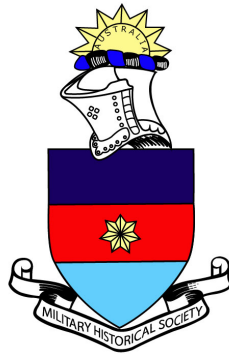


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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EDITORIAL

As this issue was going to press, the biennial conference of the Society was also getting underway in Canberra. Unfortunately, being in the midst of the university teaching semester, I was unable to attend, although I'm sure that at least some of the papers presented will appear as articles in a forthcoming issue of the journal. I look forward to receiving them, as I'm sure you are of revisiting them if you were fortunate enough to attend, or of discovering them if you weren't, and, like me, being able to experience the spirit of the conference in print.

The timing of this year's conference was such that it offered delegates the opportunity also to attend the Australian War Memorial's major international history conference, 'Kokoda and Beyond', the theme marking the 70th anniversary of that campaign. Again, I'd love to have attended, if only to hear the keynote address by Antony Beevor, author of those brilliant studies of the campaigns of Stalingrad, Normandy, Berlin and others. Luckily I have heard him 'in the flesh' before – at a Sydney Writers' Festival a few years ago – and he proved to be as eloquent a speaker as he is a powerful writer. The galaxy of other speakers includes eminent Australian military historian David Horner, and the man whose new book on Kokoda is reviewed elsewhere in this issue, Peter Williams. Given the highly revisionist view of the campaign presented in Williams' book, it's perhaps not surprising that one of my informants in the national capital assured me that the conference was expected to be 'controversial'. I wonder what you thought if you were there? Please send me your reactions, which might make for a fascinating edition of the 'As You Were ...' column.

On a less cheery note, two things occurred since the last issue which I can't let pass without comment. One is the decision by the Albury-Wodonga branch to close, based on a steadily declining attendance at meetings and a consequent lack of members to take on official roles. This is very sad news, and it is to be hoped that members affected by the closure continue to find ways of remaining involved in the Society. It is also to be hoped that this is not the beginning of a trend. I know how difficult it has been in some branches to attract new members, let alone hold onto those they already have. I suspect that this is partly to do with the different sorts of interests younger people have, but more especially with their often radically different ways of maintaining contact and building communities. One wonders if – some may say when – the Society will have to engage in the online social media in order to remain viable? It's a decision best left to members braver and more savvy in those areas than I am!

The second matter concerns the submission of articles already published in *Sabretache* to other outlets. Recently, an article which appeared only a couple of issues ago turned up in another publication; neither the author of the article nor the editor of the publication contacted me about this – I came across it by chance. In another instance, the editor of an overseas journal was courteous enough to email me to ask if she could republish an article which had already appeared in *Sabretache*. In the latter instance I was quite happy to say that, given the different readership the other journal was aimed at, I had no objections to the republication. In the former case, however, I was rather less than pleased. As anyone familiar with publishing will attest, this kind of 'double-dipping' – sometimes termed 'redundant publication' – is viewed as contrary to publication ethics, to the extent that commercial and professional journals and magazines require authors to declare that their work will not appear in any other publication without the express permission of the original publisher. While I'm aware that we are not operating within a strictly professional context with *Sabretache*, nevertheless the journal does have a certain standing, nationally and internationally. One of my duties as editor is to safeguard that standing and the integrity of the journal as the public face of the Society. I therefore ask that contributors seek permission before submitting already published material elsewhere, and that they wait a respectable interval before doing so.

All that aside, there are some fascinating and exceptionally well-researched articles in this edition, on topics which once more demonstrate how rich and varied the field of military history can be.

