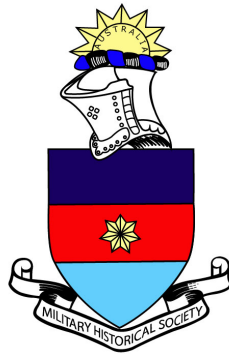


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



Copyright © 1957-2019 Military Historical Society of Australia on behalf of the Society and its authors who retain copyright of all their published material and articles. All Rights Reserved.

Sabretache policy is that the submission of material gives the Society permission to print your material, to allow the material to be included in digital databases such as the MHSa website, Australian Public Affairs-Full Text, INFORMIT and EBSCO. Reprints to non-profit historical and other societies will be approved provided suitable attribution is included and a copy of the reprint is sent to the author. Copyright remains with the author who may reprint his or her article or material from the article without seeking permission from the Society.

The Society encourages the download and distribution of *Sabretache* for personal use only and *Sabretache* can not be reproduced without the written consent of the Society.

www.mhsa.org.au

Military Historical Society of Australia
PO Box 5030, Garran, ACT 2605.
email: webmaster@mhsa.org.au

SABRETACHE

The Journal and Proceedings of
**The Military Historical
Society of Australia**

Vol XXXV

April/June 1994

Number 2

Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. NBH0587

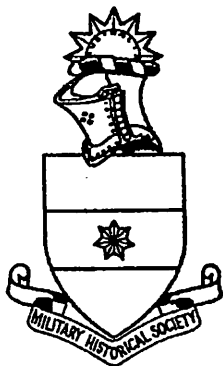
APRIL—JUNE 1994
VOLUME XXXV — NUMBER 2

CONTENTS

3. Walter Oliphant Arnot
Don W Pedlar
16. Major General Henry Despard CB, "Corporal Desperado" (Part 3)
David Murphy
29. The Glorification of Australian Masculinity and the Reshaping of Australia's Great War Experience
Dale James Blair
35. National Service in South East Asia
Richard Murison
40. Unveiling of the Gurney VC in the Hall of Valour
41. Australian Archives – worth a look
Lieutenant Colonel Neil C Smith AM
42. Book Reviews
47. Annual General Meeting

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 relevant contributor and not necessarily those of the Society.



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

Patron

Admiral Sir Anthony
Synnot, KBE, AO

Honorary Office Bearers

President

Brig. A R Roberts (ret'd)

Vice President

Lt. Col. T C Sargent (ret'd)

Secretary

Anthony Staunton
PO Box 30,
Garran ACT 2605

Treasurer

Mr N Foldi

Editor

Elizabeth Topperwien
PO Box 30,
Garran ACT 2605

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 "Advertisements" section of the Journal 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

Queries

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 "Letters" section of the Journal.

Branch Secretaries

ACT — Lcdr P R Sinfeld RANEM, 14 Angophora St, Rivett ACT 2611

Victoria — Steve Gray, 12 Player Close, Hoppers Crossing, Vic. 3030

Geelong — Robln Mawson, 25 Allanbee Avenue, Grovedale, Geelong, Vic 3216

Albury-Wodonga — Don Campbell, Unit 1, 2 Kyle Court, Wodonga, Vic, 3690

Queensland — Mr S W Wigzell, 17 Royal Street, Alexandra Hills, Qld. 4161

South Australia — Mr A F Harris, PO Box 292, Magill SA 5072

Western Australia — Rhonda Grande, 19 Sillman Way, Duncraig, WA 6023

Walter Oliphant Arnot

Don W Pedlar

Walter Oliphant Arnot, a son of Dr Henry Arnot MD RN, was born at Harwick, Essex, UK on 9 September 1860 and was educated at the Royal Naval School, New Cross. On leaving College in 1879, he came to South Australia to engage in the pastoral industry, particularly sheep farming. Aged 20, he was appointed manager of Werocata Station until the property was purchased by a Mr Ralli. He then took on the management of Andamooka and Parakylina stations. These properties comprised close to 6 000 square miles. He was a successful manager during the drought of 1883-84. For four years, he managed Collingrove for Mr J H Angus.

After moving to Adelaide, he became a gardener at Felixstoe, also joining "A" Battery Field Artillery under Captain Norton. Arnot was an efficient gunner and was qualifying for a commission when the Boer War broke out in 1899.

Arnot had married, in June 1888, Eleanor Fredrica Rosevear Seabrook. By 1900, they had four children, aged from 4 to 9 years.

There is no information extant to show why he decided to join the 3rd South Australian Contingent, the SA Bushmen's Corps. He is shown as a sergeant on the Corps roll in the *Observer* newspaper of 3 March 1900.

The Corps was raised essentially by a civilian committee, funded by public subscription and trained by the local military forces. Regarding the Corps as not so much a fighting contingent but rather as a scouting and intelligence force, it was felt that, with a first class senior subaltern to attend to military details, a civilian could command. Samuel Grau Hübbe was appointed with the rank of Captain. There being no applicant for the position of senior subaltern, Sergeant Arnot was promoted to be Lieutenant, to take rank after Lieutenants Collins and Ives.¹ Lt Arnot had had considerable experience with the class of men from whom the troopers had been chosen and his appointment was very popular among them.

The Contingent left South Australia in the transport *Maplemore* and disembarked at Beira in Portuguese East Africa.

A letter² from Lt Arnot, dated 1 May 1900, states:

"Beira Horse Camp. Here we are still camped on 'Mosquito Flat' as I have named it. I have 30 men and all the horses with me, which I am sorry to say are dropping off, about one every other day, from what is locally known as 'blue tongue' or acute pneumonia, brought on through exhaustion and long confinement on board ship, and then being suddenly turned out and exposed to the tropical sun by day and the heavy cold dews at night. I have requisitioned for stores, medicines, etc, but the mischief goes on before you get things; in fact if all the British organizations are on the same lines as here I am not at all surprised at the Boers holding out so long. We have a very comfortable camp and send out hunting parties to obtain fresh meat. We have captured two bucks today. The grass on the swamps here is seven or eight feet high

¹ E G Blackmore, *The Story of the South Australian Bushmen's Corps*, Adelaide, 1900

² *Observer*, 7 July 1900, p.7

and the bucks get tangled up in it, and are easily run down. There are now about 2 000 horses camped here. Victoria, New Zealand, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia all having their own camps. All the other men have gone up the line to form a camp at Marandellas. When we all get together we will form what will be known as the Rhodesian Field Force. A shipload of 750 Hungarian ponies have arrived here. They are the most even and beautiful lot of horses I have ever seen together, and any two of the 750 would form a pair but I am afraid most of them will die owing to the mode of treatment after landing or to the so-called 'horse sickness'. It seems a fearful shame to see such good animals and so much money sacrificed. We lost another horse this afternoon, making ten dead since we left Adelaide."

The *Advertiser* of 28 July 1900 included the following letter from Trooper E P Hodge:

"A serious charge, an officer resigns

"Bulawayo, June 10. Our first and second officers were all right, but at least one other was the reverse of pleasant. If he had not had the Queen's uniform on he would have wished he was home. He used to get drunk and come into camp and call us everything that a man could not stand. Thirty of us were left at Beira when we landed with the horses. The other 70 went on to the base. It was three weeks before we got away. While there, this officer was often drunk. He was left in charge and spent plenty of time on the whisky. He said we were sent from Australia to get rid of us as we were no good there. That was more than we could stand and we reported him on arrival at Marrandillas. So he had to resign from our corps. We have only a captain and two officers now but I think Sergeant-Major Dempsey will be the third officer. We all hope so at any rate."³

I have found no other reference to Arnot's drinking or that he was regarded as incompetent. One thing is certain: this letter was to influence subsequent events. A further reference to the above is contained in a letter from "a member of the South Australian Bushmen's Contingent"⁴:

"Bullawayo, June 11. Lieutenant Arnot has left us. He left us at Marandellas. He joined the Rhodesian Field Artillery but I do not know if he had a commission or not. I had a chance of joining the same as Arnot, but I declined to begin again at the bottom of the ladder."⁵

It is interesting to note that this letter makes no mention of compulsory resignation. In the *Observer* of 24 November 1900, the following appeared, at p.42:

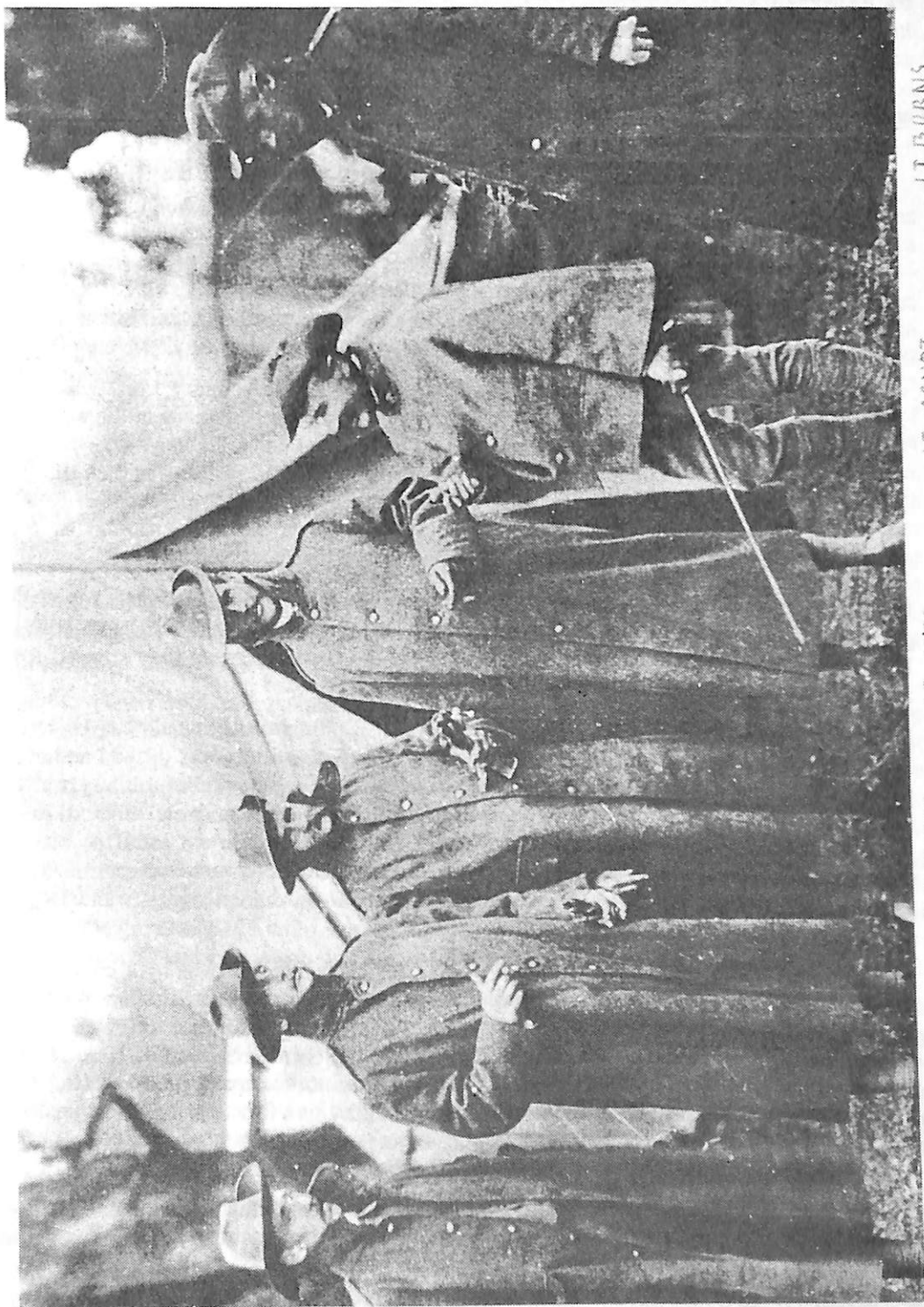
"Lieut Arnot and 28 men were left behind at Beira to look after 120 horses. They stayed about three weeks at Beira and then proceeded to Marandellas, breaking the journey at Bamboo Creek and Umtali. When the Lieutenant reached Marandellas he had 108 horses out of the 120 and he was complimented by General Carrington on the condition of the animals. The General stated that they were the best lot that had arrived up to that time. When Arnot reached the camp, an artillery brigade was in course of formation and he was asked to join it. With Captain Hübbe's sanction and

³ The letter is abridged by omitting references to the trip and complaints about the food. He does say that there would be mutiny if money was not forthcoming.

⁴ *Observer*, 4 August 1900, p.42

⁵ It would seem that the writer may have had experience and rank similar to Arnot in the South Australian forces.

OFFICERS OF THE 9TH MOUNT DOGHERTY CO.



DR. DOUGLAS
(SURGEON)

LT. A.E. COLLINS

CAPT. HUDBE

LT. IVES

LT. ARNOT

LT. BURNS
(VETERINARY SURGEON)

recommendation, he was attached to the Rhodesian Field Force Artillery as lieutenant. A squadron of New Zealand mounted riflemen joined the RFFA in a body and formed the No.1 Battery which afterwards went by the name of the New Zealand Battery. The whole Brigade was under the command of Major Powell, Royal Artillery.

“After three weeks training they left for Bulawayo, thence to Tuli and were then ordered to return to Bulawayo. They entrained for Mafeking and joined Carrington’s first column which was on the way to relieve Colonel Hore at Eland’s River. Coming within a few miles of that place, it was decided that by reason of the Boer numbers and strong position it was necessary to retire to Mafeking. On arrival the horses were jaded and two sections only were fitted out. Lt Arnot was left in charge of one section to defend Mafeking which after the retirement from Eland’s River was expected to be attacked. This did not eventuate but the artillery was involved in an action at Rio Grand. After twenty five shells were fired the Boers decamped and the British, being few in number, did not follow.

“Major Montgomery who was Commander, Royal Artillery under Lord Methuen when his force marched from Mafeking offered Lt Arnot the Adjutancy of the artillery brigade. Unfortunately Arnot was unwell and had to decline. A few days later he was sent to Kimberly Hospital with malaria. He stayed there for ten days, was then sent to Cape Town and from there invalided home on the *Australasian* in November 1900. Suffering the after effects of malaria and rheumatism, he was attached to the Permanent Artillery for administrative purposes until discharge was effected.”

Lt Arnot spoke highly of Major Montgomery from whom he gained valuable knowledge of gunnery. He also complimented Captain Bailey of the Queensland Mounted Rifles and Dr W Smith OC Australian details at Maitland for the great attention they showed towards invalided Australians at that town.

In October 1900 an invalided New Zealand officer Lt Bosworth, stated that he left New Zealand with the Imperial Bushmen from whom a battery of artillery was formed and attached to the Rhodesian force.⁶ All officers and men who had had experience of artillery work were asked to hand in their names, while others without experience were invited to make application, the distinct understanding being that the change would not interfere with either their status or rate of pay. Among those who were thus transferred was Lt Arnot of the South Australian Bushmen’s Corp who occupied the rank of third lieutenant in Lt Bosworth’s battery.

In the meantime Eleanor Arnot had been placed in considerable distress by a combination of the Hodge letter and not only having her husband’s deferred pay from the Bushmen’s Corp stopped, but all pay after May 17th being classed as in excess. In reference to Hodge, she wrote to the *Observer*⁷ “Now this remains to be proved and I would respectfully ask—Have the authorities here (either the military or the Bushmen’s committee) received any ‘official’ letter confirming this man’s words. ... It is not so much a question of the pay being stopped as that occurred six weeks ago but I feel so acutely the shameful allusions contained in Trooper Hodge’s letter that I am determined to clear my husband’s name at any cost.”

