

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

July/September 1994

Number 3

Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. NBH0587

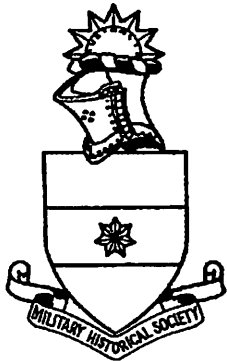
JULY—SEPTEMBER 1994
VOLUME XXXV — NUMBER 3

CONTENTS

3. MM awards to Australians — 1939-45
Anthony Staunton
13. Damien Parer, 1 August 1912 - 17 September 1944, a biography
J H McDermott
19. Goodbye, John Price—the passing of a dedicated military historian
Warren Perry
22. Medals of Indonesian Independence, 1945 and 1950
Paul A Rosenzweig
28. Conway's Corner—Dedicated To The Memory Of Corporal Michael Conway, First
Western Australian Mounted Infantry
John R Sweetman
32. The Special Air Service Regiment
34. The Templer Medal Award—1993
Clem Sargent
35. Speech by the Prime Minister, the Hon P J Keating, MP, Kanchanburi War Cemetery,
Thailand, 9 April 1994
36. Book Reviews
41. Letters
46. Advertisements

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 (retd)

Vice President

Lt. Col. T C Sargent (retd)

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 Sinfield RANEM, 14 Angophora St, Rivett ACT 2611

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

Geelong — Robin 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

MM awards to Australians — 1939-45

Anthony Staunton

King George V, on 25 March 1916, signed a Royal Warrant instituting the Military Medal (MM). The warrant stated that in appreciation of acts of gallantry and devotion to duty performed by non-commissioned officers and men, a silver medal was to be awarded to non-commissioned officers and men for individual or associated acts of bravery. The new award was made retrospective to 1914 which allowed the first Australians MM awards to be made for Gallipoli. In the 1914-18 War, 9 926 Australians were awarded the MM, 468 received a first bar, 15 received two bars and one soldier Cpl Ernest Albert Corey, 55th Battalion AIF became the only recipient in the Commonwealth ever to receive a third bar.¹ The ribbon of the MM is 1.25 inches wide dark blue with three white and two crimson stripes, each 0.25 inches wide down the centre. In 1919 recipients were given permission to use the initials 'MM' after their names.

1939-45 War

In 1990, R D Williams in the third edition of his excellent reference work *Medals to Australia with valuations* states that the number of MM awards to Australians in the 1939-45 War was 988. This number included five to the RAAF but not the five bars.² The following year, C K Bate and M G Smith in *For Bravery in the Field* listed by name 981 Australian Army MM recipients. Unfortunately they overlooked the 20 Australian MM awards listed in the *London Gazette* of 20 May 1946.³ Hence the total number of MM awards to the Australian Army is in fact 1001 plus five bars. There were also five RAAF awards. Table 1 is a breakdown of the total of 1011 awards by campaign. Only two awards, those to N108358, Wilbert Thomas Hudson⁴, 4th LAA Bty and N270852 Frederick Ronald Wombey⁵, 14th LAA Bty were won in Australia. Both awards were for bravery during the Japanese air raid on Darwin on 19 February 1942.

Verification

All MM awards can be verified in the *London Gazette* except those made to foreign troops. In 1941 awards were listed separately under the heading *Military Medal* in the *State Intelligence* section of in the quarterly index. From 1942 the names of MM recipients are listed in the consolidated index headed *Honours, Decorations and Medals*. The *Military Medal* heading was retained in the *State Intelligence* section but it only listed pages on which awards are to be found.

Although all MM awards can be verified in the *London Gazette* the same cannot be said about the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*. The *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* has republished all MM awards recommended by the Governor-General and awarded for service in the South-West Pacific. In some cases the notification in the *Commonwealth of Australia*

¹ Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 8, pp.114-115.

² R D Williams, *Medals to Australia with valuations*, Third edition, Pocket Book Publications, Dubbo, 1990, p.20.

³ C K Bate and M G Smith. *For Bravery in the Field*, 1991, pp.345-366.

⁴ (17-Dec-1920-) Citation AWM 88, Item No AMF O/A 01

⁵ (24-Jul-1922-) Citation, AWM 88, Item No. AMF O/A 01

Gazette preceded the entry in the *London Gazette*. Regrettably MM awards for the Middle East do not appear in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*.

Table 1: Military Medal awards to Australia in the 1939-45 War

Campaign	Inf	Art	Eng	Sig	Oth	Total
Bardia and Tobruk	38	2	8	3	11	62
Fort Giarabub	2	0	0	0	0	2
Siege of Tobruk	50	10	3	0	2	65
Greece and Crete	36	4	3	7	4	54
Syria	35	5	3	2	5	50
Defence of Egypt	30	6	2	2	5	45
Battle of El Alamein	14	8	3	0	3	28
Evasion and Escape	18	2	0	0	6	26
Middle East	223	37	22	14	36	332
Malaya	3	1	0	2	1	7
Singapore	3	0	1	0	0	4
Java	5	0	0	0	0	5
Timor	2	2	0	0	0	4
Australia	0	2	0	0	0	2
Japanese Offensive	13	5	1	2	1	22
Milne Bay	11	0	0	0	0	11
Kokoda Track	60	2	0	0	4	66
Gona Buna Sanananda	45	2	0	0	7	54
Papua 1942-1943	116	4	0	0	11	131
Wau-Salamaua	62	0	1	0	8	71
Huon Peninsula	95	5	1	0	13	114
New Guinea 1942-1944	157	5	2	0	21	185
New Guinea 1945	77	6	0	0	5	88
Bougainville	98	5	8	0	11	122
New Britain	5	3	2	0	2	12
Tarakan	25	0	3	0	2	30
North Borneo	16	1	2	0	2	21
Balikpapan	25	2	5	0	1	33
At Sea	0	0	1	0	0	1
1945 Campaigns	246	17	21	0	23	307
Z Special Unit	0	0	0	0	13	13
M Special Unit	0	0	0	0	6	6
Angau	0	0	0	0	7	7
Other	0	0	0	0	3	3
Special Forces	0	0	0	0	29	29
RAAF	0	0	0	0	5	5
Total	755	68	46	16	126	1011

Citations

Only two MM citations, both for RAAF awards, were published in the *London Gazette*.⁶ No citations were published in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*. However many citations can be found at the Australian War Memorial in series AWM 88: Governor General's Office, honours and awards files. In the case of Middle East and Malayan awards only the citations, if

⁶ 414561 N T E Hewitt in the *London Gazette* of 11 June 1943 and 403475 G C W O'Neil in the *London Gazette* 29 June 1943.

any, are usually found. For the South West Pacific Area awards, both citations and recommendations are usually available. Immediate awards are listed in files numbered I/1 to I/50 and periodical awards are listed in files listed in files O/A 1 to O/A 50. Recommendations usually contain additional details including the date and place of the action being rewarded as well as information as to date of birth, date enlisted and next of kin.

Bars

Army Order No. 290 of August 1916 authorised a silver rose emblem to be worn on the ribbon, when this was worn alone, to denote the award of a bar. Six Australian MM recipients received a second award or a bar to their MM awarded during the 1939-45 War. Five of the bars were for the 1939-45 War, including three gazetted on 2 March 1944. The sixth bar was for an action in the Korean War. The six recipients of bars are listed as follows:

	London Gazette	Unit	Date	Place of award
SX5399 CAWTHORNE, Cecil Hamilton			(7-Dec-1907-1-Sep-1985) ⁷	
MM	21-Oct-1941	6088 2/43rd Bn	27/28 Jul 1941	Tobruk Libya
MM*	18-Feb-1943	864 2/43rd Bn	Jul/Oct 1942	Tel El Eisa Egypt
QX5495 ELSE, Alick			(20-Aug-1916-21-Sep-1985) ⁸	
MM	5-Nov-1942	4796 2/15th Bn	4/5 Aug 1942	Tel El Eisa Egypt
MM*	2-Mar-1944	1042 2/15th Bn	13 Oct 1943	Kumana New Guinea
QX8529 FINK, Frederick John			(18-Dec-1915-) ⁹	
MM	14-Oct-1943	4548 2/15th Bn	Oct/Nov 1942	El Alamein Egypt
MM*	2-Mar-1944	1042 2/15th Bn	27 Oct 1943	Finschhafen New Guinea
NX21667 MCKELLAR, Reginald Victor			(9-Nov-1914-) ¹⁰	
MM	18-Feb-1943	866 2/13th Bn	5Nov/8Dec 1941	Tobruk Libya
MM*	11-May-1944	2170 2/13th Bn	25Sep/30Oct 1943	Finschhafen New Guinea
WX3006 MURPHY, Gordon Bernard Jamieson			(18-Feb-1919-) ¹¹	
MM	22-Apr-1943	1847 2/16th Bn	6/7 Dec 1942	Gona Papua
MM*	2-Mar-1944	1042 2/16th Bn	25 Oct 1943	Paria River New Guinea
VX36576 WHITE, Albert Mitchell			(30-Jul-1923-1954?) ¹²	
MM	8-Nov-1945	5434 2/6th Bn	10 Jul 1945	Yamil New Guinea
MM*	25-Aug-1953	4599 3RAR	1953	Korea

7 Citation AWM 88, Item No AMF 3/C, Official History: Barton Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, p.315

8 Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF 5/E and AMF I/21; Official History: Barton Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, p.616

9 Citation AWM 88, Item Nos AMF 5/E and AMF I/21, Official History: D Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives* p.475.

10 Citation AWM 88, Item Nos AMF 12/Mc and AMF I/25, Official History: Barton Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, p.481

11 Citation AWM 88, Item Nos AMF I/8 and AMF I/21, Official History: Dudley McCarthy *South West Pacific Area - First Year*, p.438 and David Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p.592

12 Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. AMF I/47 and AMF K198, Official History Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Volume 2 - Combat Operations*, p.681

Double awards

A few double awards were gazetted during the 1914-18 but the second entry was later corrected to the award of a bar. The only verified case so far of a double award is that of James William Newton awarded the MM with the Northumberland Fusiliers in the 1914-18 War who went to France with the Black Watch in 1939. He was captured by the Germans in May 1940 and remained a prisoner until 1945. In February 1946, the existence of a first award being either unknown or overlooked, he was awarded a second MM for gallantry in 1940.¹³

In the first list of MMs gazetted to Australians in the 1939-45 War is the name of NX8940 Sergeant Ian John McIntosh of the 2/1st Battalion who was cited for gallantry at Bardia on 3 January 1941. A footnote in the Australian Official History states that he like other veterans had stated on enlistment in 1939 that he was under 35 and omitted to mention that he had been awarded the MM in the 1914-18 War.¹⁴ I have gone through the *London Gazette* and have checked all the I and J Macintosh, McIntosh and MacIntosh entries but I have insufficient information to confirm the double award.

Royal Australian Air Force

The following five airmen received the MM for either evading the enemy having been shot down behind enemy lines, or for escaping from the enemy:

	London Gazette	Unit	Date	Place of award
406232 BARRAS, Alexander Edward Owen				(26-Jan-1914-15-Aug-1986) ¹⁵
MM	26-Jan-1943	458 Sqn RAAF	Jul 1942	Evaded-N Africa
402942 BESLEY, Harvey				(18-Apr-1914-) ¹⁶
MM	8-Mar-1946	11 Sqn RAF		Evade/Escape
423106 INNES, Ian Russel Caple				(28-Jan-1922-) ¹⁷
MM	12-Jun-1945	3084 78 Sqn RAF	1944	Evade/Escape
414561 HEWITT, Neville Thomas Eric				(19-Oct-1920-) ¹⁸
MM	11-Jun-1943	150 Sqn RAF		Evade/Escape
403475 O'NEIL, George Connor Watson				(12-Jan-1915-) ¹⁹
MM	29-Jun-1943	2929 450 Sqn RAAF	Jul 1942 & Jan 1943	Evaded-N Africa
DFC	14-Nov-1944	5208 451 Sqn RAAF		

Sergeant O'Neil was later commissioned and received the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying operations.

¹³ P E Abbott and J M A Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, Nimrod Dix & co, London, 1981, p.227

¹⁴ Citation AWM 88, Item No, 12/Mc. Official History; Gavin Long, *To Benghazi*, p.168

¹⁵ Citation AWM 88, Item No.RAAF 1; Official History: John Herington, *Air Power Over Europe*, p.472

¹⁶ Citation AWM 88, Item No. RAAF 7/271C

¹⁷ Citation AWM 88, Item No. RAAF 6/755B

¹⁸ Citation AWM 88, Item No. RAAF 1A/148A

¹⁹ Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. RAAF 1A/184A and 4/153B; Official History: John Herington, *Air War Against Germany and Italy 1939-43*, p.340

Other gallantry awards

A number of Army MM recipients were also awarded other gallantry awards. In the list of Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and MM recipients that follow three received the MM first and two received the DCM first:

	London Gazette	Unit	Date	Place of award	
VX17821 BEAR, Lindsay Alfred				(26-Nov-1921-) ²⁰	
MM	4-Feb-1943	638	2/14th Bn	29 Aug 1942	Isurava Papua
DCM	20-Jan-1944	392	2/14th Bn	11 Oct 1943	Kumbarum New Guinea
VX29458 BELL, Harry James				(3-Mar-1913-3-Jan-1983) ²¹	
DCM	14-Oct-1943	4546	2/32nd Bn	23Oct/5Nov 1942	El Alamein Egypt
MM	13-Jan-1944	258	2/28th Bn	14 Sep 1943	Lae/Malahang New Guinea
VX9453 DANIEL, John Henry				(20-Dec-1916-) ²²	
MM	4-Nov-1943	4848	2/6th Bn	29/30 Jun 1943	Nassau Bay New Guinea
DCM	27-Sep-1945	4782	2/6th Bn	15May/2Jun 1945	Maprik New Guinea
VX12728 HEDDERMAN, John William				(25-Jun-1916-22-Dec-1986) ²³	
MM	7-Oct-1943	4437	2/6th Bn Guinea	20/24 Jun 1943	Lababia Ridge New Guinea
DCM	5-Jul-1945	3495	2/6th Bn	28/30 Mar 1945	Maprik New Guinea
SX7808 WESTON, Jack Keith				(8-Jan-1912-13-Dec-1963) ²⁴	
DCM	30-Dec-1941	7337	2/48th Bn	17 Sep 1942	Tel El Eisa Egypt
MM	24-Sep-1942	4157	2/48th Bn	10 Jul 1941	Tobruk Libya

Four of the many MM recipients who were commissioned during the war subsequently were awarded the Military Cross. It the extraordinary case of Lt F A Reiter his MC was gazetted before his MM was gazetted.