Paul Skrebels

THE *EMDEN*, EAGLE DOLLARS AND EXONUMIA

Paul A Rosenzweig¹

The history of the Dresden-class light armoured cruiser SMS *Emden* of the German Imperial Navy is well recorded, albeit perhaps with a touch of controversy regarding her final moments on 9 November 1914. While HMAS *Sydney*'s victory is recalled in Australia with pride, the loss of the commerce raider *Emden* was not considered a tragedy by Germany. Beyond the official history written by the victors, *Emden* had a spectacular record and it is interesting to note that the Iron Cross 1st Class was bestowed upon the vessel; and with the traditional perpetuation of historic honours, that Iron Cross has been borne by each of *Emden*'s successors. Further, the landing of a German naval party on Direction Island led by *Kapitan-Leutnant* Helmuth von Mücke, the declaration of martial law, and the party's subsequent escape via Sumatra and Yemen, and overland to Constantinople and thence Germany is an epic but less well-known tale. The ship's Captain was personally honoured, and the Imperial Government of Germany allowed all of the surviving officers and men to suffix the title 'Emden' to their names. This honour is remembered to this day in the form of the numerous 'X-Emden' among German citizens still living.²

For the collector, historian and enthusiast, of the many items which recall this historic engagement among the more elusive is the Australian Government's Emden Commemorative Medal, created from Mexican 8 Reales silver coins recovered from *Emden*'s treasury in November 1914. The 8 Reales or 'Mexican Eagle Dollar' is truly a coin of legend – its story includes the source of the modern dollar symbol, it is the origin of the expression 'pieces of eight', it was the basis of trading on the New York Stock Exchange, and it provided some of the first colonial currency in Australia.

SMS *Emden*

The spoils of the *Emden*'s many raids largely comprised Spanish colonial silver coins, most of them minted in Mexico. Her crew were paid in these Mexican silver dollars, and the coins were also used as currency during her travels. In Australia, the sinking of the SMS *Emden* by HMAS *Sydney* at North Keeling Island on 9 November 1914 was commemorated by the production of an 'Emden Commemorative Medal'.³

The creation of this medal involved a unique concept directly linking the award to the action – through the addition of an ornate silver clasp to several of the Mexican 8 Reales seized from *Emden*'s treasury. An article published in the *Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society* in 1979 reveals how *Emden* was later boarded by the auxiliary cruiser *Empress of Japan* and two chests of coins were removed, containing two US \$20 gold coins

¹ Paul Rosenzweig is a medal collector and non-professional military historian and biographer. He has contributed to *Sabretache* and various other historical journals and Defence publications on a voluntary basis regularly over the last thirty years.

² One of those so honoured was the Kaiser's nephew Prince Franz Joseph of Hohenzollern (1891-1964), whose title thus became 'Prince of Hohenzollern-Emden'.

³ SMS *Emden* was a Dresden-class light cruiser, built by the *Kaiserlichen Werft* shipyard of Danzig; named after the German town of Emden which sponsored the ship. She was laid down on 1 November 1906, launched on 26 May 1908 and commissioned on 1 July 1909. *Emden* officially entered the *Kaiserliche Marine* ['German Imperial Navy'] on 1 April 1910 and was assigned to the German naval base and garrison at Tsingtao, in Germany's Chinese Kiauchau colony.

and 6,429 Mexican 8 Reales.⁴ These coins were forwarded to Australia on 28 March 1915 by Vice-Admiral Jerram, Commander-in-Chief of the China Station, for appropriate use as mementoes or a trophy.

Captain Glossop made a suggestion in 1917 to present some of these coins as mementoes, and in 1918 the Australian Navy Board commissioned the Sydney silversmith firm of William Kerr to convert 1,000 of these silver coins into commemorative medals in this manner.⁵ The coin is surmounted by a silver suspension fitting, featuring the Tudor crown of King George V, over ribbons bearing the details of the naval action: 'NOV 9 / 1914' and 'HMAS • SYDNEY • SMS • EMDEN'. The top clasp bears the impressed manufacturer's name 'W.KERR / SYDNEY' on the reverse. William Kerr (1838-1896) from Northern Ireland was a leading watchmaker, jeweller and silversmith in Sydney in the last quarter of the 19th century; his business was continued after 1896 by three of his sons until 1938.



Fig.1: The 'Emden Commemorative Medal', created by adding a silver clasp to a Mexican 8 Reales silver coin seized from the treasury of SMS Emden in November 1914. This particular coin was minted at Guanajuato Mint in northern Mexico in 1873, and bears chisel and chop marks relating to its use in commerce between 1873 and 1914.