The Bushmen’s committee stopped the pay by reason of a letter that stated that Lt Arnot had left the corps. Mrs Arnot was unable to see the letter and, as a result, she must have written to

⁶ *Observer*, 13 October 1900, p.42

⁷ *Observer*, 8 September 1900, p.42

her husband for clarification. Arnot's earlier letters to his wife are cheerful and show no sign of domestic concern. However in a letter dated 25 July 1900, extracts of which were published with Mrs Arnot's letter, Lt Arnot stated that he was "lying ill with fever and worrying about everything" when he recalled that Captain Hübbe had said that he would have to let the Secretary of the Bushmen know of his transfer. Arnot enquired of Lt Col Jenner, CSO at the staff office, as to whether he could settle the matter. The reply was "No communication was made by Captain Hübbe to South Australian authorities re your being attached to artillery—A Jenner, Lieutenant Colonel, CSO—Lieutenant Arnot attached artillery 21/5/00"

The *Observer*⁸ published two items relating to Arnot. First, "His Excellency the Governor has received a dispatch from the Lt General commanding lines of communication, South Africa dated Cape Town September 29 stating that he had that day telegraphed to him as follows:— 'Information received that pay entitled to wife of Lieut Arnot, Bushmen South Australian Contingent has been stopped on misconception that above named officer ceased to belong to the contingent. He is attached to Rhodesian Field Artillery and it is understood his wife is still entitled to draw pay.' The telegram, however, was never received by His Excellency." Secondly, "Lord Tennyson has received the following message from the General of Communications, dated Cape Town October 20:— 'In continuation of my telegram of September 29 concerning Lieut Arnot of the South Australian mounter infantry, Col Wallack reports that it was necessary to call for volunteers at Marandellas from all the colonial corps for the Rhodesian field force to man the guns which had been provided for the force. Officers and men with previous artillery experience were particularly asked to join, Lt Arnot among them. They were told on joining the artillery that their pay in the colonies would not be affected in any way and that they could still remain on the strengths of their respective contingents. Lieut Arnot, in joining as he did, carried out the wishes of his General, Sir F Carrington and rendered good service in the battery to which he was attached'."

A reply to a letter by Arnot was published⁹ "Lieut Arnot has received the following letter from Lieut-General Carrington:— 'Tuli, Matabeleland, October 27 1900, Dear Mr Arnot, Your letter of October 14 just to hand, and I cannot tell you how sorry I am that any one should have circulated such a rumour to the effect that you had to resign your commission as I personally know this to be absolutely untrue. I know you joined the RFF Artillery in response to a personal call of my own for volunteers, and had not you and the remaining colonials forming the batteries answered so well to my call, the formation of the batteries would have been much more difficult. I may also add that the battery with which you were serving (Mjr Powell's) has given me the greatest satisfaction. I trust this letter will be sufficient to contradict a rumour so falsely circulated, and I hope you will make any use of it that you think desirable.' "

Lt Arnot became involved in the discussion of the vexed question of pay for the Bushmen's Corps.¹⁰ This matter was long, involved, and as far as I have traced, still continuing in late 1904. Arnot stated the facts, being the only officer of the Corps in South Australia.¹¹ "A meeting of the executive committee of the Bushmen's Corp was held at the secretary's office on Friday June 7. It was resolved that official notice be sent to the Staff Office of the date on which the members of the corps were paid off in order that the military authorities might give the official discharge. On the recommendations of the finance committee, the executive

⁸ *Observer*, 3 November 1900, pp.27, 30

⁹ *Observer*, 8 December 1900, p.30

¹⁰ *Observer*, 9 February 1901, p.42

¹¹ *Observer*, 15 June 1901, p.32

committee adopted and decided to publish the following statement:- 'Lieut Walter Oliphant Arnot having stated to the Secretary of the South Australian Bushmen's Corps that rumours are in circulation prejudicial to his character in respect of the pay received by him, the committee desire to state that they are not responsible either individually or collectively, for any such reflection. The committee deem it fair to Lieut W O Arnot to say that neither he nor any other member of the corps has knowingly claimed or received any pay to which he was not justly entitled. And further, the committee are of the opinion that Lieut W O Arnot is still an officer of the South Australian Bushmen's Corps and never ceased to be such by reason of his service with the Rhodesian Field Artillery.' "

On 13 July 1901, Long Service and South African War Medals and Decorations were presented by HRH the Duke of Cornwall and York to members of South Australian local forces and returned veterans. Of the Bushmen's Corps, Lt Arnot was the only officer present. Fifty-six other ranks also received their medals.

In August 1901, Arnot was granted a Special War Gratuity of £37-10-0 and in December 1901, he received £12-19-6 compensation for loss of kit.

The final items in print that I have found on Arnot are as follows:

"The following is a copy of a cable message received by His Excellency on Sunday from the casualty department, Cape Town, dated May 3, announcing the death of Lieut Arnot:- 'William Oliver Arnot Intelligence Department, late of Bushmen's, died Vanderbyl's Kraal, Beaufort West, April 15.' The Premier (Hon J G Jenkins) requested a friend of deceased to break the sad news to Mrs Arnot on Sunday, and on Monday Lady Tennyson, with characteristic kindness, waited on the widow and condoled with her."¹² The other mentions are in the *Express* and *Telegraph*, 6 May, and the *Chronicle*, 10 May 1902. They give details of his early life, military service, repatriation to South Australia with ill health, subsequent recovery and return to South Africa, and his death at Vanderbyl's Kraal, Cape Colony. His widow, it was stated, resided at Felixstoe near Payneham.

Regarding the "William Oliver" in this cable, I have, so far, traced this error to a casualty list in the South African *Cape Times* of 18 April 1902. This error had unfortunate results for Eleanor Arnot, as can be seen from the following letter from W T Mortlock JP to the Chief Secretary, Adelaide:

4 Currie Chambers
41 Currie Street
Adelaide 13.5.1902

Dear Sir,

The Honourable T H Gordon kindly interested himself in the case of the late Mr Arnot on behalf of his widow. he procured a copy of the cable to HE the Governor, attested by the Under Secretary, to forward as proof of death to the Insurance Co to save the widow, who is badly off, heavy expense. The man, no doubt the same whose life is insured, is named in the Policy, "Walter Oliphant Arnot", while the cable gives the name as William Oliver Arnot. As this is only an error in the cable, would you kindly take steps to get it rectified and send to me a corrected copy of the cable before Monday next if not earlier. This is the only reason that the claim cannot be paid to the widow; the General Manager, Mr Remington, is coming through Adelaide on

¹² *Register*, 6 May 1902

Monday and if I am by then in possession of the right name of the deceased Lieutenant Arnot the matter can be settled there and then. Mr Gordon offered his professional services free of charge to the widow, but unfortunately he had to leave for Sydney and therefore I take leave to apply to you for your kind help for the widow and children.”

Yours faithfully

W T Mortlock

We should now consider the circumstances which led to this tragic telegram. By early 1902, possibly in late 1901, Lieutenant, or plain Mister, Arnot had departed once again for South Africa. The following documents were found in his personal effects, and the dates give some indication of his second period of service:¹³

- receipt for £5-8-9, a/c rendered to Mr Arnot from Royal Hotel, Capetown dated 8/4/02;
- original and duplicate Railway Permit No.59621 for Mr Arnot to proceed from Capetown to Matjesfontein dated 10/4/02;
- memo of interview at Main Barracks, Cape Town;
- authority from DAAG, “T” Southern CC to OC Troops Matjesfontein for Railway Warrant to Laingsburg dated 12/4/02;
- small black pocket book;
- red prayer book with photographs pasted in;
- three letters to deceased from his wife and children;
- quotation from Shakespeare.

The Boer General J C Smuts was operating in Cape Colony. The *British Official History of the War in South Africa*,¹⁴ states that Smuts had a force, “which, if largely powerless from lack of arms and horseflesh, was a significance grave enough to have drawn from the British High Commissioner the confession that, ‘The condition of Cape Colony is deplorable, not so much for the material damage which is being done as for the evidence it affords of the lawless and disaffected temper of the mass of the population.’ Smuts was as well aware as Lord Milner that the overt revolvers were but the source of treasonable forces which were as yet beneath the surface. He knew, even better perhaps that the High Commissioner, that at last the Boer army had put its hand, however timidly and however late, upon the only lever which bore upon the power of the British in South Africa. It was a ‘plain fact’, as Lord Milner, despising all foolish optimism, at this time reported, ‘that the rebels are still in undisturbed possession of about one-third of the Colony’.¹⁵”

The following is compiled from evidence taken at the *Inquest holden at Van der Byl’s Kraal, Ward Graph No.5, District of Beaufort West on the 15 of April 1902 before Jacobus Johannes Le Seur Van der Byl, Special Justice of the Peace for the said District relative to the death through a gunshot wound of Lieutenant Walter O Arnot CSA*¹⁶, lately of Matjesfontein.

The witnesses were:

¹³ Inquest report

¹⁴ Volume 4, chapter XXVI, Cape Colony Jan-May 1902

¹⁵ Lord Milner to Colonial Office, Telegram No.273/5.

¹⁶ It is most likely that “CSA” stands for Civilian Special Agent. The list of casualties Jan-May 1902, p.29, gives Arnot, W O as “Civilian Agent”.

- Pte John Sparkes, No.4427, of the 16th Lancers, stationed at Laingsburg and in charge of the horses of the Intelligence Department;
- Abraham January, also called Jacob, resident of Laingsburg and a Native Scout;
- Jacobus Adrian Victor, a sheepfarmer of the Sutherland district; and
- John Richard Michael Van Huyssteen, resident of Van der Byl's Kraal and the lockup keeper.

On 12 April 1902, Jacob, a Mr Martins (intelligence officer of Laingsburg) and Lt Arnot¹⁷ left Laingsburg in a mule drawn cart, accompanied by Pte Sparkes on horseback. Sparkes understood that they were going on a scouting expedition. They spent the night at Blawbank.

On Sunday, 13 April, the party reached Dwars River Farm in the Sutherland district. They stopped and talked with Jacobus Victor, he being the only person there, apparently, who spoke English. Mr Victor said, in evidence, that Lt Arnot was in good spirits and seemed quite jolly then.

On Monday, 14 April, Mr James, a scout from Laingsburg, contacted the party and asked Mr Victor to accompany Lt Arnot and Pte Sparkes as interpreter as James and Martins were to go in a different direction at Modderfontein. Arnot's party proceeded from Modderfontein for Prince Albert Road via Van Wyk's Berg. Arnot seemed in his usual spirits. They slept that night at a farm called Desyver, owned by J S Erasmus. During the night, Mr Victor noticed that Arnot got up twice, went outside and came back. Private Sparkes reported that, at one stage, "Lieutenant Arnot woke me and told me to place him under arrest. I asked him what for and he replied, 'Oh, you know.' I told him I did not and he said, 'I am suspected.' I asked him what of, and he replied I knew. I then fell asleep again."

Jacob stated, "During the night the Lieutenant got up and asked me what was walking about. I told him it must be the mules that had got out of the kraal. These he instructed me to drive back there, which I did. After this, the Lieutenant came out for the second time, walked on the stoep from the corner of which he stumbled, then walked towards the dam, holding his hands over his stomach. From the dam he came back and went into the Shear House and from thence back into the house where he and Mr Sparkes slept."

In relation to Tuesday, 15 April, Arnot is variously described as, "Not in his usual mood and very quiet"—Jacob; "Particularly quiet, for yesterday he questioned me a good deal about the farms and people, but this morning he did not do so again"—Mr Victor. Private Sparkes noted that, "When I woke, just about daybreak, the candle was still burning and the Lieutenant was awake. We then both got up and walked about outside, then went inside and had some coffee. I asked Lieutenant Arnot how he felt then, and he said, 'Alright'."

Leaving Plaattoorns in some haste a little after 9am, Arnot stopped the cart after three miles, took out a pocket book and drew a sketch which he tore out of the book and threw out of the cart, then continued to write. They proceeded to within two miles of Van der Byl's Kraal, where Arnot once again halted, asking Mr Victor how long before they would reach that place. Arnot took out a small bag and got out his prayer book and wrote in it. When he had finished, he pushed the book under his tunic.

Earlier, Arnot had given his own rifle and five cartridges to Mr Victor and issued Pte Sparkes his rifle, saying that the two of them must protect him and the boy. However, after the incident

¹⁷ He is referred to as a Lieutenant in the evidence.

with the prayer book, he obtained his rifle and a cartridge and told the others to wait as he was going to a small hill. Private Sparkes took his rifle and dismounted, thinking that Arnot was going to fire at a bird as he had done several times before, when Jacob suddenly remarked, "See, the man wants to shoot himself." Arnot had stopped after 20 paces, put the rifle on the ground and loaded it, placed the weapon upright and was leaning over it. Sparkes and Jacob made a rush towards him but had barely reached halfway when Arnot pulled the trigger. He fell on his back with the rifle on the ground, slightly to his right: death was instantaneous.

Jacob was sent for assistance and both the Special Justice of the Peace and the lockup keeper came with a cart.

Having observed the site, the state of the deceased and the rifle, they all returned with the body to Van der Byl's Kraal where the inquest was held that day, continuing on 16 April, when J van Huyssteen described the final grim scene.

In Arnot's small pocket book, the first page of which was missing, was a sketch of a road across which was written, "This was not for the Boers." On the back of the page were the words, "I swear before God whom I am going to meet I am innocent". It was signed, "W O Arnot".

His prayer book had the photograph of a lady, obviously his wife, Eleanor, on the first page and that of four children on the last. On the second page was the inscription in ink, "To my darling Walter from Nell, March 27th 1900",¹⁸ and the following in pencil: "SS Maplemore, March 11th 1900. Marandilla 3rd June 1900. SS Australasian 28th Oct 1900". On the fourth page, evidently written hastily with a shaking hand, "I was never in any concern with a Boer or a Boer Agent by all we ever had between us good held me and you my darling—goodbye Walter".

The verdict of the inquest was that he died from a gunshot wound, "which in accordance with the evidence was done by himself whilst in a state of temporary derangement of the mind, probably due to nervousness."

It could be said that he died alone, cut off from the others and preyed on by doubts and fears; resolving perhaps sometime during that last night to take his life. His last thoughts were of his family and, in a sense, by way of the photographs in the prayer book, they were close to him at the end.

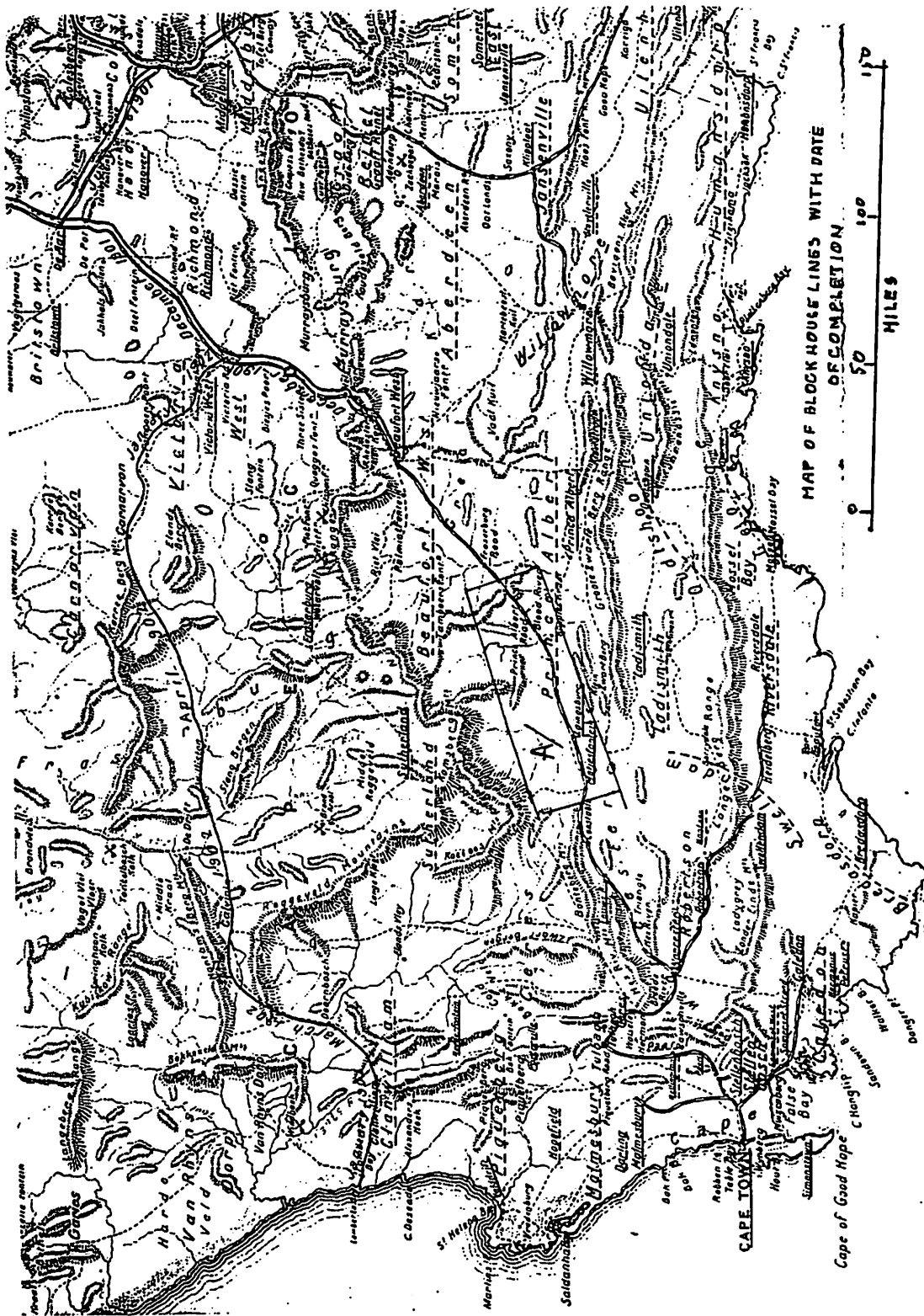
Eleanor Arnot arranged for a cross and railings to be erected at the grave. This was done by a Cape firm of monument masons.¹⁹ Lieutenant Arnot is buried near the small town of Merweville, to the north of the railway line between Laingsburg and Beaufort West in Cape Province. The grave is tended by locals who refer to it as the grave of an English Officer.

