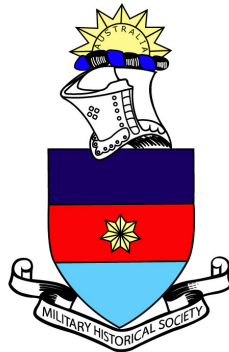


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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www.mhsa.org.au

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

EDITORIAL

When, some twenty years ago, I was talked into attending a meeting of the South Australian branch of the Society by its then president, George Newbury, I had little idea of what I was in for, let alone what the future held in store. At the time I discovered a group of warm and like-minded people with whom I could discuss and share all sorts of ideas and information about a field which had captivated me from a very young age. I decided very rapidly that this was for me, and I've been a member ever since. Now I find myself editor of *Sabretache* and launching my first issue – still fascinated by it all and hoping that the journal will continue to stimulate members' individual interests, while managing to foster a sense of community among the Society as a whole.

It can be a tricky task taking over from someone who has held a position for as long as Anthony Staunton. I believe that he originally stepped into the breach (such an apt metaphor in our area) as an interim measure, but now after nine years has been able to hand over the editorship and pursue other aspects of his life. On behalf of the Society, I'd like to thank Anthony for all his work, and to wish him all the best for the future. My further hope for the journal is that readers accustomed to Anthony's style and approach won't find the handover too disconcerting. While each editor inevitably has particular preferences, my aim is to maintain as much continuity as possible while exploring ways of further promoting the involvement of members and readers (the two not necessarily being synonymous) in the production of *Sabretache*.

How appropriate, therefore, that this issue should have at its core the three essays awarded the Society's 2011 Writers' Prizes: those by joint winners Jan Hunter and Graham Wilson, and the third by Andrea Gerrard which received the encouragement award. These and the other articles presented here demonstrate very clearly the extraordinary range of research interests and the outstanding depth of knowledge which the Society represents, and I am honoured to be able to offer them for your appreciation. I would urge you to look at the announcement of the 2012 Writer's Prize under Society Notices in this issue, and to give serious thought to taking part – you can never tell where it may lead, and how much it will help give voice to your particular passions and research projects.

I would also direct your attention to some other items in this issue. One is a new column, 'As You Were ...', which invites feedback in the form of additional information arising from articles appearing in the journal. The other is the continuation of 'Collectors' Corner', an aspect of the field dear to the hearts of many members. So even if you don't feel up to writing an article, there is still ample opportunity to contribute. The other is that in the temporary absence of Joe Furphy's 'Around the Water Cart' column, I have included a short piece on the Adam Park archaeological project in Singapore. Given the hundreds of Australian prisoners of war who were held in the Adam Park complex during World War Two, there may be some of you who had a relative there or who are privy to archival material related to it. Read the article and see if you can help Jon Cooper, manager of the project, with his enquiries.

Finally, I wish to extend my thanks to a number of people who assisted me during this transitional period. First, to those of you who sent me articles and book reviews; some of these appear here and the rest will do so in issues to come. Next, to the members of the South Australian branch of the MHSA, whose friendship I hold in high regard and who extended me much support and goodwill on my appointment. Finally, to the outgoing Federal Secretary, Kristen Alexander, a special thank you for your invaluable help and advice, without which this issue might have been much later in appearing. The Society will be the poorer for the loss of your efforts and expertise.

So I present this, my first issue of *Sabretache*, to the Society, and trust that it may represent the beginning of a long and fruitful association.

Paul Skrebels

ACCOMMODATING THE KING'S HARD BARGAIN: AUSTRALIAN ARMY DETENTION FACILITIES IN WORLD WAR TWO

Graham Wilson¹

It is a fact of military life that armies are not made up of robots; they are made up of human beings, with all of the failings, foibles and shortcomings of human beings. The Australian Army in the Second World War was no different in this than any other army of that (or any other) conflict. Members of the Army transgressed against both military and civil laws from day one. Some of these transgressors were the type who would have committed an offence no matter what, men who in an earlier day would have been classed as 'the King's hard bargain'. Others were men who fell foul of the military authorities through neglect, happenstance or sheer bad luck. Come what may, however, these men needed to be punished (if found guilty) and for the more serious offences punishment was imprisonment. This, of course, meant that the military had to have its own prisons or, as they were more correctly known, detention barracks.

This article aims to give a short history of military detention for the Australian Army during the period 1939-1945, concentrating in large part on the facilities themselves and their operation. Only those facilities that came under the direct control of a national headquarters, i.e. Land Headquarters (LHQ) or the various AIF overseas HQ, i.e. detention barracks and guard compounds, are examined.² Smaller facilities not directly controlled by the Provost Directorate or the later Military Prisons and Detention Barracks Service, such as barrack detention rooms and field punishment compounds, are not discussed, although they may be mentioned in passing.

The role of a detention barrack was to imprison and hold any person found guilty of or awaiting trial for serious military or civil crimes committed whilst a serving member of the Australian forces, any allied force, or an internee or a POW.³ Detention barracks in the main held longer term prisoners while Guard Compounds were established to hold prisoners serving shorter sentences or for prisoners in transit. It should be noted that the Royal Australian Air Force did not have its own detention facilities during the Second World War, utilising Army facilities under an inter-service agreement; while the Royal Australian Navy did have its own facilities, it committed sailors to Army facilities regularly when this was convenient. In addition, Australian Army detention facilities were used to incarcerate British, New Zealand, American and Dutch (including Netherlands East Indies) personnel, and were also used to incarcerate German, Italian and Japanese prisoners of war and civilian internees who had been found guilty of offences under Australian military law.

During the First World War, with the bulk of the army overseas, there was little need for detention facilities in Australia. The small number of military offenders in each state who were sentenced to imprisonment carried out their sentences in civilian gaols that had been

¹ Graham Wilson served 26 years in the Regular Army and then 14 years in the Dept of Defence. He retired in February this year but returned in August to work as a historian for the Commemorations Branch of the Dept of Veterans' Affairs. A prolific author, his first two books are due for publication in 2012. He is working on another dealing with the history of Australian Army detention, 1914-1948.

² The correct word to use when discussing World War Two detention facilities gazetted as barracks is 'barrack', i.e. singular, e.g. 1st Australian Detention Barrack.

³ Australian Military Forces War Establishment W.E. IV/1938/66A/1.

gazetted as military detention establishments. Overseas, for the Western Front the AIF originally made use of British facilities in the UK and on the Continent. The AIF established its own detention barrack at Lewes in Sussex in 1917 for UK based offenders, although offenders on the Continent and in the Middle East who were sentenced to more than Field Punishment continued to be incarcerated in British military prisons, either in France or in Cairo.⁴

At the end of the Great World War, with the exception of members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) who were serving civil sentences for crimes committed under civil law, soldiers under sentence received automatic remission of the unserved balance of their sentence the moment they stepped on the ship taking them back to Australia. It has been noted, although this has not been confirmed, that as early as 1922 the Commonwealth reached an agreement with various State governments in the matter of the use of State prison facilities for Commonwealth purposes should the need arise. With the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 and the concomitant expansion of the Australian military forces, i.e. the establishment of the Second AIF and the expansion of the Citizen Military Forces (CMF), the need for military correctional facilities was immediate and acute.

Establishing a military prison or detention barrack was not simply a matter of pointing to a suitable building and saying 'That's now a military prison'. Establishment of a military prison required an Order in Council by the Governor-General (for prisons and barracks established in Australia) or by the equivalent authority in other parts of the Empire (e.g. the Secretary of State in the UK). This was laid down in Section 116 of *The Defence Act 1903*, which stated:

Any member of the Defence Force sentenced to penal servitude, imprisonment or detention for any naval, military or air-force offence may, if the Governor-General by regulation or otherwise directs, be imprisoned or undergo penal servitude or detention in any place appointed by the Governor-General instead of in a prison.

The aim of a military prison was not just punishment, although that was part of it. The actual aim of the military prison regime was to turn a bad soldier into a good soldier, this being accomplished by a requirement on the part of the incarcerated soldier to adhere to a strict and high standard of discipline and dress while undertaking a course of military and physical training designed to allow him to be immediately fitted back into an operational unit on release. This training was coupled with a graduated system of rewards whereby a prisoner who abided by the rules could earn additional privileges, as well as partial remission of sentence.⁵ There can of course be no Yin in life without a Yang to balance it and alongside the system of rewards was also a system of punishments, also graduated, which consisted of:

- forfeiture of remission
- dietary punishment
- restraint by irons and handcuffs
- extra tasks⁶

⁴ See Wilson, Graham 2005 'A Prison of Our Own: the AIF Detention Barracks 1917-1919', *Sabretache The Journal and Proceedings of the Military Historical Society of Australia*, vol. 46 no. 2, pp. 13-30.

⁵ AWM52 18/3/8 War Diary, 1 AUST DETENTION BARRACK MIDDLE EAST (hereafter referred to as WD 1 ADM (ME)).

⁶ AWM52 18/3/7 War Diary, 2/2 Australian Detention Barrack, Gladstone, 'Annual Report of Commandant – 2/2 Aust Detn Bks (Type A) for Year Ending 1st July 1942 to 30th June 1943' dated 14 July 1943.

During the war the Australian Military Forces (AMF) operated detention facilities in the UK, the Middle East, Malaya, Australia, Papua and New Guinea, and in the Netherlands East Indies. The list of detention barracks and guard compounds operated by the AMF during World War Two is shown below:

1 (2/1) Australian Detention Barrack	Mount Zion, Jerusalem, Palestine
2 (2/2) Australian Detention Barrack	Hill 69, Palestine
3 (2/3) Australian Detention Barrack	Nuseirat, Palestine
AIF Detention Camp, UK	Stonehenge and Colchester, UK
AIF Detention Barrack Port Swettenham	Port Swettenham, Malaya
1 Australian Detention Barrack	Grovely, Queensland
2 Australian Detention Barrack	Puckapunyal, Victoria
3 Australian Detention Barrack	Charters Towers, Queensland
4 Australian Detention Barrack	Warwick, Queensland
5 Australian Detention Barrack	Holsworthy, New South Wales
6 Australian Detention Barrack	Orange, New South Wales
7 Australian Detention Barrack	Bendigo, Victoria
8 Australian Detention Barrack	Geelong, Victoria
9 Australian Detention Barrack	Gladstone, South Australia
10 Australian Detention Barrack	Portsea, Victoria
11 Australian Detention Barrack	Fremantle, Western Australia
12 Australian Detention Barrack	Conara, Tasmania
13 Australian Detention Barrack	Brock's Creek, Northern Territory
14 Australian Detention Barrack	West Tamworth, New South Wales
15 Australian Detention Barrack	North Tamworth, New South Wales
16 Australian Detention Barrack	Port Moresby and Lae, New Guinea
17 Australian Detention Barrack	Albury, New South Wales
18 Australian Detention Barrack	Malabar, New South Wales
19 Australian Detention Barrack	Miranda, New South Wales
20 Australian Detention Barrack	Morotai, Netherlands East Indies
1 Australian Guard Compound	Royal Park, Victoria
2 Australian Guard Compound	Randwick, New South Wales
3 Australian Guard Compound	Warwick, Queensland
4 Australian Guard Compound	Pentridge Gaol, Victoria
5 Australian Guard Compound	Kissing Point, Queensland
6 Australian Guard Compound	Paddington, New South Wales

These will now be examined, beginning with most of the overseas establishment.

Australian forces in the United Kingdom in 1940 and 1941 found the question of military detention facilities problematical. It had been intended to utilise British Army detention facilities for AIF offenders, however, on 30 June 1940 AIF Administrative HQ was forced to issue an instruction to the effect that:

Owing to the shortage of accommodation it will only be possible, for the present, to commit to detention barracks soldiers with long sentences or those whose offences render committal desirable. Applications for accommodation will be made to H.Q. Australforce. Other sentences will be undergone under unit arrangements.⁷

This was a very unsatisfactory arrangement, given that soldiers under sentence needed to be securely confined and guarded at all times, a severe drain on unit capacity. The need was seen for an Australian detention facility and this was discussed at a General Officer Commanding

⁷ 'AUSTRALFORCE ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS No.3', 30 June 1940, AWM52 1/13/3 War Diary, AIF UK Adjutant and Quartermaster General Branch (hereafter referred to as 'WD AIF UK A&QMG').

(GOC) Conference held on 31 July 1940.⁸ The AIF (UK) Detention Camp was raised at Stonehenge, near Salisbury in Wiltshire on 7 August 1940, from personnel drawn from the Force Provost Unit AIF (UK), to undertake the detention role for the Australian force in the UK, the first intake of 'Soldiers Under Sentence' (SUS) marching in the next day.⁹

In October, as part of a reorganisation of the AIF in preparation for the move to the Middle East, the detention camp moved to Colchester in Essex, taking up its new accommodation in Reed Huts, Colchester Garrison on 23 October.¹⁰ At that stage the unit held 71 SUS.

A GOC Conference was held in October 1940 to discuss final arrangements for the move of AIF units to the Middle East; the notes stated that on the move of the bulk of the AIF from the UK, the detention camp was to remain in the UK temporarily.¹¹ Although the AIF Detention Camp is specifically mentioned in an instruction of 23 November 1940 amongst a small group of AIF units which were to remain in the UK following the departure of the second and final convoy of AIF troops to the Middle East, the only person named as belonging to the establishment and specifically remaining behind was Captain J.H. Trend, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal (DAPM) and Officer Commanding (OC) Detention Camp.¹² From this it would appear that the detention camp as a physical entity had been dissolved and the personnel in all likelihood re-assigned to Military Police units. Given that all of the SUS held by the AIF (UK) Detention Camp had been men with sentences of less than 28 days, with men receiving sentences greater than that being committed to British Army detention facilities, it is almost certain that Trend had been left behind as the AIF administrative link for these men, with the sentences of the men held at Colchester being remitted.¹³

In the Middle East, meanwhile, again as a result of overcrowding in British facilities, an AIF detention facility, 1st Australian Detention Barrack (1 ADB), was established in a former convent at Mount Zion in Jerusalem, with the unit raising authority dated 18 February 1940.¹⁴ Originally commanded by Captain J.S. Copland, the unit was taken over by Lieutenant (later Major) Joseph ('Jerusalem Joe') Courtney in June 1940.¹⁵ Courtney, a pre-war policeman, was a conscientious officer and in early 1941, concerned at overcrowding at 1 ADB and mindful of the need for economy and efficiency, drafted a detailed and well thought out submission calling for the establishment of an additional two detention facilities.¹⁶ Largely as a consequence of this, 2 and 3 ADB were established in July 1941, the first at Hill 69 Camp and the second at Nuseirat Camp.¹⁷

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ AWM52 18/3/17 War Diary, AIF (UK) Detention Camp.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ WD AIF UK A&QMG.

¹² AWM52 1/13/1 War Diary, AIF UK Force General Staff Branch.

¹³ Neither War Diary of the AIF (UK) Detention Camp, nor WD AIF UK A & QMG mention this, however, given the procedure later applied to the Detention Barracks in the Middle East as they were withdrawn to Australia and also the knowledge of what happened to members of the AIF under sentence at the end of World War One, this is the only conclusion that can be reached.

¹⁴ *AIF (ME) Orders Vol. I 18.2.1940 to 16.5.1941*, Order No. 3, dated 18 Feb 40.

¹⁵ AWM52 18/3/8 War Diary. 1 AUST DETENTION BARRACK MIDDLE EAST (hereafter referred to as WD 1 ADB (ME)).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *AIF (ME) Orders Vol. II 30.5.1941 to 29.12.1941*, Order No. 470 dated 12 July 1941 and Order No. 712 dated 25 October 1941. These two facilities may be found described as 2 and 3 Detention 'Compound', however, each was definitely, legally and officially a Detention 'Barrack'.

Although there were a number of escapes from the various facilities, the only major incident occurred at 3 ADB, on 30 April 1942, when thirteen SUS refused orders to fall in following a general disturbance in the compound.¹⁸ All of the men were charged with joining in a mutiny (*Army Act*, Sec. 7 (c)); they all pleaded not guilty but were all found guilty and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment with hard labour, ranging from 18 months to five years and three months, plus discharge with ignominy (DWI).¹⁹ The sentence of DWI was not upheld by higher authority and in the end each man had his sentence mitigated and suspended at an early date (see below).²⁰

When the AIF was recalled from the Middle East to Australia in 1942, both 1 and 2 ADB departed Egypt in April.²¹ Soldiers sentenced to detention now served their sentence at 3 ADB, which relocated to Jerusalem.²² On 8 January 1943, AIF HQ (ME) directed that from that date any soldier sentenced to a period of detention of less than 90 days was to serve his sentence with his unit, with soldiers at 3 ADB with less than 28 days to serve of their sentence to be returned to their units by 11 January to serve out the balance of their sentences there and soldiers whose sentences were due to expire during the months of January to March to have their sentences suspended on 11 January and released to their units.²³ With all SUS removed from the unit, 3 ADB departed the Middle East in February 1943.

While 2 and 3 ADB both had an uneventful return trip to Australia, 1 ADB was not so lucky. When the unit departed Port Tewfik on 2 April 1942 aboard the transport *Felix Roussell*, it took with it 71 SUS, confined in special quarters set aside for them on the ship.²⁴ These men caused ‘Jerusalem Joe’ endless problems on the trip home; two serious outbreaks of violence occurred, the first when a group of drunken non-prisoners broke into the prison quarters and attempted to free the SUS, the second when illicit alcohol was smuggled into the SUS; in addition, at every port of call (Aden, Mombasa, Durban and Fremantle) prisoners contrived to escape, by climbing through port holes and diving into the water or jumping onto wharves, by prising boards off the walls of holding cells on deck and jumping onto the wharf, one man by stealing a sailor’s uniform and walking off the ship onto the dock.²⁵ The SUS did so much damage to the prison quarters that they were finally judged as too unsafe and insecure to hold prisoners and they were transferred at Durban to another ship for the final leg of the voyage—doubtless ‘Jerusalem Joe’ and his men were happy to see the end of the voyage.²⁶

¹⁸ NAA A471 36706 Court Martial File: QX22783 Private Norman Richard John Lewis; QX9552 Private Patrick Clement William Bolger; NX32999 Private R.F. Mowatt; NX43762 Private James Alexander Sims; VX570 Private Thomas William Kelly; VX44429 Private John Kelly; VX13383 Private Daniel John Gorman; VX12372 Private Norman McKenzie; VX19828 Private William James Every; NX2523 Private Clive Connors; SX11994 Private Walter Thomas Matthew Tournier; QX5764 Private Colin Adams; VX35196 Private James Joseph Jennings: Unit – 3rd Detention Compound (sic), Australian Imperial Force: Date of Court Martial – 7 to 12 May 1942.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ WD 1 ADB (ME) and AWM52 18/3/7 entry for 27 Nov 43 War Diary, 2nd Australian Detention Barracks (Middle East).

