensland and Western Australia have combined both the volunteer and militia periods and include chapters on the development of the two colonies which influenced its attitude towards the establishment and structure of the respective Defence Force.

While containing references to these important features, Mr Ward approaches his subject from a different perspective that repeatedly draws attention to the importance of continuity in the evolution of the Australian Army. An aspect many have too often ignored and have attempted to destroy in the restructuring of the Australian Army that has occurred from time to time. His attention to details of armaments of the Volunteer Force highlights the supply problems arising from maintaining different arms and other stores, rather than the benefits of standardisation which was a feature of colonial defence moves prior to Federation, and was not fully achieved in the Australian Army until after two World Wars.

Attention to these aspects, plus the method of approach to the subject of how the defence of a community should be organised, how it was met, and the problems experienced, will broaden the perspective from which Australia's defence commitments and obligations should be viewed.

Victorian Land Forces is a soft covered book of 153 pages with many photographs. It is a common tendency to pick up a book, peruse it quickly, look for certain benchmarks before making a decision to buy. This book, after a detailed reading, reveals the danger of making purchases following that practice. It contains a wealth of detail; each time one reads it, one's attention will be drawn to new significant facts and features not previously recognised.

The book commences with a résumé of the circumstances which led to the Colony of Victoria being established in 1850 and, in 1854, the proclamation of the *Volunteer Act 1854*, which provided for the creation of a Defence Force based entirely on volunteers. It also validated those Volunteer Forces which had already been formed in Victoria.

This is followed by details of the British Regiments that were garrisoned in Victoria and the role their officers and other ranks played in the development of Victoria, which included the Melbourne Cricket Club. They also had a significant influence on the effectiveness of some of the volunteer units with respect to training and their bands. This was restricted mainly to Melbourne and Geelong, where the British were based.

Details of the Rules and Regulations, Conditions of Service etc., when compared with the current equivalent show how much military practice remains constant and reliable.

The response to the formation of volunteer units shows that throughout the Colony, there was a strong enthusiasm and support for several reasons. Enrolments in some units declined shortly after to such an extent that they were disbanded while others were amalgamated to remain viable. Volunteers were required to purchase their uniforms. The number and times of drills in the morning before going to work could have contributed, among other things, to the decline in numbers. The failure to include within the Act an administrative infrastructure to make the Force effective, must have also contributed. In this regard, the Act was no different from many others in other Australian colonies.

The photographs show that the units designed their own uniforms, and with rifle units they tended to follow the British Regiments' green rather than the Infantry red. Other colours appeared in the early years.

The Officer rolls show the period of years some officers served in the volunteers and how they rose to senior positions.

The details of the armaments, rifles and artillery pieces illustrate the difficulties of logistical support as well as the age and usefulness of the artillery pieces which militated against their effectiveness that had a consequential impact on the artillery units.

The references are neither shown as footnotes at the end of chapters nor at the end of the book. They are contained within the text. This is a common practice in giving a lecture, but is unusual in written text. The author uses initials which are contained in a glossary at the end of the book. Having the glossary at the beginning probably would have been preferable. Another distraction is the typographical errors — a common problem with publishing privately. Nevertheless, the content of the book far outweighs any of these minor irritants.

Only 1,000 copies of the book have been printed. It is one of those books which will be valued for the details it contains of the volunteer units, their strengths and how they contributed to Australia's military heritage for some of them that are still in existence. Their members have served Australia well in New Zealand in the Maori Wars, South Africa, World War I and II, and still do in the Army Reserve. The book costs \$25 plus \$2.50 postage and packaging, and is available from Mr G Ward, PO Box 854 Croydon, Victoria 3136. — Stan Pyne

Books Received

Gunfire! A History of the 2/12th Australian Field Regiment 1940-1946, hard cover, illustrated, appendixes, 342 pages. \$35.

The story of the 2/12th Field Regiment formed in Melbourne in 1940 was published in September 1940. The Regiment saw service with the Ninth Australian Division in four campaigns in North Africa, New Guinea and British North Borneo. Appendixes include the Honour Roll, list of awards and decorations (citations are in the main text) and a comprehensive and informative Nominal Roll of the both the regiment and attached troops.

Those Ragged Bloody Heroes: From the Kokoda Trail to Gona Beach 1942. Peter Bruben, Allen and Unwin, hard-cover, illustrated 309 pages \$34.95

This is the story of Maroubra force, originally the 39th and 53rd Militia battalions which were later reinforced by the AIF 21st Brigade. As well as the covering the fighting along the Kokoda Track, the story continues until the capture of Gona on 9 December 1942. The book is based on interviews and correspondence with survivors of the campaign during the 1985 to 1988. The forward is by Lt Col Ralph Honner DSO MC.

The Mystery of the Leichhardt Survivor; The Story of the Men who sought to solve it, Les Perrin, paperback illustrated

In November 1874 three men went in search of the an alleged survivor of Leichhardt expedition. Two of the men died of thirst in South-west Queensland including Victoria Cross recipient Timothy O'Hea. This paperback provides a comprehensive story of the fate of the November 1874 expedition. The story of how O'Hea won the Victoria Cross is related in detail.