In 1987, authorities from Pretoria met with some local dignitaries who were eager to exhume Arnot's remains for re-interment in the local cemetery. Mr Gough-Palmer of Pretoria wrote, "My committee decided against this arrangement as it was felt that he should remain where his comrades laid him to rest."

Having completed this review of material from the period, there remain questions and speculation. The Hodge letter: if the facts were as stated, did Arnot begin to drink to excess?

¹⁸ This date may be an error in the Inquest transcript. The transport, *Maplemore*, left South Australia on 7 March 1900 (*The story of the South Australian Bushmen's Corps*).

¹⁹ The inscription reads, "In loving memory of Walter Oliphant Arnot, Dearly Loved Husband of Eleanor Arnot, Died 16th April 1902, Aged 42 years". The photograph that I have of the grave is rather poor, but the date appears to be "16th".



MAP OF BLOCK HOUSE LINES WITH DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

A PROBABLE AREA OF ARNOT'S LAST PATROL

Cape Agulhas

Was being in an independent command prove too great a stress? Surely the position at Beira was not too different from his earlier station experience. His wife showed no sympathy with Hodge. Her letter showed no sign that she suffered under a similar "tyranny". Would he have been recommended for a position with the RFF Artillery? His subsequent record appears satisfactory. Command of the artillery at Mafeking and following patrol and action, the offer of the adjudancy of the artillery brigade and whole-hearted approval of General Carrington do not seem the hallmarks of an abusive drunkard.

What was a patrol doing at that time in an area of Cape Colony not threatened by commandos for some time? The area to the north was, however, considered disloyal. Going by the questions that Arnot asked Mr Victor, perhaps they were "testing the water", ie, the temper of the populace.

Why was Arnot sent if his thoughts that he was suspected of collaboration were well founded?²⁰ It would be very interesting to know what was in the memo of interview held at Cape Town. Private Sparkes speaks of "scouting" and none of the witnesses gave evidence of watching Arnot covertly.

What might have been Arnot's state of mind during the latter period? I am deeply obliged to a South Australian psychiatrist, Dr G L D Rawson, MB, BS (Adel), FRANZCP, Hon FACRM, for reviewing the collected papers. His report follows:

"I found the transcripts quite fascinating with reference to the later Lieutenant's mental status.

"The testimony provided by Private John Sparkes at inquest indicated that Lieutenant Arnot exhibited a number of symptoms of a psychiatric illness prior to his death. These include:

"1. Ideas of reference, eg, the Christmas cards at Mrs Combrinck's house held special significance for him and the comment that Mrs Combrinck had made statements about 'the pictures on the wall'.

"2. Paranoid ideation, eg, the dialogue between Arnot and Private Sparkes on the night of the 14th April indicated that Arnot felt that Sparkes 'knew' about the reasons why he felt 'suspected', suggesting that Sparks was in some sort of conspiracy with others.

"3. Irrational (?delusional) guilt in Arnot's written statements—"I was never in any concern with a Boer ... goodbye, Walter', and, again,—'I swear before God whom I am going to meet I am innocent', and, furthermore, when Arnot requested Private Sparks to arrest him in the middle of the night of the 14th April.

"4. The Lieutenant also manifested some sleep disturbance, as Sparks had informed the inquiry that, 'the candle was still burning' and that Arnot was still awake in the predawn on the morning of the 15th April.

"5. Lieutenant Arnot's demeanor on the day he suicided revealed that he was withdrawn and troubled, presumably by his own thoughts and mood, although outwardly seemed able to cope with his military mission to Van der Byl's Kraal.

²⁰ No official papers relating to Arnot's service at this time have been found. Papers for Intelligence personnel are very scarce according to Mr Dave Buxton, a specialist researcher.

“To summarise, Lieutenant Arnot was suffering from a delusional illness, most probably psychotic depression, as can be adjudged by his reported statements at Inquest and inferred in the mode of his suicide.

“Delusional depression (major affective disorder) may often result in a serious suicide attempt (the highest rate of completed suicides is associated with major affective disorder).

“There appears to be no corroborative evidence that Lieutenant Arnot had collaborated with the Boers prior to his suicide. Furthermore, he appears to have been a successful and well respected station manager in South Australia and his previous tour of duty to South Africa in 1900 revealed no evidence of dereliction of duty or serious infractions. In particular, the previous accusations of resignation for drunkenness and receiving misappropriated pay were both dismissed.

“It would be interesting to know what precipitated Arnot’s depression, however, one wonders if his work with Military Intelligence during the Boer War had generated undue stress in a field officer and/or subjected him to bribes and other forms of duress in the course of his duties.”²¹

Of Eleanor—loyal, loving, supportive—and the children, I have found no further trace. The State registers up to 1916 show no sign that she remarried. Traces of other enquiries about Arnot have been found, but the answers show that the information in this paper was not available. Can anyone fill in the gaps?

Source, other than named in the text: *The Forgotten War*, L M Field, Melbourne University Press, 1979.

Acknowledgements: Mr Reg Watson, Mr Gough-Palmer, Advertiser Newspapers Ltd, South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society, The Mortlock Library of South Australia, Central Army Records Office, Australian Archives (Victoria), Mr David Vivian, Mr A F Harris, Mr George Newbury, Lt Col N C Smith AM, Mr R Trindall, Mr Dave Buxton, Dr G R D Rawson, the late Mr John Price, National Library of South Africa.

²¹ A good point, but it would depend on the time that Arnot was in South Africa during his second tour.



From *Burger*, 24 October 1973. Translation: An Englishman who came to South Africa with a troop of British Soldiers to take part in the Anglo Boer War committed suicide near Merweville as he did not want to fight against the Boers. In England he was informed that he would fight against "barbarians" and therefore he came voluntarily. Walter Oliphant Arnot is buried just outside Merweville, and his grave is cared for by the National Party Branch of the town. Mr Kerneels van Vuuren, chairman of the village management board, stands next to his grave.

Major General Henry Despard CB, “Corporal Desperado” (Part 3)

David Murphy

Despard joined the 99th Regiment in June 1842 when he exchanged from the Recruiting Staff. He seems to have actively pursued this position rather than remain in England with the Recruiting Staff. An article appeared in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* of 8 August 1991 entitled “Pompous Henry Despard”. Following are some notes in reply (individual notes are indicated by §).

§ The 99th Regiment had a chequered career being formed on six different occasions as follows:

- 1st was first raised in 1760 and disbanded in 1763.
- 2nd was raised in 1780 as the 99th or Jamaica Regiment and disbanded in 1783.
- 3rd was raised in 1794 and disbanded in 1798.
- 4th was raised in 1804 and in 1811 received the title “Prince of Wales’s Tipperary” and later re-numbered the 98th, and was disbanded as that in 1818.
- 5th was raised in 1805 as the 100th, re-numbered the 99th in 1815 and disbanded in 1818 with the title “His Royal Highness The Prince Regent’s County of Dublin”.
- 6th was raised as the 99th or Lanarkshire Regiment in 1824. It does not appear to have had any active service prior to its activity in the 1st Maori War in 1845. There were no battle honours recorded on its colours and the fading star of the 99th of De Winton in the Sydney Herald of January 1846 is not applicable, nor the military history as stated in the Daily Telegraph Mirror.

§ Despard and his family had just completed a journey which began on 14 April 1843. However, he and his family embarked on board the ship before this time. The ship *Gilmore* had left Sheerness carrying 254 convicts to Hobart via Cape Verde, and was not a pleasant voyage, with much sickness with three convicts dying. The convicts were troublesome and noisy and their quarters were constantly wet and damp.

The Surgeon Superintendent James Symes complained in his journal that the master E W Maw did not cooperate with him in keeping the prisoners quarters dry and the ship had to be pumped twice a day. This was repeatedly done in a negligent manner with bilge water not only hosed on to the upper deck but in between decks as well. Symes also complained about Despard in his assisting the master in his non cooperation whilst Despard thought the convicts had too much liberty on deck and far too much room to the detriment of his soldiers. Despard gave orders that no convict was to look in the direction of his quarters that he and his family occupied, and Symes reported that

Despard didn’t realise that he was after all on board a convict ship. Scurvy hit the prisoners which Symes put down to the fact that the convict quarters were wet, whilst none of the crew or any soldiers were affected by it. Due because the crew and soldiers quarters at the rear of the poop deck were dry. Despite this comment from Symes, six soldiers had to be hospitalised after arrival at Hobart. During the voyage one officer and 31 soldiers had been placed on the sick list.

Upon arriving at Hobart on 19 August, Symes made a complaint about Maw and Despard over their non-cooperation with him, while Maw and Despard made 14 counter charges against Symes. Symes stated that the military court of enquiry at Hobart was run inefficiently with Despard over ruling the Major in charge of it. The military it seemed were not that interested with only one officer present at all times throughout the enquiry, with members of the enquiry coming and going.

The ship remained at Hobart until 20 September and arrived at Sydney on 29 September. Some five and a half months on board a ship of 500 tons. No doubts the family took in a pleasant sojourn in Van Diemen's Land, but, nevertheless, it was an extraordinary long journey.

On 3 October, an advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* offering a reward for the return to Colonel Despard of a small brown spaniel which had been lost on the previous Sunday in the vicinity of the New South Head Road. The dog had on a brass collar with the name "Mr Frederick Despard" engraved on it. Obviously the dog belonged to Despard's son, and the loss must have been a shock to Mrs Despard. Upon arrival at his HQ at Parramatta he was invited to attend a ball, and it appears that his refusal to attend must have been due to the tribulations of the voyage and the added loss of the dog. It's not known if the dog was found. For the remark of viewing the guest list to see if any persons of convict origin were on it is conjecture.

Despard would be sick of the sight of the convicts aboard the *Gilmore*, but with influential and rich emancipist in the colony, things would be different. His previous time in New South Wales under Governor Richard Bourke would be proof of that.

§ Despard had last seen active service in India in 1817, so 28 years had passed since his embarkation for New Zealand in May 1845. It's true that he knew nothing about Maori warfare, but neither did any other European Commander. His tour of duty in New South Wales with the 17th Regiment lasted five years. During which time he had been well known in Parramatta and Sydney.

§ The reason for his return to New South Wales was because he wanted this position and the climate may well have suited him. Besides the previous Commander of the 99th, Gaspard Le Marchant refused to go with it to the Antipodes. There being no glory attached to guarding convicts!

§ There are no records available that state that Despard antagonised everyone in Parramatta. This I think is poetic licence! When Despard reached the Sydney Barracks in George Street on 13 August 1844, he was amazed at the lack of discipline and the dilapidated state therein. Granted the barracks were in dire need of repair, but that was no excuse for the poor state they were in. Nor to be used as a short cut for the public or for the use by the public to graze goats and sheep. Contemporary sketches and paintings do show goats on the lawns of the barracks.

During the 1830's these were the showpiece of the British army being the largest barracks outside of Europe. Guards had been on the gates at that time and even when the South barracks gate had opened in 1832 a guard was placed on sentry duty and the barracks had a stone wall built around them. In any case orders were given out under the name of the Major General commanding in May 1835 by Captain Hunter that the gates were to be locked after the Beating of the Retreat each night and no public thoroughfare was then permitted. In fact Despard was considered to be of an obliging disposition as "A Music Lover" wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in September 1844 requesting that Colonel Despard allow the fine band of the 99th to play twice a week for the public as was the 80th and 28th's bands before. In August 1844 a notice appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* stating that one of the bands men, Corporal W.

Cleary, of the regiment had composed a pretty ballad entitled *My loved, My Happy Home*, and with Colonel Depard's permission was dedicated to Mrs Despard.

§ The nickname "Old-Get-off-the-Grass Despard" stems from an article written by a "Disgruntled Citizen" who had written to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in May 1844, complaining that his family goat which had once roamed the barracks had been impounded due to the arrival of the "new regiment" and had deprived his family of home brewed milk for breakfast. He stated that the goat had been impounded three times and was now gone for ever!. The article is headlined in large capital letters: "STAND OFF THE GRASS".

De Winton in his book, *Soldiering Fifty Years Ago*, has used this as the basis of a poem which goes: "STAND OFF THE GRASS SAYS CORPORAL DESPARADO". This makes out that the lawns were meant for the regimental cow. However, *Old Chum* states that it was Despard's family cow. Again poetic license, I presume!

In regards to the bugle practise being done in the vicinity of the Flagstaff and Despard sending the buglers to practise there. This location was probably the best, with less populace in the vicinity to complain about the noise. Wherever, the buglers practised some one would be sure to complain. This is one of the reasons the Victoria Barracks were being built out in the bush at Paddington, away from the general populace. The main reason however was due to the state of the barracks and the expense of that the repairs would cost. Furthermore, the easy access to grog and the attentions of the unsavoury "ladies" to the military were another prime reason. At this time the barracks were shared between the 99th and 58th regiments.

§ No British Commanders of the period had ever fought an enemy like the Maori. The British had in 1841 signed the treaty of Waitangi and had respected the Maori as a race of warriors. Honi Heke had chopped down several flagpoles and had been encouraged in this by American and French whalers who no doubt wished to stir up things for their own ends. New Zealand had been governed from New South Wales from 1839 to the signing of the treaty in 1841, and relations between the Maoris and the British especially from New South Wales was generally on good terms. However, there were times when this relationship had been strained. Even Samuel Marsden in the past had many dealings with the Maoris, whom he admired, and had endeavoured to convert them to Christianity.

Despard arrived in New Zealand as Commander of the forces with a detachment of the flank companies, Light and Grenadiers, of the 99th, in May 1845. He had a force of 500 trained troops, comprised of men of the 58th, 96th and 99th regiments and 100 militia, under his command. Upon arrival at Auckland he visited the Governor, Robert Fitzroy, RN. who was under great political stress at the time. They discussed the tactics that would be employed on his campaign to the Bay of Islands in the North of North Island, and was given specific instructions. Amongst them was not to trust the so called friendly natives, and if they were to fight alongside his forces some means of identifying friend from foe would be necessary. An arm band was suggested by Fitzroy for this end. Which of course was fraught with danger.