²² AWM 52 18/3/12 War Diary, 3rd Australian Detention Barracks (Middle East).

²³ AIF (ME) Administrative Instruction No. 1/43, Soldiers Under Sentence, dated 8 January 1943.

²⁴ WD 1 ADB (ME).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

In Malaya, to which AIF units were deployed from February 1941, a detention barrack was established at Port Swettenham, Malaya. Little is known of this unit, apart from its existence, and it would have ceased to exist well before the surrender of Singapore in February 1942.²⁷

In Australia itself the military prison system began operating in 1939. Detention barracks (then referred to as Lines of Communications Area Detention Barracks or L of C Area DB) were established at Bendigo in Victoria (December 1939), Holsworthy in New South Wales (February 1940), Fremantle in Western Australia (March 1940), and Grovely in Queensland (September 1940).

When the three ADB returned from the Middle East in 1942 and 1943, they continued operation in Australia. After leave 1 ADB, retitled 2/1 ADB, was deployed to Grovely in Queensland, where it operated for while alongside the Northern Command or Queensland L of C Area DB until May 1943; 2 ADB, retitled 2/2 ADB, took over the newly completed civil prison at Gladstone in South Australia on 7 April 1942; 3 ADB, retitled 2/3 ADB, was located in Melbourne.

Increasing numbers of troops and units in Australia meant a commensurate increase in the number of military detention facilities. In Queensland, the L of C Area DB was split in September 1942 to form new prisons at Charters Towers and Warwick. Earlier, in April 1942, a new prison was established at Orange, in New South Wales, taking over the site of the former Orange Detention Centre (for civilian detainees) at the Orange Showground. This unit was established to ease the pressure on the existing unit at Holsworthy and in practice took prisoners serving longer term sentences, with men sentenced to lesser periods serving their sentences at Holsworthy. In May 1942 the facility at Geelong Prison, previously a sub-unit of Southern Command L of C Area DB at Bendigo, became a separate detention barrack. In Tasmania, a barrack detention room, gazetted at Brighton Barracks in February 1941, was upgraded to the Tasmanian L of C DB in April 1942, moving to Hobart in October of that year and then to Conara in November. Finally, in the Northern Territory, 7th Military District DB was formed at Larrakeyah Barracks in July 1941; renamed NT Force DB in April 1942, the unit moved to Brock's Creek, in May 1942.

In January 1943, the military prisons were reorganised and renumbered, as follows:

- 1 ADB at Grovely: formerly QLD L of C Area DB (Grovely); in May 1943 the unit was absorbed by 2/1 ADB, which then ceased to exist.
- 3 ADB at Charters Towers: formerly QLD L of C Area DB (Charters Towers).
- 4 ADB at Warwick: formerly QLD L of C Area DB (Warwick).
- 5 ADB at Holsworthy: formerly NSW L of C Area DB (Holsworthy).
- 6 ADB at Orange: formerly NSW L of C Area DB (Orange).
- 7 ADB at Bendigo: formerly Southern Command L of C Area DB (Bendigo).
- 8 ADB at Geelong: formerly Southern Command L of C Area DB (Geelong).
- 9 ADB at Gladstone: formerly SA L of C Area DB (Gladstone); on 27 November 1943, 2/2 ADB, also located at Gladstone, disbanded, most personnel being posted to 1 Australian Guard Compound in Victoria, three personnel being posted to 9 ADB.

²⁷ NAA file MP729/7 37/421/632 'A.I.F. Detention Barracks, Port Sweetenham (sic) Malaya', is held in Melbourne, however, the file is currently unexamined and has not been consulted for this paper.

- 11 ADB at Fremantle: formerly Western Command L of C Area DB (Fremantle).
- 12 ADB at Conara: formerly Tasmanian L of C Area DB (Conara).
- 13 ADB at Brock's Creek: formerly NT Force DB (Brock's Creek).
- 14 ADB at West Tamworth: New South Wales (new unit).
- 15 ADB at North Tamworth: New South Wales (new unit).
- 17 ADB at Albury: New South Wales – formerly 2/3 ADB.

The reorganisation of the military prison system in January 1943 was an acknowledgement that the military detention system had become so big that it could no longer be easily accommodated within the Provost Marshal's office. Consequently, the Directorate of Military Prisons & Detention Barracks was established as a separate directorate and service in April of that year, with Colonel G.F. Murphy, CMG, DSO as Director (DMP&DB).²⁸ Colonel Murphy, a World War One veteran, had originally been called up for service with the Volunteer Defence Corps Inspectorate but had later been appointed Provost Marshal (PM) LHQ; he was replaced as PM on his appointment as DMP&DB by his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel N.W. Faulkner.²⁹ The Directorate was located at Land Headquarters, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, and Deputy Directors were located with the HQ of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria Lines of Communications and Western Command. The Directorate itself consisted of ten personnel of all ranks, including 1 x Colonel (Director), 1 x Lieutenant Colonel (Inspector), 1 x Major (Deputy Director), 1 x Captain (Deputy Inspector and Staff Officer), 1 x Warrant Officer Class II (Chief Clerk), 1 x Sergeant (Orderly Room Sergeant), 3 x Corporal (Australian Women's Army Service, Orderly Room Clerk), 1 x Private (AWAS, Orderly).³⁰

In addition to the detention barracks, a number of guard compounds were established to hold soldiers who were serving short sentences, awaiting charge or trial, or awaiting transport to a detention barrack. The units formed were:

- 1st Australian Guard Compound: raised at Royal Park, Victoria.
- 2nd Australian Guard Compound: raised at Randwick, New South Wales in 1942.
- 3rd Australian Guard Compound: raised at Grovely, Queensland in 1942.
- 4th Australian Guard Compound: raised at Pentridge Gaol, Victoria in July 1943.
- 5th Australian Guard Compound: raised at Kissing Point, Queensland, in August 1943.
- 6th Australian Guard Compound: raised at Paddington, New South Wales to supplement the existing 2nd Australian Guard Compound at Randwick.

Several more detention barracks would be formed later in the war:

- 2 ADB was raised at Royal Park, Victoria in December 1944 from 1st Australian Guard Compound and moved to Puckapunyal in January 1945.
- 10 ADB was raised in July 1944 from 4th Australian Guard Compound and established at Portsea, Victoria.

²⁸ AWM52 1/1/17 War Diary, Directorate of Military Prisons and Detention Barracks (hereafter referred to as 'WD MP&DB') and NAA B884 N106546 Service Record of Colonel George Francis Murphy.

²⁹ AWM52 1/1/16 War Diary, Directorate of Provost Services.

³⁰ War Diary MP&DB.

16 ADB was formed in Brisbane in August 1943 for service in New Guinea; the unit moved to Port Moresby in October and took over facilities and SUS from NG Force Field Punishment Centre in November; in September 1944 the unit, including SUS, moved to Lae, where it operated until the end of the war.

18 ADB was raised at Malabar (Long Bay Gaol), New South Wales in September 1943.

19 ADB was raised at Miranda, New South Wales, in October 1943.

20 ADB was raised at Grovely in May 1945 from men drawn from detention barracks in New South Wales and Victoria, to accompany 1st Australian Corps to Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies.

Again, as with the detention barracks in the Middle East, the various barracks in Australia were plagued with escapes and escape attempts throughout their existence, however, there were few serious incidents. The most serious incident actually occurred at Lae on 16 June 1945 when an act of group disobedience by inmates of 16 ADB turned into a riot, which saw much of the facility destroyed and required members of the neighbouring 2/3 Forestry Company to turn out under arms to quell the situation and round up escaped SUS.³¹ This incident saw the court martial of 15 of the unit's staff.

With the end of the war the military detention facilities began to be closed and, where applicable, handed back to civilian authority. For example, 13 ADB at Brock's Creek in the Northern Territory was closed in October 1945 and disposed of in January 1946.³² Other facilities, for example, 14 ADB at West Tamworth, were maintained to assist with residual discipline problems as the Army demobilised.³³ By the middle of 1947, all of the war time detention facilities were gone.³⁴

Discipline in the detention barracks was strict, however, the number of files containing records of courts martial of staff members of the detention facilities on charges of mistreating or being suspected of mistreating SUS indicate that the military authorities were not prepared to put up with military prisoners being mistreated. Each detention barrack had a Board of Visiting Officers appointed to it, officers from nearby units, who could not be members of the Provost Corps or the Military Prisons and Detention Barracks Service, who would visit their allotted facility on both a regular and as an required basis, both to hear and investigate complaints and also hear disciplinary cases to ensure impartiality.³⁵ SUS could earn up to 30% remission of their sentence if they did not transgress during their time in incarceration. While in incarceration, SUS received the same rations as non-prisoners when performing full military duties (although if not performing duties SUS were fed on an authorised lower ration scale and could have their diet restricted to bread and water as a punishment), were entitled to an issue of tobacco, could accept gifts of food, including sweets and fresh fruit, and were entitled to visits from family and friends, as well as clergymen, lawyers, etc.

³¹ NAA A471 72204 Court Martial of VX128223 Sergeant Stuart Prout Clinnick, 16th Australian Detention Barracks, Australian Military Forces, 16 August 1945.

³² NAA E325 NL67 Brocks Creek Detention Barracks.

³³ AWM61 S38/1/989 Camps - NSW L of C Area (Lines of Communication Area) - Retainment of Tamworth Detention Barracks.

³⁴ 22 ADB would be raised, commencing in October 1945, for service with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, but that is another story.

³⁵ See, for example, WD 1 ADB (ME).

The system was undeniably harsh, and it was meant to be. At a time of world war the detention barrack regime was designed to take a 'bad soldier' and turn him into a 'good soldier', by the enforcement of strict discipline and application of strenuous training. Records show that the AMF was willing to give a man as many chances as he needed to redeem himself; records also show, however, that if a man proved to the military authorities that he was not prepared to soldier, those authorities had no hesitation in declaring that man's 'services no longer required' and ridding themselves of him.

It has not proved possible to date to ascertain how many men passed through the Australian military prisons in World War Two. We should not and cannot, however, pass judgement on the system, as it was a system for its time and very much a reflection of civilian mores of the time. In the end the system seemed to work well.

--oOo--

AS YOU WERE ...

Feedback from Readers and Contributors

Coincidentally, both items this issue refer to the service of the 10th Light Horse in the two world wars.

Roy Manuel writes in response to Barry Bamford's article 'The Lives of Riley: a History of the Tenth Light Horse Guidon', which appeared in the June 2011 issue (vol. 52 no. 2):

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The system was undeniably harsh, and it was meant to be. At a time of world war the detention barrack regime was designed to take a 'bad soldier' and turn him into a 'good soldier', by the enforcement of strict discipline and application of strenuous training. Records show that the AMF was willing to give a man as many chances as he needed to redeem himself; records also show, however, that if a man proved to the military authorities that he was not prepared to soldier, those authorities had no hesitation in declaring that man's 'services no longer required' and ridding themselves of him.

It has not proved possible to date to ascertain how many men passed through the Australian military prisons in World War Two. We should not and cannot, however, pass judgement on the system, as it was a system for its time and very much a reflection of civilian mores of the time. In the end the system seemed to work well.

--oOo--

AS YOU WERE ...

Feedback from Readers and Contributors

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THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE ‘BREN’:¹ THE WARTIME COMMUNIQUEs OF MATE’S LTD ALBURY, 1941-1945

Jan Hunter²

This, the first issue of Mate’s Staff Communique, has as its chief objective the forging of a link between us and those members of our staff who are serving their country, or are with the Forces still in Australia. Letters from the various fronts make it abundantly clear that any news from home is greedily devoured and ... [the boys] are bound to appreciate news concerning the old firm and those still members of its staff.³

Mate’s Staff Comfort Fund *Communique*s give a unique insight into the way a large regional department store supported its enlisted staff through a monthly newsletter, from February 1941 to September 1945. The contents of the *Communique*s illustrate the values of that time through the editorials, letters to and from enlisted staff, and the evidence of friendship and loyalty to workmates and employers. The *Communique*s give a continuous record of the Home Front in Albury, as well as providing factual information about patterns of training and enlistment for men and women.



One set of the *Communique*s survives as four hard-bound volumes, indicating that the long-term value of these documents had been recognised at the time of publication. In more recent times, however, the casual handling of the *Communique*s made their gathering and preservation the outcome of luck rather than design. Research carried out by a local amateur historian, using information within the bound volumes, resulted in a donation to the Albury & District Historical Society of a full set of loose copies, which included an extra seven issues. The *Communique*s

were typewritten on a foolscap stencil and copies roneoed manually. There were many sketches throughout, contrasting styles of font and print, and the front and back page were on card. Only about ten photos were included overall. The *Communique* provided valuable news of home to serving men and women across the globe. They now are a source of local history, illustrating the social setting of civilians from a community workplace who became servicemen and women. They set the large country town of Albury into the wider context of World War Two.

¹ *Mate’s Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.2. NB Not all *Communique* pages are numbered.

² Jan Hunter is a member of the Albury & District Historical Society who shopped at Mate’s Department Store when she was young. She has a special interest in social history including the Homefront. Jan is the author of *Building the Neighbourhood, Central North Albury 1920-1950* (2007) and papers on Albury’s builders and tradesmen. Jan’s husband and daughter are both published WW1 historians.

³ *Mate’s Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.1. The *Communique*s use both ‘Comfort Fund’ and ‘Comforts Fund. ‘Comfort’ will be used as in the first reference.

Mate's Ltd began trading in Albury, NSW in 1850 and had an estimated staff of 140 at the outbreak of World War Two. This general store was the largest in Albury, and occupied the central corner of the main business district. Departments such as the Brickworks were at other sites in the town. In November 1940 a Staff Comfort Fund was formed, 'to remind our fellow employees serving in the Forces that we, on the Home Front, want to give them a helping hand'. A committee of seven was elected, including two women. The group planned to send out a monthly newsletter, *Mate's Staff Communique*, and to continue sending fortnightly hampers and canteen orders to their enlisted staff.⁴

Members made a donation weekly. I had a list in a book and for a start would go around collecting on Friday nights, that was until Dec. 7 1941 when late night shopping ceased. I then used to collect in the morning before things got too busy ... Social events were also held to raise funds.⁵

The *Communique* seems to have been the only in-house journal produced in Albury.⁶ Only one issue was missed in 4½ years (November 1944), owing to illness among the editorial staff.

The contents of the newsletters followed a pattern. First was a sombre Editorial. Then followed a list of enlisted and training servicemen and women, jokes, some amateur poetry wisely attributed to 'Anon', and letter extracts from staff in the forces or in training. A comprehensive round-up of staff news was collected by 'Shop Hound'. Contributions to the *Communiques* were invited and welcomed: 'If a bright paragraph produces a chuckle then this Journal will have accomplished something in a small degree towards a final victory for the British Empire. GO TO IT.'⁷ However, in the second issue it was noted that contributions were to be kept free from 'all personalities likely to offend in even the slightest degree and [the writers must] endeavour always to reflect the dignity of this firm', but 'good wholesome nonsense' would be published.⁸

The Editorials were uplifting and challenging. Quotations from poetry included Wordsworth and Kipling. Drake and Wellington were held up as exemplars. The 'Thought for the Month' used Dickens or Shakespeare. 'Spring' was a time for a mental spring clean and 'Autumn' a reminder of beauty in the midst of confusion in the world.⁹ In mid 1942, the Editor challenged his readers at home on 'A Second Front':

It is the fight against the lowering of the standards of private and public morality ... the fight for truth instead of deceit ... for the rule of law; for equal opportunities and the recognition of individual responsibilities ... When our boys come home with victory in the pockets, what account of our stewardship shall we present? Surely, a town richer in ideals ... and the old job with the old Firm whose good name we have kept untarnished for their return.¹⁰

Occasionally there was a lighter tone, 'wholesome nonsense' perhaps, including a reflection on submarines which used the dimensions and qualities of a piece of slippery bath soap to

⁴ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.2.

⁵ Letter from Douglas Atchison, Lilydale Vic, former Mate's employee, 2 May 2008 to Jan Hunter, Albury & District Historical Society.

⁶ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 2, Mar 1941, p.1.

⁷ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.2.

⁸ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 2, Mar 1941.

⁹ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 3 no. 7, Aug 1943, p.1; vol. 1 no.6, July 1941, p.1; vol. 2 no. 5, June 1942; vol. 1 no.1, Feb 1941; vol. 5 no. 2, Mar 1945; vol. 3 no. 7, Aug 1943; vol. 1 no. 5, June 1941.

¹⁰ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 2, no. 7, Aug 1942.

illustrate a point.¹¹

For the first months of the *Communiques* 'Members of Our Staff on Service Overseas' was listed in general contents, along with three other headings. These were 'Training in Australia', 'Awaiting Call by RAAF' and 'Home Defence'. When the first *Communique* was issued there were five Mate's men overseas' seven training in Australia, two awaiting calls by the RAAF and two listed under 'Home Defence'. Personnel were listed according to their department, for example, Furniture, Tailoring, Lino, Grocery.¹²

In October 1941 the format changed and a full page was given to a 'Roll of Honor'. The Roll was on a drawn scroll with a sketch of an airman and soldier. Later, a sailor and a woman in uniform were added. The new format was divided into 'Overseas', 'In Australia' and 'Awaiting Call to the RAAF'. In July 1941, a new heading began, 'Missing, Believed Prisoner of War'. This changed to 'P.O.W.' and continued until the last of the *Communiques*. In February 1942 there were 13 Mate's staff members overseas including one POW, six in Australia and one 'Awaiting Call to the RAAF' By April 1942 three men had 'Returned to Australia' and the Roll of Honor had lengthened. Symbols were then employed for 'Died of Illness', 'P.O.W.', 'Believed P.O.W.' and 'Discharged'.¹³

The 'girls' were mentioned in the first *Communique*. Three of them had qualified for the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment), another was 'passing by in the heavenly blue of the Red Cross.' Two sisters had 'tackled the task of driving army trucks and ambulances to join the St John's [sic] Ambulance Squad.' Regularly young women were mentioned as being in training and there was 'great excitement' when 'Duck and Dot' were called up for the WAAAF (Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force) on the same day as Miss Haffner, all having passed their medical tests in Melbourne. In July 1942 another special page was added to the *Communique*, a 'Roll of Honor' listing 'Women Members of the Staff who have joined the Services'. Six women were in the WAAAF or the AWAS (Australian Women's Army Service). Another heading, 'AAMWS' (Australian Army Medical Women's Service) was added in August 1943.¹⁴

Almost all of the female staff at Mate's were single, women usually resigning when they married. However, as enlisting staff numbers increased, changes were apparent. In July 1941, six 'new faces' were welcomed, all female and two married. Two of the single women later enlisted. In October 1942, six more new staff members were listed, five of them married women. In 1944, a correspondent wrote, 'Things must be bad when you put a woman in Men's Wear.'¹⁵

Some of the younger staff were keen to enlist. Before leaving Albury, a salesman from Grocery had his 18th birthday party. The *Communique* account of the evening finished with the wish that Lindsey Garnsey 'might be home again to blow out the candles for his 19th birthday.' In September 1943, it was recorded that 'Jack Larkin has reached the ripe old age

¹¹ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 5 no. 5, June 1945.