In 1918, medals were presented by Captain Glossop to the officers and men who were on board HMAS Sydney at the time of the engagement (no more than 390; these had the personal details engraved on the reverse). Appendix 2 to the 1979 OMRS article details the distribution of medals and coins: a total of 702 medals and 614 plain dollars were given to the officers and men of HMAS Sydney.⁶

⁴ Atkinson, J J 'HMAS Sydney-S.M.S. Emden Commemorative Medal', *Journal of the OMRS*, 18(1), 1979, pp.43-48. The Western Australian Medal for the SMS Emden Action is detailed on pp.48-49 of the same volume.

⁵ Navy Order 58 of 1918.

⁶ Atkinson, *op cit*.

The medal was designed as a fob medallion, with a small intrinsic suspension ring and loop at the top of the crown, but at least some mounted their medal for wear on a suspension ribbon of navy blue, although this was not officially sanctioned. Glossop himself was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in the 1915 New Year's Honours List, and six members of the crew were awarded Distinguished Service Medals. An officer's undress or 'monkey' jacket belonging to Glossop, held in the collection of the Australian War Memorial, bears the ribbons of his CB as well as those of the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun (3rd Class, awarded in 1917) and the French *Legion d'Honneur* (4th Class/Officer, awarded in 1918). As a Captain, Glossop received ten Emden Medals and ten plain dollars, as well as one of the gold \$20 coins (the other was retained by Navy Office).

Other Emden Medals were given to the next-of-kin of the four sailors who died on 9 November 1914, staff of the Eastern Extension Cable Company on Cocos Island, as well as members of the Admiralty, various dignitaries, the Australian War Museum and other approved museums and historical societies both in England and Australia. Of the un-mounted coins, 343 were sold to the public at a price of £1 each, with an accompanying letter of authenticity. A further 39 were given as gifts to organisations, visiting officers and libraries, and the remaining 4,433 coins were sold to the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company of Sydney to be melted down. The proceeds of the sales were donated to the Royal Australian Navy Relief Fund.

Eagle Dollars

The 8 Reales coin [*Ocho Reales* or *Real de a Ocho*] which forms the basis of the Emden Medal is actually Mexican, not Spanish as many believe. It is, however, a continuation of the series of Spanish colonial currency produced in Spain's overseas possessions – in this case in Mexico, but after independence was gained in 1821.

The *Real de a Ocho* was a silver coin that was minted throughout the Spanish Empire with a denomination of 8 *Reales*. The Real was created by a decree signed by King Don Pedro the Cruel with the Latin expression *Numus Regalis* ['Royal Coin'], and became the basis of the monetary system in Spain from the 14th century onwards. The given name was soon shortened to 'Real' for common use; in the Spanish world however, it was always called 'Peso'. As international trade and business increased, the need for larger denominations and the abundance of silver from New Spain (as Mexico was then known) led to the striking of heavier coins of two, four and eight Reales. After the Viceroyalty of 'New Spain' was formally established by Spanish Royal Decree on 11 May 1535, a *Casa de Moneda* (Mint) was soon established and coining operations commenced in April the following year.⁷ The Spanish 8 Reales became the world money standard from the time the Mexico Mint started striking coins in 1536 until the 1850s.

Meanwhile, the Philippines was discovered by the Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan on 16 March 1521. On 21 November 1564, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi sailed from the west coast of New Spain to colonise this archipelago in the Far East, which he named 'Filipinas' in honour of the King of Spain, Felipe II. Although it was a colonial possession of Spain, the Philippines was administered from New Spain/Mexico, so there was a considerable flow of silver Reales to the Philippines. The first New World coins, including the 8 Reales, were

⁷ Type I Spanish colonial silver coin, 1536-1572. These coins were all undated (dates first appeared on the coins in 1607).

crude ‘cob’ (*macuquino*) coins with irregular shapes.⁸ From 1732, the Mexico Mint began producing a technologically superior product in which the planchets (coin blanks) were made on a milling machine and were of consistent weight and size. ‘Milled Dollar’ was a term English speakers gave to the 8 Reales coin that was minted from 1732 to 1825.⁹ The eastward flow of silver 8 Reales coins stopped when the Philippines were ceded to the United States as a result of the Spanish-American War in 1898. These silver coins are now difficult to obtain for a variety of reasons – most of the coins in the Philippines were removed by US submarines prior to the Japanese occupation, more were taken by the occupying Japanese forces, and the remainder were melted down by Chinese merchants into silver ingots. Any remaining coins that were collected by Philippine numismatists have been heavily polished, this ‘blast white’ look being the preferred appearance in Philippine collections. This gives the Emden Medals an additional significance, being based on 8 Reales coins in original circulated condition with a natural patina.