	London Gazette	Unit	Date	Place of award	
NX4545 COPEMAN, James				(8-Dec-1919-) ²⁵	
MM	21-Oct-1941	6088	2/3rd Bn	22 Jun 1941	Damascus/Beirut Syria
MC	16-Aug-1945	4158	2/3rd Bn	2 Apr 1945	Wonginara New Guinea
NX4597 DONOHUE, Timothy James				(4-Jan-1918-) ²⁶	
MM	21-Oct-1941	6088	2/3rd Bn	22 Jun 1941	Syria
MC	10-Jan-1946	379	2/2nd Bn	4 Aug 1945	Numoikum New Guinea

20 Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF I/4 and I/20; Official History: Dudley McCarthy, *South West Pacific Area - First Year*, p.506

21 Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF 2/B and I/17; Official History: David Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p.371

22 Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF 1/14 and I/42; Official History: David Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p.65

23 Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF 1/13 and I/39; Official History: David Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p.65

24 Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF 18/W-Z; Official History: Barton Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, p.404

25 Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. AMF 3/c and I/40; Official History: Gavin Long, *Greece, Crete and Syria*, p.424 and *The Final Campaigns*, p.325

26 Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. AMF 4/D and AMF I/48; Official History: Gavin Long, *Greece, Crete and Syria*, p.428 and *The Final Campaigns*, p.382.

VX4024 REITER, Frank Arnold**(10-Mar-1918-)²⁷**

MC	6-Mar-1947	1089	31st/51st Bn	1945	Bougainville
MM	25-Sep-1947	4515	2/7th Bn	27 May 1941	Evaded-Crete

QX2163 MACINTOSH, William Frederick**(22-Aug-1914-16-Apr-1993)²⁸**

MM	13-Jun-1941	3369	2/9th Bn	19/21 Mar 1941	Giarabub Libya
MC	27-Apr-1944	1927	2/9th Bn	Jan 1944	New Guinea

One MM recipient was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in 1945.

	London Gazette	Unit	Date	Place of award	
NX24405 CHOWNE, Albert			(19-Jul-1920-25-Mar-1945)²⁹		
MM	2-Mar-1944	1042	2/13th Bn	27 Sep 1943	Kreutberg New Guinea
VC	6-Sep-1945	4467	2/2nd Bn	25 Mar 1945	Dauga New Guinea

The recommendation for the MM for Sgt Albert Chowne reads as follows. The dates in the recommendation have been checked against the War Diary of the 2/13th Battalion and have been adjusted as indicated:

Sergeant Chowne was in command of detachments of mortars attached to a forward company on 25 October 1943 (sic—correct date 27 September 1943). The progress of the company was held up by a series of strong enemy positions in jungle astride a narrow ridge on the Kreutberg Range, west of Finschhafen. Reconnaissance was extremely difficult and several casualties had occurred in an attempt to determine the extent of the enemy opposition. Sergeant Chowne crawled forward to within a few yards of the enemy and ascertained their dispositions. When orders were given for an attack on the post, Chowne again worked his way forward with a telephone and cable and directed accurate mortar fire on the enemy at such close range that many of the bombs burst close about his own position. The accuracy of the mortar fire was the main factor in forcing the enemy to withdraw from that locality. Some days later, (sic—next day), this NCO repeated this act of bravery in front of another enemy post by going forward at great risk to himself to observe from a place where a short time before we had suffered a number of casualties. Again he was so close to the enemy that he was himself in danger from the fire he was directing. But this fire, by neutralising the enemy fire, enabled eight wounded men to be moved from a position where they had been covered by the enemy.

Posthumous awards

A circular issued on 27 May 1916 contained instructions that posthumous awards would not be made. That instruction stayed in force until 1979 when Queen Elizabeth II approved a proposal that MM and other awards could in future be awarded posthumously. Although posthumous awards were not permitted in the 1939-45 War, it was possible to raise a recommendation for a mortally wounded soldier and in other cases the soldier died of wounds or was killed in action prior to an award being gazetted. No less than 26 recipients did not live to learn of their award and sadly another 43 died or were killed prior to the presentation of the their award.

²⁷ Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. AMF O/A 41(1) and AMF 19/A-Z 79, Official History: Gavin Long, *Greece, Crete and Syria*, p.252 and *The Final Campaigns*, p.120.

²⁸ Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. AMF 11/M and AMF O/A 14.

²⁹ Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. AMF I/21 and O/A 29, Official History: David Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p.483 and Gavin Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p.321.

Honorary awards

Three Americans received honorary MM awards on the recommendation of the Governor General of Australia. Two of the awards were for the critical days of 28 to 30 January 1943 when the 17th Victorian Brigade landed at Wau just as the Japanese reached the airfield. Both members of the US Army Air Force's 374 Troop Carrier Group were:³⁰

15098508 S/Sgt William Lee HEATH, US Army Air Corps

6933207 T/Sgt Theodore Scott MILLARD, US Army Air corps

The third award was to 320505676 PFC Louis C GRILLI, 19th Medical Detachment, 24th US Infantry Division. The citation of his award states:

On 31 July 1944 Grilli was attached as Medical Orderly to an Australian spotting station at Lake Rombelai area Dutch New Guinea. In the early hours of the morning the station was attacked by 40 Japanese. During the action PFC Grilli shot a Japanese who was attacking with a bayonet a badly wounded Australian, Corporal Nish. While still under fire, PFC Grilli administered morphia and succeeded in stopping the bleeding of a serious wound in Corporal Nish's leg. By his disregard of personal danger, PFC Grilli undoubtedly saved the life of Corporal Nish by his prompt medical attention under fire and his successful evacuation of Corporal Nish to a safe area.

PFC Grilli was presented with the MM by the Australian Ambassador in Washington on 18 April 1947. QX15869 A/Sergeant Colin STUART of the Australian spotters was also awarded the MM in the same action. He was one of just six Australians awarded MMs for bravery in Dutch New Guinea (now West Irian).³¹

Only one recipient of the MM received a foreign award during the 1939-45 War. He was VX12513 Leslie Clarence ALLEN of the 2/5th Battalion, 17th Victorian Brigade, who received the MM for gallantry at Crystal Creek, New Guinea on 7 February 1943. Nearly six months later on 30 July 1943 the Victorians were fighting their way towards Salamaua and Corporal Allen received the United States Silver Star for twelve times advancing through heavy fire to bring in 12 American wounded.³²

Evade/escaping awards

A total of 31 MM awards, 26 to the Australian Army and 5 to the RAAF, were gazetted to Australians for evasion or escape from the enemy. This does not include awards to men who were captured. Many of the citations are quite detailed and tell stories of great endurance and initiative which are largely unknown. The detailed citation for VX4632 Sgt Robert George GORDON, 2/7th Battalion, is as follows:

Cpl. Gordon was taken prisoner at Sphakia on 1 June with Pte Bucheker. They were marched from Sphakia road and reached Canea hospital on 3rd. They were given rations of one packet of biscuits each and a tin of bully beef between three daily. On 4th they were marched to Alikianou. At first at Alikianou the rations were good, then they became very bad. Forage parties were allowed out to try and augment them, but

³⁰ Citation AWM 88, Item No. O/F 1 A/F

31 (12 Oct 1949-) Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF I/32.

32 (09-Nov-1916-11-May-1982) Citation AWM 88, Item Nos. AMF I/32 and AMF 21/A-Z 20.

things were so bad that donkey, which had been put in the camp for safe keeping was axed and eaten. Dysentery was rife. They started to plan their escape.

On the night of June 16 they crawled under the single barbed wire fence. It was pitch dark and they followed a route chosen by day. They had a watch with them but no other help. About a mile away, they got into cover and, waking up at daybreak beyond the ridge decided no further on. Everyone else had gone East, so they decided to travel West, Thinking there would be more chance of finding a boat. They were helped and sheltered by Greeks continually and finally directed to Omalo. At Aghia Irini, not far from Omalo, they met a New Zealand Sgt with a party of seven. These had two rifles and grenades and hoped to take forcible possession of a boat which the Greeks would not let them have. They went to Suia, but two friends told them Suia police had told them to give themselves up, so they decided to keep clear of the village and returned to Mani for supplies. Next day a Greek took them to Kustoyerako, a very pro-British, where they were well fed and cared for. Here two parties of escapees were trying to buy boats which the peasants would not let them have. The "cave" party managed to buy one, and set out, but returned as they did not consider it sea-worthy.

Shortly after this, on 23 or 24 June, the New Zealand Sgt with two others set off in a boat, but according to the Greeks they were captured by the Germans at Gavdos. Cpl Gordon and Pte Buchecker then examined the boat abandoned by the "cave" party, and decided that it was seaworthy. They noticed too, that the oars had been left. They collected stores, and after great difficulty found a spring near the water's edge to fill their water bottles. They tried to get away twice. Then Ptes Carter and McQuarrie joined them and they made a third attempt, with success. After ninety hours in this precarious craft rowing part of the way, and sailing with the help of a blanket rigged—they reached Tobruk.

This NCO showed courage, perseverance and resource throughout.

Awards to women

The Royal Warrant of 21 June 1916 extended eligibility for the MM to women for "bravery and devotion under fire". During the 1914-18 War 127 medals were gazetted to women including seven to Australian nurses. No Australians were among the five women awarded the MM during the Second World War. However, two Australian nurses, VX63845 Margaret ANDERSON³³ on MV *Empire Star* and NFX76584 Ellen SAVAGE³⁴ on HS *Centaur*, both won the George Medal at sea.

Engagements at sea

P E ABBOT and J M A TAMPLIN in *British Gallantry Awards* note that five British awards were made for engagements at sea, all being in respect of anti-aircraft defence.³⁵ There is one Australian award VX57613 Sapper William Richard JAENSCH, 2 Landing Ships Detachment RAE on 8 January 1945.

For courage and devotion to duty in remaining at his gun and helping to shoot down a 'suicide' bomber which attacked the ship and appeared likely to crash near his gun

³³ (11-Dec-1915-) Citation: AWM 88, Item No. AMF O/A 02

³⁴ (17-Oct-1912-) Ellen Savage died some years ago. Citation: AWM 88, Item No. AMF I/1.

³⁵ P E Abbott and J M A Tamplin, *British Gallantry Awards*, Nimrod Dix & co, London, 1981, p.228

position on the Poop eventually crashing into the sea ten feet of the stern. It is considered that by his action he materially assisted in maintaining the safety of the ship.

Johnson and Johnston

On 28 October 1948, the Governor-General of Australia approved two belated mention-in-dispatches and submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations a strong recommendation for MMs for VX44744 Sgt. Arthur ADAMS³⁶ and QX9078 Private Ray JOHNSON.³⁷ The King approved the awards which were announced in the *London Gazette* on 11 February 1949.³⁸

QX9078 Private Ray Johnson of the 2/15th Battalion was presented with the MM by the Governor of Queensland on 18 April 1950. Sometime between the announcement in the *London Gazette* and the presentation by the Governor of Queensland it became evident that the award had been gazetted to the wrong man.³⁹ The medal had been gazetted to QX9078 Private Ray Johnson but should have been awarded to QX1656 Pte. Rae Johnston.⁴⁰

How the mistake occurred is best described by Prime Minister Robert Menzies in his letter to the Governor-General. The then Mr Menzies wrote that both men had similar names, both were born in December 1919, both enlisted in June 1940, both were from Brisbane, both served in the 2/15th Battalion, both were captured at the same place near Derna on 7 April 1941, both were interned in Italy, both escaped to Switzerland and both arrived back in Australia on the same day!⁴¹

In order to seek a solution, the Australia Army representative in London confidentially approached the War Office who unofficially discussed the matter with the Honours and Decorations Committee. The representative reported that similar mistakes had occurred in the past and that the proper procedure would be to submit a new citation for QX1656 Pte Rae Johnston using the exact phraseology previously used in the citation for QX9078 Pte Ray Johnson as the actions described then were in fact preformed by the former and not the latter. In addition a new citation should be submitted at the same time for QX9078 Pte Ray Johnson if on investigation such a submission should prove to be justified.⁴²

The Australian authorities adopted this course of action and a submission went from the Minister of the Army, to the Prime Minister, to the Governor-General and then to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. The citation for QX1656 Pte Rae Johnston stated:

QX1656 Pte Rae Johnston was No. 2 of a Three Inch Mortar team which had been ordered into action against attacking forces of the German 91st Light Division. He carried the Mortar base-plate from its vehicle to the "Action position" across 200 yards of desert, mainly devoid of cover, while subject to fire from enemy small arms

³⁶ (10 May 1914-) Citation AWM 88, Item No. AMF I/32

³⁷ QX9078 Private Ray Johnson, born 19 Dec 1919, enlisted AIF 12 Jun 1940, died 6 Jan 1979.

³⁸ For a full account of this story see Anthony Staunton, Mistaken Identity: Ray Johnson, MM, and Rae Johnston, MM, *The Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society*, Spring 1992, Vol 31, No.1, pp.16-18.

³⁹ The recommendation for QX1656 Pte. Rae Johnston by Col. R. F. Marlan, was dated 4 Apr 1950 and was approved by Major General w. M. Anderson, Adjutant-General on 15 April 1950 three days before the presentation to QX9078 Private Ray Johnson.

⁴⁰ QX1656 Pte Rae Johnston, born 31 Dec 1919, enlisted AIF 3 Jun 1940, presently residing in Queensland.

⁴¹ AWM 88, Item No. AMFO/A 52, 7 Jul 1950, Prime Minister Menzies to Governor-General.

⁴² AWM 88, Item No. AMFO/A 52, 7 JUL 1950, res J/2/4270, Minister of the Army Francis Lo Prime Minister.

and armoured fighting vehicles. Subsequently he returned to the vehicle (which had been set on fire by enemy shells) for ammunition. He assisted to keep the Mortar in action during its engagement at short range by enemy armour and small arms fire, and finally rendered the weapon useless before being captured. He set a fine example of coolness and devotion to duty while in the face of the enemy.

Further investigation revealed that whilst QX9078 Private Ray Johnson had been improperly awarded the MM, it was considered that he did in fact, render service that would justify the award of the MM.⁴³ A revised citation was prepared:

On 6 April 1941, 2/15th Bn AIF were holding Barce Pass covering the withdrawal east of the remainder of 20th Australian infantry Brigade Group. The enemy were reported in action against El Mechili 130 miles ESE ie to the rear and on an open flank. 2/15th Bn withdrew in motor transport during the night 6/7 April in Company groups covered by its own advanced and rear guards. On the morning of 7 April the HQ Coy Group was attacked by armoured and mechanised patrols of 91 German Light Division. The subsequent action took place in the open desert near Wadi Derna.

QX9078 Private Ray Johnson was a member of HQ Coy Group which had just embussed preparatory to continuing the road move. On the enemy being sighted the "Alarm" signal was given and the "Order Group" called forward to receive instructions for the occupation of a defensive position nearby. Some of the leaders were delayed in reporting for orders and QX9078 Private Ray Johnson on his own initiative, selected an initial fire position near to and covering his section vehicle. He organised this position and transported ammunition and weapons to it. By the time he had been relieved of responsibility for the post by a Sergeant returning from the "Order Group" his sub-section had succeeded in getting an ex-Italian Breda machine gun into action. His initiative and promptitude in the early stage of the action and his courage and coolness throughout helped to prevent a difficult situation from developing into local chaos and confusion.