He was notified by Fitzroy that a Maori Pah could not be taken without the support of artillery, as Lt Col Hulme of the 96th had found out, in his abortive campaign of May 1846. Due to the fact that Heke in June 1845 suffered a humiliating defeat with Waake Nene and had been seriously wounded in the battle. As a consequence, Heke had retired to Oahaewai Pah to recover. Despard was eager to press on and engage Heke and his forces before Heke had time to regroup and recover from his wounds. Despard was notified that a good dray road existed between Onewhera and the mission station at Waimate, a distance of 12 miles, and as it was winter he felt no time should be spared in reaching Waimate.

He then embarked on board the ship British Sovereign taking with him his stores, ammunition and four ancient field pieces found at Auckland outside Government House. These had to have new tumbrils made and the whole mounting reworked, but they only had small 15 inch wheels fitted to them. Upon arrival in the Bay of Islands the ships assembled off Kororariki and then made for Onewhera, but the British Sovereign ran aground and much time was wasted in refloating the ship before the stores and troops could be disembarked. When the march to Waimate began he had to rely on five bullock teams to carry his stores, because the horse drawn carts were useless in the rough terrain. These bullocks were constantly employed in carrying stores during the whole campaign, and were soon exhausted. The so called good dray road was nothing more than a goat track. The only way to transport his artillery was by attaching them to the back of the drays, but at every river crossing the guns were overturned and covered in mud.

§ The so called friendly chiefs were as described but one of the chiefs turned out to be the brother of one of the rebel chiefs and he seems to have fallen out with his brother over the use of some land. Despard thought these friendlies were in it for what they could get out of the British in the way of land. The intelligence Despard received was non existent and the local whites had been warned by Heke about taking sides and to keep out of the fracas. The weather which Despard described has being one continual downpour of rain was like nothing he had seen even in the tropics of India, or in New South Wales. Despard's force proceeded towards the Pah, at the rate of one mile per hour, transporting the four ancient field pieces would allow, for fear of an attack on them by the rebels. This was much to the amusement of the friendly natives who declared that the Maori did not fight an enemy who was not armed and fed. Despard ignored their advise and continued on his slow march over some appalling terrain in extremely inclement weather. Throughout the campaign most of the advise from the friendlies proved to be of little value and seemed to cause more alarm than anything else with calls that the enemy would make attacks from the pah at night, which never eventuated. Along the way the drays carrying his food and ammunition stores broke down and he had little choice but to send his main force onto Waimate via Kerikeri, leaving a guard behind to protect and escort it to Waimate. In the early hours of the morning of 17 June the major part of the force struggled into the mission station and at day break began looking for places to buy bread as the men had not eaten on the march. When told there was a ton of potatoes there a gift from Waaka Nene to Despard the men lost little time in setting up fires and cooking pots cooking the mission fowls and a tame pig which had wandered around the station, together with the potatoes for breakfast. Later on that day the remainder of the force arrived and settled into comfortable quarters for the next five days.

§ Despard was joined at Waimate by Waaka Nene, dressed in his unusual uniform, who offered his services. The frustrated Despard answered by saying "that when he wanted the assistance of savages he would ask for it". Fortunately nobody bothered to translate properly the response to Waaka Nene otherwise a major problem would have existed. Despard and his advisers began a series of meetings with Waaka Nene and his chiefs and Despard began to see that Waake Nene was very astute, and showed great shrewdness. During one interview Waaka Nene, asked Despard what would happen if the British attacked the pah and any of the enemy threw down their arms and gave themselves up. Despard replied that it wasn't the English way to injure defenceless people even though they were enemies, they would be well treated. After thinking about this reply for a while Waaka Nene replied, "you are more merciful than we are, but what you say is good and right". At 5.00am on 23 June 1845 the force left Waimate, much to the relief of Mr Burrows of the mission and marched to Ohaeawai Pah which was about seven miles away. Despard's force comprised the following:

58th Regiment under Major Bridge	270
96th regiment under Lt Colonel Hulme	70
99th Regiment under Major MacPherson	180
Marines from HMS Hazard under Acting Commander Johnson & Lt Phillpotts	30
Auckland Volunteers under Lt Figg	80
Native allies under Tamatai Waaka Nene	250
Total	850

Two 6 pounder and two 12 pounder cannonades in charge of Captain Marlow and Lt Wilmott of the Engineers. The volunteers acted as artillery and pioneers during the campaign. Although the pah was only a short distance away it took the force until sunset to reach Ohaeawai, due to the inclement weather and rough terrain.

As Despard neared the pah they heard shots and upon advancing found that the native allies had engaged an enemy out post and forced it to retreat into the pah. The pah was now before them and was 90 yards long by 50 yards wide, every wall was broken by a projection or an angle, which gave a good concentration of fire to any position. The pah had been built by a friendly chief who had turned rebel, but had since been doubled in capacity by Kawiti the chief who now commanded it. It was thought that Heke was inside but it turned out that he had been moved prior to the arrival of the British. The enemy numbered 250 men, but there was much coming and going of men and stores, and due to its position this continued throughout the siege. Despard and his engineers looked at the pah to find a weakness and a survey was done of it. Later it was found that there were three walls built of young puriri trees about 30 to 50 inches in circumference sank six feet deep and ten feet above the ground, bound with vines at the top and a mantle of flax at the bottom. The middle wall was two feet from the outer wall and the inner wall was four feet from the middle. Between the inner and middle walls was a ditch dug five feet deep in which the defenders could stand and fire through loopholes in the outer palisade. Inside the pah were shelters, dug in the ground, the fore runners of the World War I dug outs, where the enemy could take cover during attack. These shelters were five or six feet deep covered with logs and earth to provide cover and protection. The position of the pah was well chosen, with open ground to the front and rear, with ravines and gullies on the flanks, with forest all around. Furthermore the pah was well stocked with food, water and ammunition.

In the twilight Despard's forces began to make camp in a cultivated area in a gully some 400 yards from the pah, where there was plenty of potatoes and other vegetables. This site although out of sight of fire from the pah was selected by inexperienced officers and was ill chosen, for it soon turned into a quagmire and no space was left between the tents for the men to muster. When alarm calls were made great confusion reigned, and later Despard had to break his camp and regroup, and set camp in a more suitable location. Action began on the morning of 24th June when the artillery began firing. Their targets chosen were the walls of the palisade in an attempt to breach the walls. The four guns fired each half hour, but with disappointing results. What shots hit the walls embedded themselves in it or fell harmlessly on the inside of the outer wall. The mortars were equally ineffective due in the main to their fuses being brought out of the ordnance store in Sydney having been there since 1807. These mortars failed to explode when they landed inside the pah and were subsequently pulled apart by the defenders and fired back at the British.

New positions were sought for the guns, but with new targets sighted little or no damage was done to the pah. Despard's temper was beginning to get a little frayed and he decided that a

frontal attack would commence overnight of the 25th/26th. In the meantime the guns had been brought to within 200 yards of the pah, but with little effect. A breach it seemed would never be made. The attack was planned for 2.00am on the 26th but heavy rain forced its cancellation. The guns continued their half hourly barrage, with the defenders playing a waiting game, every so often they would return fire in short bursts concentrating their fire at the batteries. New positions were constantly being sought for the guns. With the battery later being split into two sections. Again on the 27th an attack was planned but once more the weather caused it to be called off. Everybody expected a night attack by the defenders, but it never eventuated, but it caused great confusion in the British Camp, fed by the rumour mongers from the friendly natives. On the 28th at night the heavens erupted with thunder and lightning and torrential rain, however, it seemed that at last the guns were doing some damage to the pah. On the 29th the guns opened fire at 2.00am and landed inside the pah causing some activity in it. The 29th being a Sunday the missionaries complained to Despard about firing his guns on the Sabbath and that he should take note that the enemy did not return their fire, however, the complaint fell on deaf ears.

After inspecting the damage a conference was held and it was decided to send for the 32 pounder from HMS *Hazard*, and so break the impasse. Despard agreed and the seaman were rushed back to Onewhera with instructions to return at all speed. This was an enormous task as the gun weighed one and a half tons and had to be man-handled all the way. Despard was by now desperate, his lines of communication were stretched to the limit, his ammunition was running low and his food stocks were dangerously short. The incessant wet weather caused constant delay, and he could not afford to waste any more time. He decided that he would storm the pah before light the next morning. Major Bridge and his other officers prevailed upon Despard to wait for the 32 pounder, which was due to arrive very shortly. Waaka Nene stated that he wouldn't sacrifice any of his men on storming the pah and promptly withdrew his force, to the sidelines. Reluctantly Despard agreed to wait for the arrival of the gun, and try once more to force a breach through the walls.

§ Upon arrival of the gun, the enemy fired into the midst and killed a grenadier and wounded a native. This caused a great deal of confusion and some time was taken before order was achieved. Whilst the gun was being brought into position the wounded were evacuated to Waimate, and extra piquets were placed on duty ready for any attack that night the 30th from the pah. On 1 July, Despard was inspecting the gun position on the hill where the 12 pounder was still firing at half hour intervals near Waaka Nene's camp, when a loud cry was heard from the top of the hill, where he saw some of the friendlies and two of the 58th being chased by the enemy. Despard signalled his bugler to sound the alarm to the camp which was only 300 yards away. Confusion reigned until Despard arrived to take control. At the top of the hill there was a flagpole from which a Union Jack was flying and when the enemy were chased off by a piquet of the 58th into the thick bush, it was noticed that the flag was missing. Suddenly a shout erupted and from inside the pah was the Union Jack flying upside down beneath a native flag. Despard was furious over the turn of these events, for now he had to divide his force. As the enemy were now getting bolder he couldn't afford to have his lines of communication taken or his bullocks killed and he would have to retire. Despard stormed to his tent in a rage, and decided he would storm the pah that day! To begin with he had the 32 pounder brought into action, firing at the north west angle, but its 26 rounds of ammunition were soon used up.

§ At 3.00pm he had the men fall in and told his commanders of his plan of attack. The forlorn hope comprising two sergeants and 20 volunteers from the three regiments were to proceed to the walls of the pah, followed by Major MacPherson with 90 grenadiers from the 58th and 99th regiments, together with the small party of seamen and 30 pioneers from the

Volunteers. The pioneers were to carry axes, ropes and ladders and cut down and make a breach in the walls. He was to be followed by Major Bridge with 100 men of the Light and Grenadiers of the 99th, supported by Lt Col Hulme with 100 men of the 58th. The rest were held in reserve under Lt Col Despard. The part chosen for the attack turned out to be the strongest part of the pah and the 32 pounder had done little damage to it. This area was also covered by four old cannon and was exposed to covering fire from all sides. Waaka Nene and his force did not join in the attack.

§ The seamen were under the command of Lt Phillpotts, who was the son of the Bishop of Exeter, who was a very flamboyant character. He disagreed with anything the army did, and he prevailed upon the pioneers to throw down their ladders, ropes and axes, which most did. The forlorn hope reached the walls and to their dismay found no breach had been made and when the second party arrived only one ladder was placed on the walls and the attack began with the three parties advancing in four rows. At this time the defenders amounting to 130 strong opened fire at point blank range from their trenches. The only things visible being the muzzles of their muskets as they spewed their deadly fire through the loopholes. Despard watched in horror at the carnage and commanded his bugler to sound the retreat. The retreat began leaving behind the dead and most of the wounded at the walls of the pah. Lt Colonel Hulme's party did bring several wounded back with them. A roll call was taken as soon as the force reached safety and it was found that there were 40 dead and 80 wounded. It was feared that the Maoris would torture any wounded or prisoners and during the night screams were heard coming from the pah. Amongst the dead were Lt Phillpotts of HMS *Hazard* and Captain Grant of the 58th regiment. It seems that Phillpotts was quite an eccentric character and had fought dressed in a blue shirt and a white bell topper, together with his monocle firmly in place carrying a switch. He was not going to be mistaken for a soldier, but as it happened much to his disgust had been mistaken for a missionary.

Even though the attack had been repulsed the British were eager to continue the attack as soon as possible, but Despard needed time to think upon his next move. The first thing to do was to get the wounded and collect any bodies. The next day the Reverend Henry Williams with Despard's consent approached the pah under a flag of truce, to try and recover the dead, but he was told to return the next day. If the British were disheartened by the failure of the attack the enemy was delighted and several runners were sent out from the camp to spread the news that the British had been defeated at Ohaeawai. The next morning a white flag was seen waving from the pah and Mr Williams was allowed to collect the bodies with the exception of Captain Grant's and a private soldier, which were later recovered. The soldiers killed in action were buried at Ohaeawai in a single grave at the edge of the forest.

The bodies of the three officers killed, Beatty, Grant and Phillpotts were buried at Waimate in consecrated ground. A memorial to Captain Grant was erected on the walls of St John's Church Parramatta, by his fellow officers, and remains there to the present day. Again during the night screams were heard from the pah and it was assumed that they were torturing prisoners, and a war dance of warriors was danced inside the pah. To combat this Waaka Nene's friendlies performed a haka in front of the British camp. Despard was now in a quandary, his attack failed, his guns were ineffective, his ammunition low and his stores were almost exhausted. His allies under Waaka Nene had not fought in the attack, and he was unsure of their allegiance. It appears that the native allies had been very impressed with the bravery of the British, despite the failure of the assault. He was hampered by 70 wounded officers and men who had to be evacuated to Waimate. If the rebels chose to cut his lines of communication he would have no choice but to retire, for he would be helpless. He announced at the conference that he would have to retire to Waimate, because the British had little to gain

but were doing all the fighting whilst the friendlies were doing none. The friendlies were to gain land whilst the government wasn't getting any. Waaka Nene and his chiefs put up a strong case that it wasn't a good idea to leave Ohaeawai without collecting all the bodies otherwise a bad impression would be left which would give strength to the enemy. Despite their pleas Despard was determined to abandon Ohaeawai and return to Waimate. At this time one of the Chiefs, Mohi, (Moses) Tawhai rose up and shouted in an angry voice some very harsh words in his own language. Despard enquired of the interpreter, Mr Meurant what was said, who replied nothing of importance. Despard was not satisfied and demanded to know exactly what was said. Finally Meurant replied, "Well sir, if you will 'ave it. Moses says you are an old Hass".

The debate continued and after a while the British retired from the conference leaving the natives to continue it in the evening. The next morning Waaka Nene approached Despard and assured him of the natives loyalty and assistance in what ever way Despard wished whether in continuing the assault or retiring to Waimate. This is exactly what Despard was after, and agreed to continue the attack.

The enemy were sure that the British would retire and were surprised when on 8 July, the artillery opened fire inside the pah instead of at the walls. The 32 pounder being low on shot was used sparingly. This was continued on the 9th. During that night the rebels decided to evacuate the pah and on the 10th little movement being evident and none on the 11th it was decided to enter it and it was found empty except for a deaf old woman. At this time the bodies of Captain Grant and the private soldier were found buried in a shallow grave and both were found to show the marks of terrible wounds. It was later found out that the screams they heard on the night of the assault was that of a soldier who had been wounded and had been placed too close to a fire to keep him warm but his ammunition had accidentally caught fire and he had suffered dreadfully. Another body had been found close to the walls and when the rebels were repairing the walls when the flame from the torches had set the body alight and caused a small grass fire. Later after the campaign some Europeans put about that the natives had tortured the victims and had given graphic details of the injuries that could not have been described unless some one knew what had happened. Throughout the campaign Despard was convinced that the rebels had European help and military assistance. After the camp was entered Despard had it destroyed, and was considering pursuing the rebels when Fitzroy ordered his return to Auckland on the 16th July. Again Fitzroy didn't know what to do and delayed any further action. Fitzroy was sure that the loss of Ohaeawai would convince the rebels to sue for peace. Despard was of the opinion that he should attack Waiomio pah, where Kawiti had retired to, but Fitzroy still dithered.