The coin used in the pictured Emden Commemorative Medal (*fig.1*) bears the abbreviation ‘8R’: the 8 Reales did not ever have its denomination named on the coin – all coins struck show only the abbreviation ‘8R’. The obverse of Mexican 8 Reales coins minted post-independence features the insignia of the new republic: an eagle standing on a prickly-pear cactus with its left leg, eating a snake which it is grasping with its right claw. The bird is a Mexican Golden Eagle (representing the ancient Aztec sun god), although it was known in Spanish as *Águila Real* (‘Royal Eagle’). Around the top of the coin is the legend ‘REPUBLICA MEXICANA’. The reverse features the ‘liberty cap’ (*resplandor*) of Mexico bearing the legend ‘LIBERTAD’ on a background of stylised sun rays. These milled coins were assayed as .9027 pure silver.¹⁰

By way of example, the 8 Reales coin pictured was minted at Guanajuato Mint in northern Mexico in 1873. Guanajuato, on the great central plateau of Mexico, was founded in 1554 and was given city status in 1741. The area bounded by Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas is the ‘silver triangle’ of the world, and from the earliest days of the *conquistadores* it lured many early Spaniards searching for legendary treasures. In the early 19th century, the transfer of metals from the mining villages of Guanajuato and other such areas to the Mexico Mint became increasingly dangerous. During the War of Independence (1810-1821), security against rebels and bandits was achieved by the establishment of a number of Provisional Mints – at Zacatecas, Sombrerete, Chihuahua, Durango, Guadalajara, Real de Catorce, San Luis Potosí – and the Guanajuato Mint, which was established in 1812. After Mexican independence in 1821, up to fourteen Mints operated throughout the country as subsidiaries of the Mexico Mint, each using its own distinctive mintmark on its coins. The Guanajuato *Casa de la Moneda* used the mintmark ‘G’ on the reverse of the 8 Reales silver coin.

As well as the mintmark ‘G’, the reverse of the pictured Emden Commemorative Medal bears the assayer’s mark ‘FR’ for Faustino Ramirez, who was Assayer at the Guanajuato Mint from 1870 to 1878. The coin is 38mm in diameter: with decimalisation in 1869, Mexico had discontinued the 38mm diameter 8 Reales coin and replaced it with a 36mm diameter ‘Peso’,¹¹ a coin identical in silver content and weight but 2mm smaller. Size does matter –

⁸ 8 Reales Type I (1536-1572); Type II (1572-1734); Type III (1651-1773).

⁹ 8 Reales Type IV (1732-1772); Type V (1771-1825).

¹⁰ 8 Reales Type VI, 1821-1868.

¹¹ Type VII, 1869-1873.

surprisingly, this coin proved to be decidedly unpopular with traders and Chinese merchants, and the 38mm 8 Reales was quickly reintroduced in 1873.¹²

This particular coin certainly bears evidence of having travelled widely after it was brought east from Mexico, to the Philippines and then beyond. Spanish Reales minted in Mexico, each containing 20 grams of silver, were preferred by oriental merchants because of the fineness of the silver content. From the Philippines, the Reales passed to India, Siam, Indochina, Japan and China; from the depiction of the Royal Eagle on the obverse, the Chinese called this coin the ‘Eagle Dollar’ or ‘Mexican Eagle Dollar’. Since the late 1850s, Shanghai formally accepted the 8 Reales Mexican Eagle Dollar to be the base currency for all transactions, exchanges and bookkeeping. Wary of counterfeits, Chinese merchants would chisel each coin to confirm its purity and silver content. In addition, merchants would stamp genuine silver coins with their distinctive symbol (‘chop’), effectively a signature, to give their guarantee of the coin’s authenticity and silver content. Most chopmarks were ‘combined characters’ that joined two characters into one, traditional good luck symbols or secret codes, making most of them difficult to identify today. The coin displayed bears a number of such chisel and chop marks, a tangible display of its travels throughout the Far East after 1873 until being recovered from Emden’s treasury four decades later.