¹² *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.2.

¹³ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 9, Oct 1941; vol. 1 no. 6, July 1941; vol. 2 no. 1; Feb 1942; vol. 2 no. 1, Mar 1942; vol. 2 no. 3, Apr 1942.

¹⁴ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.4; vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.4; vol. 1 no. 8, Sept 1941, p.5; vol. 2 no. 6, July 1942, p.2; vol. 3 no. 7, Aug 1943.

¹⁵ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 6, July 1941, p.6; vol. 2, no. 9, Oct 1942, p.8; vol. 4, no. 2, Mar 1944, p.6.

of 18 and entered the RAAF'. John Neale enlisted in the RAN in March 1944. It is now known that he was only 16 at the time.¹⁶

A farewell function was tendered to each staff member as they left. Two women were each presented with 'a navy blue writing case – the editors consider this a gentle hint.' Some men were presented with a 'leather dressing case' and another 'a nifty shaving outfit and cigarettes.'¹⁷

The only death of a serving Mate's staff member was announced in the *Communique* of April 1942. Pilot-Officer Peter Thompson died through illness on active service in Timor. He was the only son of the Governing-Director and 'Pilot-Officer Thompson was one of the first members of Mate's Limited Staff to join the RAAF, and the first to gain commission rank.' The *Communique* inserted an '*In Memoriam*' in March of the following two years.¹⁸

Letters from enlisted personnel formed a significant part of the newsletters. The first issue contained paraphrased extracts. Ted Wightwick wrote to say he had received his first hamper. 'Thanks, Ted', was the response, 'We are just as keen to get letters from you, as you are from us.' Alan Veitch in Palestine had received a promotion to gun-layer. 'Good shooting, Alan,' said the *Communique*.¹⁹ From the third issue verbatim extracts were printed.

Those serving also received personal letters from the staff and protocol was always observed. Returning letters began 'Dear Rita,' or 'Dear Pals,' but letters to the senior members of staff began with 'Dear Mr. Evans' or 'Dear Mr. Thompson'. Throughout the *Communiques* married women were always referred to as 'Mrs.' – for example, 'Mrs. Shepherd joined the enemy with a dose of German Measles' – and department heads were given their honorific; 'Our artist, Miss Jean Rumsey ...', and 'Miss Myrtle Adams was appointed ...'²⁰

Cheery letters came and went to every theatre of war including Palestine, Greece, Africa, Borneo, Italy and camps within Australia.²¹ An early writer from overseas said he was having 'a whale of a time' and, after his first wash in three weeks, he looked like 'a Persil ad'. However, 'home' was often in their thoughts. 'How is my furniture?' wrote Bill Jeanes, 'No rain coming in on it I hope.' The first girl to join the AWAS asked, 'How is the Stationery Department progressing? I'm quite lonely without it.'²²

The newsletters were a lifeline to those away. Comments included, 'I'm anxiously waiting on the good old "Communique"'; 'Regular as clockwork my "Communiques" arrive. I've just finished reading it for the third time.' Another wrote, 'I look forward to them very much and am always sorry when I have finished reading them.' Between Japanese bombings Vern

¹⁶ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 8, Sept 1941, p.6; vol. 3 no. 8, Sept 1943, p.9; vol. 4 no. 2, Mar 1944, p.10; D J Hunter, President, 8/13 VMR Association.

¹⁷ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 12, Jan 1942, p.2; vol. 4 no. 3, Apr 1944, p.7; vol. 1 no. 6, July 1941, p.6.

¹⁸ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 2 no. 3, Apr 1942; vol. 3 no. 2, Mar 1943, p.9; vol. 4 no. 2, Mar 1944, p.11.

¹⁹ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.3.

²⁰ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 3, Apr 1941, p.2; vol. 1 no. 5, June 1941, p. unclear; vol. 1 no. 10, Nov 1941, p.4; vol. 1 no. 3, Apr 1941, p.3; vol. 2 no. 7, June 1942, pp.5,7.

²¹ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol 1 no. 3, Apr 1941, p.1; vol. 1 no. 5, June 1941, p.4; vol. 2 no. 5, June 1942, p.6; vol. 5 no. 6, July 1945, p.5; vol. 3 no. 8, Sept 1943, p.8; vol. 2 no. 9, Oct 1942, p.3.

²² *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 2, Mar 1941, p.3 ('Persil' was a washing powder); vol. 1 no. 5, June 1941, p.2; vol. 2 no. 5, June 1942, p.3.

Moffatt said, 'I get no end of enjoyment from reading these.'²³ However, many letters from the enlisted contained such phrases as, 'I apologise for not doing my duty and writing sooner.' The universal excuse was '[I've been] pretty busy.' The Editor kept his eye on tardy letter writers and was glad when Gnr Jack Inns 'found his pen at last'.²⁴

The regular hampers sent by the store were much appreciated. One RAAF man wrote from Belgium, '[My crew members] thought that Christmas had come when I produced the tin of peaches.' He used a German bayonet to open the tin, and concluded '... we were probably doing a much better job with it than the rightful owner.' The hampers included items other than food: 'Every article will come in handy ... I was particularly glad of the writing material for it is very scarce here', said one writer.²⁵

Another hamper was opened in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe):

It came just in time for a picnic we were having out in the bundu and the praises of Mate's Ltd and Aussie foods are still being sung. The picnic was held out at Rhodes' Grave and I can assure you the hamper went a long way to making it a great success.'²⁶

The letters from those serving revealed attitudes of the day with references to other races: 'We were greeted by a swarm of gyppos' [Egyptians], and 'The Arabs in this part of [censored] are a more or less lower class of person'. But one soldier '[v]isited a Jewish settlement and spent an enjoyable evening with them'. Stationed in Darwin, another wrote, 'Saw the boongs play some of our chaps Aussie Rules ... the abos are good blokes though'. In 1943 a laudatory poem about the Fuzzy Wuzzies in Papua was included. Referring to events in Albury, the Editorial in November/December 1944 praised the local Apex Club for launching a Free Pre-School Kindergarten, but 'it is to be hoped that its German name [*kindergarten*] will not prove to be a handicap'.²⁷

News of the staff, collected by 'Shop Hound', was always jocular and helped keep enlisted employees up to date with 'civilian' gossip. When two young women went to Melbourne on holidays, they 'even set the traffic lights blinking', but others were 'patriotic citizens' and stayed at home. Staff romances were documented. 'Rumour has it that Una and Lionel are contemplating ????' 'Other engagements were noted. Two girls were 'giving out change with their left hand' and, as couples married, it was 'Best Wishes from all the Staff'.²⁸

The *Communiques* also kept up with what was happening to staff Prisoners of War. Sergeant A.W. (Bill) Williams was captured by the Germans in North Africa in April 1941. His family received a letter from a fellow soldier to say that Bill was seen being marched away. In September 1941 a *Communique* headline read, 'Scoop Just Arrived, News of Bill Williams.' Bill had written, 'was captured at Tobruk after good scrap. No option, horribly disappointed. Receiving good treatment. See you soon. Bill.' In a PS he listed three other Albury men as 'here OK'. Williams sent and received mail regularly during his years as a POW. His letters

²³ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 3 no. 5, June 1943, p.5; vol. 3 no. 5, June 1943, p.4; vol. 3 no. 5, June 1943, p.4; vol. 2 no. 8, Sept 1942, p.4.

²⁴ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 2 no. 12, Jan 1943, p.7; vol. 3 no. 9, Oct 1943, p.4; vol. 2 no. 10, Nov 1941, p.4.

²⁵ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 4 no. 10/11, Nov/Dec 1944, p.7; vol. 4 no. 5, June 1944, p.8.

²⁶ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 2 no. 11, Dec 1942, p.6.

²⁷ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 12, Jan 1942, p.4; vol. 1 no. 10, Nov 1941, p.3; vol. 1 no. 12, Jan 1942, p.2; vol. 5 no. 1, Feb 1945, p.5; vol. 2 no. 12, Jan 1943, p.10; vol. 4 no. 10, Nov/Dec 1944, p.4.

²⁸ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 4 no. 12, Jan 1945, p.10; vol. 1 no. 12, Jan 1942, p.8; vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.5; vol. 1 no. 1, Feb 1941, p.4; vol. 1 no. 7, Sept 1941, p.6.

expressed gratitude for the news from home, the hampers and parcels including those from the Red Cross.²⁹

Lieut Clive Marshall was captured in Rabaul early in 1942 and taken to Japan. He wrote from Zentsuji Prison Camp hoping for mail, although he was appreciative of several Australian cables. He sent a message to the boss: 'Tell Mr. Thompson I am putting in a lot of hard work on Business Administration and Efficiency, under both English and American experts'. His subjects included Law for the Layman, Shorthand, and Public Speaking. He had taken up chicken raising in his spare time. A few months later he reported, 'Studies progressing satisfactorily, still in good fettle. No need for any worry ... just keep smiling.' A letter card from Clive, written in April 1944, was not received until early 1945. It said,

Imagine my feelings on receiving seventeen letters after two years silence. The sudden realisation that loved ones, home and happiness await my return was like waking from a nightmare. Great to know you are all carrying on so splendidly.³⁰

Doug Buchhorn enlisted in October 1941. The *Communique* wrote, 'Latest member of Mate's staff to enlist to fight for King and Country is Doug Buchhorn of our Timber Yard. Doug asked for 10 minutes off, came back two hours later and announced that he was leaving with the draft.' By June 1942, the *Communique* listed him as missing, '[His parents] have been officially notified that there is no information forthcoming about Doug. He was last heard of in Malaya. We trust that word to say that Doug is safe and well may soon be received.' This came in September 1943 when the *Communique* had news from Doug through his parents: 'I am a prisoner of war and am in excellent health ... I am thinking of you often. Don't worry.' The final *Communique* item about Doug came through his sister saying he was in a camp in Thailand.³¹

The Annual Meeting of the Mate's Staff Comfort Fund, in November 1944, recorded that parcels were still being sent to Bill Williams, then in Germany, but War Saving Certificates were being held for Clive Marshall and Doug Buchhorn, 'in lieu of goods'.³²

In January 1945, the Editor reflected: '[It has been] four, long, painful and anxious years, during which we have tried to keep in touch with the men and women, boys and girls who left us to play a fuller part in the service of their country.' He spoke of light and shadow, deep despondency and hilarious joy, sorrow and despair. He concluded hopefully, 'The world can now detect the pale light of dawn and look forward to the time when our boys finish off this dreadful war.'³³

On 9 May 1945, a notice of 'Thankfulness' was used in place of the usual Mate's advertisement in the *Border Morning Mail*. It was repeated in the *Communique*.

On the announcement of the cessation of hostilities in Europe, our predominant emotion is thankfulness ... for the hundreds and thousands of men and women who have given their lives ... to the millions ... who have toiled ... [and] for the inspiration

²⁹ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 6, July 1941, p.3; vol. 1 no. 8, Sept 1941, p.7; vol. 3 no. 8, Sept 1943, p.8.

³⁰ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 2 no. 9, Oct 1942, p.7 records that Radio Tokyo confirmed Clive was in Zentsuji Prison Camp; vol. 2 no. 4, May 1942, p.5; vol. 4 no. 12, Jan 1945, p.10.

³¹ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 1 no. 9, Oct 1941, p.5; vol. 2 no. 5, June 1942, p.6; vol. 3 no. 8, Sept 1943, p.8; vol. 4 no. 4, May 1944, p.9.

³² *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 4 no. 10/11, Nov/Dec 1944, p.12.

³³ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 4 no. 12, Jan 1945.

of wise leaders ...³⁴

The last Mate's Staff Comfort Fund *Communique* was an August/September 1945 issue. There was no indication it was the last one.³⁵ Three men were listed as overseas, 16 had returned from overseas, 29 were in Australia or Australian Territory, three in the RAN and five in the AMF. Five had been discharged and two were POWs. The Roll of Honor for the women listed three with the AAMWS, five with the WAAAF, six with the AWAS, one in the WRANS and four discharged. Among the letters from enlisted staff was a comment from Bernie Rhynehardt: 'Well how do you feel now that Peace has arrived at last? Gosh it must be good to see the lads coming home.'³⁶

Importantly the final issue contained the impressions of Bill Williams, repatriated to England in May 1945, and now home.

So that's Australia – that's the country I've waited so long to see again ... why am I feeling so numbed? That's Australia, my home, the greatest country in the world. Was I prepared for the changes we'd heard of? And everyone at home, would they have changed so very much?

[Bill then takes a train to Albury.]

At last – Albury. 'Detrain' – and I was out. There was my Mother, my sisters and my friends. The happiest moment of my life.³⁷

The *Communique* reported Bill looked remarkably well, 'even if he did appear a bit shy under all the demonstrations of his female fans'.³⁸

In March 1945, the Australian Army had picked up a message from Tokyo Radio that Clive Marshall was well and was 'looking forward to being with his mother again soon'. Doug Buchhorn was still listed as a POW in the last Roll of Honor, but he did come home.³⁹

Luck has played a part in the preservation of these now fragile *Communique*s. When Mate's Ltd was sold to Burns Philp & Co in 1946 the store continued to function under a manager. When Burns Philp sold to Waltons in 1976, Mate's Ltd was closed. One of the sales staff, local historian Cliff Chamberlain, gathered up a set of bound volumes more or less as he turned off the lights. Decades later these volumes were handed round at a staff reunion and became separated. It was by chance that a member of the Albury & District Historical Society later came across one volume. Realising their value, the member tracked down the others, including one from the NSW coast. An A&DHS member used these *Communique*s for research on a North Albury local history, as many staff had lived in that area. Another member, with an interest in the Albury Air Training Corps, interviewed former staff member Doug Atchison, 83 years old and living in Melbourne. Doug had been a member of the ATC and some of his camp experiences were written up in the *Communique*s. While talking about his time at Mate's, Doug remembered he had a full set of the newsletters on top of a cupboard. 'Would you like them?' he asked. When they arrived, it was realised that the final seven issues, comprising Volume 5, were included. That was an exciting find.

³⁴ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 5 no. 4, May 1945, p.7.

³⁵ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 5 no. 7, Aug/Sept 1945, p.7.

³⁶ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 5 no. 7, Aug/Sept 1945, p.7.

³⁷ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 5 no. 7, Aug/Sept 1945, p.9.

³⁸ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 5 no. 7, Aug/Sept 1945, p.10.

³⁹ *Mate's Staff Communique* vol. 5 no. 2, Mar 1945 p.8; POW records, WW2 PoWs, VX 63863 Sig. D. Buchhorn, www.awm.gov.au.

The discovery of the *Communiques* had an unexpected outcome. Soon after he returned from service, Bill Jeanes' wife died. Bill then left Mate's Furniture to raise his small daughter and an orphaned niece. News of Bill's whereabouts and health, as well as his letters from Egypt, had appeared regularly in the *Communiques*. When the newsletters were found in 2008, copies of those letters were sent to Bill's daughter and his niece. His daughter wrote, 'I wept on the tram home after picking up your mail today. I never knew these things about Dad.' His niece wrote, 'Uncle was always a quiet man, we are astonished at this side of him and it is lovely to have our memories of this lovely man augmented by these letters'.⁴⁰ The *Communiques* have also, then, helped a family fill in some of their missing history.

Various aspects of life on the Albury Home Front during World War Two have already been documented,⁴¹ but the Mate's *Communiques* add a unique dimension. They give a continuous record of the practical outcome of patriotism. They illustrate the values of the time with the emphasis on character and social status through language. The appreciative letters show that the bonds of loyalty to one's employer, and the friendship between several hundred staff members, were strengthened by the *Communiques*, the parcels and personal letters. This is further borne out by recent highly successful staff reunions. In 2004, ninety former staff met in Albury, even though many were in their late seventies and early eighties. In 2008, older and fewer in number, former staff met again for a weekend of shared reminiscences. Another reunion is planned for October 2011.

The bound and unbound volumes of the Official Organ of Mate's Staff Comfort Fund will be donated to the Albury LibraryMuseum in the near future. They will be scanned and saved in digital format so public access to this valuable collection will be readily available.

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⁴⁰ Emails to Jan Hunter, September 2008.

⁴¹ Bruce Pennay, *On the Home Front: Albury During the Second World War*, Albury & District Historical Society, 1992. Jan Hunter, Compiler, *Australian Red Cross North Albury Sub Branch*, Albury & District Historical Society Paper No 16, 2011. Jan Hunter, *Building the Neighbourhood Central North Albury 1920-1950*, Triple D Books Wagga Wagga, 2007.

‘TOO GOOD FOR THE BEASTLINESS OF WAR’: CAPTAIN IVOR STEPHEN MARGETTS, MID

Andrea Gerrard¹

All too often the average Australian soldier in the First World War is overlooked unless he did something extraordinary. Yet our army was made up of thousands of ordinary men who did their duty as they saw it. This is the story of one such individual who inspired his men by his example and his attitude to life in even the toughest and most unforgiving situations. The sense of humour that was admired in the staff room was also evident on the field of battle along with his resourcefulness and never-say-die attitude.



Lieutenant Ivor Margetts, 12th Battalion AIF, standing outside his tent, possibly at Brighton Army Camp, Tasmania. (AWM H15808)

‘By now you will have heard of poor Margetts’ death. ... It seems that his company and another of the same battalion were absolutely the furthest out ... Margetts was out reconnoitring in advance of the whole front, when he was picked off by a sniper, some say. ... In my aid post all hands deplore his loss. As one said, “I don’t know what that company will do; they worshipped that man!” Such was the general opinion of him ... the battalion mourned him as seldom a man is mourned, and that he left a name behind him that we can all envy...’² wrote Captain James Sprent in a letter written to Mr. Lindon, headmaster of Hutchins School, Hobart, soon after learning about the death of this popular sporting figure from Tasmania’s north west coast.³

Captain Ivor Margetts, from Sprent’s comments, was a man who was much admired by his fellow officers and those who served under him. It was also their opinion that he had a ‘better military knowledge of both field and office work than ... any other officer in the battalion.’⁴ Ivor Margetts had excellent prospects of reaching greater heights, having repeatedly demonstrated his leadership qualities on the

battlefield. Sadly, a rise through the ranks was not to be the case; the killing fields of Pozieres would claim the life of this bright young captain from Tasmania’s north who inspired many with his sense of humour and his attitude to life.