Then Heke sent a letter to Fitzroy, which he replied to in a paternal manner, but still no action followed. Despard in the mean time searched everywhere for ammunition and stores determined he would not be in a similar situation that had happened. He sought out as much intelligence as he could on his enemy and the area around the bay of Islands. He found the original gun carriages and limbers for his 6 pounder guns and found that they could be repaired, and made two carriages for the 12 pounders. Every shot and shell he could find was added to his armaments but it was still very low and none could be spared for practise. Despard then returned to the Bay of Islands, and in the meantime the rebels began to build the formidable pah of Ruapekapaka in the area known as the Bat's nest. Thus whilst the government aided by the missionaries were suing for peace, the rebels were preparing for war, and Fitzroy's policy of wait and see was implemented with Despard retiring to Kororareka, much to Despard's disgust. He had to content himself in establishing a new camp instead of harrying the rebels. Whilst this work was under way the colony was startled to hear that

Fitzroy had been recalled and replaced as governor by George Grey the governor of South Australia. Both the rebels and friendly natives were quite concerned at this turn of events and when Grey assumed his post on 18 November 1845 he soon found that the problems were to get worse before they got better. He had two things at his disposal that his predecessor didn't and that was money for ammunition and New Zealand was now crowded with war ships as a result of Fitzroy's calls for help, these brought guns, ammunition and men. By this show of force Grey hoped to frighten the rebels into suing for peace. Furthermore, Grey actively pursued an interest in the deployment of the military and visited the Bay of Islands much to the delight of Despard. Both Heke and Kawiti wrote letters offering peace to Grey, but Grey's terms were refused. It now appeared that it was a war to the finish. On 12 December, when Grey arrived at the Bay of Islands the force set out for Ruapekapeka and the campaign began in a new light of optimism. On the 8 January 1846 the force comprised:

	Officers	Men
HMS <i>Castor</i>	33	280
Royal Artillery	2	0
Royal Marines	4	80
58th Regiment	20	543
99th Regiment	7	150
HEIC Artillery	1	15
Volunteers	1	42
Native Allies	7	450
Total	75	1560

His guns included three 32 pounders, two 12 pounders, one 18 pounder, one 6 pounder, four 4½inch mortars and two rocket tubes. On 10 January the attack began on a scale never witnessed by the Maoris before and the walls took a severe battering, which caused Heke to abandon the pah leaving it to Kawiti to defend.

During the bombardment not one shot was fired by the defenders. When the walls seemed to be breached a force of 200 men were got ready to make an assault but Despard was implored to wait a little longer. Unbelievably the fuses on the mortars didn't explode when fired into the pah, again these were from the same supply as those used at Ohaeawai. During the night the remainder of the rebels evacuated the pah and left for the safety of the forest, leaving behind a few who wished to surrender.

The next day being a Sunday, the force being very wary entered the pah and took possession of it and subsequently destroyed it. The British allies were quite light loosing 12 killed and 30 wounded with 12 native allies killed during the whole campaign of the Bat's Nest. On the 15th Despard returned to Auckland where news was received that the rebels were prepared to talk peace. On 26th January 1846 Despard returned to Sydney where he was promoted to full Colonel and awarded the C.B. in March.

§ With the flank companies remaining in New Zealand, Despard returned to Sydney and its troubles of depression and unemployment. The grog mutiny had been put down when the 11th regiment arrived in Sydney early in January. The 11th regiment had been called urgently to Sydney by Major General Sir Maurice O'Connell due to the regiments, the 99th and 58th, stationed at Sydney and Parramatta had demanded that their grog be given back to them, and had refused to mount guard until it was.

§ The 11th had been expecting trouble from the 99th but were pleasantly surprised when the 99th cheered them into the barracks and turned out the guard and presented arms. The 99th

left in New South Wales since Despard had left for New Zealand in May were commanded by Brevet Lt Col J N Jackson, and if any one from the 99th was to blame for the Grog problem then it should be laid at Jackson's door. In September 1847 Despard wrote a lengthy letter to Sir Howard Douglas, Bart. GCB, GCMB, on the circumstances of the issue of a spirit ration in New South Wales. He pointed out that the ration had been permitted in the colony from its earliest days, and that in some cases to stop exploitation, the soldiers who were married or non drinkers, in debt or of good character were granted a payment in lieu which was accredited to the men's accounts of his company. With Despard having experienced cases where soldiers in the 17th foot being sent out bush on escort duty during the early 1830s and accruing his daily spirit ration it was decided to stop the ration, and the men were to be paid an additional one penny per day in lieu of grog from December 1832. This order was signed by the General Officer commanding the forces in New South Wales at that time, Sir Richard Bourke. However, the 4th regiment were dissatisfied with this and intimated that they would not mount guard on the day the order came into force and the liquor stopped. Bourke then had second thoughts and decided he could not risk this and rescinded the order.

In the latter half of 1845 it appears that the hierarchy were once more looking at ways to reduce costs and decided that the spirit ration must be stopped. So O'Connell issued orders to stop the ration from 1 December 1845. In Van Diemen's Land the order was ignored by the officer commanding the forces but in Sydney and Parramatta it was put in action. In fairness the men were granted money in lieu but this wasn't satisfactory. Despard can not be blamed for starting the problem over the spirit ration because he wasn't in New South Wales in December 1845, but in fact still in New Zealand. He continued in his letter that the problem could have been avoided if all concerned had bothered to read Major General Bourke's minute on the subject. In an attempt to get his regiment away from the evils of Sydney Despard requested that his regiment be exchanged to Van Diemen's Land and to instil into his men the spirit of camaraderie that at that time didn't exist. This request was granted and in the latter part of 1848 the regiment moved to Hobart, where it remained until 1856 when it was sent to Ireland, after nearly 14 years in the colonies.

§ Despard was requested in 1852 to do a tour of inspection on the Victorian gold fields, which he found in a reasonable state. In August 1854 he was promoted by brevet to the rank of Major General and he was succeeded by Lt Colonel Jackson as commander of the 99th. Despard with his wife and probably one child returned home to Great Britain where he died in 1859.

CONCLUSION

Despard may have been pompous, but he showed a fatherly interest in his officers and men. This is evident in reading his letter book which dates from 1846 to 1854. There are several occasions where Despard attempts to foil the selling up of young officers to pay their mess and drink bills. In one case he sends a young officer home on 12 months leave and writes to his mother seeking her help in straightening him out. In another he writes to the officers elder brother a commissioner for crown lands in the Port Phillip district asking to help pay the young officers mess bill, to avoid the officer selling out. He attempts to give some of them colonial duties to keep them away from the evils of drink and gambling in Sydney, however, in one case this fails when the officer concerned attached to the mounted police at Bathurst who was well liked by the hierarchy, but had fallen in with bad company, the sons of wealthy squatters, and the officer concerned sold out. To select an old man of 62 to command the forces in the field against the Maoris cannot have been the right course of action to take. Granted, Despard was the senior officer present on the New South Wales station, but the fact remains

that there were younger officers of the same rank present, better suited by age and experience. For example, out of the 10 Field Officers present there was Lt Colonel W H Elliot, 51st regiment, stationed in Van Diemen's Land. He was at least 10 years younger than Despard, but had seen service in the Peninsula and Waterloo and had considerable battle experience. In fact there were another three majors both with the rank of Brevet Lt Colonel, who had major experience in action. These were in order of seniority:

- Brevet Lt Col F Mainwaring 51st Foot, 1815 at Waterloo and a veteran of the Peninsula.
- Brevet Lt Col Hulme 96th Foot 1818, against the Pindarees in India. He in fact had been sent to New Zealand and had failed in the first expedition against Heke, in May 1845.
- Brevet Lt Col Jackson 99th Foot 1810 to 1814, in the Peninsula. His active service shows more experience than any other. Why then wasn't he sent to New Zealand instead of Hulme?
- Major MacPherson 99th, who was seriously wounded whilst, Captain William Edward Grant, 58th Foot and Lt Edward Beatty 99th Foot, who were both killed, had not seen any active service.

The choice of these officers must surely lay with the General Officer Commanding at Sydney, ie, Maj-Gen Sir Maurice O'Connell.

Other relevant disabilities included:

- the lack of local intelligence made available to Despard, particularly in regards to the state of the roads and the fact that the Missionaries complained about the use of the guns on Sundays;
- the total lack of understanding of the Maoris as a warrior race;
- the lack of suitable artillery and the general lack of repair of the available guns and their carriages and limbers;
- the lack of suitable means of transport available to Despard;
- the unbelievable state of the fuses, being that old and deteriorated which caused them to fail to explode;
- no studies had been made of the construction of the pahs and how best to storm them other than Lt Colonel Hulme's experience, being made available to Despard;
- the inclement weather and incessant rain during a winter campaign;
- the fact that the ropes, ladders and axes were not taken in the first attack, with the volunteers being somewhat in awe of Lt Phillpotts, Royal Navy, who disagreed with anything the military did. Later Despard admitted that he thought even if these had been taken the pah would probably not have fallen. Although at the time he cited this failure as the main reason the assault failed;
- the political instability evident in New Zealand under the Governorship of Robert Fitzroy, Royal Navy, and his wait and see approach. This, no doubt, caused by the lack of money and men available to him. On 1 January the New South Wales station comprised the following:

10	Field Officers.
29	Captains
67	Subalterns
21	Staff
196	Serjeants
75	Drummers
3405	Rank and File fit for duty
119	rank and File sick
1	Serjeant Colonial duty Mounted Police
140	Rank and File colonial duty Mounted Police
3973	Total all ranks.

In November 1845 Fitzroy was recalled and replaced as Governor with George Grey who was transferred from the Governorship of South Australia. Although Grey took an active part in the Bat's Nest campaign he had no military experience. The main cause for the early failure of the military stems from the usual problems of lack of money, lack of ammunition, guns and stores, caused by a lax administration in Sydney.

Bibliography and source references for this series of articles:

Introduction:

Daily Telegraph Mirror Aug 1991

Soldiering Fifty Years Ago, by G J De Winton.

"Old Chum" series of articles in *Truth* newspaper.

Skeleton's From Australia's Past, by George Blaikie.

History of the 11th regiment, *From Sydney Cove to Paddington Hill*, by J F Kreckler.

Part One:

Officer Service Returns 1829; WO 25 AJCP.

Dictionary of National Biography.

State Trials at Large, of E M Despard.

1835 Select Committee on Orange Lodges in New South Wales.

Great Britain Army Lists 1800.

History of the Services of the 17th Leicestershire Regiment; by E A Webb. 1688 to 1912.

Part Two:

History of the Services of the 17th Leicestershire Regiment; by E A Webb. 1688 to 1912.

Surgeon Superintendent Campbell France's Journal ship York 1831/1832; ADM 101. AJCP

Convict Ships, by Charles Batson.

Standing Orders of the 17th Regiment 1831.

WO 12 Muster Sheets and pay lists 1830; AJCP.

WO 17 Monthly returns, 1830 to 1836; AJCP

Early days at Port Stephens; Extracts of Sir W E Parry's journal while Commissioner of the Australian Agricultural Company 1829 to 1834.

Sydney Herald 1831 to 1836.

Australian 1831 to 1836.

Sydney Monitor 1831.

History of Australia; by Professor Manning Clarke.

Bushrangers half a century ago, article in *Echo* newspaper 1883; by Samuel Caldwell.

Colonel Henry Despard's Letter Book, 1846 to 1854; AJCP.

1835 Select Committee on Orange Lodges in New South Wales.

History of the Services of the 17th Leicestershire Regiment; by E A Webb, 1688 to 1912.

Part Three:

History of the Wiltshire Regiment, (99th).

Daily Telegraph Mirror Aug 1991.

Surgeon Superintendent James Syme's Journal for ship Gilmore 1843; AJCP

Convict ships; by Charles Batson.

Sydney Morning Herald 1843 to 1848.

Soldiering Fifty Years Ago; by G J De Winton.

NSW Government *Gazette*, General Orders 1832.

New Zealand's First War; by T L Buick.

New South Wales Government Despatches for New Zealand campaign 1845.

Conclusion:

WO 17 Monthly returns 1845; AJCP.

Hart's army lists for 1845.

The AJCP, Australian Joint Copying Project, has copied many items concerning Australia and New Zealand from records held in the Public Record Office Kew, London, England. These copies are held at most State Libraries and all are held at the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

The Glorification of Australian Masculinity and the Reshaping of Australia's Great War Experience

Dale James Blair

In August of 1914 young men in Europe were swept up in droves by a compelling festive gaiety which accompanied the collapse of order induced by decades of imperialist diplomacy. Artists and students with the fire of new ideals raging in their bellies—Italian Futurists and German Expressionists rebelling against the constraints of the establishment welcomed the outbreak of the war as an escape and a means of realizing youthful dreams of a restructured society embodying the “common man” and or “new man”.¹ Initial response at the recruiting depots in Australia had been as overwhelming to local authorities as it had been in Europe. Yet it could hardly be said that Australian youth responded to the same ideals. The concept of the “common” and “new man” were perhaps more synonymous with the artistic and philosophical traditions of Europe. They did, however, appeal to a concept of manliness, a concept with which Australians were not unfamiliar. “Manliness meant patriotism, physical prowess, courage and energy”,² it also appealed to physical beauty, and, ultimately, “War was an invitation to manliness”.³ Many Australians readily accepted that invitation.

Undoubtedly the greatest expression of the concept of manliness is found in the ANZAC tradition. If we are to understand the extent to which Australian masculinity was glorified and, in turn, the extent to which that glorification was realised during World War One then we must first understand the parameters in which that concept operated prior to, during and after the war. This paper will attempt to discuss Australian masculinity within those three time frames and, in doing so, will examine the expectation, and myth surrounding the experience of Australian manhood within the context of the Great War.

Prior to the outbreak of the war Australia was a firmly established patriarchal society. Men were the dominant force and expected passivity and compliance from women. Women could best serve the national interest in a supportive role in the home. School texts of the time preached this doctrine constantly as well as inculcating a strong sense of duty to one's origins. State schools lauded the virtues of “King and Empire” while Catholic curriculums emphasised the notion of “God and Country”. Both would be used to invoke men to fight in wartime. On reflection, some soldiers, pointed to their education as a motivating force in their decision to go to war. “The Flag, King and Country called and that was it. In the schools at that time, English history was mainly taught, and the stories of the great soldiers and sailors of the past, that had built an empire on which the sun never set ...”⁴ said one, and another, “I believe that being reared in an atmosphere of patriotism both at home and at school motivated my enlistment”.⁵

At the turn of the century Australia's Boer War experience had highlighted many notions of “Empire” but more importantly, had, by way of direct military participation placed Australian

¹ George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the world wars*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990, Chapter 4 pp. 53-69.

² *ibid.*, p. 60.

³ *ibid.*, p. 166.

⁴ J N I Dawes & L L Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, Melbourne University Press, 1977, p. 105.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 46.

masculinity in competition with that of other nations. The ideal role model of the Australian Bushman, cultivated in the 1880s and 1890s, emerged from his military foray—not a soldier—but rather, as a hard and versatile fighter. In addition, this image was somewhat tarnished by a perceived lack of discipline. The “Bushman” had become a bit of a “larrikin”. This trait would, in time, be turned into a virtue by way of the ANZAC legend.⁶

Federation and the long held fear of Asiatic hordes descending on Australian shores placed defence as a critical issue in pre-war government policy. The introduction of compulsory military training, in 1911, for Australian youths between the ages 14 to 21 ensured that thousands of boys would equate their emerging manliness with military service. Violence was an ever present factor in school readers and “Boy Conscription” served as a practical demonstration of that aggression. Military and educational authorities would perhaps permit themselves a satisfied sigh when their young charges carried their combined lessons off to war. The last stanza of the poem “The Tempest” may well have been sublimated in many young minds:

They need not dread the stormy day
Or lightnings flashing from the sky
Who walk in wisdom’s pleasant way
And always are prepared to die.⁷

As previously stated the outbreak of war saw Australian men rush to enlist. All their education and training directed that they respond with enthusiasm. Participation in war was a proof of ones masculinity but in World War One it encompassed an even higher ideal—Nationhood. After Gallipoli the *Argus* declared that Australia had “in one moment stepped into the worldwide arena in the full stature of manhood”.⁸ “It is our baptism of fire ... It will be a test of our manhood and our womanhood ...” wrote the *Sydney Morning Herald*.⁹ It proved more than a test and degenerated into the most traumatic period of Australia’s “white” history. The expectation that men would do their duty was largely realised but the grisly reality of that duty would overwhelm the nation.