Exonumia¹³

A host of collectibles are available for those with a passion or interest in this significant aspect of history, from Eagle Dollars representing mercantile trade and the global reach of the Spanish Empire, through to canteen tokens and tally bands from *Kreuzer Emden*. The ship itself is depicted on a range of media, including postage stamps, photographs, postcards and currency such as the late-war City of Emden 50 Pfennig banknote. Postcard no.4336 in the series ‘History in the Making’ by Raphael Tuck & Sons of England depicts the *Emden* being engaged by the *Sydney* on 9 November 1914.

For those with an interest in the personalities of the conflict, there is a German *Kriegs Karte* which depicts the Prussian *Fregattenkapitän* Karl Friedrich Max von Müller, Commanding Officer of the SMS *Emden* in 1913-14. He joined the *Emden* in May 1913 with the rank of *Korvettenkapitän* [Lieutenant-Commander] and took her to the Far East. The *Emden* joined British and Japanese warships in putting down a revolt of Chinese along the Yangtze River, and shelled a rebel fort into submission on 13 August 1913. She left Tsingtao on 31 July 1914, and was at sea when news of the outbreak of war was received on 1 August. After beaching her in 1914, *Fregattenkapitän* von Müller was the last to leave the *Emden*. The crew remained in captivity in Malta until the end of the war; von Müller was transferred to England, and in 1917 he escaped through an underground tunnel (but was recaptured). He received the *Eiserne Kreuz 1.Klasse* from Kaiser Wilhelm II, and was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* on 19 March 1918 for his ‘outstanding leadership and distinguished naval planning

¹² Type VIII (1873-1897). In the late 19th century, further coins bearing the denomination ‘UN PESO’ appeared throughout the Spanish empire: El Salvador (1892), Puerto Rico (1895), Dominican Republic (1897) and Cuba (1898). In Mexico, the Peso was reintroduced in 1898 (Type IX, 1898-1909). As a result of the Spanish-American War (22 April-10 December 1898), however, no further Mexican silver came to the Philippines.

¹³ Exonumia generally relates to numismatic items other than coins and paper money, such as canteen tokens, medals, souvenir medallions, badges, patches and ribbons. Its derivation from the Greek *exo* (‘out-of’) and the Latin/Greek *nomisma* (money/coins) is taken to strictly mean ‘outside of the category of coins’ (numismatics). It can also be considered to relate to items made ‘out of’ coins, so that they are no longer used as currency, such as the Emden Commemorative Medal.

and successful cruise operations' over a three month period.¹⁴ There is a street in Hannover, 'Kapitän-v.-Müller Straße', named in his honour and noting that he was Captain of the Cruiser *Emden* in World War 1. This street forms a T-intersection with 'Emdenstraße'.

Germany issued a series of bronze and silver medallions to commemorate the various exploits of the *Emden* and her crew. Some depict the Commanding Officer von Müller and the ship steaming ahead. Another commemorates the escape of the Prussian *Kapitan-Leutnant* Hellmuth von Mücke and his shore party from Direction Island on the three-masted schooner *Ayesha*, while one other depicts von Mücke and his party during their African sojourn. Other worthwhile additions to the collection would be 1914 issues of the *Illustrated War News*, or the German magazine *Der Weltkrieg* which relates the exploits of the *Emden* and von Mücke's party. Von Mücke was also awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class. He wrote two books on his exploits in the *Emden* and the *Ayesha*, and both were translated into English. Another book, *My Experiences in SMS Emden*, was published by Prince Franz Joseph of Hohenzollern-Emden, who had served on the cruiser as a torpedo officer.



Fig.2: Colour patches of the modern frigate F-210 *Emden* V, bearing the insignia of the Iron Cross 1st Class.