On 25 September 1950, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations advised the Governor-General that The King had been pleased to approve the award of the MM to QX1656 Pte Rae Johnston and the announcement to that effect would appear in the *London Gazette* of 6 October. The award was to be backdated to 11 February 1949. The Governor-General was advised that The King had also given approval that the MM for QX9078 Pte Ray Johnson should stand and that both awards would have the same promulgation date of 11 February 1949.

The *London Gazette* published the award to QX1656 Pte Rae Johnston on 6 October 1950. The gazette entry was headed The War Office, 11 February 1949, but there was no indication in the gazette notice or the press release to the fact that the award to QX9078 Pte Ray Johnson has been confirmed and that his citation had been amended.⁴⁴ However, the Governor-General's Honours and Awards files which are now controlled by Australian Archives and are available for inspection at the Australian War Memorial clearly indicate that both MM awards to QX9078 Pte Ray Johnson and QX1656 Pte Rae Johnston are valid and should be counted as separate awards.

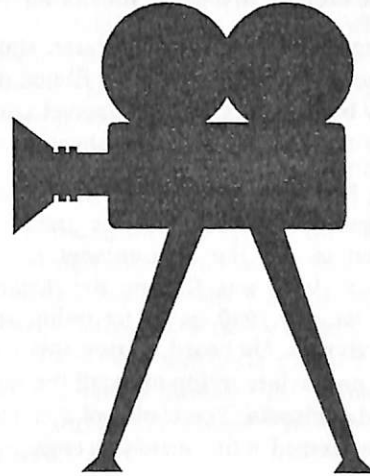
⁴³ AWM 88, Item No. AMF O/A 52, 1 Aug 1950, Honours Dispatch No. 220, Governor-General to Secretary of state for Commonwealth Relations.

⁴⁴ AWM 88, Item No. AMF 18T52, press release, 3 1ct 1950 embargoed 6 a.m., 6 Oct 1950. The press produced almost verbatim in *The Age*, Melbourne, Monday 9 oct 1950, p.4.

Damien Parer 1 August 1912 - 17 September 1944 a biography

J H Macdermott

As the Fiftieth Anniversary of the death of Australia's foremost acclaimed war photographer draws nigh I feel it is appropriate to pause and reflect on the wastage of genius. That he was a genius of the cameracraft can not be disputed when one reads the plaudits of his peers as well as viewing the moving image that he had captured. Those interested in the craft of the camera should, on that day, honour the man who in less than twenty years of work achieved a standard of excellence in the craft that has set standards which, I believe, are seldom matched to this day.



Damien, the seventh son and youngest child of John Arthur Parer and Teresa (nee Carolin), was born on Thursday, 1st August, 1912, in Malvern, Victoria. It has been said that from his Spanish born father he inherited spiritual, artistic and creative insight; while from his Australian born mother (of Irish descent) he received a gift of laughter with a total indifference to materialistic values. At the time of his birth his father operated a hotel on King Island, Bass Strait, hence he spent much of his childhood there. He was later sent to St Aloysius College, Portland, Victoria for schooling. Following his family relocation to Albury, he was transferred to St Stanislaus College, Bathurst, NSW.

Damien was 12 years old when given his first camera and apparently developed his love of the cameracraft from this time. Talking to Chester Wilmot in January, 1941, he said he was only 14 years old when he developed his keen technical interest in the Camera workings after a chance look at the magazine, *Australian Photographic Review*. He saved pocket money of three shillings to buy the book, *All About Photography*, and became largely self taught reading every book on photography that he could find while building an extensive library of the subject. In his late teens he organised an apprenticeship with a Melbourne studio.¹

By 1933 he was deeply interested in the making of moving pictures. Fortuitously, through a chance meeting of his father with Charles Chauvel during a train journey, Damien was able to join the Chauvel camera crew who were making the film *Heritage* in St Kilda, Melbourne. Later Chauvel moved to the Pagewood studios, Sydney, and Damien was employed as a camera assistant there during 1935 and 1936. Productions included *Uncivilised*, *The Flying Doctor*, and *Rangle River*. He worked with English cameraman Errol Hinds and developed a deep

¹ Australian Broadcasting Commission, Guest of Honour Interview between Damien Parer and Chester Wilmot, 24 January 1941, reported in book; *Xmas Down South—1939*, by Damien Parer with a postscript by Michael S. Parer. p.63

friendship with Ron Maslyn Williams, a junior editor. In between movies he worked as a stills photographer.

Inculcated at an early age with a profound love of the Australian ethos it is inevitable that he found identity with the poets: A B Paterson and Henry Lawson. So imbued was he that he prepared two short low-budget films under the general title of *This Place Australia* with some influence by photographer Max Dupain and in collaboration with both George Hughes and Stan Tolhurst. These were shot in the Blue Mountains near Katoomba and near Bathurst. Kenneth George Hall stated in his book that he had only met Damien once before the war, "when he brought in a short, illustrating one of Henry Lawson's poems ... It was excellent."²

Hetherington, in his article on Parer, states that Damien next worked with Chauvel on *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, which was filmed mainly in and around Sydney. He is not listed among the crew by Pike & Cooper. Chauvel commenced filming in 1938 in the Cronulla sandhills, and later at Orange.³ The main shooting was during 1940 without Parer.

In 1939, he commenced work in the Department of Commerce and, in a typical Public Service reorganisation, his section was transferred later to the Department of Information. He "managed to get the appointment as official movie photographer to the AIF"⁴ and, in December 1939, was filming the departure of AIF troops from Melbourne. While at sea through January 1940, as his troopship sailed towards the Middle East, he filmed various ship-board activities. On board, during this voyage, the War correspondent John Hetherington met Damien and, while trying to recall the impact of the meeting, wrote, "I certainly knew him for a devoted craftsman. You could not spend ten minutes with him and not know that the camera was his life he seemed at first merely an engaging eccentric absorbed in the technique of his trade."⁵

He became the first of three official cameramen serving with the AIF in the Middle East. The others who arrived later, were Captain Frank Hurley (who had worked with both Hall and Chauvel and was a famed Antarctic photographer) and George Silk (Still photographer) of New Zealand. The Team also included Ron Maslyn Williams (writer and editor) and Alan Anderson (sound technician). Parer shot memorable footage of camp life in both Palestine and Gaza. These, and later films were included in Newsreels which were shown in all picture theatres only a week or two after receipt.

The importance of Newsreels to the home front at that time is lost on the post-war TV generation. It should be remembered that before television the Newsreel was the quickest way people could experience the current worldwide happenings of life.

For the fall of Bardia, December 1940 - January 1941, he had gone on board HMS *Ladybird* and filmed the naval action. Damien told Wilmot that, "This little gunboat had two six inch guns, and whenever they fired, the ship shuddered so much that I thought I would shake to pieces, and it was very hard to hold a steady camera."⁶

² *Australian Film. The Inside Story*, by Ken G. Hall p.127. One of these films being based on Patterson's "The Song of the Future", the other on Lawson's "The Storm That is to Come", and "Waratah and Wattle".

³ *War Cameraman. The Story of Damien Parer*, by Neil McDonald. pps 21-23. Pike & Cooper is not necessarily a complete authority. The Sydney premiere was Boxing Day, 26 December 1940.

⁴ McDonald, p.34

⁵ *Australians—Nine Profiles*, by John Hetherington. Chapter titled, "The Immortal Cameraman". p.163

⁶ Michael Parer, p.93 (same interview as in footnote 1, above.

Other films he made included coverage of the capture and occupation of Derna with its all important aerodrome and other areas of the Libyan Campaign during January-February 1941. He also sought out both RAN (Australian ships in the Mediterranean Sea, May 1941) and RAAF units for filming. He was with RAAF Squadrons in the Western Desert, December 1941-January 1942. He joined an RAAF bombing mission over the Middle East. Overall these actions Parer was making his name with his "Battle Front" film footage. During the Siege of Tobruk he tried to show the day by day story August through October 1941, as well as covering the Relief of Tobruk in December 1941.

Hall and Cinesound claim much credit for Damien's exposure as Hall later wrote, "he had maintained a continual correspondence with Damien Parer while he was in North Africa and elsewhere, telling him how his negatives had turned out and sending him clips of it ... He was obviously star material as a cameraman and well worth all the help I could give him. So we gave him publicity, built him up with the public and he soon became well known."⁷

Damien returned to Australia prior to the Japanese attacks on New Guinea, nevertheless, he soon found himself headed for New Guinea. He produced footage of New Guinea fighting commencing with the blitz on Moresby in June 1942. He found what he termed the "strangest supply route of the war" filming activity in the Wau-Salamaua-Bulolo areas from June to August 1942. It was his filming of jungle warfare on what became the Kokoda Trail over August to September 1942 that Cinesound marketed as a newsreel: *Kokoda Front Line*. He made documentary films covering a visit to Timor to film the commando operations there during November, 1942. Again he did not omit RAAF coverage filming the Bismarck Sea Battle from a RAAF Beaufighter aircraft; "crouching behind a pilot's head"⁸ in March 1943. He also filmed the nurses in New Guinea in April 1943.

Ken G Hall, who was Cinesound Newsreel's managing editor in Sydney from 1932 to 1956, produced, supervised the editing, and wrote the commentary for *Kokoda Front Line*. It was first shown at the State Newsreel Theatre on 22 September 1942, and was very well attended. The popularity of the film surprised all: it was the best advertisement of the problems and difficulties facing and surmounted by the Australian soldier. He was also countering the heavy media accent on American propaganda. At this time the part played by the Australian soldiers in any action received scant attention in media commentary. This film, "Kokoda Front Line", was co-awarded the Academy Award as best documentary film of 1943 by the USA Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. The Academy arranged for the Australian born Director John Farrow to accept the award at the 4 March 1943 ceremony.⁹

It is reported that this film did not please Damien as he had become a perfectionist in film-making and Hetherington¹⁰ quotes Parer as preferring his *Assault on Salamaua* (filmed June to August 1943). This belief was later shared by Hall.¹¹ The Official History mentions that in July 1943, Damien put aside the camera to take around buns and tea for members of the 2/3 Inde-

⁷ Hall, p.131

⁸ Hall, p.128. McDonald, pp.179-186

⁹ McDonald, p.195, *Academy Award Winners*, p.86. There had been 25 nominations for this category, the Academy decided to allocate 4 co-winners. See also *Inside Oscar. The Unofficial History of the Academy Awards* p.129 and pp.711-712. Also see *Cinema in Australia: a documentary history*, general editor, Ina Bertrand pp.213-214.

¹⁰ Hetherington, p.177

¹¹ Hall, p.103

pendent Company engrossed in the battle for Timbered Knoll. As a result, a feature, "Parer's Bowl" (250 yards from Timbered Knoll) was named after Damien.¹²

Kokoda Front Line is believed to be the only war newsreel to have received the "Oscar", and the Statuette, received by Hall after the War, is now residing in the National Film and Sound Archive, in Canberra. As Hall commented, "Without Damien there could have been no Academy Award film. Without Cinesound's treatment of his film there would have been no Academy Award anyway."¹³

Damien was not only a genius photographer, he had many short articles printed in various newspapers as well as becoming known through his interviews over the wireless networks with Chester Wilmot and others. McDonald advises, "The day before the [Kokoda] newsreel was released, Damien was interviewed by Frederick Daniell on the Macquarie Network of radio stations. Parer used the broadcast to amplify and explain many of the images of the film." He went on to describe the incredible conditions under which the Australians fought also emphasising the supply problems—details not fully understood by either the military or political hierarchy let alone the civilian population. He also described details of rouses used by the Japanese enemy to surprise our forces. Damien said that the Militia, 39th Battalion in maintaining contact before reinforcements arrived had done "a corker job".¹⁴

Damien keenly felt the apparent lack of commitment in the Home population to the war effort, which he encountered in his visits, and he continually strived to promote the Australian "Digger" to counter the American propaganda. This lack of appreciation in the population may have had its seeds in the manner of wartime censorship; with its suppression of deeds performed by the Australian forces due to the Australian Government's perceived need to over promote the American machine.

Damien was a very religious man, deeply ensconced in his Faith. There are many references from numerous authors attributing his easy handling of his belief to a total commitment which he wore as casually as others would wear clothes. In a February 1940 letter written to Max Dupain from the Middle East, Damien wrote, "the ancient faith has stood by me in tempting circumstances, but it is the greatest thing in my life."¹⁵ Several have referred to Damien's practice of taking prayers morning and night—perhaps in a corner of a crowded tent.

Despite being in the field he could not avoid being tied to the Australian bureaucracy hence he could not escape the red tape which annoyed him to the extent that he resigned on 25 May 1943, by a letter sent from New Guinea. He then joined the American organisation, Paramount, which assigned him later to cover amphibious landings of American troops on Guam.

On leave in Sydney he married Miss Elizabeth Marie Cotter, of Wollstonecraft, Sydney, on Thursday, 23 March 1944. This was not a "whirlwind" courtship as in a letter dated 6 December, 1943 he had spoken of her "unswerving love of me ... is one of the most beautiful

¹² *Australia in the War of 1939-1945. The New Guinea Offensives.* p.172

¹³ Ken Hall letter to Michael Parer, 16 May 1982, quoted by Michael Parer, p.97.

¹⁴ McDonald, p.166. McDonald frequently refers to apparent lack of knowledge by the military planners, of both the USA and Australian Forces, in the fighting conditions in New Guinea. These misconceptions led to the removal of several Line Commanders including General Rowell. See also the article, "How Radio Helped Commandos", by Damien Parer, in the Sydney Morning Herald of 4 January 1943, regarding Portuguese Timor.

¹⁵ Damien Parer, letter to Max and Olive Dupain, Saturday 21 February 1940, from *Official War Photographer AIF Headquarters Abroad*, p.8. Quoted by Michael Parer, p.89. See also Hetherington p.163, pp.171 and 178.

things that has come into my life.”¹⁶ Their only child Damien Robert, was born on 15 February 1945.

His final assignment was covering the landing of the US Marines on Pelelieu Island in the Palau group, central Pacific Ocean. As they advanced two days after the landing Parer was killed in action. Denis Warner wrote, “Where others thought of security first, and pictures second, Parer thought only of pictures. That he was a conspicuous target did not trouble him at all. One night he failed to return ... He had died walking backwards towards the Japanese positions filming American tanks ... Parer was not on the frontline. He was beyond it ... There was only one way to photograph the action, he believed, and that was to be part of it”.¹⁷ J E Vines recorded that he fell “12 yards in front of a Jap pillbox”.¹⁸

In an *Argus* report Ted Genock, Paramount Newsreel chief, stated, “that Parer was a genius. He had been doing the most impressive original work in the newsreel field today”. The US Navy commented that since Parer left the Australian Department of Information he had made an impressive picture of Guam for Paramount Films with featured commentary on the lines of his Kokoda film.¹⁹ In another report, on 9 March 1945, the *Argus* stated that Damien had been “Mentioned in Despatches” with others for their work as war correspondents in New Guinea.