The Longest Tunnel: The True Story of the Great Escape, Alan Burgess, Bloomsbury, paperback index, 289 pages

First published in hardback in 1990, based on interviews, this is the another story of the escape of 76 allied prisoners from Stalag Luft III in March 1944. Fifty of the recaptured airmen, including four members of the Royal Australian Air Force, were executed after recapture.

Australian War Memorial History Conference 1991

Lieutenant Colonel Neil C. Smith AM

It is thirty years since I made my first visit to the Australian War Memorial. Although a boy at the time I was immediately overcome by the sacred aura which enveloped me and fascinated by the visual exhibits of Australia's military heritage. Subsequently, as a soldier and aspiring military historian I took the opportunity scores of times to retrace my boyhood experience. It never failed, indeed the reward of each visit seemed to increase in its richness. Therefore, I grasped the opportunity to attend the Australian War Memorial History Conference 1991. The Conference was conducted at the Australian Defence Force Academy at Campbell between 12 and 15 November 1991. I was intent on maximizing my stay and, despite the annoyance of optional sessions, set out to involve myself in all that the Conference had to offer.

The 1991 Conference of course was especially significant. The notion of an Australian War Memorial had been conceived 75 years ago in 1916 in response to the tragedy of Pozieres. The Memorial was to be opened 25 years later when Australia was again at war. A further twenty five years passed out and Australians were wincing at the sacrifice being made in Vietnam at places like Long Tan. Thus 1991 was a year in which not only had Australians distinguished themselves in yet another foreign conflict, but three quarter centuries had passed since the conception of the Australian War Memorial. Further, the more astute reader would no doubt note that this Conference was indeed the 10th successive Conference.

Starting with Michael McKernan's keynote address, the program maintained a steady pace. Although I've not analysed the program critically, there seemed to be something to suit most tastes. Perhaps a little more emphasis on the extremities of Australian military history would have been appropriate. For instance there was scant attention paid to the period prior to World War One nor indeed to recent United Nations operations in which Australians have been involved. Greatest attention seemed to be placed on both World Wars and, to a lesser degree, Vietnam. To my pleasant surprise the long silence on the Malayan Emergency was even broken. Clearly my interest in this latter campaign is not unique as the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General John Coates attended to chair the session by Peter Dennis on the Malayan Emergency and another on Australia's decision to enter the Vietnam War by Peter Edwards.

Although I have little interest in nautical matters I found myself engrossed by a presentation delivered by Tom Frame and Stephen Allen on the loss of the HMAS *Sydney* following its encounter with the German armed auxiliary cruiser, HSK *Kormoran*, on 19 November 1941. Like many, the mystery surrounding the incident provides a fascinating subject.

Joan Beaumont, not surprisingly, addressed the matter of Australian prisoners of the Japanese and it was a refreshing surprise to find that Heidi Zogbaum took the time to explore the experiences of Australian POWs on the other side of the war, in Nazi Germany. In fact there were a number of POW sessions. James Burfitt, fresh from the success of his unit history on the 2/18th Battalion gave a fine account of conditions in the Blakang Mati POW Camp where, unlike most Japanese run POW Camps, only a handful of prisoners lost their lives. Our own society member, David Milne from Victoria, was present throughout the conference and, as a former POW, made some meaningful contributions.

Naturally many of the stalwarts of contemporary Australian military history were present and contributed formally or informally. Several come to mind, such as David Horner, Len Barton, George Odgers and John Laffin fresh from a lengthy sojourn in Wales.

The second evening of the conference featured an informal reception with drinks and nibbles in a rather grandiose marque erected for the anniversary celebration leading up to the conference. I must admit I spent a considerable portion of the evening buying far more books than I needed at the Australian War Memorial bookshop which provided a very reasonable discount for the event. The opportunity was taken another evening for the launch of Lex McAulay's latest book *Six Aces*. On the Thursday night the conference dinner and quiz was held. From all accounts this was an enjoyable function and one from which the participants departed better informed on Australian military history.

In hindsight I think I was most impressed by some of the work in progress sessions. Perhaps I identified with some of these "amateur" historians with their fresh and energetic approach to new subjects. There was some emphasis on homefront subjects such as Sybil Jack and Deb Hull who examined aspects of children and warfare. Melanie Oppenheimer was another who examined the unsung heroines of the Australian Red Cross who served as nurses in France 1916-19. I was particularly excited by Graham McKenzie-Smith's report on his AMFDBASE. Although computers are soulless black boxes to me, the virtues of Graham's computer database tracking the location and organisation of all AMF and AIF units in Australia during WWII, are immediately apparent. Further, although he didn't have a lot to report, Bob Breen's intention to examine the post WWII Australian infantry is of great personal interest, as was Mike Fogarty's work on HMAS *Macquarie* in Java 1946.

In conclusion I congratulate the Australian War Memorial for a job well done. They are recognizing the needs of amateur historians and of course the public. Their sessions on "How to find it" during the conference are testimony to this approach and they should develop the concept in future conferences. Unfortunately the Australian War Memorial's efforts in marketing the conference, not to mention the preceding 50th anniversary activities, fell short of the mark. However, it must be acknowledged that the Memorial is struggling in a resource constrained environment. After all, I suspect that the bills arising from the marbled interior of the splendid new Administration Annex are still a cause for concern to the Memorial's accountants. Nevertheless, I'll be sure to attend the next Australia War Memorial History Conference.



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