Colour patches from the modern frigate F-210 *Emden* V (fig.2) are an interesting addition to a Sydney-Emden collection. Three German light cruisers were named after the city (two of which served in World War I and the third in World War 2). The seaport of Emden in the northwest of Germany has existed at least since the 8th century, and the city's coat of arms was granted by Emperor Maximilian I in 1495. With industrialisation in 1870, a paper mill and a shipyard were the first to be constructed, and in 1903 the *Nordseewerke* shipyard ['North Sea Works'] was founded. The fourth German Navy ship to be named after the city, the Köln-class frigate FGS *Emden*, F-221, served with the *Bundesmarine* ('Federal Navy') of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1958 to 1983 (fig.3). The fifth was the Bremen-class frigate F-210 *Emden* V. She was built by the *Thyssen-Nordseewerke* shipyard in Emden in 1979-80, and entered into service in 1983. Of particular interest, F-221 and F-210 colour patches depict the insignia of the Iron Cross 1st Class, which Kaiser Wilhelm II had bestowed upon the original SMS *Emden* for gallant service during World War 1. The Kaiser also awarded the Iron Cross to her successor, *Emden* II, which was beached at Scapa Flow in 1919 when much of the High Seas Fleet was scuttled. The three subsequent *Emdens* have all

¹⁴ Hamelman, W C, *The History of the Prussian Pour le Mérite Order, Volume III, 1888-1918*, Matthäus Publishers, USA, 1986, pp.546-47.

carried large symbols of this decoration on their bows or forecastles. There are commemorative patches noting service in NATO operations such as 'Sharp Guard'. Another commemorative patch recognises the service of F-210 with the first contingent to Operation 'Enduring Freedom'. *Emden V* twice participated in the Global War on Terror, serving with Coalition forces off the Horn of Africa in 2002 and again in 2006. The patch features the insignia of the Iron Cross 1st Class and the arms of the city of Emden.



Fig.3: Colour patches of *Emden IV* (1958-1983) – the German frigate F-221 FGS *Emden*, showing the crest of the city of Emden and the insignia of the Iron Cross 1st Class which Kaiser Wilhelm II had bestowed upon the original SMS *Emden*.

Perhaps one of the most desirable items recalling the engagement is the silver medal which was awarded by the citizens of Western Australia to Western Australian personnel serving aboard HMAS *Sydney*. A particularly attractive and displayable souvenir of the engagement is the patriotic cartoon entitled 'Good Hunting – A Chip off the Old Block' which was published in *Punch* on 18 November 1914. This depicts a mature lion (the British Empire) gazing proudly upon a younger male lion (Australia) holding a fox in its jaws, referring to the Royal Australian Navy's destruction of the German raider *Emden*.

A set of four postage stamps was issued by the Cocos Islands in 1989 to mark the 75th anniversary of the engagement between HMAS *Sydney* and SMS *Emden*. After being surprised while trying to destroy the British radio station on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Captain von Müller had beached *Emden* on the tiny atoll of North Keeling Island at 1115 to avoid sinking. *Sydney* left the scene to pursue *Emden*'s collier *Buresk* but returned to the beached cruiser at 1630, *Sydney*'s commander Captain Glossop later stating that *Emden* was still flying her battle flag, denoting her intention to continue resistance. *Sydney* re-opened fire on *Emden*, causing further casualties before *Emden* finally struck her colours. The wreck of the *Emden* was largely salvaged for scrap metal by a Japanese company in 1950. In Pulu Keeling National Park, 14 nautical miles north of the southern atoll of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands scattered parts of the wreck of the *Emden* remain today in less than eight metres of water.¹⁵

Prints are available of the painting 'The First Convoy' by the Australian War Artist Charles Bryant (1933), which depicts the first Australian Imperial Force convoy to Alexandria in 1914. The Royal Navy heavy cruiser HMS *Minotaur* can be seen leading the convoy,

¹⁵ North Keeling Island was originally named after Captain William Keeling who is believed to have sighted this 2km long and 1.3km wide atoll in 1609. Pulu (Cocos Malay for 'island') Keeling was proclaimed a National Park in December 1995 and is Australia's sixth and smallest Commonwealth National Park.