The cost to the nation was a staggering one. Some 60 000 were killed and a further 150 000 wounded. It could not be said that any country ever recovers from the loss of such a valuable resource. Furthermore two-thirds of those soldiers that returned to Australia were discharged as medically unfit. The war had cost men their health and this undermined their masculinity and standing in society. Life expectancy of ex-soldiers was reduced by two to three years and the extent to which men’s wartime experience carried into the post-war period can be measured in part by their claims for pensions and treatment in hospitals.¹⁰ By mid 1918, 40 000 incapacitated servicemen had been granted war pensions, that figure peaked at 90 000 in 1920 and by the decade’s end had dropped to 75 000.¹¹ Similarly the number of individual cases of war related injury treated in hospitals had risen from 22 742 in 1926 to 49 157 in

⁶ L L Robson, “The Australian Soldier: Formation of a Stereotype” in McKernan & Browne, *Australia Two Centuries of War & Peace*, pp. 318-319.

⁷ “The School Paper: for Class III”, Melbourne, June 1896., Vol. 1, No. 5, p. 71.

⁸ Cited in Marilyn Lake, “The Power of Anzac” in McKernan & Browne, *Australia Two Centuries of War & Peace*, p. 195.

⁹ Cited in Jane Ross, *The Myth of the Digger*, Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney, 1985, p. 15.

¹⁰ A. G. Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in War of 1914-1918* Volume III, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1943, n24, p. 819.

¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 963-964..

1939.¹² Mental disorders or war neurosis made up only a small percentage of these figures. There seems no doubt that mental disorders were a lot more prevalent than was acknowledged and they must certainly have accompanied other complaints as a secondary problem. Pension and medical classifications were, however, based on the primary or major problem and not the secondary. Authorities that had only grudgingly accepted "shell shock" as a real problem late in the war were probably even less likely to comprehend what is now recognised as post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental condition brought on by exposure to warfare. One veteran who, like many others, tried to keep his emotions intact reflected, "We thought we managed alright, kept the awful things out of our minds, but now I'm an old man and they come out from where I hid them. Every night."¹³ For many survivors the war would never go away.

The effects of the soldiers mental traumas and anxieties had an immediate impact on the homefront as the stream of wounded flowed back into the country. Without doubt the severest repercussions were felt by women. While violence and sexual offences against women were prevalent in Australian society prior to the war the level of that violence increased appreciably during the war and post-war years. Compounding the problems in the post-war period was the onset of the depression and resultant unemployment which further undermined the ex-soldiers feelings of self-worth. Failed soldier settlers drifted back to the cities while many others took to the road as "bagmen". Society in its attempt to come to grips with the problems besieging it and in its attempt to make sense of and justify the destructiveness of the war tended to ignore the plight of women as it sought to glorify the sacrifice of its manhood. Faced with an increased level of violence against women, and crimes against society in general, by traumatised ex-soldiers the courts tended to impart a liberal degree of clemency toward the fallen heroes.¹⁴ The patriarchy still ruled and women's activist, Vida Goldstein, abandoned the "male-ocracy" disgusted at the "scant recognition and appreciation" of her sex.¹⁵

The image of Australian soldiers which we equate with the ANZAC legend is somewhat incongruous with the reality of their war experience. The ANZAC is often portrayed as a "superman", a highly skilled individual, adaptable, and capable of extraordinary feats; Tall and graced with a stealthy elegance, he is attributed a lofty contempt of authority and his carefree ways enabled him to laugh at adversity. John Masefield, an Englishman, described the ANZACs (and Royal Naval Division) as "the finest body of young men ever brought together in modern times. For physical beauty and nobility of bearing they surpassed any men I have ever seen; they walked and looked like the kings in old poems, and reminded me of the line in Shakespeare: 'Baited like eagles having lately bathed.'"¹⁶ Nine months on Gallipoli left the survivors emaciated by poor diet, sickness and disease. It was Masefield's image that Australia preferred of her manhood and one which the authorities and many of the public sought to uphold in the face of the less appealing realities. Worse still, for the participants, was the inevitability of becoming a casualty of war. Few "originals", on whom the legend was founded, would escape unscathed. By 1916 the 13th Battalion, for example, could count only 144 such men in the ranks of their original 1 100.¹⁷

¹² *ibid.*, p. 823.

¹³ Patsy Adam-Smith, *The Anzacs*, Thomas Nelson Australia Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1978, p. 356

¹⁴ Judith A. Allen, *Sex & Secrets: Crimes involving Australian women since 1880*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990, pp. 131-156.

¹⁵ C M H Clark, *A History of Australia VI*, Melbourne University Press, 1987, p. 132.

¹⁶ John Masefield, *Gallipoli*, (Seal books) Rigby, Hong Kong, 1978 [1916], p. 19.

¹⁷ T A White, *The Fighting Thirteenth*, (reprint), p. 79

If the Government and supporters of the war effort were to sustain their crusade it was hardly in their interests to highlight the grisly facts. When Albert Jacka was badly wounded at Pozieres in 1916 a posed photograph was arranged to show the public that he was in good health. In truth, Jacka spent months recuperating from his wounds and fighting off complete nervous breakdown. E J Rule, a fellow officer, noted "little though we dreamed it, our hero, too went through the valley of the shadow".¹⁸ Jacka's military exploits were well documented and his deeds were used as an inspiration to potential volunteers. He epitomised the ideal Australian hero and his manufactured invincibility was a priceless commodity for recruiting agents.

Australian authorities had a useful ally in the British government and press who played up the soldiery of the Dominions for their own ends. They commemorated the first anniversary of ANZAC with a parade through London. Thousands cheered the Australians. Their presence proved the justness of the British cause and the fact that they had overcome the tyranny of distance to participate gave added strength to that premise. The King and Queen attended the memorial service at Westminster Abbey and, later, Billy Hughes addressed the troops, "their deeds had won them a place in the Temple of the Immortals. The world had hailed them as heroes" he said. He spoke of "shining wings of glorious valour", of the evocation of "pure and noble spirit", and of "the sweet, purifying breath of self sacrifice". They had "out on the toga of manhood".¹⁹ The enshrinement of Australian masculinity in Australia's secular religion had begun.

Australian women were also used to ennoble the sacrifice of Australian men. Those in support of the war used the image of defenceless women and children being threatened by Teutonic monsters to inspire enlistments. Australian nurses were depicted angelically providing succour to neatly wounded boys, maternally cradling heads in cupped hands and bosom. Their pristine and impractical uniforms promoted the virtues of cleanliness and neatness and seemed designed expressly to sanitize the bloodshed. The patient nurturing care that they administered, as well as hastening the return of men to the front, served only to reinforce men's perceptions of the feminine role. During the conscription debates anti-war propaganda, in contrast, honed in on the reality of the bloodshed and urged women to save their sons from Billy Hughes' gruesome purification ritual.

The first contingent of initiated returned to Australia to a mediocre reception, in which the wounded and venereally diseased disembarked as one to polite applause, after which the respective state governments began to give civic receptions more befitting a hero's return.²⁰ Behind the strains of the brass-bands the problems of assimilation had already begun for returned soldiers. Idleness, boisterousness and lawlessness were increasingly noted in their behaviour. Arrests and public concern increased and the "national saviour" quickly assumed the mantle of "terrorist".²¹ The bitterness of the conscription debates and increasing numbers of repatriated soldiers ensured that they would remain a disruptive element for the duration.

With the wars end Australians were left to make sense of their contribution to the Armageddon. The broken health, both physically and mentally, of the majority of returned soldiers was visible for all to see. The reality of their being was quickly transfigured into the

¹⁸ Ian Grant, *Jacka, VC: Australia's Finest Fighting Soldier*, Sun Books, South Melbourne, 1990, pp. 88.

¹⁹ Donald Horne, *The Little Digger: A biography of Billy Hughes*, Sun Papermac, South Melbourne, 1979, pp. 65-66.

²⁰ Clark, p. 17

²¹ Lake, pp. 198-200.

cult of the fallen. "Australia now had a faith, but what that faith was no one could say".²² Post-war Australia was sure of one thing and that was that its manhood had taken part in some sort of Homeric odyssey and homage needed to be paid. Australia symbolised the sacrifice of its manhood in monuments, avenues of honour and war cemeteries. The Australian War Memorial would become a place of pilgrimage. It was a house to the holy and looked to the past not the future. The sanctioning of a public holiday on Anzac day ensured that the events commemorated by that day, whatever they stood for, remained a part of the national calendar. It also provided another stage for the victorious "right". The pomp and ceremony that fronted Proceedings at these shrines on Anzac and Remembrance Day were as much a celebration of the established order of authority as they were to the sacrifice of the nation's manhood.

The Australian soldier that Bean portrayed in his official histories was an egalitarian and a product of the Australian "bush". In reality the majority were products of urbanity, working class, though undoubtedly imbued with a sense of egalitarianism. The Australian officer caste was quite the opposite and was a bastion for the middle and upper-classes. Class was an important factor in the indoctrination, glorification and mythologising of Australian masculinity.

In describing the effect of the war sacrifice on Germany, George L Mosse notes, "The cult of the fallen was of importance for most of the nation: ... Yet it was the political Right and not the Left which was able to annex the cult and make the most of it. The inability of the Left to forget the reality of the war and enter into the Myth of the War Experience was a gain for the political Right."²³ The same may well be argued for Australia. The right, whose values were enconced in Australia's military and educational institutions, had succeeded in appealing to the masculinity of young men and inducing them to embrace a sense of duty that required them to fight for their nation when the time came. Nobody had envisaged what fulfilment of that expectation would entail. When disillusionment set in and opposition to the war increased the voice of the anti's and pro's emanated from the working class and middle to upper classes respectively. While the anti's wanted the war stopped the pro's wanted the war won and, even more frightening, were making provision for future conflicts. An editorial of the *Old Melburnian* published in May 1917 carried the following exhortation:

Certainly years hence our Empire will be at death grips again, and the salvation of every part of it depends upon the boys of today. To save it—Australia if you like—boys must be better men than their fathers have been. It is with the sons and grandsons of to-day that the future lies ... the race that trains its boys to be thorough, to give their whole energy and attention to the work at hand, is the race that will win a place in the world's sun, and the right to exist.²⁴

While the private schools worked on directing the nation's youth the *Age* lamented the attitude of the nation's women, "The desire for the abolition of war has bitten so deeply into the hearts of women that there are times when every suggestion of it would be banished from the face of the earth if women had their way".²⁵

The post-war period saw a concerted effort by the Government to enshrine and mythologise Australia's manhood while the Australian Labor Party attempted to have all articles extolling

²² Clark, p. 16.

²³ Mosse, p. 106.

²⁴ J Beacham Kiddle (ed), *War Services of Old Melburnians*, Arbuckle, Waddell Pty. Ltd., Melbourne, 1923.

²⁵ *The Age* October 21, 1924, in article "Children's books and war".

the battles and heroes of past wars banned from school texts.²⁶ It was a suggestion which was not enacted. L L Robson has noted that "the annual school Anzac Day services that steadily inculcated the digger stereotype in the minds of the impressionable young" proved to be of long term significance so that by the eve of the Second World War, "the stereotype of the Australian soldier was confirmed and embedded in the Australian consciousness".²⁷

Any conclusion on the glorification of Australian masculinity through the Great War experience must operate at two levels. For the ruling authorities the whole experience was a positive one. Prior to the war their attitudes had prevailed and ensured that Australian men reacted promptly to the manufactured threat to the "Empire". In the post-war period they were able to draw on the sobering reality of the war and promote the same ideals through the commemoration of the fallen. The returned soldiers who took refuge under the political umbrellas of the Returned Serviceman's League and the New Guard, while often at odds with government policy, were not disposed to oppose the continued commemoration of their comrades. The post-war focus on the celebration of Australian masculinity served a duality of Purpose, whether intentional or not, of promoting masculinity and, in doing so, further subjugating women in Australian society. If women had been elevated in any small way in the national consciousness during the war they were certainly stripped of their gains immediately after.

For the returned soldiers, who constituted a sizeable portion of the male population, the Great War experience had been a traumatic one. They returned physically and psychologically scarred. While the powers that be celebrated the edifying effect on the nation the returned soldiers bore the scars. If anything they returned disempowered and bearing little resemblance to the figure of the legend built about them. Thoughts of glorification were furthest from their mind as they battled to assimilate into a society that had changed markedly during their absence. The twentieth century was materially and technologically advancing and adulation and pity for returned soldiers was an unwanted distraction for many. For many of the returned soldiers the legacy of their experience was perhaps a prolonged, if not lifelong, emptiness. "No 'rites of reaggregation' could efface the memory of utter defencelessness before authority and technology. No ceremonial conclusion to the war could restore the continuities it had ended".²⁸ Their broken masculinity was an unsuitable reality and was replaced by a mythical construct on which the authorities could again convey their imperial values and expectations of Australia's manhood.

²⁶ Clark, p. 119.

²⁷ Robson, p. 330.

²⁸ Eric J Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat & Identity in World War I*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1979, p. 213.

National Service in South East Asia

Richard Murison

It is now history that more than 150 000 young people of the Services in the Commonwealth of Nations from Africa, Asia, Australasia and Europe, displayed great powers of endurance and guts in scoring victory over Communist domination in Malaya. In the twelve years of fighting, where liberty and independence were forged and tempered with safety from aggression, they played their part, together with rubber planters, tin miners, civil aid volunteers, policemen and civil servants. About 7 000 Australian Army, Navy and Air Force served in this war.

Australia in Malaya

The price was high in winning the struggle against guerilla Communism: evolving a classic non-escalating formula for beating the tactics of Mao Tse-Tung by winning the "hearts and minds" of the people. Although historians may attribute the failure of the Malayan Communist Party revolutionary war to other reasons, success in Malaya was conceived with this formula in June 1950, when the Briggs Plan started. "The main lesson that Australians learned in Malaya was that you cannot bomb Communism out of existence, it cannot be destroyed on the battlefield."

This story about National Service with the Gordons in 1953 would be similar to many Australian experiences. Throughout the twelve years, every guerilla killed or captured was the result of patience, determination and skill. As the years passed, the toil of unceasing patrols, following tracks and ambushing became even more gruelling for the Australian infantryman. From 1955, three battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment and supporting troops had operational tours. However, their service was "eclipsed by the carnage of World War One, the magnitude of World War Two, the major power confrontation during the Korean War, and subsequently the media coverage of conscription and Vietnam". Nevertheless, the lessons learned were to prove valuable to Australian soldiers, both regulars and National Servicemen, a decade later in South Vietnam.

It is worth remembering that the Gordon Highlanders have close affiliations with the 5/7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and the Royal Victoria Regiment; as well as the 48th Highlanders of Canada, the Toronto Scottish and the Capetown Highlanders of the Republic of South Africa.

In Malaya with the Gordons

How can John Millar appreciate the wonders of tropical nature? Pulling down the brim of his floppy jungle green hat, below which a veil covers his face, John looks round in the gathering darkness. Later on in the night, the shape of one of the bushes or trees around him could begin to look suspiciously like a Communist terrorist. 22591436 Private John Millar, a painter and decorator from Invergordon, settles into a sitting position. He is hidden from view in tall grass amongst overgrown rubber trees, on the edge of scrub jungle. On this night in 1953, his ambush group of four Gordon Highlanders soon will be invisible to friend or foe!

They came here in the fading light, shortly after the 7pm curfew at the nearby kampong. Now, the other ambush groups are being placed quickly by John's officer. Between dusk and 9pm, a

small number of Communist guerillas collecting supplies are to be ambushed, and killed or captured. Due to the night curfew and food control schemes, nothing can be easily smuggled out to the insurgents by the largely Chinese underground Min Yuen. John knows that after five years of the insurgent war, the Malayan Communist Party's fighters in the jungle are dependent now upon supplies and money extorted from the towns and villages. From this kampong, he is enjoying hearing the strains of Chinese music.