One claim to fame that Ivor Margetts possessed was that he had been present at the landing at

¹ Andrea Gerrard is a historian, teacher and genealogist whose passion is researching the lives of Tasmanian men who served in the First World War, particularly the men from the 12th Battalion. Her maternal grandfather and great uncle both served – one in the 26th Battalion and the other in the 12th Battalion. She is currently a Masters student working on researching our soldiers with Tasmanian indigenous heritage and is also involved in other projects to establish links between our convict past and the First AIF.

² *Hutchins School Magazine*, Sept 1916, p.3.

³ James Sprent, medical practitioner of Sandy Bay, enlisted 27 July 1915. Promoted major January 1917, wounded in action April 1917. Returned to Australia August 1917. Awarded the Military Cross for his work with the 13th Field Ambulance while at Pozieres and at Mouquet Farm.

⁴ *Weekly Courier*, 28 September 1916, p.36.

Gallipoli by the 3rd Brigade and was still there when it was evacuated:

Captain Ivor Margetts ... holds the splendid record of being the only army officer, either English or Colonial, to land at Gallipoli ... and stay there right through the terrible eight months of fighting ... From the time he landed until the troops left Captain Margetts was never off the peninsula. Alone, of all the officers, either English or colonial he remained on the peninsula the whole time, and with the exception of being struck on the side of the face with a piece of shell, which did not disable him, he was not otherwise wounded. Captain Ivor Margetts is a very fine built man, standing 6 ft, 4 ins high. He is the third son of Mr. S.W. Margetts, of Wynyard. He is well known in Hobart as a footballer having been a prominent member of Lefroy Club.⁵

‘Margo’ as he was affectionately known, often wrote home to his parents sharing as much of his experiences as censorship would permit. In later years these letters along with a small diary from 1915 were donated to the Australian War Memorial by his family as part of their collection.⁶ Excerpts from Ivor’s description of the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 have from time to time been quoted by historians when recounting what took place in the hours before and after the landing, but the remainder of the letters and diary seem to have been largely overlooked.

These letters are full of Ivor’s thoughts and ideas on a variety of topics that ranged from the buildings that he saw on his travels and the countryside itself to the beauty or otherwise of the local women. All were written with his own unique sense of humour and sense of the ridiculous that was clearly appreciated by his family. No topic seems to have been out of bounds. In a letter dated 4 July his parents were informed that ‘it is four months since I have seen a girl closer than 7 or 8 hundred yards away and that was at the Island before we came here. I almost forgot what they are like and I hope they do not forget me’.⁷ In another letter he speculated about how well or otherwise he and other soldiers would be able to settle back into normal life after being in the trenches, assuming that he survived the ordeal which he seemed fairly confident that he would. In yet another he asked his parents to ensure that any money due to him was banked in a separate account in case he came ‘back to find that you had gone where the good niggers go & me hav[ing] difficulty about getting any boodle’.⁸

Items from the daily and weekly newspapers suggest that Ivor Margetts was a popular individual and quite well known. He was considered by many to be a very good sportsman that gained him some notoriety along north-west coast where he had family connections, in Launceston where he had attended school and later in Hobart where he lived and worked prior to his enlistment. He did not see himself as being anyone special, but a very ordinary person who was blessed with a happy disposition. His wit and wisdom comes through in his correspondence and it would seem that it is this quality that was much admired by the staff at Hutchins School and the men with whom he served with at the front, both officers and other ranks alike. The fact that he survived the Gallipoli campaign unscathed also brought him

⁵ Undated newspaper clipping from 1DRL 0478 (1 DRL 0478 is the AWM Ref for the collection of letters and diary belonging to Captain I.S. Margetts, 12th Battalion. See note 5 for the full list of file contents.)

⁶ 1DRL 0478. Photocopies and typescript copies of letters of Captain I.S. Margetts, 12th Battalion AIF, World War 1914-1918, AWM File No: 12/11/80 Australian War Memorial. Letters written by Ivor Margetts to his mother and father starting in October 1914 with the last dated 9 May 1916. Also included is a copy of Private G.A. McKenzie’s eyewitness statement for the Red Cross, two letters from Colonel Charles Elliott, a personal letter from Private G. A. McKenzie and several other official documents and newspaper clippings.

⁷ Letter dated July 4, 1915 in 1DRL 0478.

⁸ Letter dated ‘Somewhere 15 April’ in 1DRL 0478.

some admiration, being one among a handful of officers to do so.

Ivor Stephen was the third son born to Stephen Ward Margetts, an auctioneer and sometime storekeeper and his wife Charlotte (nee House). In early September 1891 the family were living at 6 Welman Street, Launceston when Ivor was born⁹. The family later moved to Balfour Street where Ralph, the next son, was born before moving to Sydney where Vernon was born in 1897, and then to the north-west coastal town of Wynyard, here his father had various business interests. Ivor received most of his formative education at the Launceston High School where he excelled at sport and later as a senior prefect.¹⁰ While Ivor was among the prize winners in his last two years at the school, it was on the sporting field rather than in the classroom where his talents came to the fore.

In his last two years at Launceston High School (1909-10) Ivor started to make a name for himself as a sportsman. In 1909 and 1910 Launceston High School was finally successful in its bid to win the Bourke Challenge Cup. On both occasions, Ivor was stroke for the school's senior-eight crew and according to the account printed in *The Mercury* was instrumental in its win for the year 1910.¹¹ In the same year he also made school champion, having won the 100 yards at the athletics championships.¹² In 1909 and again in 1910, Ivor Margetts' name appeared among the prize winners at the end-of-year celebrations, being awarded the 'All Round Prize' which was presented by Thomas Bourke Esq and the 'Senior Scripture Prize' in 1909 and again in 1910 with the addition of the Form VI prize.¹³

Also in 1910 Ivor sat the University of Tasmania Senior Public Examination and according to the list of results published in the local press gained seven credits, which was considered sufficient to gain him entrance to the University of Tasmania.¹⁴ By September 1911 he was the coach of a Hutchins School rowing team that ventured north to contest the Bourke Challenge Shield. Clearly the southern school was out to win and was happy to use Ivor Margetts' experience and inside knowledge to help them in their quest.¹⁵ It would appear that Ivor had one year of study at the University of Tasmania, mostly likely undertaking an Arts Degree before being offered the position of junior sports master at Hutchins School, at which time he seems to have abandoned his studies.

While in Hobart, Ivor Margetts continued to pursue his sporting interests, particularly in Australian Rules football, playing for the Lefroy Football Club, Hobart and in several representative sides where at six feet three inches (190 cm) and weighing just under 14 stone (88 kg) he made a formidable opponent.¹⁶ He was in Sydney representing Tasmania when war was declared and like several other members of that team, rushed back to enlist. Ivor also rowed in several representative crews for the Sandy Bay Rowing Club, thus continuing his interest that had begun in Launceston.

⁹ Ivor Stephen Margetts was born on 4 September 1891 (Registrar General Department Records). The family later moved to Wynyard and were for many years associated with this area of the north west coast of Tasmania.

¹⁰ *Tasmanian Mail*, 21 June 1917, p.10. Launceston High School was located at Milton Hall, Frederick Street. It amalgamated with the Launceston Church Grammar School in 1913.

¹¹ *The Mercury*, 26 November 1910, p.10.

¹² *The Examiner*, 15 December 1910, p.8.

¹³ *The Examiner*, 22 December 1909, p.6 and 20 December 1910, p.3.

¹⁴ *The Mercury*, 24 December 1910, p.8.

¹⁵ *The Mercury*, 9 September 1911, p.9.

¹⁶ Height and weight measurements taken on enlistment and included in his AIF service file, NAA: B2455/1559947 Margetts, Ivor.

In 1912 Ivor Margetts' name appeared among the staff of Hutchins School, Hobart as an assistant master.¹⁷ His appointment came at a time when there was great sporting rivalry between Hobart's major private schools and it would seem that one of his roles was to boost the schools' sporting prowess and therefore boost the prestige of the school who was concerned about attracting boys of talent whether on the sporting field or academically. Over the next couple of years the school achieved some measure of success on the sporting field while Ivor was sports master. He soon became a popular member of the school staff, chairing the School Sport Committee among other activities.

Ivor Margetts was also actively involved in the local militia and had been for several years prior to the outbreak of war. He was appointed a Second Lieutenant with the 12th Australian Infantry Regiment (Launceston Regiment) in early 1911.¹⁸ Keen to continue his involvement with the militia, on moving to Hobart he transferred to the 91st (Derwent) Regiment. At the end of August 1914, he successfully applied for a commission in the newly-formed Australian Imperial Forces (AIF), entering the officer ranks as a Second Lieutenant.

As the organisation of the First Contingent progressed, officers were very much in demand, particularly those with previous military experience. This resulted in Ivor Margetts being called up with little notice. Despite the short notice, Hutchins School graciously gave him leave and a fitting farewell was hastily arranged in the Masonic Hall on Saturday evening, 12 September. At 8 p.m. about thirty fellows assembled, the theme of the evening being 'Eat, drink, sing, and be merry, for to-morrow we die'.¹⁹ Proceedings began with cards followed by some lively entertainment, speeches and a presentation. Ivor was presented with a handsome pipe and case on behalf of the staff. Mr Bullow, one of three masters in attendance, gave a speech on behalf of the school community. In it he referred to Ivor's happy disposition and his ability to maintain the harmony of the master's study by turning everything into a joke. Ivor Margetts suitably responded, 'saying that if his nature was a happy one, he couldn't help it, he had been born like it'.²⁰ It was this quality that he would take with him into the AIF. After a hearty supper the evenings' proceedings concluded with the singing of *Auld Lang Syne* and the National Anthem.

On entering the Brighton Army Camp Ivor Margetts was allotted to A Company, 12th Battalion.²¹ On a site adjacent to the main road to Launceston, the 6th Military District set up camp on an area of flat ground near the current Pontville Hall. Despite being used by the militia previously, the site was hardly a suitable for a tented camp with its windswept open ground and few facilities. Here the men, drawn from all areas around the state, trained in marching, drilling and operating as a battalion. Musketry training was a train-ride away at Sandy Bay. As a junior officer, Ivor Margetts would have been detailed to help in the training process.

¹⁷ *The Mercury* 9 September 1911, p.9. It would appear that he may have had some involvement with the school in 1911 when he coached the school rowing team for the Bourke Challenge Shield in September 1911. Hutchins School was one of several private mostly church based schools that operated in Hobart in the early 1910s. In 1912 it was located on the fringe of the central business district in a group of sandstone buildings on the corner of Macquarie and Barrack Streets. Today academic and sporting success is still very important to the school.

¹⁸ *The Examiner*, 1 May 1911, p.6.

¹⁹ A description of the evening's events appeared in the *Hutchins School Magazine*, September 1914, pp.5-7. Copy held in the school archives.

²⁰ Brighton's unsuitability as a site was soon noted with a new camp being located at Claremont (now the site of the Cadbury Chocolate Factory) which had better facilities and was closer to the Hobart and the main railway line.

²¹ *Hutchins School Magazine*, September 1914, pp.5-7.

By early October 1914, plans were well underway for the departure of Australia's first contingent. While secrecy surrounded the actual departure date of Tasmania's first contingent, a march through the city was conducted on Monday, 5 October, to allow the people of Hobart and surrounding areas to bid the men farewell. In rather unpleasant weather conditions, immense crowds lined the route in order to catch a last glimpse of friends or relatives. The parade was led by the Light Horse, followed by the 9th Battery of the artillery, with the infantry and other dismounted troops bringing up the rear. Each group was led by its officers and all looked 'a really fine set of men ... well set up and [holding] themselves as if they were proud of having the honour of Tasmanian manhood placed for the time being in their keeping'.²²

Once the farewell march had been held, the general belief was that the troops would soon depart. Just over two weeks later the first Tasmanian troops boarded the SS *Geelong* at Ocean Pier, while the SS *Katuna* was loaded with horses and other equipment for the 9th Battery.²³ Even though their departure had been kept secret and no mention had been made of it in the local newspapers, again a large crowd lined the wharf and pier for one last look and to wave goodbye. While in charge of guard duty which was detailed to 'keep people off the wharf & to stop men from getting off the boats to kiss their relatives & girls, sweet hearts etc off', he witnessed some very pathetic scenes, but was buoyed by the presence of some friends who had come to see him off and 'were very much cut up at my going'.²⁴ Life at sea soon settled into a rhythm. Not everyone enjoyed the voyage, particularly as the *Geelong* was apt to roll in heavy seas, but Ivor Margetts certainly did. In his first letter to his parents he wrote,

I am sitting in the saloon while the old ship is rolling from side to side and some of the officers are talking & some are playing the piano and we are all as happy as kings. We have had a wonderful voyage very smooth and no doubt you will be very surprised to hear that I have not missed a single meal.

He was clearly enjoying life at sea as if on a pleasure cruise with a 'very comfortable cabin with everything I want & a man and a steward to wait on me'.²⁵ This was in stark contrast to the other ranks, which included his brother Ralph, who was also on board having enlisted with the Army Medical Corps, were without the same comforts afforded to officers and had a very different experience.²⁶ On boarding, the other ranks were issued with two blankets and a hammock. Their mess decks were down in the hold of the boat, 'not far from the bilge water by the smell', according to Gunner Ray Brownell, 9th Battery (later Air Commodore R.J. Brownell), where 'we had to sling our hammocks on hooks provided about three feet above the mess table'.²⁷

²² *The Mercury*, 6 October 1914, p.5.

²³ Approximately 1000 men were boarded onto the *Geelong* with the remainder on the *Katuna*. The date of their departure was not made public, but word soon spread around the city and thousands of people swarmed onto Ocean Pier to say goodbye.

²⁴ Letter 'S.S. Geelong, Sunday Night', 1DRL 0478.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ See Raymond James Brownell's account of life on the S.S. *Geelong* in Australian War Memorial file PR83/231. Ralph, who enlisted with the 3rd Field Ambulance, served at Gallipoli where he contracted enteric fever in August 1916. He was evacuated from Gallipoli and admitted to the 1st Australian General Hospital for treatment where he remained until November 1916. He was returned to Australia in April 1916. Ivor's older brother Athelstane, also enlisted in April 1917 and was discharged in London in January 1920 to enable him to travel to America, before returning to Australia.

²⁷ Brownell, R.J. 1978, *From Khaki to Blue*, Military History Unit, Canberra, p.5.

While Ivor paints an idyllic account of life at sea, boredom soon set in among the troops and to relieve the situation, the junior officers were ordered to set up exercise routines, church parades and lectures on a variety of topics which the men were expected to attend.²⁸ Evening concerts also helped to pass the time as the heat of the tropics took its toll.

From this same letter estimated to have been written about 25 October, it is evident that the men firmly believed that they were heading for 'home', a euphemism which usually meant England. While the Margetts family had lived in Tasmania for several generations at the time of Ivor's and Ralph's enlistment in 1914, England for many was still referred to as 'home'. On the bottom of this letter Ivor tells his parents to write to him care of the '12th Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade, 1st Australian Division, England'.²⁹ Just how he feels about this is not mentioned, but in a later letter he does express his relief that they are not going 'straight home to England'.³⁰ Again no explanation is given.

Clearly one of the major highlights of the voyage was the fight between the *Sydney* and the *Emden*. If families had not already read accounts of the action near Cocos Island, then they would soon learn about it from their soldier sons:

You have doubtless heard by now of the great sea fight which the Sydney had with the Emden, and I can tell you it was a great sight to see her suddenly put on full speed and then dash off at a tremendous rate with her battle flags flying. We were all sorry that we could not see the action and we anxiously awaited the news of the engagement and were naturally very pleased with the result.³¹

It would appear that a ripple of excitement went through the entire ship's company, if not the whole flotilla. The loss of life on both sides did not seem to be of great importance in Ivor's or other men's accounts, just the joy and excitement that the enemy had been defeated.³²

In Egypt, the men once again found themselves living under canvas, this time at Mena Camp, located in the desert near the Pyramids. The heat and sand of the desert would dominate the lives of all who trained there to take on the Turks. Sight-seeing provided some relief for the soldiers and Ivor was no exception, writing 'very vivid descriptions' of all he saw to relay to his parents in his next letter home.³³ Few details escaped his notice, from the buildings and their surrounds to the people themselves and how they dressed. Egypt evidently made a lasting impression on him from his first day there and one that he felt he would never forget. In his first letter home after arriving in Egypt, he began with the artificial harbour at Alexandria, noting that there were a number of 'prize' ships anchored there³⁴ He then scrutinised the local inhabitants, commenting on the clothes they wore. Some he thought

²⁸ Letter dated 'S.S. Geelong' 1DRL 0478 and Orchard, A.A. (2009) *Diary of An Anzac*, Arthur Orchard, Otago, Tasmania, pp.26-28.

²⁹ Letter dated 'S.S. Geelong', p.4, 1DRL 0478.

³⁰ Undated letter to parents written after leaving Colombo, 1DRL/0478. It would seem that some of the information contained in this letter was not to be shared with others as he gave instructions at the end of the letter that it should be burned as soon as they had read it and not shared around as would have been the usual case.

³¹ Undated letter, 1DRL 0478, written after leaving Colombo. The sight of the *Sydney* steaming away from the convoy with her battle flags flying caused great excitement among the men and much speculation among the men. A number of accounts of the *Sydney* leaving the convoy have survived.

³² Brownnell, *From Khaki to Blue* pp.6-7, and Orchard *Diary of an Anzac* pp.25-26.

³³ Three letters written during late 1914 and early 1915 survive among the collection and provide lengthy accounts of what Margetts witnessed while in Egypt and of the places he visited

³⁴ Letter dated 9 January 1915, 1DRL/0478.

wore what looked like dressing gowns or nightshirts while others looked like very roomy pyjamas.³⁵

A rushed trip to Cairo on army business provided the observant Ivor Margetts with new sights and experiences. He thought the 'City of Cairo a very pretty place with numerous gardens & public squares ... Naturally it is very up to date in most things such as suerage, electric trams, electric light etc, but in other things it is very funny.'³⁶ Apparently the milkman took the cow and her calf to the house and would then proceed to milk the cow of the quantity required by the customer. On the negative side, he thought that the morals of the people in Cairo (the English excepted) were 'not too high and quite different from that which we are accustomed.'³⁷ Within a month of being in Egypt he had visited a number of places of interest – quite the tourist like so many Australian soldiers – the details of which he relayed to family back home.³⁸

After leaving Egypt on 2 March 1915, the 12th Battalion spent about six weeks at Lemnos. If the men thought that life at Mena had been unpleasant, Lemnos would prove to be much more difficult due to a shortage of space. The men of the 12th Battalion were forced to live on board the P&O liner S.S. *Devanha*, and each day rowed ashore for training. These exercises consisted of route marches, a company or battalion attack and later embarking and disembarking from the tows that would eventually take them ashore at Gallipoli. So it was with a certain feeling of relief that the invasion force left Lemnos on Saturday 24 April for the Dardenelles to finally put into practice all that they had learnt during training.