followed by the Flagship *Orvieta* carrying General Bridges and the 1st Division staff. This convoy of 38 transports departed King George's Sound in Western Australia on 31 October, carrying over 20,000 members of the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force (AIEF) and 7,479 horses across the Indian Ocean to Alexandria. General Bridges' expeditionary force (although he personally disliked the term) complemented the other force which was raised in 1914 for overseas service, in German New Guinea – the 'Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force' (ANMEF). On 10 August 1914, recruiting for the AIEF was authorised by Proclamation. The force's original destination was Southampton for training on Salisbury Plain prior to deploying to France. However the entry of Turkey into the war changed that plan, and the subsequent history of the force involving the Suez Canal defences, training at Mena in the shadow of the pyramids and Maadi on the banks of the Nile, and the subsequent ship-borne assault on a Turkish peninsula are well known. It was whilst training in the Middle East that the AIEF was retitled the 'Australian Imperial Force' (AIF).



Fig.4: A privately made 'sweetheart badge' in sterling silver from 1914, with the initials AIEF.

Before leaving Australia, however, many had 'sweetheart badges' privately made by jewellers for wives or girlfriends. One particular badge is of interest: it is a brooch made in sterling silver, in the shape of Australia with borders shown and each of the states named, and in the centre are the initials 'AIEF'. Interestingly, the Northern Territory is still shown as being a part of South Australia as it once had been, even though control over the Northern Territory had transferred to the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911.

The AIEF was escorted by the Australian warships HMAS *Melbourne* ahead of the convoy and HMAS *Sydney* on the port beam, with the Japanese Cruiser *Ibuki* on the starboard beam of the fleet – an example of the 'most cordial relations' which prevailed between the Australian and Japanese naval authorities at that time. At this time, all of north-eastern New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago was German territory, and the sealanes around Australia were patrolled by German raiders. Accordingly, this first convoy carrying Australian troops had an Allied naval escort which included a Japanese cruiser – Japan having entered the war against Germany on 23 August 1914. It was during this convoy's transit across the Indian Ocean, on the night of 8 November, that the German raider *Emden* crossed their path barely three hours ahead of them. Early the following morning, HMAS *Sydney* was seen dashing off to the south with ensigns flying and decks cleared for action. Success later that morning was acknowledged by cheers from the decks of all transports. Aboard the HMAS A11 *Ascanius* formerly of the Ocean Steam Ship Company Ltd of Liverpool, the officers of the 10th Infantry Battalion shouted the men a free issue of beer with dinner.¹⁶ There were equivalent expressions of elation and jubilation back home – 'it was the greatest news received in this country since the relief of Mafeking'.¹⁷

For those with an interest in physical memorials, in 1917 one of the 4.1-inch rapid fire guns taken from the *Emden* was installed as a monument in Sydney's Hyde Park. Another is

¹⁶ Lock, C B L, *The Fighting 10th*, Webb & Son, Adelaide, 1936, p.33.

¹⁷ Lawson, Colonel R S, 'The Teaching of Australian History in Schools . . . The Story of H.M.A.S. Sydney and the Emden'. *Defence Force Journal*, No.8 (January/February), 1978, pp.43-48.

located at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. A third sat at HMAS *Penguin* at Balmoral in Sydney from the 1950s until 2010 when the refurbished gun was displayed at the RAN Heritage Centre on Garden Island. Emden's armament comprised ten such rapid-fire guns: 2 forward, 2 aft and 3 each on the port and starboard sides giving the cruiser a 5-gun broadside capacity. The *Emden's* binnacle and other artefacts have been displayed in Morwell, Victoria, including her steam whistle. After being salvaged from North Keeling Island, this whistle became the Yallourn power station siren from 1928 until 1980, and for half a century the residents at nearby Yallourn lived their daily lives to the regular sounding of the former *Emden* steam whistle.¹⁸

Beyond the naval engagement, the fate of the officers in Australia can be followed through a visit to the Berrima District Museum.¹⁹ They had been taken to Berrima in the Southern Highlands, a satellite camp of the much larger Holsworthy Camp at Liverpool, the headquarters of 'German Concentration Camps, Australia'. At Berrima the internees had considerable gentlemanly freedom and privileges not enjoyed by any other prisoners of war. They were housed in the old disused sandstone jail, but before long the *Emden* officers had comfortably established themselves in *Schloss am Meer* ('Castle by the Sea').