Guy Harriott wrote of Parer, “His films of the fighting ... were considered by many to have done more than anything else to promote in Great Britain and the United States a realisation of the part Australian troops were playing in the Pacific War ... He believed that a war photographer’s place was with the frontline troops, and his utter disregard of danger in carrying out his job made him something of a legend among the AIF and later the United States Marines. His complete simplicity and sincerity earned him their affection as well as their respect.”²⁰

Ken Hall, in May 1982, observed, “Damien was quite a man and a genuine character in his own right, warm, human, fallible. He was a good cameraman ... Damien’s great gift was knowing what to shoot, to look for the human interest angle, to remember the dictum, ‘people are interested in people’. His other great natural gift was an uncanny knack of being in the right place at the right time ... The Cameraman has to be there when it happens.”²¹ It should be obvious that writing can be done at any time following the event, but, filming the event, honestly, has to be done as the action unfolds.

Denis Warner, wrote from Palau to the *Sydney Sun*, “Parer regretted before his death that he was no longer covering the Australian troops. Often he told me he thought he knew the Australian soldier better than anyone else and felt that if he had been able to portray for the world

¹⁶ Letter to “Ronnie” from Damien Parer War Correspondent GHQ Press, 6 December 1943. Copy held in the National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra.

¹⁷ *The Herald*, Melbourne, Friday 13 September 19(?). In this article Denis Warner compares the similarity of dedication in two war photographers—Damien Parer and Neil Davis. I am still trying to track down the year of publication of this clipping.

¹⁸ *The Sun*, Friday, 29 September 1944. Also reported in *The Age*, Friday 29 September 1944.

¹⁹ *Argus*, Monday 25 September 1944.

²⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, Monday 25 September 1944, (Guy Harriott). See also the AAP report in *The Sun* and *The Age* of the same date.

²¹ Letter from Ken G Hall to Michael Parer of May 1982, quoted by Michael Parer, p.91

the spirit of the Australian fighting man in a documentary film, his life would have been well spent."²²

That this was fulfilled is shown by usage of Parer footage in later films such as: Eric Porter's 1946 film, *A Star is Born* (New Guinea); and Ron Maslyn Williams 1952 film *Mike and Stefani* (Middle East).²³ Both the National Film and Sound Archive and the Australian War Memorial have holdings of the film shot by Cameraman Parer.

Lest We Forget.

NOTES

I wish to thank both the National Film and Sound Archive and Mr Neil McDonald for assistance in the preparation of this paper. In this paper, not all of Damien's filmclips have been listed—I have tried to make the listing representative of his work.

SOURCES

Atkinson, Ann, *The Dictionary of Famous Australians*, St Leonards, Sydney, NSW, Allen & Unwin, 1992.

Bergan, Ronald, Graham Fuller & David Malcolm, *Academy Award Winners*, UK, Admiral, 1986.

Cinema in Australia: a Documentary History, Ina Bertrand, general editor. Sydney, New South Wales University Press, 1989.

Cunningham, Stuart, *Featuring Australia. The Cinema of Charles Chauvel*, North Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1991.

Dexter, David, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945: the New Guinea Offensives*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1961.

The Documentary Film in Australia, edited by Ross Lansell & Peter Beilby, published by Cinema Papers in association with Film Victoria, 1982.

Hall, Ken G. *Australian Film: the Inside Story*, Sydney, Summit Books, 1977 (1980 edition).

Hetherington, John, *Australians—Nine Profiles*, Chapter, "The Immortal Cameraman", Melbourne, F W Cheshire, 1960.

McDonald, Neil, *War Cameraman. The Story of Damien Parer*. Melbourne, Thomas C. Lothian Pty. Ltd. 1994.

Parer, Damien, *Xmas Down South—1939*, Postscript by Michael S. Parer. Geelong, Vic. Allella Books, 1982.

Pike, Andrew and Ross Cooper, *Australian Film 1900-1977: A Guide to Feature Film Production*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press in association with The Australian Film Institute, 1980.

Shirley, Graham and Brian Adams, *Australian Cinema. The First Eighty Years*, Currency Press, 1989, revised edition.

Wiley, Mason and Damien Bona, *Inside Oscar: the unofficial history of the Academy Awards*, edited by Gail MacColl, New York, Ballantine Books, updated edition, March 1987.

²² *The Sun*, Sydney, Tuesday 26 September 1944 (Denis Warner). Also see Tribute by Minister for Information, Mr. Arthur Calwell, same paper. Usual politician/bureaucracy platitudes, however, as Calwell had met Damien he may have meant them, but, at that time unable politically to expand. Another tribute, "Death of a Hero", was printed in the Tribune, Melbourne, Thursday 28 September 1944.

²³ Pike and Cooper, p.266 and pp.278-280.

Goodbye, John Price— the passing of a dedicated military historian

Warren Perry¹

John Ernest Price died in Melbourne in March 1994 aged 68 years. It was a common saying in the Army that “No man is indispensable”. Then in another place a distinguished Australian Chief Justice in taking up his office said much the same thing when he said “When one man goes another must take his place”. Nevertheless, in the case of John Price these sayings to become applicable to him may need some qualifications, for some at least of his colleagues and friends in the Naval Historical Society of Australia and in the Military Historical Society of Australia believe that “We shall not see his like again”.

Shakespeare has told us that “Man in his time plays many parts” and this statement applied to John Price in all respects. In addition to his full-time occupation of an Australian Postman, John Price throughout his adult life always had a number of other “occupations” and interests which he pursued concurrently, with great ingenuity in the matter of time and expense, but “outside office hours” so to speak. Some of these activities will be mentioned later.

John Ernest Price was born in England at Birmingham on 9 September 1925—the year Great Britain returned to the Gold Standard. He was the son of John and Rose Price. His father had been a regular soldier of the British Army in which he had enlisted in 1909. At the outbreak of the War of 1914-18 he was serving with his regiment, the Leicestershire Regiment, in India. His regiment soon sailed from India for active service on the Western Front in Europe and thus joined “The Old Contemptibles” of the BEF. In the course of duty on the Western Front Private John Price was wounded six times including gas wounds. At the time of the Armistice on 11 November 1918 he was a Prisoner of War somewhere in Germany.

Seven years later John Ernest Price was born in Birmingham.

When the War of 1939-45 began in September 1939, John Ernest Price was a schoolboy and it was not until six days later that he attained the age of 14 years. About this time his schooling, in which he had only reached the primary school level, closed. Its closure at this level may be attributed to a combination of the Great Depression which began with the “Wall Street Crash” of October 1929 followed by further domestic disruption caused by the outbreak of the War of 1939-45 which before its closure engulfed John Price junior in its fighting forces. At 18 years of age in 1943, presumably, he was drafted into the York and Lancaster Regiment and served in India, Burma, and Singapore.

After the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific in August 1945 he returned to the United Kingdom and in 1947 he was demobilised. In that year he turned 22 years of age. In January 1951 John Price migrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. Two years later, in 1953, his parents and his sister Jenny migrated from England and the Price family established a new home in the Melbourne suburb of Malvern.

In 1960 John Price became an Australian Public Servant and was employed for the next 21 years in the Postmaster-General’s Department as a Postal official. He was employed at first in the Mail Branch at the GPO at the corner of Bourke and Spencer Streets, Melbourne. Two

¹ Sometime Federal President of the MHSA

years later he was transferred to the Post Office at Carnegie as a Postman. Then in 1967 he was transferred to the Post Office at Cheltenham as a Postman and he remained there until he retired in 1981.

During his career in the PMG's Department he was also pursuing his many other "occupations" which were referred to earlier. In 1964 he became interested in Geology and he attended several courses in this subject which were conducted by the Victorian Council of Adult Education at the University of Melbourne. While attending these classes, he met Miss Nancy May George, who was also attending the same classes.

He also pursued other interests. He resumed in Melbourne an interest which he had first had in England in the Scout movement and became a Scoutmaster. He was a member of long standing of the Orders and Medals Research Society. At various times he was the Secretary of the Military Historical Society of Australia at the Federal and Victorian Branch levels. He also served as a Chapter Secretary and Newsletter Editor in Victoria of the Naval Historical Society of Australia. After his official retirement from the Postal Service he interested himself actively in the Corps of Commissionaires (Victoria) and he ultimately became a member of its Advisory Committee. He was also interested in the Masonic Lodge movement in Victoria and in 1990 he became a Worshipful Master of a Lodge.

Space forbids a further recital of his many interests, but during his pursuit of all his many interests he and Miss Nancy May George were married on Wednesday 25 October 1967 at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Springvale. John Price was then employed at the Post Office at Cheltenham so they established a home at 16 Barrett Street, Cheltenham where they were still residing at the time of his death.

From this time onwards John Price began to take a more serious and systematic interest in the study and writing of Australian and British modern military history. As a research historian he usually followed the advice of the Army tactical instructor, if funds permitted that "Time spent on reconnaissance is seldom wasted".

In 1978 he travelled widely in South Africa to study operational areas of the contestants in the South African War of 1899-1902. At another time he studied on the ground the battlefields of the Gallipoli campaign of 1915.

He was tireless in his efforts to overcome his initial educational handicap as an historiographer, but want of generosity and good manners by some of his associates did not daunt John Price. He was generous and sincere in his own conduct and his aim was ever to make his performance better next time. He wrote books, he wrote research papers he addressed meetings on military subjects of historical interest. His practice was to pass on freely any knowledge he had to others who asked for it. Only a few weeks before he died I discussed with him some details of the South African campaign of 1899-1902, including the negotiations at Pretoria between the British C-in-C of the British Field Forces in South Africa General Lord Kitchener and the British High Commissioner in South Africa, Lord Milner, on the one part and, on the other the Boer leaders. John Price also filled in gaps in my knowledge about "Melrose House", Pretoria and sent me some interesting documentary information which he had collected there on the spot about "Melrose House" which today is a museum. In 1902 it was British GHQ in the field and Kitchener and his staff worked and resided there. I have just mentioned, above, John Price as a lecturer and I should now add that in speech he was the ideal of authors of textbooks on English Phonetics. One could not detect in his speech whether he came from Birmingham or Bendigo for it was as free of dialect as it was of any local accent.

It is a fact of life that men forget and men are soon-forgotten. So to keep memory green for a time I have tried to give here a picture of John Price to enable those who knew him to refresh their memories of him and to enable those who did not know him to learn something of the kind of person John Ernest Price was—he was a man who kept himself humble in mind and avoided vanity and self-seeking.

John Ernest Price died in hospital in the Melbourne suburb of Sandringham on the 4 March 1994—towards the end hopes of his recovery were not realised. On Tuesday afternoon 8 March 1994 at Tobin Brothers' Chapel at 1352 High Street, Malvern a Funeral Service began at 2.30 and lasted for almost an hour. The mourners can best be described numerically, as a full parade of friends and colleagues from the various organisations with which John Price had been associated. In the Chapel the seating accommodation was soon occupied and then the standing room was soon taken to its limits. My wife and I could not claim to have seen everybody who was present so large was the number. I did see Barry Videon who is one of the foundation members of the Military Historical Society. An absent original member of the MHSA was Alfred Festberg late of Brunswick in Germany and Melbourne in Australia. Alfred still remembered by his many friends with respect and admiration for his efforts in helping to build up the MHSA died in Melbourne some years ago.

The Chief Mourners were John Price's widow Nancy Price and his sister Jenny. The Funeral Service at the Chapel in Malvern was followed by a private cremation at Springvale.

Medals of Indonesian Independence, 1945 and 1950

Paul A Rosenzweig

The archipelago of over 13 000 islands today known as Indonesia—Nusantara—has risen to glorious heights in the eras of Sriwijaya and Majapahit but has also suffered under colonisation and occupation by foreigners. The relatively short history of the modern archipelago nation is well chronicled by its series of decorations and medals (*tanda tanda kehormatan*), commencing with those issued in relation to the attainment of independence, in 1945, and of the struggle in the ensuing years to attain sovereignty. Indonesian Independence (*Kemerdekaan*), together with its date of *17 Agustus 1945*, pervades every facet of Indonesian life—from the national anthem through to the naming of organisations and institutions—and is symbolically represented in the *Garuda*, the embodiment of the state ideology based upon the five guiding principles of Indonesian democracy, *Pancasila*.

Independence Medal (*Satya Lencana Kemerdekaan*)

The Japanese desire for the oilfields and refineries in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and the failure of diplomacy and negotiations through 1940 and 1941, led Japan to embark on a campaign to forcefully bring the NEI into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The Japanese Eastern Force swept through the Celebes, reaching Ambon on 30 January 1942, Bali on 19 February, Dili in Portuguese East Timor and Kupang in West Timor on 20 February, and landing on Java itself on 1 March. By that same day, the Western Force, from Hainan Island and Indochina, had struck at Malaya and North Borneo, and had landed on Sumatra and West Java. The Central Force meanwhile, was striking at East Borneo and the Celebes. Some Indonesians (mostly Ambonese and other Moluccans) fought side-by-side with Dutch forces in the Battles of Lombok Strait (19-20 February 1942) and Java Sea (27-28 February)¹ but, following assaults on Batavia on 1 March, the Royal Netherlands Indian Army (KNIL) capitulated on 8 March 1942.

In occupying the Netherlands East Indies, known to the Japanese as *Shonan* ("Great Eastern Territories"), the Japanese had an advantage they had not experienced elsewhere—they were seen by most as liberators rather than invaders, and their occupation was generally welcomed by the indigenous people who had tired of three centuries of Dutch colonial rule. Certainly, some groups maintained a loyalty to the Dutch, particularly in the eastern provinces (notably Maluku), and in this lay the seeds of subsequent dissent. That the Japanese were welcomed is evident in the adoption, after independence, of red and white as the Indonesian national colours, and of the incorporation of the five-pointed star into all Army insignia and buttons,

¹ Earning the following Netherlands awards:

- (a) Cross for Important War Actions (*Kruis voor Belangrijke Krijgs-verrigtingen*), known colloquially as the Expedition Cross (*Expeditie-Kruis*); and
- (b) Commemorative War Cross (*Oorlogs-Herinneringskruis*), with such clasps as:
- *Krijg Ter Zee 1940-45* (Sea War, 1940-45);
 - *Krijg Ter Land 1940-45* (Land War, 1940-45);
 - *Nederlandsch-Indie 1941-42* (Dutch Indies, 1941-42);
 - *Java Zee 1941-1942* (Java Sea, 1941-42);
 - *Oost-Azie-Zuid-Pacifc 1942-45* (East Asia / South Pacific, 1941-42).

and in particular, on the steel helmet.² Most importantly, upon the end of the war in 1945 Indonesia issued, not a "Victory over Japan" medal, but rather, an Independence Medal.