Wary of the many different sounds that come to his ears, John continues to look around searching the darkness; and, he wishes for the moon to come out. Sometimes in a night ambush position John has fair visibility, but very often he is in taller grass or at the bottom of a dip in the ground, and can hardly see any distance at all. Hearing is as important as eyesight, but there are so many deceiving noises. A branch off a tree makes a splash falling onto water. John listens hard for more splashes, which a guerilla could be making. What with the noises of a tropical night and the dense vegetation in Malaya, with all its creepers and vines limiting visibility, a high degree of alertness and good nerves are needed for ambushing at night.

The ambush groups, each usually of four to six Jocks, cover the likely approaches and ground the guerillas could be expected to use. In charge of John's group tonight is Corporal McVeigh, whom he trusts and likes. Corporal McVeigh comes from Pitlochry and had been "keeping", before joining the Seaforth Highlanders as a regular soldier, in December 1949. He came out to Malaya with the Gordons, and has a well earned reputation with his company. As well, he has a natural air of command.

Close to John is his friend for life, Private Peter Rodger, who is a baker from Kirkcaldy and almost two years older. They both started their National Service on 20 September 1951. Peter is a good shot, and always is larger than life. In later years they both married, John working on North Sea oil rigs, and Peter went on to a career with the Fife Police.

A loud noise of cracking wood shatters the night! John's alertness increases, although, he realises rotten branches fall from time to time. Before long, he reckons another branch may have fallen from a rubber tree. Every few minutes the sky lights up with a flash of blue lightning, which seems to go on all night in Malaya. The moon is coming out, and John's watch shows 7.45pm. He notices a suspicious shape about ten yards away, and while watching it, a whistle pierces the night. He hardly dare breathe and his forefinger begins to move the safety catch on his weapon. Nothing more happens, but that whistle sounded human. The suspicious shape, for a minute or two, has remained unchanged and motionless, and so he reckons the whistle was an insect. All sorts of whistling sounds are made by some insects at night. John is glad Private Alastair McLean is in their group tonight. Quiet by nature, good as a leading scout in jungle, he is as steady as a rock. Today, Alastair continues as a monument mason in Oban, where he began his apprenticeship before National Service. He is a good shot too. At every opportunity he carried the platoon's sniper rifle. The four of them tonight are armed with a rifle mark V, a shotgun, an American carbine .300, and John's bren light machine gun.

Another quarter of an hour has gone by, and not a sign of the guerillas—nothing unusual is happening. Sitting here absolutely motionless is giving John cramp in his right leg. As usual among rubber trees, there is an infuriating hum of ferocious mosquitoes around him. He has put mosquito repellent on his hands, head and face veil, but all the same their bites are making John feel as if the small of his back and shoulders are on fire. Seldom does he risk raising a hand to brush away mosquitoes, even those behind his ears and around his eyes, as that movement could catch the eye of a guerilla. They can move like animals of the jungle, and could be anywhere now out there in the dark. Every so often John slowly turns his head, looking around behind. Ouch! He feels as if he has been bitten by a hornet, but they are not out

at night. He thinks it was probably one of those seldom-seen striped mosquitoes. There seem to be always far fewer mosquitoes in the jungle itself, but worse there are the smaller sand-fly type insects that can bite easily through John's thin jungle green shirt and trousers.

Ants can be troublesome anywhere: some like red ants, termites and soldier ants have a painful bite. Luckily red ants never seem about after dark. Only a few days ago on patrol, John's officer became covered in red ants after brushing them off a bush in the scrub. Off came the second lieutenant's shirt in a flash, as he removed at high speed a mass of vicious red ants. This was not a hundred yards from the Communist Malacca Independent platoon camp, unknown to their twelve man patrol for another half hour or so. That day, this Communist camp was attacked by his patrol, which had split in two. When the firing started, John had spotted a terrorist coming at them and told his officer to look out. He was standing beside him. But, that terrorist disappeared in a second amongst the scrub and very high lallang (grass). It didn't take long to get into the camp, and the sight of smoke curling out of the bowl of a pipe, abandoned on a table, had fascinated John. A rifle and two bren gun magazines were captured, along with documents, nine packs of food, medicine and equipment, two sacks of rice, waterproof shelters and five red star uniform caps.

The pressure maintained on the insurgents by John's company commander, in continuous ambushing, patrolling and combing through the jungle, harries the Communists all the time. John, with great fortune, is blessed with an efficient company commander, who was decorated for bravery more than once in the Second World War.

The Malayan Communist Party's fighters in the jungle numbered around 11 000 in 1950. "From a military point of view, 1952 was a year in which the jungle fight definitely turned against the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA), as during it Government troops killed some 1 097 Communist insurgents." The MRLA spent most of 1952 reorganising itself, and practising the instructions of the Politburo. Many of the neatly formed companies and original ten regiments were broken up. Early in 1953, the hard core of the MRLA went deeper into the jungle to retrain. The remainder of the MRLA came to be made up mostly of jungle independent platoons and sections, based on a Min Yuen village branch for support. These were to remain on the fringes of the jungle in as close contact with the people as possible. They were to be aggressive guerillas, and were to strengthen the Communist hold on nearby towns and villages.

Night ambushing is cunning, as both sides try to outwit each other. Both the Security Forces and the Communist insurgents have agents, and both sides receive information from the local population. Long before leaving the shelter of the jungle, the guerillas post sentries to keep watch: and the Min Yuen and sympathisers amongst the people watch out too for the Security Forces. They can either leave or give warning signals. John normally expects to move into ambush soon after the curfew. This should allow each group of Jocks to be positioned before it is properly dark. The guerillas may turn up quite soon after curfew; and, both sides can arrive at the same time. When this happened last month, his corporal fired at movement in the undergrowth, a few yards in front of him. Quite rightly, as it turned out. The next morning in the thick bushes at that place, a bag of rice was found.

John takes these night ambushes with good humour, despite never being certain whether or not the elusive guerillas are going to be ambushed. There is another one and a quarter hours to go before they return to camp, and into bed. He tries to plan his leave in Singapore from 11 to 18 May. The minutes are dragging by, as John occupies himself thinking about next week, about Saltburn Invergordon and of his Mother there, in Seaforth Cottage. Recently, John had discovered that both he and the second lieutenant knew the farmer at Inchfuir, Mr MacKenzie. John picked potatoes at Inchfuir. His officer had lived there as a child. They had talked about

the bombing of the oil storage tanks in Invergordon; and, remembered how the oil ran down the railway into the Cromarty Firth. It had made the rails too slippery for trains to use and they had seen too, many swans in the firth smothered with oil. Mr MacKenzie was out ploughing with his horses, when this German plane had flown low over him. Having served in the Great War with the Seaforth Highlanders, he only wished he could have shot at that plane! Another day in the fields at Inchfuir, his officer and sister had seen Mr MacKenzie's plough disturb an oyster catcher's eggs. One of these eggs was undamaged, and it is much prized in Australia to this day.

The moon clouds over. In the moonlight John sometimes wondered if he could be spotted, and now he knows he is invisible. But, of course he cannot see very well himself, despite his eyes having adjusted to the dark. Any bright light would destroy in an instant his night vision, which is now acute. The wind is rustling the tall grass just as if some people are walking through it. Tension rises, as perhaps this could be the terrorists. Unless John is certain that he can see the shape of a man in the pitch black of the night, he will not shoot. From his experience, there could be wild pigs around. The tension eases. He begins to wonder if the rain will stay away. When rain starts in Malaya, it comes in a torrent, and all sounds made by terrorists would be drowned out by the noise of the deluge.

More often than not, night ambushing occurs as the result of information given by the Police Special Branch. Now that the war is turning against the Communists, frequently one of the local people would tip off the Police if they suddenly had information that could lead to the killing or capturing of insurgents. The large Government rewards for good results were very effective, and justified on the score that an informer would need a substantial sum to be able to start a new life elsewhere. Very seldom could an informer give the actual time, or even be definite about the day. In John's experience, the time for an ambush was normally between dusk and 9pm. Sometimes, an informer would insist that it could be anytime of the night. Then, there would be ten hours instead of three hours in ambush. Even for the keenness, this was never a pleasant prospect.

John has been sitting on damp ground for almost three hours, and is getting more and more uncomfortable. His heart leaps—a light is flashing not far away. He strains his ears for any suspicious sound. Fireflies have been about all night, but this one is much bigger and is flashing like a torch. Could it be a firefly? The tension is unbelievable. He hears nothing suspicious and this light certainly could be a firefly. But, this one appears to be stationary as it flashes, and isn't flying around. It is so very deceptive, as to be nerve-racking. After what seems an age, this light darts off like a firefly, and John relaxes his finger on the safety catch of his bren gun. The time creeps on, five minutes by five minutes. At long last, John's officer is giving the signal to end one more of those countless, uneventful ambushes. However, this ceaseless ambushing and patrolling gives the guerillas no rest.

The Communist insurgents were progressively deprived of food, money and information. They were hunted down by the Security Forces, and the Min Yuen underground rooted out. After 6 000 or more insurgents had been killed or captured in twelve years, the war came to an official end with a Victory Parade in July 1960¹. The Gordons had made a by no means insignificant contribution due, above all, to the staying power and dauntless qualities of the

¹ The first British infantrymen to go into action against the communist insurgents were men of the Seaforth Highlanders, who were in Singapore when the emergency began. A war or an emergency? It was a war, but there was a reason why it was never declared one. "Out of regard for the London Insurance market, on which the Malayan economy based on rubber and tin, relied for cover, no-one ever used the word. The misnomer continued for twelve years, for the simple reason that insurance rates covered losses of stocks and equipment through riot and civil commotion in an emergency, but not in a civil war."

Jocks. An old and distinguished Regiment, which has fought in two hundred years all over the world, the Gordons remain a typically Highland Regiment, true to the ancient Highland spirit and tradition. In the nerve-racking early years of the Malayan campaign, Jock is in the true line of descent from Donald (as private soldiers were then called) of the Napoleonic Wars. The Gordons arrived in 1951 right into the middle of a desperate struggle against fanatical insurgents, imbued with an unalloyed faith in the dictates of the Chinese Communists. Like the forefathers of the present day soldier, men of the same stamp and type, John Millar and the Jocks in Malaya built up the traditions of the Gordons.

Sources

Edgar O'Ballance, *Malaya—The Communist Insurgent War 1948-1960*, Faber and Faber London 1966.

Noel Barber *The War of the Running Dogs*, Wm Collins 1971.

Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson, Volume VI *The History of The Gordon Highlanders*, Leo Cooper London 1974.

Lt Col N C Smith, *Mostly Unsung*, Melbourne 1989.

Robert Jackson, *Malayan Emergency*, Routledge London 1991.

2/Lt RWC Murison *A night ambush*, (unpublished) 1953, 12 Platoon Commander's notebook 1953 and diary.



Thirty years later, John Millar, Peter Rodger and Sandy Sinclair at Invergordon, Ross-Shire, March 1983

Unveiling of the Gurney VC in the Hall of Valour

The Director of the Australian War Memorial, Brendon Kelson, made the following remarks on Monday 11 April 1994 in receiving on behalf of the Australian War Memorial the Victoria Cross and medals awarded to Private A S Gurney, VC.

“On 22 November last year at a special function in Perth, I had the privilege of accepting on behalf of the Australian War Memorial, the medals of the late Private Arthur Stanley Gurney VC. These medals, along with a photograph of Private Gurney, and details of his gallant exploits are now proudly displayed here before us in the Memorial’s Hall of Valour where they will receive the recognition and tribute of the nation.

“Today I am pleased to welcome the friends and relatives of the Gurney family, to the formal opening of the display dedicated to the late Private ‘Stan’ Gurney.

“Private Gurney enlisted in the AIF in 1940, just before his 32nd birthday. He took part in the siege of Tobruk as a member of the famous 2/48th battalion. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his work at Tel el Eisa, Egypt, on 22 July 1942.

“In an act of extraordinary strength and courage, he single-handed, attacked three German machine-gun posts which had been holding up the advance of his company. The citation for the award says: “The successful outcome of this engagement was almost entirely due to Private Gurney’s heroism at the moment when it was needed”. In attacking a further enemy position he was killed.

“Again I would like to thank the Gurney family for making the medals available for all Australians to see, for I am sure you will agree that there is no more appropriate place for his awards to be than with those of his peers.”



Pte A S Gurney, VC

Australian Archives – worth a look

Lieutenant Colonel Neil C Smith AM

On many occasions I have made the assertion that, if you are prepared to look hard enough and long enough in the Melbourne office of Australian Archives, you can find something of relevance to any quest for information on Australian military history. With some years of research experience behind me I stand by that statement. Naturally, I follow with interest the endeavours of the Australian Archives office in Melbourne, which holds the majority of archived material on Australian military history. But to those who do not keep such a watchful eye on the resources and facilities offered by Australian Archives, something of an update may be in order.

The Melbourne office of Australian Archives holds for posterity the most important records of all Commonwealth Government Departments, and certainly those of a Defence nature. Records in most cases date from Federation, but there are some from last century which were transferred from the States to Melbourne after Federation in 1901. Some of Australia's most valuable records, such as historic cabinet papers, immigration records, films and radio tapes are now housed in a scientifically controlled building erected on the site of the former Tally Ho Boy's Home, East Burwood near Melbourne. The Australian Archives \$9.5 million specially designed building at Burwood replaces in part the former repository known for the past forty years to so many military history researchers in Middle Brighton. The problems of the Middle Brighton facility, a former 1927 dry cleaning factory, had increased at a disturbing rate for some years and included a leaking roof, rising damp and adverse humidity levels which made it difficult to preserve many of our precious records. It was a pleasure to attend the recent opening of the East Burwood facility by Federal MP Leo McLeay and to witness first hand the technology used in the care and preservation of archival records. With automatically set temperature and humidity ranges for paper, microfiche and film records, all housed in a secure environment with preservation facilities on hand and a computerized storage data base, our nation's recorded heritage is in safe keeping. As part of the developing strategies of Australian Archives, the main office and public reading room was relocated from Middle Brighton to Casselden Place in the heart of Melbourne over a year ago. Many records are still kept at the Dandenong storage facility but I'm sure this facility is under close scrutiny for its continued suitability.

But what is in it for the military historian and researcher? I can assure you that time spent at Australian Archives, particularly in Melbourne is time well spent. Even if you are not fortunate enough to have time for a sojourn in the southern Capital, the Australian Archives network is truly national with a computer system linking all offices plus the Australian War Memorial. More specifically, many family and military history records are held in archives, such as passenger lists, and records relating to naturalization, immigration, war crimes, internment and war service to mention a few. Although most war service documents relate to the two World Wars, there are some which pertain to the Boer War and other periods. The staff of Australian Archives are particularly helpful and encourage the use of the records in their custody. Members of the public of course have right to seek access to Commonwealth records which are more than 30 years old, unless the records are subject to exemption. Exemptions effect only a small proportion of records, and are usually imposed to protect personal privacy or Australia's defence, security or international relations. Don't forget, if you need information, there is no better place to start looking than at Australian Archives.

Book Reviews

Australia's Forgotten Army, Volume 1, The Ebb and Flow of the Australian Army in Western Australia 1941 to 1945, \$33 from Grimwade Publications, 112 Perry Drive Chapman ACT 2611.

The Ebb and Flow of the Australian Army in Western Australia 1941 to 1945 is the first volume in a series by Graham R Mackenzie Smith entitled *Australia's Forgotten Army* a study of the role of the Australian army in Australia during World War II. The author is a Western Australian and the first volume is concerned with the army's role in his home state.

In the introduction, the author draws attention to the few published accounts of the army's role in Australia. Until 1942, Australia had a very small professional army with the Citizens Military Force, the militia, being concerned with home defence.

In World War I, the Australian Imperial Force was a Volunteer force and this practice was repeated in World War II, with the creation of the 2nd AIF. Large numbers of personnel the Citizens Military Force joined the 2nd AIF.