Ivor Margetts was part of the second tow to go ashore in the early hours of the morning of 25 April 1915. As he prepared his men for their place in the next tow, one 'man just in front ... dropped, hit in the head.'³⁹ Very soon several others became casualties. But this was not the only problem the men faced after leaving their transports. Each kit weighed about 58 pounds, impeding the men as they tried to make it ashore. Despite being a physically strong man, Ivor Margetts felt the weight of the kit as he was forced to wade ashore, telling his parents it was 'almost impossible to walk with full marching order, absolutely drenched to the skin and I fell twice before I got up to the dry beach where I scrambled up under cover of a sand ridge.'⁴⁰ Officers and soldiers alike landed wet-through, but still needed to move off the beach with little hesitation to take on the enemy who had been firing at them since getting into the tow boats.

The conditions that the Australians faced as they waded ashore that fateful morning can be seen from the article he sent back to Hutchins School:

it was just breaking dawn, and as we looked towards the sound of the firing, we were faced by almost perpendicular cliffs, about 200 feet above sea level and as we were of the opinion that most of the fire was coming from this quarter it was evident that this was the direction of our attack.⁴¹

As soon as they had caught their breath, the Australians started to climb, often on hands and

³⁵ Letter dated 9 January 1915, 1DRL 0478.

³⁶ Letter dated 9 January, 1915, 1DRL 0478.

³⁷ Letter dated 9 January, 1915, 1DRL 0478.

³⁸ Including the Pyramids and Sphinx, which seemed to have been compulsory sites for Australian soldiers.

³⁹ Letter dated 23 May 1915, 1DRL 0478.

⁴⁰ Letter dated 23 May 1915, p.2, 1DRL 0478.

⁴¹ Ivor Margetts, 'The Battle of Gaba Tepe' *Hutchins School Magazine*, September 1915, p.5.

knees as they tried to reach the heights. Here, on Russell's Top, the 12th Battalion encountered their first Turkish soldiers:

About fifty men had reached the Top. With one leap they all ran forward – Margetts ahead, pulling out his revolver, in the hope of getting there first. The Turks scrambled over the back of their trench and fled.⁴²

Lt Margetts and his men pursued the Turks and opened fire at about 350 yards. In the ensuing exchange, Colonel Clarke, their commanding officer, was shot along with his batman.⁴³

Ivor Margetts and his men advanced to the ridge over which the enemy had retired. There they discovered that the 'enemy were in strong force, and were attempting to get round on our left flank. Subsequently that flank retired and we had to follow suit'.⁴⁴ According to his account the remainder of the day was spent either in the firing line, lugging ammunition, or trying to secure reinforcements or stretcher bearers for the wounded and all done without a break or sleep.

On Monday, Margetts and his men reinforced the New Zealanders and on Tuesday they staved off a concerted attack by the Turks followed by 'standing to arms all day ... awaiting the charge that never came'.⁴⁵ By Wednesday, on the point of utter exhaustion – when 'some of the steadiest could scarcely trust their eyes or decide whether the sights they saw were realities or creations of the imagination' – the men were finally withdrawn.⁴⁶ During those first few days, the 12th Battalion had suffered heavy losses of both officers and other ranks.⁴⁷ Despite this Ivor Margetts felt that they had the satisfaction of knowing that they had done what had been asked of them. Finally in a bivouac about 600 yards up a valley the men were able to wash and rest; having 'dug our little holes to protect us from fire and shrapnel' they lay down for the night.⁴⁸

When the battalion was finally relieved, Ivor Margetts arrived at the beach with no overcoat, his trousers torn to ribbons and boots caked in mud. He was dirty, weary and cold through, but nonetheless he was satisfied with the great display of courage shown by his men and had confidence that they would do so again when next called upon. He later reported home that he had experienced 'several very close shaves, but like Johnny Walker, was still going strong'; such was his attitude, making light of even the darkest situation.⁴⁹

According to Newton, the 12th Battalion historian, 'after the turmoil, anguish and exhaustion of the few days after the Landing, a line of defence having been established and re-organisation effected, the Battalion gradually settled down to "trench warfare", a form of

⁴² Bean, C.E.W. 1921, *The Story of Anzac from the Outbreak of war to the end of the first phase of the Gallipoli Campaign May 4 1915*, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, p.272.

⁴³ 'The Battle of Gaba Tepe' Hutchins School Magazine, Hobart p.6. Colonel Lancelot Fox Clarke DSO VD was shot in the heart as he was writing a message for a signaller to take to Brigade Headquarters. Clarke was a 56-year-old married shipping manager from Devonport when he volunteered for the A.I.F. He had previously served with the Victorian Volunteer Field Artillery and had one year with the 91st (Derwent) Regiment.

⁴⁴ Margetts, 'The Battle of Gaba Tepe', p.6.

⁴⁵ Margetts, 'The Battle of Gaba Tepe', pp.6-7.

⁴⁶ Bean, C.E.W. 1924, *The Story of Anzac From 5 May 1915 to the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula: The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, p.523.

⁴⁷ Ivor Margetts noted in his article for the school magazine that only six out of thirty officers turned up to a roll call when the 12th Battalion assembled near the Naval Pier (*Hutchins School Magazine*, September 1915, p.7).

⁴⁸ 'The Battle of Gaba Tepe' *Hutchins School Magazine*, September 1915, p.7.

⁴⁹ Letter dated 4 June 1915, 1DRL 0478.

warfare not taught in the training manual'.⁵⁰ Each company had its own section of the front line which was held by one or two platoons, with another in support. The firing line was fully manned day and night, supported by sniper's posts, with support and communication trenches. Troops were required to 'stand-to' for an hour before dawn and then again at dusk. On 29 July 1915, Ivor Margetts was promoted to the rank of captain in A Company, still with the 12th Battalion.⁵¹ The high attrition rate among the officers meant that it was possible for a junior officer of ability but with only limited experience to rise rapidly through the ranks. Captain Margetts had certainly demonstrated his leadership qualities and his aptitude for battle and, despite his relatively young age, it would seem was considered worthy of the promotion bestowed on him.

The next major engagement for the 12th Battalion was in August when they were ordered to provide two companies for the attack on Lone Pine. Ivor Margetts' pride in the way his men fought can be seen from the following account sent to his parents:

Our battalion has just been actively engaged in a fairly heavy operation and, although it cost us some valuable men, yet we did splendidly and received personal congratulations from both the Army Corps Commander, the Divisional Commander, and the Brigadier, so naturally we consider our Regiment as top dogs, and are one and all proud to call it 'my Regiment.' The men did wonders against great difficulties and I am sorry that I am not able to give you a full description of the operation, but if you could have walked through the captured trenches on the day after the business you would have gained an idea of what capturing a trench really means.⁵²

In marked contrast is the letter dated 9 August. Ivor Margetts may have been under some stress and strain when writing this or was just trying to bring some levity to a bad situation.

I am afraid there will be rather a break between this letter and the last but as we have had a most busy week changing our quarters, and as changing quarters here means first blowing up the house where the other fellow lives and then chasing him out and barricading up doors, windows, etc. and rebuilding the 'house' at the same time while the former occupant hurls 'buck' pebbles at you without ceasing, when this is finished you sit up and watch lest he should want his shanty back again. Incidentally, I might mention that the former occupant who was not fortunate enough to leave before his domicile was blown up remains and revenges himself by emitting frightful stench.⁵³

In the initial period, despite living like rabbits in holes, he thought that the life he was leading at Anzac Cove quite suited him, leaving aside the stench and lack of water for bathing. He informed his parents that he had never weighed more in his life than he did then and that he was as 'brown as a berry'.⁵⁴ In contrast, by late August, life in the trenches had become more tedious and difficult with the stench from the large number of unburied bodies attracting an ever increasing number of flies: 'In the trench I counted 79653821165073982 flies who walked first on the perspiring live men and, so as to cool their feet, they walked on the dead ones'.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Newton, L.M. 1925 (2000 edn), *The Story of the Twelfth*, John Burridge, Swanbourne, WA, p.54.

⁵¹ He had been appointed adjutant from 25 April, 1915; see service record NAA, B2455, Margetts, Ivor, 1559947.

⁵² Letter dated 20 August 1915, 1DRL 0478.

⁵³ Letter dated 9 August 1915, 1DRL 0478.

⁵⁴ Letter dated 4 July 1915, 1DRL0478.

⁵⁵ Letter dated 20 August 1915, 1DRL 0478.

Having endured seven months in the trenches at the Dardanelles, by 25 November it was the 12th Battalion's turn for a rest away from the hardships of trench life. On a bitterly cold night the men quietly left their trenches for the pier where they boarded a boat for Lemnos the following morning. The last sight the men had of their home for the past seven months was of the sun rising over the peninsula.⁵⁶ They, like all the soldiers, left with mixed feelings, mostly of sadness: for the mates that they were leaving behind, but also proud of the fact that they had been there longer than other troops.⁵⁷ As they left, little did the men realise that they would not be returning to the Dardanelles. Before their rest period had expired, the order had been given for the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Arriving in Lemnos, the men soon realised just what poor shape they were all in from lack of exercise and from the poor monotonous diet that they had been consuming. Rest and recreation were seen as the perfect answer and for a sportsman such as Ivor Margetts, lots of sport was the perfect antidote, particularly when coupled with the pleasure of seeing some 'real, live, Tasmanian sisters'.⁵⁸ After a brief period at Lemnos, the 12th Battalion returned to Egypt for rest, reinforcements and further training. Among Ivor Margetts' less pleasant duties was writing to

broken hearted mothers giving them details regards killed or missing men. It's not a nice job but I am getting a dab at it. Every one different & quite original. One has frequently to cut out some of the details. People ask if you can tell them the last words & who was holding their hands when they snuffed out. I could not very well say that the poor chap was cursing fairly well & was being held down on the stretcher by three or four dirty stretcher bearers who also put in an occasional curse at the Turks for doing the damage or describe some of the actual sense which one sees.⁵⁹

For the men who had spent all or a greater portion of their time on Gallipoli, leave to visit Cairo was on offer early in 1916. At this time, Ivor Margetts was given five days of leave and spent some of it sightseeing in company with several Tasmanian sisters whom he had met along the way.

Having regrouped, by late March 1916, the 12th Battalion was on the move again, this time to the Western Front. In order to fill out the newly created 4th and 5th Divisions, a number of battalions were split in half to form the nucleus of a new battalion. In the 12th Battalion, two platoons of each company, with an equal proportion of officers and senior NCOs, were transferred to the newly formed 52nd Battalion, which was then brought up to strength with reinforcements.⁶⁰ The 12th Battalion was also brought up to strength with reinforcements and old hands returning to duty after suffering wounds or sickness. Ivor Margetts was fortunate enough to be to remain with the 12th Battalion and continue in the role of Adjutant.⁶¹

On 9 May 1916, Ivor Margetts wrote to his parents to let them know that he was now in France, having been there for nearly a month undertaking. The 12th Battalion was now billeted at Sailly about three miles from the front line trenches. He thought France was a 'great country' and that he was seeing it at its best: 'After coming from Egypt where

⁵⁶ Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p.69.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Letter dated 18 January, 1916, 1DRL 0478.

⁵⁹ Letter dated 11 February 1916, 1DRL 0478.

⁶⁰ Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p.76.

⁶¹ Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p.70.

everything was sand as far as one could you may judge how we appreciated the change. Then also there are some very pretty girls here which makes the country more interesting – naturally’.⁶² Another positive for him was that he could now get out of the sound range of the artillery, something that was not possible on Gallipoli.

In late May Ivor Margetts had been given eight days’ English leave, during which time he toured around and caught up with friends before returning to the battlefields.⁶³ While his observations are much briefer than those on his arrival in Egypt, he certainly tries to give his parents some idea of what ‘home’ was really like. In London he based himself at the Hotel Cecil while he ‘did things in style too’.⁶⁴ As he left London’s bustle behind to return to the battlefields of France, little did he realise that the next letter that he would write home would be the last.

Shortly after returning to France the 12th Battalion was in action for the first time on French soil when on 7 June 1916, they moved into the line in the Fleurbaix Sector near Armentieres to relieve the 11th Battalion, taking over the role of the left battalion of the Petillon Sector. The 12th Battalion occupied a stretch of trench 1000 yards long with three platoons from each company in the line and one in support. Margetts and A Company were on the right flank. One of duties of each company commander was to provide daily intelligence reports to Headquarters, giving a brief report of all activity during the preceding twenty-four hours. On one very quiet night with little else to occupy his mind, Captain Margetts forwarded the following report: ‘such stony silence surely suggested something strangely suspicious’.⁶⁵ Casualties were light during this period, with the loss of an NCO and a private, but this was to change very rapidly when the battalion next went into action.

The 12th Battalion’s next action was at Pozières in the Somme valley in late July 1916 as part of the 1st Division, A.I.F. Pozières’ ‘tactical significance lay in its height and position: it lay on an open part of the ridge, affording observation down Mash Valley to the west’ as well as down Sausage Valley to the south.⁶⁶ Running eastward from the windmill on the edge of the village ran the old German lines known as OG1 and OG2. ‘K trench ran roughly north to Mouquet Farm, Thievpal and the Schwaben redoubt and it was from this trench that the Germans had observation down Mash Valley’.⁶⁷ Pozières, because of its height and position was one of the strongest points on the German line and the allies were determined to gain control.

The Somme Offensive commenced on 1 July 1916, but it was not until 20 July that the 12th Battalion made their way to the front line, having travelled from Albert through Sausage Valley near the village of La Boisselle. Here, in the now deserted village, the men soon discovered the extent of the German fortifications with its concrete walls, deep dugouts and a system of corridors and rooms used as a headquarters. The next forty-eight hours were spent salvaging tones of derelict stores by day and carrying parties at night.

A heavy mist hung over the area early on the morning of 22 July, as Captain Margetts and A

⁶² Letter dated ‘Somewhere in France 9-5-16’, 1DRL 0478.

⁶³ A roster was established giving those men who had served at Gallipoli since the landing, priority. Margetts was given 8 days leave, the same as the ordinary soldiers. English leave was much sought after.

⁶⁴ Letter dated 9 May 1916, 1DRL 0478.

⁶⁵ Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p.91.

⁶⁶ Charlton, P. (1986) *Australians on the Somme: Pozieres 1916*, Methuen Hayes, Sydney, p.27.

⁶⁷ Charlton, *Australians on the Somme*, p.124.

Company proceeded to the forward area to view the situation. From here they eventually made their way to where the 11th Battalion was located. According to the account by Lieut-Col Charles Elliott for the battalion history, a message was received that the enemy had evacuated Pozières and that the 12th Battalion was to occupy the village. Two patrols consisting of an officer and thirty men from A and D companies were ordered forward.⁶⁸ As dusk fell, Captains Vowles and Margetts went forward with two patrols passing over the road near the northern prong of the light railway. Satisfied that the ground to the north of the 12th Battalion had been cleared of snipers, the site for a new trenches was chosen by Margetts, while Vowles returned and then proceeded to bring up the men of A and D Company into their new positions. Vowles and D Company had shelter from a crossroad hedge, but no such shelter existed on the left for Margetts and A Company. Exposed, Margetts was hit, most likely by a 'chance shell'. According to one eyewitness account, 'Captain Margetts was struck by a piece of shrapnel that penetrated his heart'. Another suggested that he was killed by a sniper, a number of which were known to be active in the area.⁶⁹ Aware of his condition and their current location, Ivor Margetts 'asked to be pulled down into shelter from shell-fire and, knowing his hurt was mortal, told his helpers to "look after the boys"'.⁷⁰ Such was the calibre of this officer who put the interests of his men ahead of his own welfare.

His burial, like so many on the battlefields, took place the following morning amidst the noise and horror of war. While it was no place for long goodbyes, a party of men from A Company attended.⁷¹ 'Ah mother', lamented a fellow soldier in a letter home,

I feel I've lost a brother. He was a nice fellow, and such a fine officer. His men adored him, and he was such a cheery soul that he kept the men's spirits up when others failed ... It would seem that his happy nature commented on in September 1914 by his colleagues had yet again shone through. 'He had done splendid work in this war. His record of Gallipoli was wonderful. From landing, 25th April, till end of November without one day from the fire, the noise, the always present danger and the conditions of unparalleled discomfort. 'Grand old Margo and cheerful through it all ... His work has been done splendidly. He is indeed a lesson to the 'shirkers.'⁷²

Clearly 'Margo' was a man who was much admired by those who knew him, judging by the comments from the daily and weekly newspapers from Tasmania. 'He was too good for the beastliness of war', opined a stretcher bearer, who apparently cried like a child at his burial.⁷³ Another felt that he would be 'hard to replace in the battalion as he had a better military knowledge of both field and office work' than most.⁷⁴ When the news reached his home state a number of articles appeared in both the daily and weekly newspapers mentioning his passing, referring to his popularity as a sportsman and as someone who had gone the distance. Pte G.A. McKenzie, a stretcher bearer, 'stuck up a little cross on his grave in

⁶⁸ Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p.101. Captain Alan Stewart Vowles and Margetts had had similar experiences at Gallipoli, since first joining forces on Baby 700 at the landing at Gallipoli. Vowles, a pearler from Perth, went on to receive the Distinguished Service Order.

⁶⁹ Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau File, 1DRL/0428, Captain Ivor Margetts. Private G.A. McKenzie stated that he had in fact examined the body and seemed very sure of his facts. Another account in his service records suggests that he was killed instantly by shrapnel.

⁷⁰ *Hutchins School Magazine*, Sept 1916, p. 3. Letter from Captain James Sprent, 13th Field Ambulance to Mr Lindon Headmaster, Hutchins School. Over the first 5 days at Pozieres, the AIF sustained 5,000 casualties. The second division suffered heavier losses with 7,000 casualties in 12 days.

⁷¹ *Weekly Courier*, 29 September 1916, p.36. The burial service was conducted by Captain Connell.

⁷² *Tasmanian Mail*, 28 September 1916, p.10.

⁷³ Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau File 1DRL/0428.