In liberating Indonesia from the Dutch, the Japanese found that there were various nationalist movements in existence which would support them, so these anti-Dutch movements were keenly fostered, the Japanese encouraging the formation of regional councils and "People's Committees" which could, in time, form the basis of an independent Government—it was



Indonesian Independence Medal (*Satya Lencana Kemerdekaan*)

the publicly stated intention of the Japanese to allow Indonesian independence by mid-1946. As the Japanese suffered defeats however, they brought the date for Indonesian independence forward to August 1945. Prior to the Japanese surrender, on 17 August 1945 Dr Soekarno (subsequently the first President) and Dr Mohammed Hatta (Vice-President) proclaimed the independence of the Indonesian Republic at 56 *Jalan Pengangsaan Timur*, this street since being renamed *Jalan Proklamasi*.³ After the reading of the proclamation, the Indonesian national flag was raised for the first time by Latief Hendraningrat and Suhud Martokusumo. Soekarno's proclamation, stored today in the Indonesian National Monument (*Monumen Nasional*—MONAS) in Jakarta, was actually dated 17 August "05" in deference to the Japanese, 1945 being the year 2605 by the Japanese calendar.

To commemorate their liberation in 1945, Indonesia issued an Independence Medal (*Satya Lencana*⁴ *Kemerdekaan*). This is a circular medal with the edge comprising wreaths of rice and cotton, depicted as the fifth of the five principles of *Pancasila* to represent social justice (keadilan sosial) for the people of Indonesia—food and clothing for all. The obverse of the

² Until 1965, when all insignia was changed considerably. The star is still the Army symbol though, and is included in the Army hat badge (*kartika ekapaksi*) and is worn by itself by officers on the side-cap.

³ Sjahrir was chosen to be the first Prime Minister.

⁴ Indonesian medals were originally known by the title of *Satyalantjana* ("badge of loyalty"), although they have been referred to as *Satya Lencana* since the modernisation of the Indonesian language in 1972.

medal bears a five-pointed star, the word *Kemerdekaan* (Independence) and the year 1945, while the reverse has REPUBLIK INDONESIA in raised capitals. The ribbon is red with five equally-spaced thin blue stripes. It would be a further four years of fighting, however, before the Indonesians could rightfully claim full sovereignty.

War of Independence Medals I and II (*Sata Lencana Peshwa I dan II*)

A People's Peacekeeping Army (*Tentara Keamanan Rakjat*—TKR) was raised on 5 October 1945, this date being celebrated annually as Armed Forces Day. On 18 December 1945, Colonel Soedirman (formerly commanding Division V) was elected as Commander-in-Chief of the TKR with the rank of General, subsequently becoming known as "Bapak ABRT"—Father of the Armed Forces. After some changes in designation,⁵ on 3 June 1947 it gained the title it retains today—*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*,⁶ sworn to the death to defend the sanctity of the Proclamation of Independence on 17 August 1945.

One month following the defeat of Japan and the proclamation of Indonesian independence, Allied Forces began landing throughout the archipelago and sporadic fighting broke out. The British intended to allow the Indonesians to establish themselves, and they departed in November 1946. The Linggadjati Agreement was de facto recognition by the Dutch of an independent Indonesia in Sumatra and Java, allowing for full independence by 1 January 1949 but, following disagreements over the terms of the Agreement, the Dutch delayed signing until March 1947. And then, on 21 July 1947, they launched a military action against TNI forces in West Java. In this first Dutch Military Action (*Agresi Militer Belanda I*), three Dutch infantry brigades struck out from the Jakarta area—1 Brigade moved south and 3 Brigade southwest towards the southern coast of Java, while 2 Brigade moved eastwards through Tandjungpura and along the north coast. Meanwhile, Brigades W and V moved north and northeast from the Bandung area to the coast. Five brigades from the Indonesian Siliwangi Division responded with guerilla attacks from bases in the mountains. There were a series of armed clashes followed by a ceasefire imposed by the UN Security Council and implemented by the Renville Agreement.

This new Agreement provided for Indonesian troop withdrawals from western and eastern Java to around the capital, Djogjakarta, and evacuation from Medan, Padang and Palembang in Sumatra. In addition, the UN was to supervise a general election. Evacuations were made by the Indonesians but continuing negotiations were continually interrupted by Dutch attacks through 1948. On 19 December 1948, the Dutch launched their second offensive (*Agresi Militer Belanda II*) throughout Java and Sumatra. A major Dutch assault against Djogjakarta was resisted valiantly by the TNI who, under the personal command of General Soedirman, stood firm until they were overwhelmed, and President Soekarno and Vice-President Hatta were captured and taken into exile.

A ceasefire was imposed in January 1949, monitored by the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI). The TNI recaptured Djogjakarta in March 1949 while, on 27 December 1949, the transfer of sovereignty of all territories (except West New Guinea) was effected. The following day, Dr Soekarno was announced as President of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia Serikat*—RIS), RIS comprising Indonesia proper plus the semi-autonomous East Indonesia and East Sumatra states, which opposed federation. Soekarno was

⁵ On 1 January 1946, the army was redesignated *Tentara Keselamatan Rakjat* while, on 24 January, it was again re-named, becoming *Tentara Republik Indonesia*.

⁶ Subsequently formed into Army (TNI—*Angkatan Darat*), Navy (TNI—*Angkatan Laut*), and Airforce (TNI—*Angkatan Udara*). Together with the Police, these four arms today make up the Indonesian Defence Force, ABRI (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*).

also appointed Commander of the RIS Armed Forces (*Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat*—APRIS), which was established by Emergency Law No.4 of 1950. Lieutenant General Soedirman was APRIS Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief of the TNI, with Colonel A H Nasution the Army Chief-of-Staff.

General Soedirman set about officially accepting the surrender of Dutch forces, which was supervised and co-ordinated by Colonel Nasution. The Dutch commanders on Java

surrendered to the local Indonesian Military Governor: the surrender of Major General Bray in East Java was accepted by Colonel Sungkono; Major General Mollinger in Central Java surrendered to Colonel Gatot Subroto; and Major General Engels in West Java surrendered to Colonel Sadikin. On Sumatra, local Dutch commanders were required to surrender to three deputy security co-ordinators, Colonel Kawilarung (North Sumatra and Aceh), Lieutenant Colonel Dahlan Djambek (West Sumatra) and Colonel Simbilon (South Sumatra). In *Kalimantan*, Lieutenant Colonel Sukanda Bratamenggala accepted the surrender as Deputy Co-ordinator of Security while, in *Negara Indonesia Timur*, Lieutenant Colonel Mokoginta headed a Military and Territorial Commission for East Indonesia, accepting the surrender by KNIL Major Nanlohy. Naval Colonel Subyakto had accepted the surrender of Commander Beckering Vinkers at Surabaya on 27 December, while it was not until 19 January 1950 that Sukanto Tjokrodiatmodjo assumed control of Dutch police from Van Nes, nor until 27 June 1950 that Major General Van Eem had fully surrendered his air forces to Air Commodore Suryadarma.

After discussions relating to the formation of a unitary state, on 8 March 1950 the RIS Government issued Emergency Law No.11 of 1950 which provided for a structural change to *Republik Indonesia Serikat*, to incorporate the East Indonesia State and the State of East Sumatra with Indonesia proper into a unitary state—*Republik Indonesia*. On 15 August 1950, the Charter of the Establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed, with Dr Soekarno becoming the president of the unitary Republic of Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia*), in fulfilment of the 17 August 1945 proclamation. The United Nations



Indonesian War of Independence Medal I (*Satya Lencana Peristiwa I*) and Indonesian War of Independence Medal II (*Satya Lencana Peristiwa II*)

Commission for Indonesia was disbanded the following January, although the question of West New Guinea was left unresolved.

The Indonesian War of Independence Medal I (*Satya Lencana Peristiwa I*) was awarded to military personnel for continuous active service in the first phase of the War of Independence against the Dutch, July to December 1947. *Peristiwa* refers to a significant event or occurrence, relating to perhaps the most significant period in the nation's history. The medal is circular with scalloped edges, and the obverse bears the words *Perang Kemerdekaan* (War of Independence) around the roman numeral I, all within the national wreath of rice and cotton. The reverse bears the words REPUBLIK INDONESIA in raised capitals. The ribbon is red and white in equal halves.

The War of Independence Medal II (*Satya Lencana Perisnwa II*) was awarded to military personnel for continuous active service in the second phase of the War of Independence against the Dutch, December 1948 to June 1949. The medal is identical to the previous but with the roman numerals II in the centre. The ribbon is red with a thin central white stripe.



Guerilla Star (*Bintang Gerilja*)

During these four years, the Indonesians had rallied under the red and white flag (*Bendera Sang Merah Putih*) which was adopted as the national flag of the Republic as a simple means of unifying a diversity of races across a large archipelago. The colours of red and white, also used for the ribbons of these independence campaign medals, have traditionally represented the spilt blood of a nation born from revolution, perhaps only coincidentally matching the colours of their liberators' Rising Sun. Others have more eloquently suggested that, after liberation in 1945, when the Eurasians dared to raise the Dutch flag, an Indonesian nationalist simply tore off the lower blue stripe, leaving the red and white at the masthead, establishing a new national flag for the young republic.

In addition to these purely campaign medals, there were two decorations instituted for service at this time while a third has its origins in this era of unrest but has taken its place in the modern Indonesian honours system.

Guerilla Star (*Bintang Gerilja*)

The Guerilla Star was awarded to both civil and military personnel for noteworthy service as a guerilla in the defence of their independence during the post-war revolutionary period, 1947-49 (the 1st and 2nd periods of Dutch aggression), leading up to the establishment of the independent unitary state of Indonesia in 1950. The obverse of the five-pointed star bears the words *Pahlawan* (hero or patriot) and *Gerilja* (guerilla), within a wreath of rice flowers. The reverse is plain, and the ribbon comprises four red and three white equally sized stripes. That this award was given to both civil and military personnel reflects the basic nature of guerilla strat-

egy, upon which the WNI relied during this period—one of close co-operation between land forces and the civil infrastructure. This strategy continued to be the basis of Indonesian military planning until 1958.

Garuda Star (*Bintang Garuda*)

The second decoration rewarded personnel of the Indonesian Air Force (subsequently *TNI-Angkatan Udara*) for noteworthy service in the defence of independence, 1945-49, during the struggle to establish the independent unitary state of Indonesia. This award is a ten-pointed star with a central circular device bearing the eagle and wreath, and legend "1945 Garuda 1949". The ribbon is light blue with a wide central stripe of white.

Eight Year Star (*Bintang Sewindu*)

The Eight Year Star deserves mention here as its origins lie in the founding period of the armed forces, 5 October 1945 to 5 October 1953. As distinct from the long service medals, awarded in bronze, silver and gilt simply for 8, 16 and 24 years' service, this higher decoration rewards members of ABRI who have demonstrated loyalty, dedication and good character of the highest order in the performance of their duty during eight continuous years' service. *Windu* is an eight-year period, a period of mystical significance in Javanese Hindu mythology, so *sewindu* represents one such eight year cycle. The obverse bears the legend *Sewindu Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia* and the original insignia of APRIS—an eagle bearing a shield containing eight stars. The ribbon is white with eight thin red stripes equally spaced, the stripes and stars representing an eight year period.



Eight Year Star (*Bintang Sewindu*)

The State of War with Japan inherited from the Netherlands East Indies was formally ended by Indonesia with a Peace Treaty signed by Foreign Ministers Dr Soebandrio and Aichiro Fujiyama in Jakarta on 20 January 1958, and ratified by Law No.13 of 1958. This included provision for over \$US 220 million in reparations to be paid over the course of twelve years. But despite liberation and proclamations, the unitary state of 1950 was a concept that would still need to be fought for in the ensuing decades as the young Armed Forces took on an internal security role, quelling a succession of secessionist revolts and uprisings.

References

- 40 tahun Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*. Markas Besar ABRI, 1985.
 Gayo, I (ed), *Buku Pintar*. Upaya Warga Negara, Jakarta. 13th Edition, 1990.
30 Years of Indonesia's Independence. State Secretariat, Jakarta, 1975.
 Wigmore, L (1968) *Australia in the War of 1939-45. Volume IV: The Japanese Thrust*. Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Conway's Corner—Dedicated To The Memory Of Corporal Michael Conway, First Western Australian Mounted Infantry

John R Sweetman

When the call for volunteers to serve in South Africa against the Boers was made in October 1899, Michael Conway was amongst those who offered their services for Queen and Empire. On selection for the West Australian Permanent Infantry, he was enlisted with the rank of Private and with the number 96. His details given on enlistment were as follows :

Age:	28 years and four months
Birthplace:	Lancefield, Victoria
Occupation:	Tramway Employee
Previous Military Service:	Had served in "C" Battery, Victorian Field Artillery

He was serving in No. 1 Field Battery, Perth Artillery Volunteers, at time of his volunteering for the South African Contingent, with the rank of Driver and the number 194.

During this period of service, he entered the annual "Driver's Competition" for the year ending 30 June 1899 and gained the 3rd prize of one pound.

At a farewell given in his honour by his now ex-workmates of the Perth Electric Tramways Company, Michael Conway was to be the recipient of a presentation from these workmates. The presentation of a gold medal, inscribed "M. Conway, from P.E.T. Employees, 1.11.1899", was made by the Managing Director, who said "He trusted to see Conway return with another medal—the reward of a brave soldier". Unfortunately this was not to be the case. Although Michael Conway would receive a medal—the Queen's South Africa Medal with the clasp "Cape Colony", the fulfilment of the wish to see him return with it was not to be, as the medal would be awarded posthumously.

On 7 November 1899, the contingent, which had been trained in the infantry role as required by the British authorities, left the Karrakatta camp by train for Perth. After a civic farewell in their honour, the contingent boarded a train for Albany where they boarded the SS *Medic* and departed for Cape Town, reaching this destination on 27 November. On arrival in South Africa, the West Australian company was amalgamated with two Victorian, one South Australian and one Tasmanian company to form "The First Australian Regiment". At Naauport in Cape Colony, on 1 February 1900, the regiment was converted to Mounted Infantry. So along with the change in role, the name of the company was also changed—from now on, they were to be known as "The West Australian Mounted Infantry" (WAMI).

On 9 February, Michael Conway who had by now been promoted to Corporal, was a member of a patrol led by Major Moor which left the major British base and supply depot at Slingersfontein on a routine patrol of the area.¹

Shortly after leaving the camp, the patrol came in contact with a superior number of Boers en-route for the camp. Realising that the out-numbered garrison at the camp would not be able to hold it against the advancing Boers, Major Moor led his patrol to a nearby hill in the path of the approaching enemy. From here he hoped to be able to deny them access to the camp and the vital supplies that it held. So began the first battle between the West Australians and the Boer foe which they had travelled all the way from Western Australia to meet and defeat.