Since 1908, the principal activity of the CMF had been training on a part time basis and the provision of cadres to provide the nucleus should a force be required for Imperial defence purposes. This CMF role in Western Australian was under taken by battalions of the 13th Inf Bde, mainly based around Perth and the south-west area of the State and this continued until Japanese military expansion into South East Asia, resulted in 1941 with a change in the Strategy for the defence of Australia.

The author uses the chronological approach and sets Western Australia within the strategy developed in Melbourne and approved in Canberra late in 1941, The first priority being the major population and industrial centres, from Newcastle to Melbourne. The Minister for the Army came from North Queensland and his personal influence resulted in southern Queensland being included in this priority.

Mackenzie Smith's research method and writing style is to set out clearly and simply the changing pattern of the Australian Army's involvement in Western Australia citing from the official records, the Order of Battle and the Administrative Instructions issued originally in Melbourne and following the creation of the 3rd Corps its instructions and those of lower levels issued in Western Australia. The respective Instructions, Numbers and dates are quoted in the Text. This gives almost every paragraph an authoritative basis.

After the return of Lt-Gen Gordon Bennett, to Australia after the surrender of Singapore, he was appointed GOC 3rd Corps responsible for the defence of Western Australia. Reference is made to the differences between General Blamey and Lt-Gen Bennett, these are well known, however, Blamey could not have been unmindful of Bennett's proven organisational skills and the impact of his training of the 8th Division after its arrival in Malaya, that enabled the Division to acquit itself so well, prior to General Percival's surrender. This no doubt influenced Blamey in his decision, which also put Bennett at some considerable distance from the centres of influence and power where Blamey wanted to be unfettered.

The Order of Battle for the 3rd Corps was the 2nd and 4th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Armoured Division. The majority of the troops and their equipment had to be gathered and or procured in Eastern Australia and then transported to the West. In addition of the Corps there were three Garrison Battalions and Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) units. These battalions and the VDC were mainly comprised of older age men, many with WWI experience.

Lt-Gen Bennett issued instructions designed to increase the efficiency of the under trained battalions and a number of Exercises were held. The initial instructions were directed towards the defence of the southern part of State and few troops were stationed north of Geraldton.

The return of the three Divisions from the Middle East and the stopping of the Japanese advance in New Guinea and the South West Pacific, reduced the possibility of Western Australia being invaded and the role of the 3rd. Corps changed. Training of the troops for use in New Guinea was commenced and Battalions, followed by Infantry Brigades when sufficiently trained began moving to the Northern Territory and Queensland.

The resultant run down of forces in Western Australia was well in hand prior to the Japanese invasion attempt in March 1944. The invasion task force sailed from Singapore, however, a three day cyclone off the North West Coast caused the fleet to turn back. The threat lead to a major tactical change with plans being made to move troops north, but it proved unnecessary and no troops actually moved.

Lt-Gen Bennett retired in 1944, his successor was Maj-Gen H Robertson who had been in command of 1st. Armoured Division. Later, that year the Corps was reduced to one infantry division including an armoured brigade. There was a concomitant disbandment of units, some in Western Australia, but the majority moved to the east and disbanded shortly after their arrival in New South Wales or Queensland.

The continuing removal of troops from Western Australia, many who were later to serve in New Guinea and Bougainville, left only three battalions and these were in effect training battalions: 3rd Corps was disbanded.

The text is supplemented by references to books written on campaigns in the South West Pacific and unit histories, these provide the many personal touches, which are an integral part of military life and without them no military history text is complete.

The author has included a Glossary of Abbreviations, Unit location statements at the end of each month and maps showing the unit locations in eight areas. These are exceedingly useful in enabling a fuller appreciation of the value of the book. There is a bibliography, index of units and locations, unfortunately there is no personal index.

Volume I The Ebb and Flow of the Australia Army in Western Australia 1941 to 1945 is a very readable and authoritative text. It has set a high standard for the author to follow in the succeeding volumes. When the series is completed a history of Australian Army in Australia will have been achieved. Without such a history no Australian military history library will be complete.

The author refers in the text to a AMF database and print-outs for the database can be obtained from the same address; price subject to negotiation. It is the author's intention at a later date to late make the AMF Database available as probably, when further Volumes have been published.—S H Pyne

Denis Winter, *25 April 1915 The Inevitable Tragedy*, Uni of Queensland Press, 1994, \$18.95

Conspiracy, cover-up and confusion dominate this superb new book by Denis Winter. General Hamilton, the Allied General is seen to cover-up his pre-knowledge of the Gallipoli site in an attempt to protect his innocence for the disaster that was to follow, and as an excuse that he failed to assess the limitations of the eventual landing area. The role and the decisions of General Birdwood, the Commander of the ANZAC forces, is examined, particularly his part in developing three different landing places, the last of which would be put into effect without the

knowledge of many who took part in the first assault. And we see the subsequent confusion on the landing of a brigade “dribbling ashore at about one-third the expected rate, commanded by a man (McCay) temporarily off his head”. Moreover, another brigade, the 4 000 strong 3rd, stumbling and struggling upward from a place “less than the width of a cricket pitch”, and more than a mile north of where the brigade had been briefed it would land.

If these issues dominate this intriguing story, so does gallantry, greatness and glory that accompanied the historic Australian landing on 25 April 1915 against a vastly superior Turk defence. There is succinctness, sorrow and academic rigour in Winter’s story who, after 13 years of “gathering and reflecting” has given historians an alternative analysis of the campaign and the base to re-judge the Gallipoli landing. The Australian War Memorial sponsored much of his research which is based almost exclusively on unpublished documents. Using these sources never before studied by historians Winter reconstructs the events leading to the campaign and the disaster that immediately followed the early hours of 25 April 1915.

Many historians have argued why the ANZAC force was landed at the small inlet on the Gallipoli Peninsula known now as Anzac Cove. It is worth recording that a few, notably Winston Churchill, in *The World Crisis 1911-1918* noted, “in the dark the long tows of boats missed their direction”; Liddell Hart, *History of the First World War*, observed, “darkness and the strong current caused the tows to arrive off a beach a mile north of the intended point”. And Alan Moorehead in *Gallipoli* suggested the reason for the off course landing was “an uncharted current”. Winter asserts that such a current can be dismissed. Similarly, he also dismisses the allegation that the Navy’s navigation put the landing off course. He suggests that there were perhaps deliberate and planned reasons for the landing at Anzac Cove. His explanations are thorough and well documented. His interpretations could lead us to change, or at least challenge, views that the planners intended to land at Brighton Beach. Winter’s research points toward at least two major changes of plan on the landing: the changes for the most part secretly withheld by the major figures in Birdwood, Hamilton, Bridges, De Robeck and perhaps MacLagan, whom Birdwood met with the day before the landing. Winter comments, “the existence of three successive plans, each shifting the centre northwards away from the threat of Turkish artillery, is not easily discounted”. As the author explains, “botched briefings and the secret issues of orders make it difficult to achieve a certainty on the plans and intentions of the high command”.

The book is mostly an analysis of the landing but including, as it does, the strategies of the campaign, the shadowy and deceptive nature of its commanders, the discourse, at times at odds between Navy and Army. It resulted, as Winter puts it in his title, “the inevitable tragedy”.

Assessing the decision-making processes on the battle field is always a difficult task particularly in arriving at the right conclusions. Gallipoli is no exception. In narrowing the margin of error, Winter successfully supplements detail from diaries, papers, archives and official histories with military instruction manuals. Winter speculates that commanders adhered to out-dated tactical codes, particularly those set out in the 1905 *Manual of Infantry Training*, which led to many unfortunate results. As an example, Winter describes the training of the Australians at Mena where, in part, they were drilled in assault tactics, where according to the Manual, “command was to be decentralised to the lowest possible denominator”. The results of this training were not appreciated by the attacking force on 25 April 1915.

And how frustrating, and deadly, it was in those early hours as men scrambled wildly upward in the noisy darkness; small groups, out of control in the wrong place. Many reached far objectives and were lost, and many wandered back to the beach in search of orders and leadership. Sadly, the men had been trained from the 1905 Manual which offered, “clear

instructions must be given before each advance. The Commander must state the objective and how he intends to reach it". MacLagan was to reflect on the beach that, "saving such instruction for the battlefield was bound to make it too late". And this was to happen.

It is, however, the stories of the soldier that are the most revealing in exposing why such a tragedy occurred. A platoon commander from the first wave of the 9th Battalion was to comment, "exactly where I was I was never able to define. I have no knowledge of any attempt to reorganise on the 25th. A little rain fell either on the 25th or 26th—I'm not certain."

Our acceptance that there were a number of changes in landing sites, including selected areas of Brighton Beach and Anzac Cove, is paramount to correctly understanding the campaign. Many believe that as a result of landing at Anzac Cove the campaign faltered and failed. This interpretation is certainly a major argument in Winter's analysis, but he also attributes Turk supremacy, poor training and raw inexperience of the Australian troops and the lack of correct tactical use of infantry weapons as other reasons for the tragedy.

But the error of Anzac Cove, and its consequences, is Winter's central plank. Whether we choose to accept that the campaign failed because of this is, of course, a choice for the reader. An alternate view has been provided by Colonel CAM Roberts in a paper, "The Landing at Anzac: an Australian defensive action", presented to the Australian War Memorial 1990 History Conference, who reasoned that the landing at Anzac Cove did not, in itself, cause the campaign's failure. Roberts argued that a major change in tactics by MacLagan that shifted the objectives of both his 3rd Brigade and that of McCay's 2nd Brigade resulted in the Australians not achieving their first day objectives. The campaign thus stagnated at the beach into a defensive but unwinnable battle.

An absorbing book extremely well researched and documented: Winter uses his sources well and argues with a clarity that is refreshing. There is much here to challenge some of your beliefs about Gallipoli, particularly the actions of some of its commanders. I suggest you buy it very soon.—Barry Clissold

Tom Frame, *HMAS Sydney: Loss and Controversy*, Hodder & Stoughton Australia, RRP \$29.95

HMAS Sydney: Loss and Controversy, is an important new study into the mysterious disappearance of HMAS *Sydney* and its 645 member crew. Fifty-two years ago, on 19 November 1941 HMAS *Sydney*, the pride of the Royal Australian Navy, sighted what appeared to be a Dutch merchant ship off the West Australian coast. That ship was in fact the German auxiliary raider HSK *Kormoran*, in disguise.

In a short but devastating close-range gun battle, both ships suffered mortal damage and later sank. *Sydney* was last seen by *Kormoran* to be on fire and heading over the horizon. While more than 300 German sailors were subsequently recovered from lifeboats, not one out of the 645 Australian sailors on board *Sydney* lived to describe their ship's ordeal. It was Australia's greatest wartime naval loss.

In *HMAS Sydney: Loss and Controversy*, Tom Frame discusses recent developments in archival research and scientific analysis and examines questions generated by this mysterious and controversial naval action:

- Why did *Sydney*'s captain bring his ship so close to *Kormoran* that he risked a mortal engagement?

- Why was *Kormoran* able to inflict so much damage to *Sydney* that her ship's company were apparently unable to communicate with assistance ashore and could not save their ship from sinking?
- Why was the Australian cruiser and her 645 men lost virtually without trace and why have they eluded detection for over 50 years?

Tom Frame also explores the origins and propagation of many bogus allegations against the Navy and the *Kormoran* survivors, as well as the charge that the Japanese were involved in the sinking of *Sydney* three weeks prior to Pearl Harbour.

Dr Frame is one of Australia's leading naval historians and the author of *First In, Last Out! The Navy at Gallipoli, The Garden Island, Where Fate Calls: The HMAS Voyager Tragedy and Pacific Partners: A History of Australian-American Naval Relations*.

Expose! A History of Searchlights in World War 2, Noel F Hill, Boolarong Publications, hard case 175 x 240 mm, 196 pages \$29.95 per copy post free from J A Robinson, 2 Rosedale Road, Gordon NSW 2072.

There are many gaps in our rich military history, *Expose!* fills one of them in a felicitous way. The author wrote *A Long White Finger* some years ago as a history of the 73rd Australian Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Battery AIF based on War Diaries in the Australian War Memorial. The experience inspired him and others to systematically research the wartime records of all the anti-aircraft searchlight companies and batteries.

For the first time we have a comprehensive account of the organisation, recruitment, training and operational experience of an extremely important element of our defences both at home and in the islands to our North. They saw action on many occasions and acquitted themselves with great credit. Originally formed as units of the Royal Australian Engineers, responsibility for searchlights, both anti-aircraft and coast defence, passed to the Royal Australian Artillery in 1943. Clearly without any diminution in the esprit de corps of the units concerned nor in their operational efficiency.

The book underlines the strong personal bonds established in these units. We must welcome, 50 years on, this history of a very considerable group of people, men and women, who put up with isolation, poor living conditions for sustained periods, and maintained their morale, efficiency and alertness with consistency and humour in poor climatic conditions and in uncertain strategic and tactical situations.

Each of the 34 anti-aircraft searchlight batteries formed in World War 2 is mentioned but the reader should not be misled by the subtitle. The book does not deal with the large number of lights and those who tended them in the coast artillery organisation. Perhaps this can be the subject of another welcome history?

A well produced, well illustrated and informative book and great value for those interested in our World War 2 history.—John Whitelaw

Military Historical Society of Australia

Patron: Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot KBE AO

Federal Council



Correspondence to:

Federal Secretary
MHSA
PO Box 30
Garran ACT 2605

Notice of 1994 Annual General Meeting

Date: Monday 24 October 1994
Venue: RSL Club Civic
Time: 7.30 pm

In accordance with the amended MHSA Constitution (printed in the Jan/Mar 1993 edition of *Sabretache*) and which came into effect on 1 August 1993 the following members were elected to Federal Council at the 1993 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society.

Tan Roberts, Clem Sargent, Neville Foldi
 Anthony Staunton, Elizabeth Topperwien, Richard Murison

At the following Federal Council meeting Federal Office bearers were elected as follows:

Tan Roberts	Federal President
Clem Sargent	Federal Vice President
Neville Foldi	Federal Treasurer
Anthony Staunton	Federal Secretary

Under section 5(a) of the MHSA Constitution Federal Council members serve two year terms with half retiring at each AGM. The 1994 AGM is the first AGM at which this clause comes into effect and Federal Council has decided that Tan Roberts, Clem Sargent and Anthony Staunton be eligible for re-election at the 1994.

Notes from the Editor on contributions to *Sabretache*

While the following are merely guidelines, it certainly helps the Editor in preparing copy for publication if these guidelines are followed. Nevertheless, potential contributors should not be deterred by them if, for example, you do not have access to computers or typewriters. Handwritten articles are always welcome, although, if publication deadlines are tight, they might not be published until the next issue.

Typewritten submissions are preferred. Material should be double spaced with a margin. If your article is prepared on a computer please send a copy on either a 3.5" or 5.25" disk (together with a paper copy).

Please write dates in the form 11 June 1993, without punctuation. Ranks, initials and decorations should be without full-stops, eg, Capt B J R Brown MC MM.

Please feel free to use footnotes, which should be grouped at the end of the article (however, when published in *Sabretache* they will appear at the foot of the relevant page). As well as references cited, footnotes should be used for asides that are not central to the article.

Photos to illustrate the article are welcomed and encouraged. However, if you can, forward copies of photos rather than originals.

Articles, preferably, should be in the range of 2,000-2,500 words (approx 4 typeset pages) or 5,000-7,000 words (approx 10 typeset pages) for major feature articles.

Articles should be submitted in accordance with the time limits indicated on page 2. Recently, lateness in receiving articles has meant that the Journal has been delayed in publication. Nevertheless, where an article is of particular importance, but is received late, the Editor will endeavour to publish the article if possible and space permitting.

Elizabeth Topperwien
Editor

✂

Application for Membership

I/*We
(Name/Rank etc.)

Of (Address)

.....
hereby apply for membership of the MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA and wish to be admitted as a *Corresponding Member/*Subscriber to *Sabretache* / *Branch Member of the Branch

My main interests are

I/*We enclose remittance of A\$26.00 being annual subscription, due 1 July each year.

Send to: Federal Secretary, PO Box 30, Garran, ACT 2605, Australia

ISSN 0048 8933

Price \$5.00