⁷⁴ *Weekly Courier*, 21 June 1917, p.36.

memory of him.’ The following night two other officers from the 12th Battalion were buried close by. During the Spring Offensive of 1918, the German Army recaptured the area around Pozieres and Margetts’ grave was obliterated.⁷⁵ His name is commemorated on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial among those with no known grave.⁷⁶

Captain Margetts’ service to his country would later be rewarded with a Mentioned in Despatches (MID) from General Sir Douglas Haig dated 13 November 1916, for

general good and gallant work during the whole period, [Gallipoli] and especially for the 5 last months during which he was Adjutant. He showed resource and coolness under fire on all occasions and is a keen and zealous officer and a gallant leader.⁷⁷

Such praise would have provided a small measure of comfort to his grieving family upon its receipt, along with the letters received from those who served alongside him.⁷⁸ He brought to the field of battle the same dash and daring that he exhibited on the playing field back home with his cheerfulness and never-say-die attitude, winning the admiration of many. Back home his death was observed by many from all walks of life. The popular ‘long-distance singing footballer’ had paid the ultimate price for his country.⁷⁹ Captain Ivor Stephen Margetts was a man of wit, wisdom, dash, courage and just a little humility. The final words come from W.E. Bottrill:

It is with sad regret I see in this morning’s paper the announcement of the premature close of the career of this daring and skilful fighter. Australia has sent to the great war no worthier specimen of her gallant sons than this tall athlete, this scholar, gentleman and Christian. With sincere admiration I drop this sprig of wattle blossom upon his bier. All who knew him loved him.⁸⁰

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⁷⁵ Bean, *Official History*, vol. III, p.542. According to Bean, Sgt J.A.N. Clarke of Launceston and Pte L.J. Brown of Ulverstone, both in a 12th Battalion Lewis Gun section, were killed by the same shell as Margetts, which contradicts other accounts that he was struck by a sniper.

⁷⁶ His name appears on several war memorials around Tasmania, including the Roll of Honour in the Hobart Town Hall, Hutchins School, Tasmanian Football League, University of Tasmania and Margaret Street Uniting Church, Launceston. A tree was planted in his memory on the Soldiers Memorial Avenue.

⁷⁷ www.awm.gov.au/research/people/honours_and_awards 415473.

⁷⁸ IDRL 0478. This collection include letters from Lt. Col Elliott and Pte A.G. McKenzie who was clearly upset by his death. Elliott included a map in one of his letters, showing the location of the grave, perhaps in the hope that either one day his parents or a member of Margetts’ family might visit the grave.

⁷⁹ *Weekly Courier*, 24 August 1916, p.12.

⁸⁰ IDRL 0478, undated newspaper clipping.

THOSE FORGOTTEN: THE INQUIRY INTO RECOGNITION FOR FAR EAST PRISONERS OF WAR WHO WERE KILLED WHILE ESCAPING

B J Brooks¹

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence announced on 6 March 2011 that twenty Australian servicemen who were killed while escaping from Japanese forces during World War Two will be posthumously awarded the Commendation for Gallantry. Senator Feeney accepted the unanimous recommendations of the independent Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal from April 2010,² and called on the next of kin of those honoured to come forward and receive the Commendation for Gallantry. The Tribunal inquired into recognition for Australian prisoners of war who were killed while escaping from Japanese forces during World War Two. Senator Feeney said, 'The Commendation for Gallantry recognises the bravery and courage of these World War II servicemen. Each has his own story. Some were killed while trying to escape, others executed after being recaptured. But what is common to all twenty men is the Australian spirit that they showed before their deaths.'

The inquiry examined the submission from Mr John Bradford of Adelaide, South Australia, seeking recognition for Far East Prisoners of War killed while trying to escape, or who were executed following recapture. Mr Bradford sought the award of a Mentioned in Despatches (MID), or the contemporary equivalent, for those Australian World War Two soldiers he identified as eligible. In these circumstances, the Tribunal considered that it was appropriate that the servicemen identified as having been executed during an escape or after recapture from a Prisoner of War Camp should be awarded retrospectively and posthumously the Commendation for Gallantry. Two Prisoners of War, VX63100 R.E. Breavington and NX37426 E.E. Hatfield, had previously received posthumous MIDs for their executions after recapture, and were not considered for the retrospective award. While the belated recognition is welcomed, the question arises: Was the scope and investigation by the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal was thorough enough? The Tribunal concluded it was unlikely further Far East Prisoners of War would be identified as being eligible for the posthumous MID.

The decision to grant retrospective awards can be criticised. However, the basis of this discussion is not to debate the retrospective honours, but since this precedence has been set, will additional eligible servicemen identified be considered for contemporary recognition of the award? While twenty escapers have been awarded retrospective honours, this is not an exhaustive list, and other servicemen who were murdered by the Japanese when recaptured after escaping should also be entitled to the Commendation for Gallantry. How will these deceased PW escapees be verified and nominated to receive posthumous honours?

The basis of the inquiry was due to the lobbying of John Bradford, who located a document in the Public Record Office in the UK covering the possibility of granting posthumous gallantry awards to PWs who had lost their lives in attempting to escape. A similar file is held

¹ Brenton Brooks, University of Adelaide, B Ag Sc (Hons), PhD, is an avid research compiler of South Australians at war. More recently he has expanded research to investigate gallantry recipients and the bureaucracy of awards, and the identification of Australians executed during World War Two.

² Defence Honours & Awards Tribunal, 2010, 'Report into the recognition of Far East Prisoners of War who were killed while escaping'.

by the Australian War Memorial.³ This nominal roll was compiled by 10 June 1945 in essence from witness statements of Australian survivors from the *Rakuyo Maru* tragedy, given in evidence for Sir William Webb's commission into Japanese War Crimes. The Japanese transport ship *Rakuyo Maru* was sunk in the South China Sea following torpedoing on 12 September 1944, and rescued PW witness statements were recorded throughout October 1944. This resulted in a component of Webb's second report on war crimes against Australians.⁴ On 20 February 1946 three servicemen proposed in June 1945 were certified as being eligible, but no further names were added to the nominal roll.

Therefore, the roll submitted only reflects cases identified from a narrow pool of prisoners prior to the end of the war in the Pacific. The 'Hellship' survivors mainly comprised former working parties on the Burma-Siam Railway being transported to Japan from Singapore. There were few reports of executions or murders of escapers from other locations throughout the Pacific by this stage. One exception was the case of QX15656 T.R.B. Mackay and NX49419 H.F. Harvey who escaped from Sandakan, Borneo, with NX58809 Sergeant Walter Wallace. The roll was compiled before the cessation of hostilities in 1945 and overlooks any subsequent affidavits taken from recovered PW. Without examining the post war affidavits, there is a major deficiency in the scope of inquiry by the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal.

The inclusion of VX52128 Albert N Cleary and NX38584 Wally Crease from Sandakan was only made in the submission by John Bradford due to hearing of their fate on a radio interview. The decision by the Tribunal to award Cleary a Commendation for Gallantry but deny one to Crease is perplexing. The Tribunal found Crease did not qualify on the basis that his service dossier has no mention of execution, but that he died of disease – Malaria. The Tribunal states there remain some discrepancies with dates and explanations of cause of death between personal files, the AWM Roll of Honour and the DVA Nominal Roll of World War Two. The fate of Crease in his personal file was recorded based on locating a Japanese death certificate, which under the circumstances would have to be deemed unreliable. The AWM Roll of Honour identifies that Cleary and Crease escaped together in March 1945 from Ranau, Borneo, and were recaptured. Crease is said to have been shot by Japanese guards on 14 March 1945. An examination of the War Crimes Military Tribunal of Kitamura Kotoru, Kawakami Koyoshi, and Suzuki Saburo for the murder of Cleary reveals evidence was provided by NX42191 Keith Botterill, that Crease escaped a second time whilst undergoing beatings as punishment for the first escape.⁵ How Crease could be denied recognition defies strong supporting evidence of repeated escapes and his fate at the hands of the Japanese.

It is ironic that since the announcement for awards of the Commendation for Gallantry, the Tribunal has been directed to make recommendations on the eligibility of the naval and military members, in which Cleary is listed, to be awarded the Victoria Cross, the Victoria Cross for Australia or other forms of appropriate recognition for their gallantry or valour.⁶ If

³ AWM119, 122, 'Posthumous MIDs [Mention-in-Despatches] for PsW [Prisoners of War] killed whilst attempting to escape'.

⁴ Webb, W. 1944, 'A Report on War Crimes against Australians by individual members of the Armed Forces of the Enemy', AWM54, 1010/9/129.

⁵ NAA A471, 81213. War Crimes - Military Tribunal - KITAMURA Kotoru AWC 755 : KAWAKAMI Koyoshi AWC 751 : SUZUKI Saburo AWC 824 : Date and Place of Tribunal - Rabaul, 25, 27 and 28 July 1946.

⁶ Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal. 2011, 'Inquiry into unresolved recognition for past acts of naval and military gallantry and valour'.

the Commendation for Gallantry of Cleary is to be reviewed for upgrade, it is reasonable to expect consideration that Crease's eligibility case for recognition be revaluated.

These superficial measures of inquest research by the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal suggests an inadequate approach to evaluating and verifying Australia's military history. A basic review in the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1939-45*, which was consulted by the Tribunal, would reveal there were more cases of escapers executed or murdered than considered by the inquiry.

A.J. Sweeting's chapter 'Prisoners of the Japanese' in volume four of the seven-volume series on the Army,⁷ states 27 'known' cases, officially recorded, of Australian servicemen executed during World War Two for abortive escape attempts from the Japanese. Alan Ramsey in the *Sydney Morning Herald* earlier took up the cause of Bradford by stating,

It is to military authorities' everlasting shame that Australia has always refused to acknowledge the valour of such incidents. None of the 27 men received posthumous recognition, unlike those in some similar failed escape attempts from German captivity in Europe which ended in executions of both British and Australian servicemen, mostly air crew.⁸

If official sources indicate 27 execution cases for failed escapes, why did the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal only recommend twenty Commendations for Gallantry to be awarded? The inquiry was held without a public call for submissions, and consequently bureaucracy fell short on full delivery of eligible entitlements.

In two cases of escapes where Commendations for Gallantry have been recommended, there were other escapees present who after recapture were murdered on the same occasion as other members in the parties. There was a third member present in the party of NX66447 L.G. Davies and NX45920 C.B. Jones, and another accompanied VX50944 Joseph Bell. How have these servicemen been overlooked? There are also another ten documented cases of murders conducted by the Japanese for escaping which were not submitted to the Tribunal. These relate to escapes from camps in Java, Ambon, Japan, Burma and Siam. In addition, there are four separate cases which may fall under the category of escaping in Timor, Borneo and Ambon, but remain difficult to define due to the nature of the witnesses. Finally, the consideration of NX54192 K.D. McLachlan may in fact be a mistaken identity due to a corruption of the nominated surname, and requires further investigation. Although the Official History states 27 executions in Japanese captivity for escaping, figures here suggest there were at least 35, with the possibility of several more which may never be verified.

The failure of the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal to recognise all Australian service personnel executed or murdered by the Japanese for escaping is an injustice to the forgotten victims of such brutal crimes and remains a stigma on our military history. The oversight warrants serious redress.

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⁷ Wigmore, L. 1968, *The Japanese Thrust*, Australia in the War of 1939-45, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, p. 642.

⁸ Ramsey, A. 2003, 'True Anzac spirit ignored', *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 April 2003.

OPERATIONS CYCLONE NO 1 AND 2: THE USE OF AERIAL SPRAYING IN THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

Rohan Goyne¹

The British conducted aerial spraying operations utilising helicopters during 1953 as part of the offensive air operations which formed part of the response during the Malayan Emergency. Those operations were known as Operations Cyclone No 1 and No 2 and they have been little chronicled in the annals of military history. The standard texts associated with the Malayan Emergency that deal with the air operations have little reference to these operations apart from *The Malayan Emergency: The Commonwealth's Wars, 1948-1966* by Robert Jackson,² which makes fleeting reference at the end of a chapter.

This article will place these operations in the broader context of the air operations during the Emergency and then look specifically at Operations Cyclone No 1 and 2 in detail.

Air Operations in Malaya

In 1948, the Communist insurgents had sought to mount attacks both in urban areas and against economic interests. However, the security forces enjoyed their greatest advantage in urban areas, therefore the insurgents chose to move their operational focus to operations directed against people and infrastructure located on the jungle fringe. By the early 1950s, the combination of improved coordination of security operations on the jungle fringe and the adoption by the government of a relocation program among Chinese squatters denied the insurgents food and support.

When the insurgents then decided to move deep into the jungle, this forced the security forces to undertake operations that required penetration and sustainment within the rugged jungle and mountain areas. These factors guided the conduct and nature of aerospace operations, hence Operations Cyclone No 1 and 2.

Use of helicopters in the Malayan Emergency

Helicopters emerged from 1953 as a new force element in the Emergency. The key roles of helicopters were troop insertion and medical evacuation. In troop lift, in spite of possessing small numbers of aircraft, relatively large numbers of troops were moved. In May 1953, when there was only one squadron of eight Sycamore helicopters available, over 1900 troops were airlifted in the field while on operations.

The cost of operating helicopters as against fixed wing aircraft, a shortage of helicopter numbers and difficulties in providing adequate maintenance curtailed the widespread employment of helicopters on the scale of the Vietnam War.

While eventually three helicopter squadrons would be created within Far East Air Force (FEAF) – two Royal Air Force and one Royal Navy – serviceability rates in the tropical

¹ Rohan Goyne is the current Federal President of the Military Historical Society of Australia. He has written several articles for *Sabretache* and has developed an expertise in Australia's involvement in the Cold War. He has recently left the public sector after twenty years and is starting up a risk management consultancy whilst undertaking a PhD in Law at the Australian National University. He holds a Masters in Laws from the University of Canberra and is an admitted legal practitioner of the ACT Supreme Court.

² R Jackson, *The Malayan emergency: The Commonwealth's Wars, 1948-1966*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 113-114.

conditions bedevilled operational employment. Owing to their age and the operating environment, serviceability rates sometimes were as low as 40%. However, in spite of these shortcomings, helicopters were vital and popular assets among force commanders.

Operations Cyclone No 1 and No 2

Operations Cyclone No 1 and No 2 were the aerial spraying with toxic liquid of cultivation plots utilised by the insurgents. These operations represent a unique offensive role played by helicopters mounted against the Communist insurgents following their withdrawal into deep jungle areas from late 1952 onwards.

The insurgents had been compelled to deploy a large proportion of their forces in remote jungle areas in order to cultivate the food necessary for their survival, with the aim of stockpiling the produce and building dumps of complementary and essential foodstuffs. The jungle cultivations as established by the insurgents were small in size and screened by jungle vegetation, except from the air. The aborigines who were frequently pressed into service as an additional labour force on these plots also provided an intelligence screen which made it difficult to approach them on foot undetected.

It was realised that aerial attack offered the best means of destroying these cultivation plots and since high explosive and fire bombs proved ineffective in this role, a scheme for the use of chemical sprays was proposed.³ At first sodium arsenite was used with effect but it was poisonous and the danger which it afforded to the lives of the indigenous population of the peninsula was politically unacceptable.

Imperial Chemical Industries suggested the use of Fernoxone but the toxic spray that eventually proved the most efficacious was a mixture of trioxene and diesolene, which formed a non-poisonous herbicide that killed all types of vegetation and rendered the ground unusable for a period. This marked the first use of a herbicide in warfare.⁴

The spotting and location of jungle cultivations was carried out by Austers of No 656 Squadron and became an increasing commitment of these aircraft when the terrorists' cultivation program got under way in 1952. When a number of these cultivations had been plotted a spraying operation was mounted, using both light and medium helicopters. The first of these operations was Operation Cyclone No 1, mounted on 31 August 1953 in the Kluang and Labis area of Johor.

Ten cultivations, all fairly close together, had been located in the Mar Okil Forest Reserve and after they had been marked by Austers, they were strafed by pairs of Hornets to eliminate any ground resistance. One S51 and two S55 helicopters were then flown into the area from Kluang and operating in pairs, managed to deal with twenty cultivations on the first day of the operation. As the remaining cultivations were more scattered the daily achievement of this small helicopter force was reduced but, after the two S55s had carried out spraying operations for one and half days and the S51 for a further two days, some thirty cultivations had been dealt with. One lesson learnt was that the Auster reconnaissance aircraft were an essential part of the operation.

The second crop spraying operation Operation Cyclone No 2 was carried out soon after the

³ VCAS file *Policy in Malaya*, AM to FEAF/MSX 169, 10 Mar 1950 (ID9/515/PT3).

⁴ *New Scientist*, 11 March 1982, p. 632.

first and, by the end of 1953, 88 terrorist cultivations had been effectively destroyed from the air during the course of 48 hours of flying by the S51 and 15 hours of flying by the S55s. However, a temporary reduction in the available helicopter force put an end to these operations at that time. They remained in abeyance for most of the remainder of the campaign through lack of sufficient aircraft both for spraying and for the tactical reconnaissance of the cultivations.

Conclusion

As part of the general food denial campaign that was carried out against the terrorists, crop spraying operations helped to render terrorist camps in the jungle zones untenable, thereby forcing the insurgents to contact their supporters among the civil population and thus increasing the security forces' chances of contacting them.

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SOCIETY NOTICES

***Sabretache* Writer's Prize 2012**

Federal Council is pleased to announce that the *Sabretache* Writer's Prize for 2012 is now open. The details and conditions of entry of the prize are:

- the prize will be open to Society members;
- \$500 will be awarded to the entry judged the best by a panel;
- entries must consist of an essay of 3,000 to 4,000 words on a topic of Australian military history, based in part on primary sources.

Entries close on 31 May 2012. The winning entry will be published in *Sabretache*. Entries should be sent, preferably in digital format, to the Federal Secretary or Federal President of the Society (please note, not to the Editor).

Position of Federal Secretary

The position of Federal Secretary is currently vacant on Federal Council. Federal Council would like to hear from any member of the Society who may be interested in being considered for the position. In the first instance, please contact the Federal President at rgoyne@grapevine.com.au.

MHSA Conference for 2012

The biennial conference of the Military Historical Society of Australia will be held in Canberra in November 2012 at the Hellenic Club in Moore Street, Canberra City. The conference will be hosted by the ACT Branch of the Society. The ACT Branch is inviting potential speakers to contact them for consideration for the draft conference program. The contact at the ACT Branch is Ian Stagoll at ian.stagoll@gmail.com.

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first and, by the end of 1953, 88 terrorist cultivations had been effectively destroyed from the air during the course of 48 hours of flying by the S51 and 15 hours of flying by the S55s. However, a temporary reduction in the available helicopter force put an end to these operations at that time. They remained in abeyance for most of the remainder of the campaign through lack of sufficient aircraft both for spraying and for the tactical reconnaissance of the cultivations.