During the fighting at what was to become known as "The Battle of West Australia Hill", due to the bravery shown by the defenders, Michael Conway saw his friend and officer, Lieutenant GGW Hensman fall. Shot through both legs, Hensman continued to be a target for Boer rifle fire.²

Despite the heavy and accurate rifle fire and artillery barrage, Conway, along with No. 94 Private Alexander Krygger, went to the assistance of the severely wounded officer.³ After assisting Krygger to build a protective wall of stones around the injured officer, Michael Conway turned to the task of trying to bandage Hensman's bleeding legs. This humane gesture was to be the last thing that he would perform, as he was shot through the head and died instantly. Thus becoming the first member of a West Australian-raised unit to die in the Boer War, which was not the recognition that had been wished for him on his departure from Western Australia.

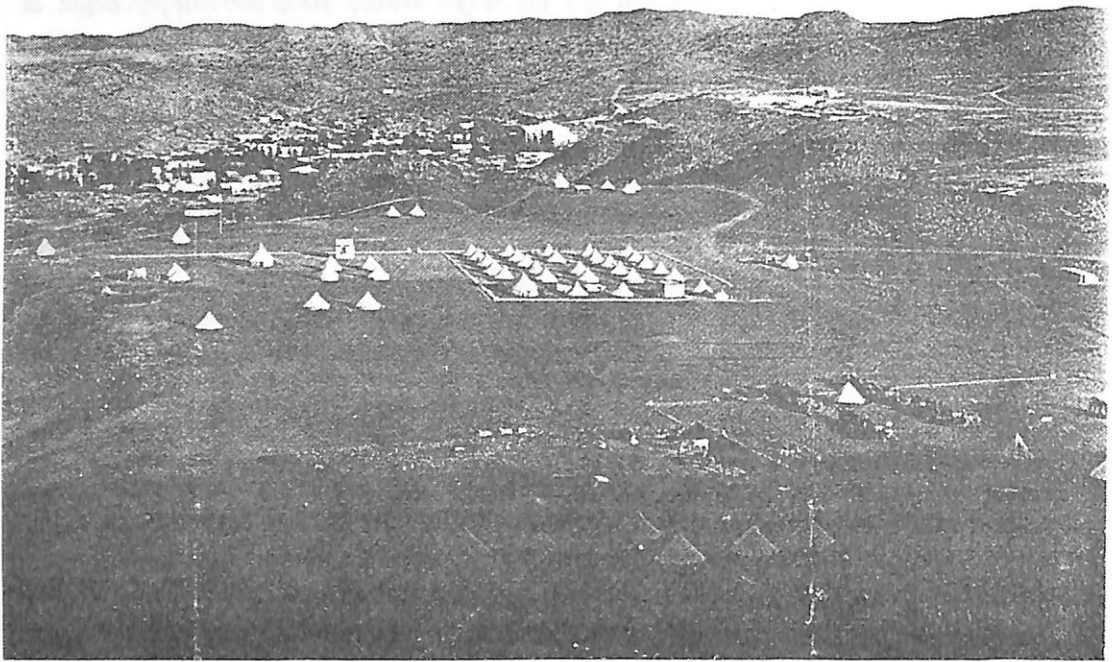
After a battle that raged all day, Major Moor was forced to order his men to retire from their positions as the rapidly failing light meant that they were no longer able to hold the Boers back. Michael Conway's body was recovered next morning and buried at the foot of the hill. However, this was not to be his last resting place as his body was later re-interred at Kloof Camp at Arundel, Cape Colony, in 1901. In December of 1905, his body, along with all the others buried in Kloof Camp, was exhumed and arrangements made for the final resting place for these men who had made the supreme sacrifice for Queen and Empire and, in Michael Conway's case, for a friend.

¹ Major Hatherly George Moor, Royal Artillery. Seconded to the British South Africa Chartered Company, he served during the Second Matabele War and commanded the artillery during this campaign. At the expiration of his secondment, he travelled back to Natal through the Transvaal, taking a great interest in the Transvaal Artillery. As a Lieutenant, he was appointed to command the Permanent Artillery garrison at Albany and arrived in Western Australia in August of 1899 to take up this command and given the local rank of Captain. Due to his experience of warfare in Africa, he was the logical choice to command the contingent to serve in South Africa. He was promoted to Major on the 14 October 1899. However, he had not received the notification of his promotion at the time of the West Australia Hill action. He was killed in action at Palmietfontein (Rhenoster Spruit), in the Orange Free State on 19 July 1900.

² Lieutenant Geoffrey Gordon William Hensman. Had served from October 1895 to March 1897, in the Royal Horse Guards before purchasing his discharge and coming to Western Australia and becoming a miner. He enlisted in the 1st Contingent as a Private and with the No. 100. He was promoted to Corporal, 31 October 1899, to Sergeant, from 7 November 1899, and to Lieutenant, 1 January 1900. During the fighting at West Australia Hill, Hensman was to have his mandeered" his watch, he had not been harmed further. Mentioned

in Despatches, *London Gazette*, 25 February 1900. Died at Cape Town on the 12 March 1900, after the amputation of his right leg this being a direct result of the wounds he suffered at West Australia Hill.

³ Private Alexander rygger. The subject of a previous *Sabretache* article by Michael R.S. Downey.



Kloof Camp, 1900, taken from a kopje just behind it. Colesberg can be seen just below the camp. Suffolk Hill is to the left and Coleskop in the distance west of the camp.

On the 14 February 1906, all those bodies from Kloof Camp were buried in the local Military Cemetery in Colesberg with full military honours. The service was conducted by the Reverend C Wallace, Rector, with E Cosnett, Wesleyan Minister. The Royal Fusilier's 3rd Battalion provided the Military detachment comprising of one hundred rank and file, with band. Corporal Michael Conway was buried in Grave 64 and, with this moving ceremony, disappeared into the history books and today, little is known or even taught about the involvement of those men, volunteers all—who fought in Western Australia's first international conflict. Even in death and burial, Michael Conway never received the full recognition that he was due. Although his name appears on the memorial plaque in the Garden of Remembrance, it appears as:

W. AUS. M.I.
PTE. J. COMWHY.

When the Western Australian Branch of the Military Historical Society was fortunate enough to obtain a building which we could call ours, it was decided that the hall be given a name which would reflect the military history of our state. With this in mind, it was further decided that the members all try to come up with a name which would achieve this goal and that at our next meeting, all the names submitted would be discussed and a vote taken to decide the most appropriate one for our meeting place.

My submission for the hall was the name of a member of the 1st West Australian Mounted Infantry, his name and the reason for this choice were well received at the meeting and only missed out on being the name selected by a small margin. However, those present at the meeting felt that his name should be recorded in some way, so that his part in the military history of Western Australia not be forgotten. With this in mind, it was decided at the same

meeting that the actual corner of the hall where the meetings took place, be named after this soldier. This was done and now at Kokoda Hall, when we meet to discuss the military history which is our common bond, we do so at "Conway's Corner".

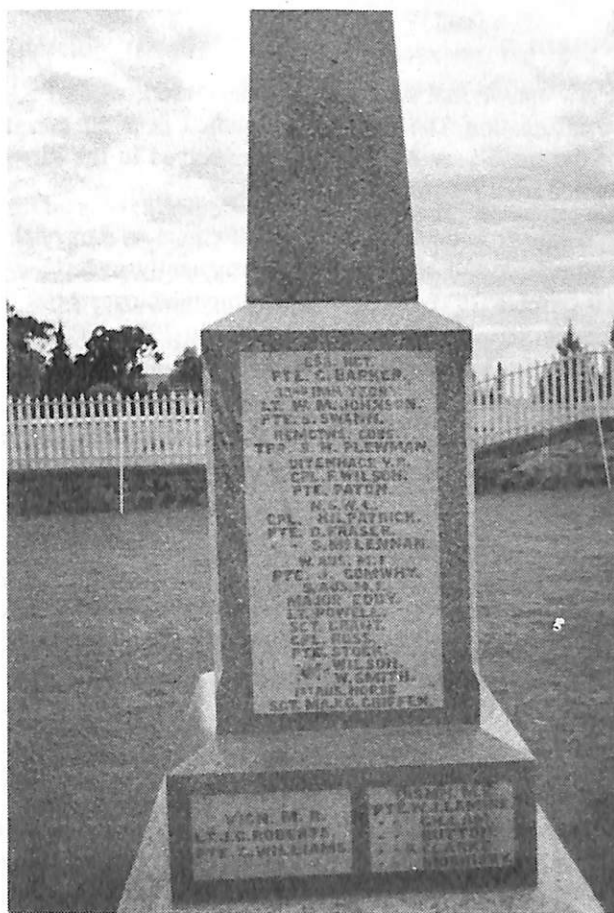
References

They Proved to all the Earth, pp 17 and 73, John E Price

The West Australian Newspapers, 1899-1900

Acknowledgements

Photographs of Memorial Plaque, Garden of Remembrance, Colesberg and Kloof Camp: Mrs B Gordon, Colesberg / Kemper Museum, Colesburg, Republic of South Africa.



Memorial Plaque, Garden of Remembrance, Colesberg, South Africa

The Special Air Service Regiment

The Australian Army raised 1st Special Air Service Company at Swanbourne, Western Australia on 25 July 1957. Originally an infantry corps unit, the company became part of the Royal Australian Regiment in November 1960 when it was redesignated the 1st Special Air Service Company, Royal Australian Regiment. The Company originally consisted of a headquarters and four platoons and had a strength of about 200 all ranks. On 4 September 1964, the 21st anniversary of the Lae-Nadzab operation in New Guinea, the first Australian combined land, sea and airborne operation, the company was expanded to regimental strength and renamed, the Special Air Service Regiment.

Borneo and Vietnam

The Regiment first saw operational service in February 1965, when 1 SAS Squadron deployed to Brunei during confrontation. The Squadron mounted over 60 patrols before returning to Australia in July of the same year. 2 SAS Squadron served in the same campaign, operating from Ruching in Borneo from February to July 1966.

In June 1966, 3 SAS Squadron deployed to South Vietnam as part of the 1st Australian Task Force. Each sabre squadron and signals troop subsequently undertook two tours of duty in South Vietnam until October 1971. In these two campaigns over 1400 patrols were mounted, reporting the movements of over 5600 enemy troops. In 298 contacts with the enemy, SASR patrols killed over 500 of them for the loss of one Australian, who died of wounds, and 14 whom were wounded in action.

Unit Identification

Qualified members of SASR are readily identified by their sandy coloured beret and its distinctive badge depicting a winged sword Excalibur and the words, "WHO DARES WINS". The Regiment has no colours as it is classified as a rifle regiment. Historically rifle regiments were reconnaissance troops often involved in skirmishes and since they usually operated in small groups, security of the colours were never awarded to the rifle regiments. The regimental tunes are Lily Marlene for slow time and The Happy Wanderer for quick time.

Role and Organisation

The SASR's role is to conduct strategic and operational intelligence gathering operations, specialist recovery operations and small scale offensive operations beyond the range or capability of other Australian Defence Force elements. In 1979 the Regiment was given the task of providing a counter terrorist capability and this commitment was given to 1 SAS Squadron. In order to maintain both the CT commitment and the unit's war roles, 2 SAS Squadron, which had been disbanded in late 1971, was re-raised in October 1982, bringing the Regiment to its present organisation of a regimental headquarters and six squadrons.

Base Squadron

Base Squadron is responsible for local administration and providing logistic support to the regiment. It has the capacity to detach medics, armourers, cooks, drivers, marine mechanics

and vehicle mechanics to the SAS Sabre Squadrons when they are deployed independently from the Regiment

Training Squadron

Training Squadron is the Special Forces (SF) school. It is responsible for the selection and training of SAS reinforcements and conducting formal courses in certain advanced unit specialist skills ~o undertake these responsibilities, the Squadron has eight specialist wings which cover, but are not limited to, such training activities as the selection of personnel, patrolling, climbing, survival, demolitions, counter terrorism and training associated with methods of insertion eg parachuting, diving and driving

152 Signals Squadron

The Signal Squadron is an integral part of the Regiment It consists of corps of signals personnel these men are cross-trained in a variety of SAS skills

The Squadron provides high frequency communications for the SAS squadrons and the regimental headquarters Each sabre squadron has a signals troop attached under command to provide squadron base station communications

SAS Sabre Squadron

The SAS sabre squadrons are the operational elements of the Regiment and are organised and equipped to allow them to be deployed independently of the regiment Two of the three sabre squadrons are designated as War Roles Squadrons and are each organised into a squadron headquarters, three sabre troops and the signals troop which is attached under command The sabre troops are water operations troop, air operations troop and vehicle mounted troop Each sabre troop is commanded by an officer and comprises five patrols A signals officer commands 15 other ranks in the signals troop When deployed, the SAS squadron will be allocated its logistic support elements from Base Squadron Each sabre troop within the war roles squadron is broken up into five patrols, which have a strength of between 4 and 6 men, depending on their role and mission

The Regiment has a higher proportion of senior non commissioned officers (sergeants and staff sergeants) compared with conventional units and this is reflected in the patrol, which is commanded either by a sergeant or a corporal (the troop commander may be a patrol commander, depending upon unit commitments). Patrols are the principal working level of the Regiment For most tasks, they operate independently of each other, reporting directly back to the squadron headquarters

For counter terrorist operations, the third sabre squadron is structured into a purpose designed squadron organisation of four troops, a squadron headquarters troop, a land troop, a water troop and a sniper troop. A signals troop is attached under operational command as required.

The Templer Medal Award—1993

Clem Sargent

Members will be pleased to learn of the Society for Army Historical Research (Britain) award of the Templer Medal for 1993 to Ian McNeill of the Official History Unit, Australian War Memorial, for his work *To Long Tan*, the first volume in the projected eight volume history of Australia's involvement in South East Asia conflicts since 1948. (Korea has already been well covered in two volumes by Professor Robert O'Neill.)

The Templer Medal is awarded annually by the Society for Army Historical Research to the author of the book which makes a notable contribution to the study of any aspect of the British Army or its predecessors and of the Land Forces of the Empire or the Commonwealth, in the English language. The purpose of the award is to commemorate the life and achievements of the late Field-Marshal Sir Gerald Templer KG and to mark the notable contribution he made to the Society for Army Historical Research from 1969 to 1979.

The 1993 award has added interest as this is the first occasion since the award was instituted in 1981 that it has gone to a work published outside Great Britain and it reflects great credit on the efforts of the Official History Unit led by Dr Peter Edwards. In his work on this volume Ian McNeill has been ably assisted by senior research officer, Ashley Ekins, and part time by well known MHSA member, Colonel David Chinn MBE (Retd).