Conclusion

As part of the general food denial campaign that was carried out against the terrorists, crop spraying operations helped to render terrorist camps in the jungle zones untenable, thereby forcing the insurgents to contact their supporters among the civil population and thus increasing the security forces' chances of contacting them.

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SOCIETY NOTICES

***Sabretache* Writer's Prize 2012**

Federal Council is pleased to announce that the *Sabretache* Writer's Prize for 2012 is now open. The details and conditions of entry of the prize are:

- the prize will be open to Society members;
- \$500 will be awarded to the entry judged the best by a panel;
- entries must consist of an essay of 3,000 to 4,000 words on a topic of Australian military history, based in part on primary sources.

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13 FIELD SQUADRON: THE OLDEST UNIT IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY?

Graham McKenzie-Smith¹

As sappers of 13 Field Squadron at Karrakatta (WA) approach the centenary of the formation of their unit, the researchers from the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) Association of



Western Australia claim it may be the oldest unit in the Australian Army. Other units can claim that their predecessor units give them links back to the colonial period, but all of these units have had a series of name and role changes over their history. 13th Engineers (Field Company) was formed on 1 July 1912, served at home during the First World War, and became 13 Fd Coy which served in New Guinea in the Second World War. They were reformed as 13 Fd Sqn in 1948 and have been the principal combat engineer unit in WA almost continuously for nearly 100 years without a change in their role or designation. The following analysis of the evolution and changes among units of

the Australian Army will demonstrate that 13 Fd Sqn has a very good case for making its claim.

The Organisation of the Army pre 1912

Prior to Federation each colony maintained a small army with some full-time soldiers, militia units and units of volunteers. These continued under Commonwealth control after Federation until 1903 when GO 103/1903 set out the reorganisation which saw the birth of the Australian Army. Numbered infantry regiments were formed, with 1 to 4 in New South Wales, 5 to 8 in Victoria, 9 in Queensland, 10 in South Australia, 11 in Western Australia and 12 in Tasmania. Other infantry regiments retained their descriptive titles such as NSW Scottish and Tasmanian Rangers. The colonial cavalry units became numbered light horse regiments, with 1 to 6 in NSW, 7 to 11 in Victoria, 12 in Tasmania, 13 to 15 in Queensland, 16 and 17 in SA and 18 in WA. The artillery batteries were numbered within each state. The colonial engineers were organised into field companies (1 to 5), submarine mining companies (1 to 3) and electric companies (1 to 3). Later in 1911 the artillery batteries were renumbered 1 to 5 in NSW, 6 to 10 in Victoria, 11 and 12 in Queensland, 13 in SA and 14 in WA, while 15 and 16 were in Tasmania.

The Kitchener Reforms and Universal Service

The 1903 reorganisation was aimed simply at standardising the army structure using the men and units inherited from the colonies. The Commonwealth Government then embarked on a number of reviews of the army, utilising the services of General Kitchener. They decided on a form of Universal Service which would see all young men serve in the army, progressing through the Junior Cadets (12 to 14 years), Senior Cadets (14 to 18 years) then the Citizen Forces (18 to 26 years). Australia was divided into 23 brigade areas and 92 battalion areas and as each intake of men joined the Citizen Forces, each area would build up to a full battalion of

¹ Graham McKenzie-Smith is a long-standing member of the WA and ACT Branches of MHSA as well as an ex Sapper and a member of RAE Assoc of WA. He is editing a forthcoming history covering the first 100 years of the RAE in and from WA.

trained part-time soldiers, with a quota of Senior Cadets preparing to join the unit as others finished their compulsory service. Each brigade area (four battalions) would also raise several artillery batteries, a company of engineers, a service corps company and a field ambulance. Twenty nine light horse (LH) regiments were also to be raised, mainly in rural areas.

To accommodate this expansion, the army was again reorganised, encapsulated in MO 277/1912 which authorised the formation of the first round of new units and the redesignation of many existing units. Only some units were initially raised, with the others to be formed as each annual quota of trainees was enlisted, but provision was made in the numbering system for all planned units. The infantry brigade HQs were allocated to Queensland (1 to 3), NSW (4 to 11), Victoria (12 to 18), SA (19 and 20) WA (21 and 22) and Tasmania (23). Battalion numbers were allocated to Queensland (1 to 12), NSW (13 to 44), Victoria (45 to 72), SA (73 to 80), WA (81 to 88) and Tasmania (89 to 92). In most cases the new battalions were an amalgam of companies from a number of previous units and none of the new battalions carried the unit number of their predecessor unit.

Similarly, provision was made for 29 LH regiments with 1 to 4 plus 27 in Queensland, 5 to 11 plus 28 in NSW, 12 to 21 plus 29 in Victoria and 22 to 24 in SA, while 25 was in WA and 26 in Tasmania. The existing 19 LH regiments were reorganised and renumbered with no unit retaining its 1903 designation. The engineers were reorganised with 14 field companies allocated to Queensland (1 and 2), NSW (3 to 6), Victoria (7 to 10), SA (11 and 12), WA (13) and Tasmania (14), while the fortress companies were numbered 32 to 39. Again, although most units had a continuity of role, the reorganisation of 1912 saw all units receive new numbers as part of the overall rationalisation of unit nomenclature.

The 16 artillery batteries were unchanged in 1912 (with four new batteries added) but in MO 126/1913 they were reorganised along the same lines, with provision made for 52 field batteries. These were allocated to Queensland (1 to 6 and 43), NSW (7 to 18, 44, 45 and 49), Victoria (19 to 33, 46, 47, 50 and 52), SA (34 to 36, 44 and 51), WA (37 to 39) and Tasmania (40 to 42). The 20 existing batteries were all renumbered and a further seven batteries formed over the next few years. Field brigade HQs were also provided for with 1 and 2 in Queensland, 3 to 6 in NSW, 7 to 11 in Victoria, 12 in SA, 13 in WA and 14 in Tasmania, but only nine were formed at that time.

The 1912 reorganisation gave all existing units of the Australian Army new numbers and although many minor changes of unit names were gazetted in the next few years (mostly the addition of a regional component to the title) and new units were raised, the fundamentals of the unit name structure remained unchanged until 1918. The Sydney University Scouts, which had been formed as an officer training unit in 1903, was the only unit not to be renamed in the 1912 reforms.

The Australian Imperial Force, 1914-1918

Under the Defence Act the militia units could not serve outside Australia so the all-volunteer First AIF was formed to participate in the Great War. First Infantry Division was formed in 1914 with three brigades (1 to 3) each of four battalions. 1 Inf Bde had four battalions from NSW (1 to 4) while 2 Inf Bde had four battalions from Victoria (5 to 8). 3 Inf Bde was the small states brigade with battalions from Queensland (9), SA (10), WA (11) and Tasmania/Queensland (12). The supporting artillery, engineer and ambulance units were numbered in line with the brigades with 1, 2 and 3 Field Bdes RAA 1,2 and 3 Fd Coys RAE and 1,2 and 3 Fd Ambs AAMC generally formed in the same areas as their brigades.

4 Inf Bde was formed as an all states brigade to work with the New Zealanders and had battalions from NSW (13), Victoria (14), Queensland/Tasmania (15) and WA/SA (16). No artillery field brigade was formed but they were supported by 4 Fd Coy and 4 Fd Amb. Then a second division was formed with a similar grouping of units. 5 Inf Bde was from NSW (17, 18, 19 and 20 Bns) while 6 Inf Bde came from Victoria (21, 22, 23 and 24 Bns) and 7 Inf Bde was formed in the smaller states with 25, 26, 27 and 28 battalions. 8 Inf Bde followed as another all states brigade with 29 (Vic), 30 (NSW), 31 (Qld/Tas) and 32 (SA/WA). The last division to form in Australia was 3 Inf Div with 9 Inf Bde from NSW (33, 34, 35 and 36 Bns) while 10 Inf Bde was mostly from Victoria (37, 38 and 39 Bns) and included 40 Inf Bn from Tasmania. 11 Inf Bde was the small states brigade with 41, 42, 43 and 44 battalions. In all cases the brigades were to be supported by an engineer field company and a field ambulance, each numbered after their brigade.

After the Gallipoli campaign, 1, 2, 3 and 4 Inf Bdes were divided to produce four new brigades which together with 4 Inf Bde and 8 Inf Bde were grouped to form 4 Inf Div (4, 12 and 13 Inf Bdes) and 5 Inf Div (8, 14 and 15 Inf Bdes). 12 Inf Bde was formed out of the all states 4 Inf Bde and its battalions were formed with reinforcements from NSW (45), Victoria (46) and Qld/Tas (47) while all SA soldiers in 16 Inf Bn transferred to 48 Inf Bn, allowing the former to be a WA unit and the later a SA unit. 13 Inf Bde was formed out of the small states 3 Inf Bde using reinforcements from Qld (49), SA (50), Tas/Qld (51) and WA (52). 14 Inf Bde was formed out of 1 Inf Bde using NSW reinforcements while 15 Inf Bde was formed out of the Victorian 2 Inf Bde. To support these new brigades similarly numbered engineer and ambulance units were raised in Egypt.

The artillery units of the AIF underwent considerable changes during the war. For 1 Inf Div, three field brigades were raised (1 in NSW, 2 in Vic and 3 in the small states) each with three batteries which were numbered sequentially. These were followed by three similar field brigades (4, 5 and 6) for 2 Inf Div. Then an extra six batteries were raised in Egypt to give four batteries per brigade. Three field brigades (7, 8 and 9) were formed in Australia for 3 Inf Div, each with four batteries. When the AIF was expanded to five divisions in early 1916, six further field brigades (10 to 15) were formed in Egypt from reinforcements which took the total field batteries to 60, but in the process the nominal state allocation of each unit became confused. Also five howitzer brigades were formed (21 to 25), each with three batteries which were numbered 101 to 115). To make lineage more difficult to follow the field brigades were restructured to each have three field batteries and a howitzer battery and during this exchange of batteries the state affiliation of most batteries and field brigades became tenuous.

Name Changes to Honour the AIF

Throughout the Great War the militia units in Australia remained on the Order of Battle although many of their soldiers took leave to join the AIF. While the AIF were still in Europe, ways were sought to link its units with the militia in the areas where each AIF unit was raised. For the infantry this was done in MO 364/1918 which created 60 new regiments. The AIF battalions were to be seen as the 1st Bn of each regiment and the militia units were reorganised to form the 2nd Bn of each. As there were only 60 AIF battalions, some 16 additional militia battalions were formed which were styled as the 5th Bn of some of the regiments. Although many of these new battalions were created by renaming existing militia battalions, most involved the mixing and regrouping of individual companies. In most cases the senior cadets of the units forming the 2nd Bn or 5th Bn were used to also form the 3rd Bn

and 6th Bn of the same regiment. In this process the only infantry units to retain their 1912 regimental numbers were 17 Inf Regt in NSW and 57, 58, 59 and 60 Inf Regt in Victoria.

Similarly MO 388/1918 reorganised the light horse units but here only some units were renamed to match the 14 AIF light horse regiments on a geographical basis with the others remaining unchanged. 2 LH Regt in Queensland, 28 LH Regt in NSW, 13, 17, 19 and 29 LH Regts in Victoria, 23 LH Regt in SA and 26 LH Regt in Tasmania retained their 1912 numbers.

No changes were made to the artillery field brigade titles but each field battery (including the ones not yet raised) was renamed to mirror an AIF battery formed in that state, even though the frequent reorganisations of the AIF artillery made some of these connections tenuous. During this process only 13 Fd Bty and 14 Fd Bty in Sydney and 38 Fd Bty in Perth retained their 1912 numbers. With the engineers, only the field companies in Queensland, NSW and Victoria were renamed in this process and they adopted the numbers of the field companies raised in Australia, although 4 Fd Coy in NSW and 10 Fd Coy in Victoria were reallocated their previous number. The field companies in the smaller states retained their 1912 numbers. These changes were done on an ad-hoc basis by each corps with a number of MOs initiating the process followed by others that made subtle changes.

The 1921 Reorganisation

However, a more comprehensive reorganisation was undertaken in 1921 (MO 95/1921) and this was to establish the numbering system used in the Australian Army to this day. All units of the militia were impacted and the whole army reorganised to reflect the structure of the AIF.

Four divisional HQs were formed with 1 Inf Div having two brigades in NSW and one in South Queensland while 2 Inf Div had three in NSW, 3 Inf Div had three in Victoria and 4 Inf Div had two in Victoria and one in SA. 5 Inf Div was not formed as the other three brigades were reformed as independent mixed brigades in North Queensland, Tasmania and WA. The infantry was reorganised into 60 new battalions with 20 of these formed in NSW, 20 in Victoria and 20 in the other states. The individual battalion numbers allocated in each state were generally based on the state the AIF battalion was recruited in, with some changes for the multi-state units to ensure that there were eight battalions in Queensland and four each in SA, WA and Tasmania. The battalion recruiting areas were also rationalised to give 60 battalion areas and although most of the new battalions had at least some companies from their equivalent unit formed in the 1918 reorganisation, only 17 Inf Bn in NSW and 57, 58 and 59 Inf Bns in Victoria could claim continuity of title with the units created in 1912.

The brigade HQs in NSW were renamed after the AIF brigades which had been raised in NSW (1, 5, 9 and 14 Inf Bdes) and they also were allocated the all states 8 Inf Bde. The Victorian militia brigades were renamed after the Victorian AIF brigades (2, 6, 10 and 15 Inf Bdes) and the all-states 4 Inf Bde. Queensland was allocated two of the small states brigade numbers (7 and 11 Inf Bdes) while SA was allocated 3 Inf Bde. 12 Inf Bde was formed in Tasmania and 13 Inf Bde was formed in WA. Although there is no surviving documentation to explain the allocation of the small state brigade numbers between the states, it may be that 12 Inf Bde was allocated to Tasmania because 12 Inf Bn had been allocated to that state and that 13 Inf Bde was allocated to WA because the sappers of 13 Fd Coy and the gunners of 13 Fd Bde were established units in WA.

Although they adopted the new structure, the light horse regiments which had adopted AIF numbers in 1918 kept them, with the only units retaining their 1912 numbers being 2, 13, 17, 19 and 23 LH Regts. The six cavalry brigade HQs were formed into two cavalry divisions. The engineer field companies were renamed to reflect the brigade to which they were attached and this resulted in most having new numbers. 1 Fd Coy and 9 Fd Coy in NSW kept the numbers they had been given in 1918 as did 2 Fd Coy in Victoria, while only 10 Fd Coy in Victoria and 13 Fd Coy in WA retained their 1912 numbers, as they were allocated to brigades with that number. The artillery units adopted the new structures and nomenclature with gusto. The 52 batteries from 1918 were reorganised into 68 with no battery retaining its previous number. Seventeen field brigades were formed (numbered I to XV plus XVIII, XXI and XXII) with no continuity of unit number.

The 1921 reorganisation was a complete restructure of the Australian Army to take account of the AIF's experience in Europe and the resulting system of unit nomenclature continues to guide the numbers allocated to units of the Australian Army into the 21st century. However, few units retained the unit number allocated in 1912. These included the HQs of 5, 8, 9 and 15 infantry brigades, 17, 57, 58 and 59 infantry battalions, 2, 13, 17, 19 and 23 light horse regiments along with 10 and 13 engineer field companies.

Between the Wars

The brigade HQs continued to operate between the wars, but when the Universal Service system ceased in 1929 many units were amalgamated, with their numbers linked in the title of the new unit. There were relatively few such merges among the units with numbers dating back to 1912, with 2/14 LH Regt formed in Queensland in 1929 along with 18/23 LH Regt in SA. 57/60 Inf Bn was formed in Victoria as was 17/19 LH Regt. 19 LH (Armd Car) Regt was formed in 1933 but renamed 1 Armd Car Regt in 1934, when 17 LH Regt was again renamed 17/19 LH Regt. In 1936 18 LH (MG) Regt was formed out of 18/23 LH Regt and 9 LH Regt was renamed 9/23 LH Regt to continue the connection back to the original 23 LH Regt. In 1937 17/19 LH Regt was reformed as 17 LH (MG) Regt, while 13 LH Regt became 13/19 LH Regt. Sydney Uni Scouts became Sydney Uni Regt in 1927.

Second World War

2/14 LH Regt was unlinked in August 1940 to become 2 Recon Bn and later became 2 Cav Regt. They moved from Brisbane (Qld) to Townsville and remained in Queensland until disbanded in July 1943. 13/19 LH Regt was also unlinked in August 1940 with 13 LH Regt later becoming 13 Armd Regt. They remained around Melbourne and Puckapunyal until they disbanded in October 1943. The reformed 19 LH (MG) Regt became 19 MG Regt in December 1941 and 19 MG Bn in August 1942. They moved to Darwin in December 1942 and stayed in the Northern Territory until disbanded in May 1944. Also in December 1941, 17 LH (MG) Regt became 17 MG Regt and then 17 Mot Regt in March 1942. They moved to Narrabri (NSW) in July as part of 1 Armd Div but were disbanded in February 1943. 9/23 LH Regt was unlinked in December 1941 and 23 Recon Coy remained in SA until disbanded in May 1942.

HQ 5 Inf Bde and HQ 8 Inf Bde mobilised at Bathurst and Wallgrove (NSW) in December 1941 as part of 2 Inf Div which was in reserve behind Sydney and they moved to WA in July 1942. After a period around Perth they moved to Geraldton in November. HQ 8 Inf Bde left WA in September 1943 and reached Finschhafen (NG) in December 1943. Here they led the advance along the Rai Coast to Madang as part of 5 Inf Div and remained at Madang after

HQ First Aust Army took over in New Guinea in late 1944. They had just moved to Wewak to join 6 Inf Div when the war ended, returning to Sydney in late 1945 to disband. HQ 5 Inf Bde remained at Geraldton until January 1944, when they left to join 3 Inf Div at Kairi (Qld). Here they were disbanded in June. HQ 9 Inf Bde remained in the Sydney area until they were also disbanded in June 1944.

57/60 Inf Bn, 58 Inf Bn and 59 Inf Bn were part of 15 Inf Bde Gp at Seymour when mobilised in December 1941 and moved to Brisbane in May 1942. Here 58 Inf Bn and 59 Inf Bn were merged into 58/59 Inf Bn in August and they moved to New Guinea in March 1943. Both 57/60 Inf Bn and 58/59 Inf Bn fought in the advances on Salamaua, Lae and Madang before a leave period in Queensland. They saw out the war on Bougainville with 3 Inf Div and were disbanded in early 1946. 17 Inf Bn mobilised along the northern beaches of Sydney and remained in NSW until they disbanded in April 1944. Sydney Uni Regt was disbanded in 1942.