The author graduated from RMC into infantry in 1954 and served in Korea, in SAS and in the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam, as senior Australian adviser I Corps in 1965-1966. He attended the Australian Staff College in 1967 and in 1972 joined the military history section at Army Headquarters with the late Brigadier "Bunny" Austin. There Ian McNeill wrote *The Team: Australian Army Advisers in Vietnam 1962-1972* which has been widely acclaimed. Ian McNeill was well qualified both academically, with BA and BLitt, and practically with a depth of military experience to undertake the Vietnam history after he retired from the Army and joined the Official History Unit in 1984. *To Long Tan* continues the tradition of the Australian official histories established by Bean and Long but here the author has the advantage of practical military experience in the theatre. His experience will no doubt be reflected in the second volume on ground operations in Vietnam—*A Province for a Battlefield*—for which the projected publication date is late 1997

All MHSA members will join in extending our congratulations to Ian McNeill on his award

Speech by the Prime Minister, the Hon P J Keating, MP, Kanchanburi War Cemetery, Thailand, 9 April 1994

This place honours those who died on the Burma-Thailand Railway. It reminds us of the worst of which humanity is capable, and the best. Almost one in five of the thirteen thousand Australians who worked on the Railway died.

With them also died thousands of men from Great Britain, Burma, New Zealand, Malaya, Java, India, The Netherlands and Thailand.

Although they were criminally mistreated and denied their rights under international convention, those from the allied nations died as prisoners of war. The vast majority of those from Asia upwards of three hundred thousand of them—died as slaves.

To visit I Hellfire Pass and see the scale of the work men were driven to do is to be reminded that the task itself was inhuman.

When we are told of the speed with which it was done, the hours the men worked, the disease they suffered and the brutality and sadism that they endured, we begin to understand why the Burma-Thailand railway ranks among the most evil acts of World War 2.

The images of our countrymen returning from those camps gaunt and debilitated remain in the minds of every Australian who ever saw them. The knowledge of what was done to them remains as shocking now as it was when it was first revealed almost fifty years ago.

It is not because those inhuman acts can in any way be excused or forgotten that we have come now to think less about the cruelty and more about the means men found to endure it - and to help their comrades endure it.

The Burma-Thailand Railway has become one of those episodes in our history from which we have chosen to draw inspiration. It has become a legend of courage, comradeship, sacrifice and resourcefulness.

Book Reviews

At War with the 51st Infantry Battalion and the 31/51st Infantry Battalion from 1940 -1946,
W E (Bill) Hughes

The only reference to the 31/51st Infantry Battalion recorded in the CD-ROM Australian Military History Database is a four page article by G F Coady, Merauke Force (31/51st. Inf. Bn.) published in 1963 in *Reveille*. In response to requests by the Cairns Historical Society and his own injunction to other members of the Bn. to write their experiences, while still able, W E (Bill) Hughes, decided to write and publish at his own expense his experiences with the 31/51st Inf. Bn. He served as a Signaller and was discharged as a Private.

At War is a Private's view of serving in a war and of the impact not only upon himself, it includes the impact and influence of the army in which he served. He writes not only of his own experiences he includes those of his comrades with whom he served as well as that of the North Queensland community, where the Battalion was formed and served until late 1943 and many of his comrades after demobilisation where to return.

The 51st Inf Bn CMF at the commencement of WWII was based on Cairns, with the 31st Inf Bn being based on Townsville and both Battalions, formed part of the 11th Infantry Brigade CMF. Bill Hughes, as he was known in the Battalion, was a Regimental Cadet attached to the Battalion in September 1939 and enlisted for full-time duty, while under age in November 1940. He later became a Signaller in Headquarters Company, often being attached to other Companies for operational purposes and was discharged as a Private in 1946.

The book is in some ways a memoir, with the strengths and weaknesses of a memoir. It is written from the perspective of a Private, who is influenced by those around him and with whom a strong bond developed. There is a desire in recalling events to identify those that were involved. This personal identification often extends to their post war success.

There is a wealth of detail concerning the training undergone by the Battalion, including the clothing and ration scales. He also records that until late in 1941 the Battalion was dependent upon horse transport.

Bill Hughes, in writing the book, takes pains to detail the separate roles of the 2nd AIF and the CMF and their distinctive characteristics. Like many under age enlistees, he subsequently tried to enlist in the 2nd AIF but parental intervention prevented it. For Bill Hughes he has later to thank their intervention—he did not go with the others to Malaya with the 8th Division.

Following the amalgamation of the 2nd AIF and the CMF into the Australian Army in 1942 and the Declaration of Essential Industries, large numbers of rural workers in the 51st and the 31st Bns were discharged and the two understrength Battalions were merged into the 31/51st Infantry Battalion. Many of the replacement officers were 2nd AIF with Middle East war experience. The subsequent replacements to the Battalion resulted in the lowering of the CMF component and eventually the Battalion was redesignated the 31/51st AIF Bn, but the stigma of the militia continued to be felt.

Late in 1943, the Battalion was sent to New Guinea and disembarked at Merauke in Dutch New Guinea where it became part of Merauke Force. Shortly after arrival at Merauke, the Battalion was dispersed to engage the Japanese at Company and occasions Platoon level to locations often many miles apart. There were engagements with the Japanese on the coast and inland in hilly country.

At the end of 1944, the Battalion was moved to Bougainville where once again it replaced American troops. Dispersion remained the operational practice, with battles at Georges River Crossing, Tsimba Ridge, Down Ridge, Torokina and Nuna Nuna. The Battalion was the moved to northern Bougainville.

It was at Porton on 8-10 June, the major battle of the Battalion took place and Bill Hughes was there. The action was a Company strength with a beach landing into Porton Plantation with associated support units. The Japanese strongly counter-attacked and eventually the Company was forced to withdraw.

In the engagements in which Bill Hughes was not involved he has relied on field reports written at the time.

After the cessation of hostilities the Battalion was involved in the relief of Rabaul, followed by companies being diverted to relieve Nauru and Ocean Island (the author being sent to Nauru). Bill Hughes was discharged just before the Battalion was disbanded early in 1946.

When the Army Reserve was created in 1948, the 51st Inf Bn was reconstituted and once more based in Cairns. It is known as the Far North Queensland Regiment.

It is the author's plea that officers seem reluctant to undertake the unit history of the 31/51st Inf Bn and if the only written record of its endeavours is Bill Hughes's AT WAR, then the best interests of the 31/51st Inf Bn have not been served. For the slit trench he occupied at Porton is not the place nor does it give you the perspective to write a Battalion account, which was Bill's secondary objective in writing the book.—S H Pyne

Soldier A SAS: Behind Iraqi Lines and Soldier B SAS: Heroes of the South Atlantic by Shaun Clarke

The Special Air Service Regiment which prides itself at the stealth in which it goes about its work is also one of the most written about regiments of the modern British Army. The fascination with the regiment has now spawned some factoid novels that have the reader with the SAS trooper lying out in the desert, hiding in the jungle or freezing on a glacier while observing the enemy.

So far about eight novels, by different authors have been published in the series. The first two dealing with the Falklands in 1982 and the Gulf War in 1991 are by the same author and some of the characters appear in both novels. The characters are a typical cross section of the society but their language is uncouth and their humour is gutter as they impatiently await the unknown.

The background to all the novels is the training, equipment and doctrine of the Special Service Regiment and the officers and men who carry out its tasks. Real incidents from the Falklands such as the helicopter crashes on South Georgia, the raid on Pebble Island and the Sea King tragedy are woven into the story. In the Gulf there is the exposed terrain with its harsh climate which claimed several deaths from hypothermia.

Perhaps the most interesting parts of these books in the operation of small teams without support for long periods behind enemy lines and well in advance of supporting troops. Both novels pick up the fear and the danger of the situation. Mistakes in which the SAS lost lives were not glossed over.

I read both novels flying to and from Canberra to Perth to attend the MHSA Biennial Convention in April. I well recommend them as an informative and enjoyable read:

The first eight of the series:

- Soldier A SAS: Behind Iraqi Lines
- Soldier B SAS: Heroes of the South Atlantic
- Soldier C SAS: Secret War in Arabia
- Soldier D SAS: The Colombian Cocaine War
- Soldier E SAS: Sniper Fire in Belfast
- Soldier F SAS: Guerrillas in the Jungle
- Soldier G SAS: The Desert Raiders
- Soldier H SAS: The Headhunters of Borneo

— Anthony Staunton

Allan Box, *A Source Book for Australian Military Genealogy: The First Fleet to the Gulf War*, \$19.95 per copy. Postage & packaging is \$3.05 for a single copy and \$6.10 for multiple orders, Box Military Books, 20 Burnley Street, Leongatha 3953 Tel (056) 623 257

The volume is designed for use by family historians, teachers and students of history, librarians, amateur and professional historians, genealogical researchers and interested members of the public.

A thoughtfully designed volume of over 80 perfect bound B5 pages of quality art paper for text and photographs with a full colour laminated card cover, this publication offers the reader a wide range of relevant source material.

The book focuses on the collection and interpretation of source material which allow the reader access to information to assist in the reconstruction of the military experience of individual Australian soldiers, nurses, airmen and sailors.

Sources included in this volume:

- A select annotated bibliography of volumes containing biographical material concerning the military service of individual Australians.
- A short history of all British regiments which served in colonial Australia, together with details of their regimental museums.
- An annotated bibliography of Australian regimental, ship, squadron and unit histories from the First Fleet to the Gulf War.
- A detailed listing of major military genealogical sources in Australia.
- Strategies for military genealogical research by conflict

Victoria's Guns A Field Guide Available from the Publishing Department, Museum of Victoria, GPO Box 666E, Melbourne Vic 3001, at \$ 19.95 (plus \$ 5.00 p&p Victoria or \$ 7.00 interstate). Tel (03) 651 6190.

Major Bill Billett Curator of Arms and Armour at the Museum of Victoria has written a very interesting account of the surviving colonial guns in over 40 Victorian towns and cities. This account is a unique State-wide heritage listing. It gives an explanation of the technical and broader historical importance of these guns in context of colonial Victoria as an energetic participant in Imperial affairs.

order sent
15 Mar 95
Cheque No
100567

As it Seemed to Us — 1st Australian Mountain Battery RAA AIF Edited and published by Chisholm Cutts and Jack Allan, a limited print priced at \$ 30 (including postage) soft cover. Orders may be placed with Mr Chisholm Cutts, 19 Melrose Avenue, Beulah Park SA or through Rev Jack Allen, 9 Oleandor Drive, Ashgrove QLD 4060. Telephone enquiries 08 333 2602.

This book deals with a unique unit of the RAA originally armed with 3 7 inch mountain howitzers and with pack animals it later became our first parachute gunner unit. The highlights of its service during World War II were the Buna, Gona, Sanananda campaign and actions at Kokoda Wau and Salamaua.

The Guns! Thank Gawd, The Guns!: The Story of the 2/3rd Australian Field Regiment, RAA It is being published by the 2/3rd Field Regiment Association which is asking for support by an initial deposit of \$30.00 before they place a printing order. Contact the Association Treasurer, Les Bishop, 12 Wijnalla Road, Yowie Bay NSW 2228.

The title of the book is a line from Rudyard Kipling's "Ubique" which honours that simple but significant motto of the Artillery.

This history is based on actual war diaries blended with individual accounts. It will include a nominal roll, with details of casualties, honours and awards covering six years in World War II.

A guide to the records of Gavin Long, (Canberra: AWM, 1993) Price \$13 95 per copy plus flat fee to cover postage and handling of \$1.50 from Manager - Shop, Australian War Memorial, GPO Box 345, Canberra ACT 2601 Fax 06 243 4236

The guide describes the papers of Gavin Long, held in the Australian War Memorial's Official Records collection series AWM 67: Official History, 1939-45 War: Records of Gavin Long, General Editor. In early 1943 Gavin Long was appointed as General Editor of Australia in the War of 1939-45. This guide has been published to mark the 50th anniversary of that appointment. Prepared initially by well known archivist. Ian Maclean, the guide has undergone further revisions by Paul Mansfield and Katherine Crowley.

The guide includes introductory material, a biographical note and descriptive listings of the various sub-series which comprise AWM 67. Appendices cover related records held by the Memorial and the published volumes of the Official History, and an index of names referred to in the guide is also included.

Richard Fullford, *We Stood And Waited: Sydney's Anti-Ship Defences 1939-1945* Hardcover at \$37.50, softcover at \$25.00, postage and packing at \$5.00 per copy (or pick up from North Head). Publications, Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society Inc, PO Box 42, MANLY NSW 2095

Lonely and deserted, lashed by wind and rain, baked by many summer suns, the remnants of the World War II coast artillery defences dot the headlands, cliffs and hillsides of the Sydney seaboard. To the young or the uninitiated they're just concrete structures of disparate configurations. Some small, others relatively large, many now partially hidden by bush and scrub but in all their heyday commanding an uninterrupted panorama of a designated area of sea and sky. But all, without exception, are filled with memories. Emotive memories of the thousands of young Australian men and women who endured varying degrees of heat and cold,

dampness and discomfort and, on occasions, boredom as they manned the once top secret anti-ship defences of Sydney during the years 1939-1945. *We Stood and Waited* is a thoroughly researched, comprehensive and splendidly written record of the people and the interlocking complex of fortifications on which Sydney, and indeed Australia, depended on in the event of bombardment or invasion. The author, Brigadier Ken Fullford, has devoted countless hours compiling a history which will have a distinct appeal not only to students and historians, old gunners and their families, present and future generations of artillerymen, but the general public. Anecdotes by ex-members provide interesting and sometimes humorous stories about their day to day lives. The location, calibre and arcs of fire of the various batteries together with the fire command, observation, searchlight and radar positions are well illustrated with photographs and diagrams. A separate chapter has been devoted to the Japanese submarine raids against Sydney during June 1942. Not one post or site from Beacon Hill in the north to Wattamolla in the south has been omitted from this exhaustive but exceptionally readable work. For the more technically minded, the author has not overlooked the mathematical, technical and engineering aspect of a fortress artillery system. How is the target located and tracked? Who orders and controls the fire of the guns? How were the various servicemen and women trained and moulded to form a fighting formation. To these and many other questions the answers can now be presented. Without doubt this book forms a valuable chapter in the history of the Royal Australian Artillery and the military history of Sydney.

Richard Kennedy Fullford was born in Sydney in 1918. His extensive artillery experience began in 1934 when he joined 14th Heavy Battery, Australian Garrison Artillery, as a senior cadet. After some years in northern New South Wales he returned to Sydney in 1938 and rejoined his former battery, by then part of 5th Heavy Brigade, Royal Australian Artillery (Militia). On 2 September 1939, he began his full-time war service which continued until July 1946 by which time he held the rank of Major in the AIF. He became an officer of the Regular Army in October 1948, and retired on 1 April 1973 with the military title of Brigadier. He was awarded the OBE in 1970 in recognition of his outstanding work as Director of Manning, especially in respect of manning the Army's force in South Vietnam. His artillery service included service in coast artillery at Hornby and Signal Batteries in Sydney, Breakwater and Illowra Batteries at Port Kembla, as Battery Commander of "O" Australian Heavy Battery (Coast) AIF at Buna and Port Moresby in 1943-44. He qualified as an Instructor-in-Gunnery at the School of Artillery, Larkhill, England in 1954-56, taught field gunnery at our own School of Artillery at North Head, Sydney in 1957-58 and commanded 1st Field Regiment 1959-61. He was Commanding Officer/Chief Instructor of the School of Artillery during 1962-64. He commanded Northern Territory Command during 1965-66. After retiring from the Army in 1973 he spent four and a half years as National Secretary of the Scout Association of Australia.

The book is printed and stitch-bound in Australia. Its 276 pages of good clear print on quality paper includes 48 photographs, diagrams and illustrations. The Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society Incorporated has agreed to act as publisher and will undertake the book launch, promotions and sales. All profits from book sales will be made available for further development of the National Artillery Museum at North Fort, Manly. NSW.

Military Miniatures

Browsing in the Rocks Centre, Sydney, recently, the Federal Vice-President came across a shop—AUSTRALIAN HORIZON—which stocked a wide range of Australian 54 mm military miniatures from the NSW Corps, 1790, to Royal Australian Infantry c1988, in boxed sets and singles. Prices were from \$18 for singles to \$140 for sets. The quality of the moulding and painting of the figures was generally better than Britains but not up to the standard of Staden

miniatures. It is suggested that interested members should write for the eight page catalogue and price list to - Australian Horizon, Shop 21, The Rocks Centre, The Rocks, Sydney, 2000.

Letters

Dear Editor,

With reference to David Vivian's article on "The other Boer War..." (*Sabretache* Vol XXXIV July/September 1993), your readers may be interested in the situation that developed among the Boer POWs held on St Helena Island 1900-1902.

Initially, a POW camp was set up on Deadwood Plain in the east of the island, about five miles from Jamestown; this was filled with Transvaalers, the first of whom (including General Kronje and his wife) arrived on 14 April 1900. A second camp was then formed at Broadbottom to house the Orange Free Staters; this was about seven miles from Jamestown in the west of the island.

Between April 1900 and February 1902 a total of 5 865 POWs were taken to St Helena. They included many professional men and skilled tradesmen, and some of the more affluent men moved out of the shared tents into little private huts they built and made comfortable for themselves. Many of the prisoners were employed by local farmers and merchants who were responsible for them during working hours; they lived in small satellite camps near their work during the week. Others were employed as shop assistants, grooms, bakers or household servants and lived with their employers' other servants. They were all subject to a curfew.

As time went by the "other Boer War" manifested itself among the prisoners: "... many who had been commandeered, some who had taken arms against Britain through ill advice, and many who considered they would benefit by so doing, gave in their names to the military as being desirous of peace ... a number, anxious to be on the winning side, offered, if allowed to go back, to fight for Britain."¹

Feelings became so inflamed that some agitators had to be removed and confined in prison, and a separate camp—called the Peace Camp, was erected for the "Loyalists": their fellow prisoners called them "traitors".

The Declaration of Peace was posted in Dutch and English in all three camps on 5 June 1902, and a special Court was set up to administer the Oath of Allegiance; it operated daily for the next three months.

On 26 June the first 470 men who had taken the oath marched to the capital with Union Jacks flying, led by the band of the 3rd Wiltshire Regiment, for a formal farewell by the Governor of the island before boarding the SS *Canada* for Cape Town. They were praised for their fortitude and constancy in the face of "exceptional trials" and told that being sent home first was a "mark of regard" by the Government, and that on arrival they would meet the "loyalists from Ceylon": "So the first one thousand men to land on their native shores would be those in whom the Government felt confidence."²

¹ Jackson E L, St Helena. 1903. p.114

² *ibid*; p.121

Without access to the newspapers of the day one can only surmise what their reception may have been when those first ships from St Helena and Ceylon converged on Cape Town to disgorge their cargoes of excited "Loyalists". The bitter reality that had to be faced was, as David Vivian spells out so clearly in his article, that at home their status was that of "collaborators", with the attendant hostility in the community and the workplace that still echoes down the years.

NOTES

Below is a list of ships arriving at St Helena with Boer prisoners-of-war.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Gray
 Researcher and Volunteer Guide
 Auckland War Memorial Museum.

54a Towai Street
 Auckland 1005
 New Zealand

Ships arriving at St Helena Island with Boer prisoners-of-war 1900-1902

Date	Ship	Men
14 Apr 1900	Milwaukee	514
21 Apr 1900	Lake Erie	394
1 May 1900	Bavarian	1 099
26 Jun 1900	Mahrarta	110
Jul 1900	Manchester Port	1
Jul 1900	Idaho	196
10 Dec 1900	Victorian	199
12 Jan 1901	Columbia	200
24 Jan 1901	Bavarian	1 337
3 Feb 1901	Mongolian	649
Jan 1902	Orient	1 500
24 Jan 1902	Britannia	39
Feb 1902	Victorian	77

REFERENCE:

Jackson, E L, St Helena, 1903, pp 107-110.

Medical certificate

Dear Editor,

I am intrigued by the attached copy of a 1917 medical certificate signed by Howse, the Victoria Cross holder. Could any one of our more knowledgeable members enlighten me regarding the significance of "the letters D or B.C."

Major General G L Maitland AO OBE RFD ED (RL)
 37 Cherry Street
 Warrawee NSW 2074

Braidwood (NSW) War Memorial

I am currently researching material relevant to the Braidwood (NSW) War Memorial—both the Memorial itself and some of the servicemen, and women, whom it commemorates. The Memorial was unveiled on 5 June 1922 by the Hon. (later Sir) Austin Chapman MP. Following WW2 a black granite tablet was added to the Memorial honouring those whom, as the tablet records, were “Killed World War 1939-1945”. This tablet was unveiled by Lieutenant Colonel C G W Anderson VC MC. Despite extensive research of the obvious sources and numerous “Letters to the Editor”, I have not been able to establish the date of this latter ceremony; but am led to believe that it may have taken place “about 1950”.

I would be grateful if, perhaps, one of our members could assist me in this matter.

F J. (Jim) Moore)
89 Carroll Avenue
Mollymook NSW 2539
(044) 55 2890

32nd Battalion AIF, 1916-1919

The 32nd Battalion AIF, 1916-1919 was formed by men from South Australia and Western Australia. It fought with great courage in France and Belgium, after an initial disaster, the tragic and horrific battle of Fromelles. Their Commander in 1918, Major Blair Wark, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his extraordinary bravery in leading the Battalion in their assault on the Hindenberg Line.

I wish to compile a history of this unit, and would be pleased if any of your readers who have information concerning the 32nd would contact me. Access to photographs, diaries, letters etc. would be very useful.

R R Freeman
57 Sussex Terrace
(08) 2715859 (after hours)

1st Australian Mountain Battery RAA AIF As it Seemed to Us

A history of 1 Aust Mtn Bty edited by Chisholm Cutts and Jack Allen is nearing completion. It deals with a unique Australian unit which carved a niche in history as the only gunner unit armed with 3.7 inch mountain howitzers; for its devoted support for Australian and United States infantry in the Buna, Gona, Sananada campaign and at Kokoda, Wau and Salamaua in 1942-43 and for being our only parachute trained artillery unit later during the war.

Details are available from Mr Chisholm Cutts, 19 Melrose Ave, Beulah Park, SA 5067 and Rev Jack Allen, 9 Oleander Drive, Ashgrove, Qld, 4060. Orders are now being taken and the limited print will probably mean it will be difficult to obtain in the future.

We Stood and Waited: Sydney's Anti-Ship Defences 1939-1945.

The RAA Historical Society is publishing this book by Brig Ken Fullford. The typescript has been completed. Photographs remain to be positioned and a flyer is being prepared. Quotes will be available shortly. This substantial work details the armament, organisation, training and operation of the Sydney Fortress during World War 2 including the attack by Japanese

submarines. It is liberally laced with personal anecdotes and is representative of the wartime experience of the men and women of the many forts and batteries around S Australia.

Order forms will be available shortly. Enquiries may be made to the RAA Historical Society, The Artillery Centre, PO Box 42, Manly, NSW, 2095. If you send your name and address an order form will be sent.

Canadian Signals And Intelligence Group Australia 1945

Further to the recent publication of information on this group and request for museum material in your journal, it is advised that the Director, Canadian Forces Communications and Electronics Museum has forwarded copies of the following documents through the Canadian Forces Adviser in Canberra:

- a. Unit war diaries July 1944 to February 1946—Canada, through Australia and return to Canada
- b. Unit Souvenir Booklet 1944-45.
- c. The History of Canadian Military Communications and Electronics ("90 Years and Still Counting").

The original copies forwarded have been passed to the Director, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, together with a selection of miscellaneous papers, camp diagrams and photocopied photographs. These will be accessible to the public in due course. Copies made of the three documents sub-paragraphed above have been forwarded to the Director of Signals, and the Director of Military Intelligence for corps interest and access.

D A Chinn, Col (Retired)

Fred Birks VC

The following letter was published in the *The Australian* earlier this year.

I am attempting to complete a collection of information regarding the life of the late Fred Birks VC, MM of 6th Bn Victoria AIF, who was killed at Ypres on 21 September 1917. Fred Birks went to Australia in 1913 at the age of 18 from Buckley, Flintshire in North Wales UK, with two friends, Emrys Jones and Bill Gray. That there should be people surviving who will remember Fred Birks is unlikely. It does, however, seem possible that descendants of his associates may have heard and remembered anecdotes which may help in my quest. Among these associates and friends were the members of the 2nd Field Ambulance Unit with whom he served during the great battles of Gallipoli and the Somme and who were near and remembered him at his death at Ypres. This work of collation is very important to me. Fred Birks was my uncle under whose shadow I was born and reared and whose life I feel compelled to set out for posterity.

Fred Birks
19 Benaly Terrace
Edinburgh, EH13 OEL
SCOTLAND, UK

“Strafer” Gott

Dear Editor

David Vivian's article on “Strafer” Gott (*Sabretache* Jan/Mar 1994) was nothing if not provocative.

Constructed selectively from secondary sources Mr Vivian has taken great care in building his tribute to an undoubtedly courageous man who enjoyed legendary status throughout 8th Army, particularly amongst its tank elements.

However in any commentary on Gott that makes the claim that he “had the confidence and trust of the men he commanded” as Mr Vivian's does, it would appear prudent to at least consult some source material directly relevant to the “Commonwealth infantry formations” entrusted to his command.

In the Mersa Matruh battle Mr Vivian explains that Gott was “not at his best at this time”. It can necessarily find no place in a tribute but Gott's 13th Corps was handled so badly (even by the standards of 8th Army) that it warranted a Court of Inquiry. Barrie Pitt has noted in *Crucible of War* that its findings “were quite clear, and were laconically summed up in the remark by the chairman that 13th Corps just disappeared and left 10th Corps up the pole”.

Barton Maughan the author of *Tobruk and El Alamein*, the Australian Official History, writes that General Gott's 13th Corps attack on Ruweisat Ridge 14-15 July 1942 saw “the New Zealand Division's exposure to the German armour and the failure of British armoured brigades (whose tank strength so greatly exceeded that of the Germans) to be there alongside to give battle left an aftermath of bitterness and distrust of the armour and also of the commanders responsible”.

Major General Sir Howard Kippenberger, commander of the New Zealand Division's 5th Brigade, recorded in his book *Infantry Brigadier* that prior to the El Mreir attack of 22 July 1942, “... again there was no corps conference and this was a corps battle and we knew only at second hand what the other formations concerned were to do”. The result was another disaster. The New Zealand Division advanced as ordered but 2nd Armoured Brigade didn't put in an appearance. Gott then ordered 23rd Armoured Brigade to advance on a narrow front. In a charge that has been likened to Balaclava in the space of a few hours the brigade lost 80 tanks in addition the New Zealand Division suffered heavy casualties.

David Vivian quotes Correlli Barnett's view that Rommel had “gained a moral ascendancy over the commanders of 8th Army”, but it seems inadequate to ascribe 8th Army's defeats and the deplorable performances of its corps commanders to such an intangible cause. Certainly elite formations of 8th Army, such as 9th Australian Division and 2nd New Zealand Division remained not in the least awed by the reputation of Rommel.

Mr Vivian's contention that Gott had the confidence and trust of the men he commanded is not substantiated by the official histories of Australia, New Zealand or South Africa. There can be no doubt of Gott's courage nor of his ability to inspire others, Mr Vivian's adulation is plain evidence of this. There is a great danger that devotional tributes will replace historical accuracy in the minds of uncritical readers. In considering the later career of Mr Vivian's “man of immense prestige” a pertinent quote from Rene Quinton's *Soldiers Testament* springs to mind, “soldiers pay with their lives for mistakes in promotion”.

Bruce Davey
Chatswood NSW 2068

Victoria Cross

Dear Editor

There is understandable view in the community that the Victoria Cross belongs to the nation. This is a fallacy. The fact is the Victoria Cross is presented by the nation to an individual as a reward for extreme bravery in the face of the enemy.

The Victoria Cross is the property of the individual to whom it was presented. Unlike some orders, the Victoria Cross does not have to be returned on the death of the recipient. The medal belongs to the recipient to do with it as he wants and no organisation of government should interfere.

Eighteen Australians won the Victoria Cross in France in 1918 when the Australian Corps was serving under the British Fourth Army. Most of the recipients were presented with the Victoria Cross at Buckingham Palace by the British Monarch. The medals were cast by a firm of London Jeweller's from metal reputed to be made from Russian guns captured by the British in the Crimean War. Recent research indicates the metal maybe from Chinese guns. The Victoria Cross itself is the highest British Commonwealth award which Australian abandoned in the 1980s. Over 60 examples of the medal are held in Australian institutions with the great majority on public display. To suggest that this foreign made, foreign awarded and foreign earned medal if sold to a foreigner would be a diminution of Australian cultural heritage is absurd.

Terry Trusswell

Advertisements

**PRICE IN NEW ZEALAND DOLLARS. incl. postage and packing: N.Z.
THE SOUTH AFRICAN (BOER) WAR. 1899-1902:**

SERVICE RECORDS OF BRITISH AND COLONIAL WOMEN

SHEILA GRAY

Detailed service records of over 1,700 military and civilian nurses, laywomen and civilian volunteers rewarded for service in South Africa, with Rolls of those Mentioned in Despatches and awarded the Royal Red Cross. Limited edition. Available from the author: 54a Towai St, Auckland 1005., New Zealand.

PRICE IN NEW ZEALAND DOLLARS. incl. postage and packing:

\$32.00; AUS \$38.00; UK/CAN \$42.00; S.AFRICA (air) \$50.00.

ISBN: 0-473-01926-4

WANTED

Photographs and Information on the
WEST AUSTRALIANS
who served in the
West Australian Contingents to the
BOER WAR, 1899 - 1902



Required for a book on the above.

Please Contact

JOHN SWEETMAN

3 Altone Road

Lockridge. W.A. 6054.

(09) 279 5572

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