10 Fd Coy mobilised with 10 Inf Bde Gp at Seymour (Vic) in December 1941 and moved with them to South Queensland in May 1942. When 10 Inf Bde was disbanded in August 1942, 10 Fd Coy was retained and worked with a variety of engineer HQs in Queensland and at Port Moresby, Buna, Lae and Torokina until the end of the war. 13 Fd Coy worked with 13 Inf Bde Gp in WA and NT before joining 5 Inf Div at Jacquinot Bay, New Britain in November 1944. After the Japanese surrender, 13 Fd Coy accompanied 11 Inf Div to Rabaul where they stayed until 1946.

The Second World War saw a huge expansion of the Australian army and many of the pre-war militia units saw active service while many more were disbanded after a period of service in Australia. The only units that had been named in the 1912 Kitchener reforms that were overseas until the end of the war were HQ 8 Inf Bde, HQ 15 Inf Bde, 10 Fd Coy and 13 Fd Coy, although the old 57, 58 and 59 Bns were present in combined units. The last one to return to Australia was 13 Fd Coy.

The Post-War Army

After the Japanese surrender the army was disbanded as fast as possible, except for the brigade group recruited for the British Commonwealth Occupation Force and a range of base units of the Interim Army. After much review, the Citizens Military Force was reborn in 1948 and the only units that could claim a direct link to those formed in 1912 were HQ 5 Inf Bde and HQ 8 Inf Bde in NSW, 10 Indep Fd Sqn as part of 1 Armd Bde Gp in Victoria, and 13 Fd Sqn as part of 13 Inf Bde Gp in WA.

The adoption of the Pentropic structure in 1960 saw the demise of the separate brigade HQs and although they were later reformed as Task Force HQs, neither brigade HQ can claim longevity. 10 Indep Fd Sqn was disbanded in 1960.

Is 13 Fd Sqn the oldest unit in the Australian Army?

Many units have in the past claimed this title but it depends on your definition.

The gunners claim that their 'A' Fd Bty is the oldest unit as the first 'A' Fd Bty was formed by NSW in 1871 but several different units have used the name. In 1943, 'A' Fd Bty was reorganised as 2 Mtn Bty and served in New Guinea under that title until 1945. At the end of the war, 6 Indep Fd Bty was formed at Morotai to accompany 34 Inf Bde Gp to Japan and this

was later renamed 2 Fd Bty, then 'A' Fd Bty. In the various reorganisations since, 'A' Fd Bty has 'migrated' between artillery regiments and it cannot claim continuity of service under its original title.

A claim could be made by the NSW based 1/19 RNSWR on behalf of its 1 Inf Bn component, which can trace its history back to 1854. However, in the 1912 reorganisation it became 21, 24 and 26 Inf Regts and was not renamed 1 Inf Bn again until 1919. It was linked into 1/19 Inf Bn for much of the interwar period and then into 1/45 Inf Bn in 1942, before being disbanded in April 1944. 19 Inf Regt on the other hand was formed in NSW during the 1912 reorganisation and retained that name in 1919, but was linked into 1/19 Inf Bn and then 20/19 Inf Bn during the inter-war period. In November 1941, Darwin Inf Bn was renamed as 19 Inf Bn but there was no connection with the previous unit. 19 Inf Bn served with distinction in New Guinea and was disbanded in 1945. 1 Cdo Coy was formed in 1955 and became 1 Inf Bn (Cdo) in 1957 before being renamed as 1 RNSWR in 1960, still with a commando role. 19 RNSWR was formed as remote area battalion in 1966 and the two merged in 1971 with 1 Cdo Regt emerging as a separate unit. Again 1/19 RNSWR can claim connections back to previous units but there are too many discontinuities to claim continuity of unit name or role.

Sydney Uni Regt can show a lineage back to the colonial University Volunteer Rifle Corps but lacks continuity following its disbanding in 1942, and has changed roles several times between being a line infantry battalion and a dedicated officer training unit.

2/14 LH QMI celebrated their 150th Birthday in 2010 on the basis of their connection with the colonial period Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI). Neither 2 nor 14 were involved as unit numbers in the colonial period and the Queensland light horse units were formed into 13, 14 and 15 LH Regts in the 1903 reorganisation. In 1912 these units became 1, 2, 3, 4 and 27 LH Regts, while 14 LH Regt was formed in NSW. In 1918, 2 LH Regt was retained in Queensland and 27 LH Regt became 14 LH Regt. The two regiments were linked in 1930 but in 1940 were unlinked to form 2 Recon Bn in Queensland and 14 LH (MG) Regt in NSW. 2 Recon Bn went on to become 2 Cav Regt and served in North Queensland before being disbanded in 1943. 14 LH (MG) Regt became 14 MG Regt, then 14 Mot Regt before disbanding in NSW in 1942. After the rest of the CMF was formed in 1948, a squadron of 2/14 QMI was formed in 1949 as an armoured car unit and expanded to a full regiment in 1950. From 1956 they became an anti-tank regiment and an Australian Regular Army squadron was formed in 1960. This ARA squadron transferred to the unrelated 2 Cav Regt in 1966 and 2/14 QMI was reorganised as a CMF cavalry regiment. It was reduced to a squadron in 1976 before expanding again in 1980 as an armoured personnel carrier unit which was renamed 2/14 LH QMI in 1981. It became an integrated ARA/Army Reserve unit in 1986 and converted to a reconnaissance role in 1997, becoming a fully regular unit in 2005. Although 2/14 LH QMI can trace its origins back 151 years, in that time it has had many names, many roles and long breaks in service.

Overall the sappers of 13 Fd Sqn can uniquely claim that their unit was formed in 1912 and except for a short period after the Second World War (1946 to 1948) has been active on the Order of Battle of the Australian Army, under the same name, doing the same job at home and overseas for 100 years. Does this make them the oldest unit in the Australian Army?

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APATHY AND OPPOSITION: THE STRUGGLE TO BUILD THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE WAR MEMORIAL

Peter Hopper¹

Anyone visiting the WA War Memorial in King's Park today would be puzzled to discover that its construction involved six years of tireless work following the initial establishment of a committee to undertake its planning and fundraising. The involvement of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) throughout this period was crucial and no doubt the project would not have been successful without its input. Other prominent figures driving the project were Sir Talbot Hobbs, Sir William Lathlain and Archbishop Riley, who sadly passed away only five months before its official opening on 24 November 1929. Why did the project take so long to bring to fruition and what were the obstacles that had to be overcome?

Although the Great War came to an end in November 1918 it was not until February 1924 that the first moves were made to set about the task of planning to construct a War Memorial for the people of Western Australia. The first conference exposed many of the problems that were to plague the project in the years to follow. Firstly there was strong opposition against the proposed site, King's Park, at a point overlooking the Narrows and close to the entrance to the Avenue of Honour. Mr W.C. Angwin MLA argued that Monument Hill in Fremantle would be the ideal site for such a project. Many people at the time were also reluctant to support yet another war memorial. Many municipalities had already erected memorials of their own at considerable expense, for example, the Subiaco Fallen Soldiers' Memorial that was opened in November 1923.

Another form of opposition came from community members who wanted the memorial to be of some practical value such as a hospital. The WA Labor Premier in 1925, Mr P. Collier, labelled the intended memorial 'a useless pile of stone'. As financial contributions to the project dried up in 1925 there were suggestions that this was due to the fact that people wanted a memorial of some practical use, not a symbol. Underneath this opposition was a feeling that an ornamental memorial would serve to perpetuate the wanton waste of life and money in the Great War. The Labor Party had split over the issue of conscription and the union movement was not keen to support projects that reinforced memories of those war years.

Despite these initial concerns the State War Memorial Committee established a fundraising committee and called for donations. Subscriptions were to be acknowledged in *The West Australian* and it was hoped money would flow in from enthusiastic people throughout the state. In the first year of fundraising only £101 (\$202) was raised. The headline 'NO WAR MEMORIAL: Contributions Too Scanty' in *The West Australian* (29/05/25) seemed to spell the end to the entire project. It was at this stage that the RSL decided to step in and take control of matters. Mr E.S. Watt of the RSSILA executive declared that 'if the public would not subscribe then the returned soldiers should each put in a few shillings to erect their own'.²

¹ Peter Hopper is a retired History Honours graduate from University of WA. He specialises in researching Digger discontent during and after the First World War. Several of his articles have already been published in *Sabretache*.

² *The West Australian* 12th February 1925.

This was not the first time that returned servicemen were to be asked to contribute. On Anzac Day 1928 Archbishop Riley made an impassioned appeal for funds in order to complete the memorial. He was addressing the returned servicemen at the end of their march through Perth that morning. He was not in good health at the time and opened by reminding everyone that 'this may be the last time I make an appeal'. He pointed out that the war memorial was being constructed 'in the most delightful spot in a delightful country. It was a crying shame', he continued, 'that he had to make an appeal for money. It is not fitting that a soldier should have to get up and appeal to soldiers for a few thousand pounds to finish a war memorial'.³

His reference to a few thousand pounds was not quite correct. The target was £11,000 and by the end of 1927 only £3000 had been raised. It had indeed been a monumental struggle. In May 1925 State public servants had been urged to donate 'At Least a Day's Pay' and various businesses in Perth had responded with enthusiasm.⁴ The major banks agreed to accept donations for the cause and concerts organised by the RSSILA were successful in attracting finance. Sir William Lathlain, as Chairman of the State War Memorial Committee, was behind many of these new initiatives. He also urged that a tree be planted in King's Park for every WA digger who fell in the war.

The next option was to seek money from the Perth City Council and the State Government. Today both these avenues would have been willing to contribute, but not so in 1925. The Labor Premier Mr P. Collier put the matter to his Cabinet and it was rejected. 'If they desire to have one they will have to erect it themselves', he was quoted as saying.⁵ The Perth City Council also felt they could not legally vote funds for the purpose of subscribing to the State War Memorial. This had not been the case in Fremantle where their council had donated £500 towards their own War Memorial on Monument Hill. The executive of the RSSILA met on 17 March 1926 and declared 'We are disgusted at the feeble efforts made by the Government and the people of Western Australia.'⁶ At this stage it seemed the project would not continue.

Nevertheless, on 8 April 1926 it was announced that despite the poor response to the appeal the project would proceed and the construction of the memorial would begin. The tender of Mr A.T. Brine for £3506 was accepted. Sir Talbot Hobbs was appointed Honorary Architect and his design was first seen by the public on 16 September 1926 when it was published in *The West Australian*. This was indeed a generous act by Sir Talbot Hobbs. In February 1924 it had been agreed to hold a competition for suitable designs with substantial prizes on offer. The prizes of 300 guineas (first), 150 guineas (second) and 75 guineas (third) would have eaten up all the money that had been donated.⁷

Sir William Lathlain announced to the press that the foundation stone (obelisk) of the WA War Memorial would be in position for an unveiling ceremony on the Sunday following Anzac Day 1928. On 28 January 1928 readers of *The West Australian* learnt that the Melbourne City Council had given £250,000 for the construction of their Shrine of Remembrance. One wonders how the WA War Memorial Committee responded.

³ *The West Australian* 30th April 1928.

⁴ *The West Australian* 7th May 1925.

⁵ *The West Australian* 10th August 1925.

⁶ *The West Australian* 18th March 1926.

⁷ One guinea = one pound one shilling (£1/1/- = \$2.10).

It is interesting to note that the first commemorative observance at the State War Memorial took place on Anzac Day 1929, seven months before it was officially unveiled and dedicated. A remarkably large number of returned men and citizens assembled at 6 o'clock to attend a brief ceremony at the incomplete memorial. Little did they know at the time that they were setting in motion the annual Anzac Dawn Services that have been a highlight of Anzac Day commemorations in Perth ever since.

On Sunday 24 November 1929 the State War Memorial was finally unveiled and dedicated. A crowd of around 10,000 witnessed the unveiling by the State Governor, Sir William Campion and the dedication by Chaplain Rabbi D.I. Freedman. An impressive yet simple service marked the culmination of years of frustration and devoted effort. Lady Birdwood, wife of Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood, laid a wreath along with representatives of foreign nations, including Germany. Sir Talbot Hobbs reminded those present that only three things remained to be completed. These were the inscription of names, the flood-lighting of the memorial at night and the work of beautifying the grounds around the memorial.

Visitors to Perth are often taken to the State War Memorial overlooking the Perth CBD and the Swan River. To the east lies the Darling Scarp and the Canning River can be seen flowing into the Swan River from the south. It is indeed a splendid location for such a memorial. We have to thank all those who persevered in the struggle to have it built against such opposition and apathy. The RSL⁸ WA Branch can claim this to be one of its finest achievements.

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⁸ The Returned and Services League (RSL) is the current title of the former RSSILA.

THE ADAM PARK ESTATE: CAN READERS HELP?

Paul Skrebels

During a recent teaching trip to Singapore, I was privileged to be shown around the Adam Park Estate by battlefield archaeologist Jonathan Cooper. The estate consists of a group of 'black and white' colonial houses located NNW of the Singapore CBD, situated right up against the Pan Island Expressway and not far from the McRitchie Reservoir, and still serve for the most part as private dwellings. From 12 to 15 February 1942, Adam Park was the scene of some intense fighting between the 1st Bn Cambridgeshire Regt, which was dug in and around the houses, and the invading Japanese forces. The Cambridgeshires gave Gen Yamashita's men a hard time of it, and still hadn't retreated from the position when the surrender order was received from Gen Percival. Subsequently the estate became a prisoner of war compound, occupied initially by Australian 8th Division men under the command of Lt Col Roland Oakes, CO of 2/26th Bn AIF, and supplemented eventually by British troops.



Jonathan Cooper in front of No 7 Adam Park, one of 19 such houses on the estate. The sign erected by Singapore's National Heritage Board provides a summary of the fighting, and explains that No 7 served as headquarters of 1st Bn Cambridgeshire Regt. (Photo by the author)

Jon Cooper, currently residing with his family in Singapore, is part of the University of Glasgow's Centre for Battlefield Archaeology. Readers may be familiar with the TV series *Two Men in a Trench*, which dealt with unearthing British battlefields; Tony Pollard, one of the 'two men' in that series, also belongs to the Centre, and was Jon's supervisor for his M.Litt in conflict archaeology. With his move to Singapore, Jon's focus shifted from Scottish Renaissance military history to that of the SW Pacific theatre in 1942 when he discovered

Adam Park literally on his doorstep. He set about organising and managing The Adam Park Project (TAPP), as a partnership between the National Heritage Board of Singapore, the National University of Singapore, and the Singapore Heritage Society, with the continued support of the Glasgow University's Centre for Battlefield Archaeology. The TAPP was the first archaeological survey of a battlefield site in Singapore, and involved 20 months' work during 2009-2010, the objects being not only to discover what the site itself had to offer, but also to lay the foundations and establish suitable methods for future similar efforts on other sites on the island. No less significant an outcome also would be the project's contribution to raising awareness about the need to preserve more of Singapore's history.



No 19 Adam Park was held by 1st Bn Cambridgeshires, while elements of the Japanese 41st Regt, 5th Div managed to occupy No 20, next door. The result was some very severe close-quarter fighting between the two positions. Jon explains how at one stage the British used a 2-inch mortar as a petard to blast a hole in a wall to get at the enemy. (Photo by the author)

Jon has written about TAPP's findings in the academic journal produced by the Glasgow University centre,¹ a feature article appeared in the popular magazine *Britain at War*,² and Jon has a book-length study on the way. Suffice it to say that considerable evidence was uncovered of Adam Park as both battlefield and POW camp, although, as Jon admits, sometimes it has been difficult to determine whether certain artefacts relate to the one or the other. Nevertheless, once research was underway it was found that the Imperial War Museum

¹ J Cooper, 'Chosen Ground – The Significance, Objectives and Progress of The Adam Park Project (TAPP)', *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, vol. 6 no. 1, Jan 2011, pp. 22-41.

² 'Park Life: Revealing a Hidden Battlefield from the Fall of Singapore', *Britain at War* 43, Nov 2010, pp. 75-77.

and the Australian War Memorial contain a considerable amount of archival material relating to Adam Park in its POW camp guise. A number of unpublished sources were also discovered, mainly diaries kept by former POWs and sketches of life there. TAPP has also established contact with ten veterans, Allied and Japanese, who either fought in the battle or were in the camp.

There is one mystery, however, which Jon is keen to resolve, and which he asks readers of *Sabretache* to assist in solving. Somewhere in one of Adam Park's 19 houses the prison chapel was located, but exactly which house remains unknown. Pictorial evidence of the chapel exists in the illustrations by NX48029 Signaller Robert Mitchell, 8th Div AIF, who was a POW at Adam Park and Kobe, Japan. While his depictions of the interior of the chapel are very colourful and detailed, the house he shows containing it has yet to be positively identified.³ Most of the houses required significant restoration after the war, owing to battle damage and occupation by POWs and the Japanese military; it appears that enough was done effectively to mask the chapel's whereabouts. But Jon is hopeful that behind a wall of an upper room in one of the five so-called Class 1 houses – the larger dwellings used by the wealthy and influential – will be found the mural and thus the chapel.

So the challenge is there. If any reader has connections, family or otherwise, with the Adam Park POW compound, with access to material that might shed further light on the chapel, or indeed any other aspect of life in the camp that hasn't already reached the public domain, Jon would be very keen to hear. Information can be sent to the editor, who will forward it to Jon in Singapore.

³ Mitchell's work may be seen on the website devoted to him, 'Robert Boyed Mitchell', <http://www.robertmitchellartist.com.au>.

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COLLECTORS' CORNER

WARTIME PILOTS' AND OBSERVERS' ASSOCIATION PATCH

Don Wright

Recently I obtained a sports/reefer type jacket. Emblazoned on the upper pocket was the red, white and blue roundel of the air force, showing the eagle with wings outstretched in the centre, with the words 'Wartime Pilots and Observers Assn.' This cloth badge measures 9cm across and is made with a bullion-type thread. I was impressed with this 'pocket patch' because of its similarity to the badge of the Australian Volunteer Air Observer Corps during World War 2.

The Wartime Pilots' and Observers' Association is Canadian. It was formed in Montreal in 1919 by former Canadian members of the British Royal Flying Corps.

During World War 2 the association included pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, wireless air gunners, etc, the criteria being that their aircrew badge had to be obtained in wartime. In its heyday there were up to 1700 members but by 2008 numbers had dropped to 375 with very few Australian members left. The association held its final function on 6 June 2008 because of members' age, although representatives continued to present awards to No. 3 Canadian Forces Flying Training School until 2010.



The jacket obtained was probably the property of an Australian member as the air force type buttons were made by Stokes (Melbourne).

It is certainly the end of an era with the winding up of this association, but this item will find a good home in my collection.

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