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Returning to the Sydney-Emden silver dollar medals, it is interesting to recall that the earliest 8 Reales coins produced in Spain's overseas possessions contributed the modern dollar symbol. The most widely accepted theory about the origin of the Dollar Sign derives it from the 'Pillars of Hercules' device found on the earliest Spanish colonial coinage. The first colonial silver coins produced by the Mexico City Mint from 1536 were actually known as *Columnario* or 'Pillar Dollars', due to the depiction of a pair of pillars on one face. These columns represented the 'Pillars of Hercules' from Greek mythology – the 'gates' of the Mediterranean Sea, the farthestmost limit reached by Hercules in his travels to the far west. In reality, they are two large promontories flanking the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar: the Rock of Gibraltar to the north, and a corresponding southern peak in North Africa. The Romans modified the legend to say that, instead of crossing the mountain of Atlas, Hercules smashed through it and thereby formed the Strait of Gibraltar connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea; the two remaining halves of the mountain (in Gibraltar and North Africa) are the 'pillars'.

Plato said that the lost realm of Atlantis was found beyond the Pillars of Hercules – effectively in unknown and uncharted territory. Another tradition states that the Pillars carried the warning '*Nec Plus Ultra*' or '*Non Plus Ultra*' to warn sailors to go no further, because there was 'Nothing Further Beyond'. King Charles I of Spain adopted a personal device with the motto '*Plus Ultra*', encouraging him to 'go beyond' and expand Spain's territories (this is still today the Spanish national motto). The Pillars thus came to represent Spain's overseas possessions, beyond the Mediterranean Sea. Accordingly, the emblem of the Pillars of Hercules adorned with scrolls bearing the motto '*Plus Ultra*' was adopted for most Spanish colonial 8 Reales coins from 1536 to 1772.²⁰ From this concept, the Pillars were introduced as supporters of the Spanish coat of arms, and these arms appeared on the colonial 8 Reales until Mexico gained independence in 1821.²¹

¹⁸ <http://www.emdenfamilie.de/dit-un-dat.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/enemyathome/berrima-internmentcamp/>

²⁰ 8 Reales Type I (1536-1572); Type III (1651-1773); Type IV (1732-1772).

²¹ 8 Reales Type V (1771-1825).

It is from this emblem that the modern dollar sign was adopted: the scroll around one of the pillars becoming the 'S', and the edges of the pillar becoming the two vertical lines (or the pillar itself being represented by a single vertical line). There are many other theories of course, many of them quite complex and convoluted, and the internet now gives any wild theory an audience. Unlike in the movies however, there is no arch-villain or transcontinental conspiracy. In common with most mysteries and investigations, the simplest solution is generally the truth. A King's emblem, drawn from an old Greek legend, adopted for use on a coin which travelled the world and was widely used in America, leading to a graphical depiction of that emblem – a far more credible explanation than some fantastic theory involving a considerable stretch of the imagination and logic.

Before the American Revolution, there was a chronic shortage of British currency in the colonies. Trade was widely conducted with Spanish 8 Reales coins, valued at one dollar, which were obtained through illicit trade with the West Indies; these coins remained legal tender until an Act of Congress discontinued the practice in 1857. Even after the United States Mint was established in 1792, Spanish dollars were more popular than US dollars because they were heavier and were made of finer silver. The 8 Reales coin was often cut into 8 pieces to make small change: each 'bit' (worth 1 Reale) had a value of 12.5 cents. Hence since these earliest days, '2 bits' has referred to a Quarter Dollar, and the pricing of equities on US stock exchanges was (until 1997) in 1/8-dollar denominations. Further, these smaller denomination 1 Real 'coins', regularly carried in transport galleons which were high-value targets for seagoing pirates, became popularly known as 'Pieces of Eight'.

These Spanish Dollars are of particular interest to Australian collectors – some 40,000 such milled coins bearing dates from 1757 to 1810 were modified by the Government of the Colony of New South Wales to create a 5 Shilling 'Holey Dollar' (of which, some 296 are known to have survived). To solve a severe currency shortage in New South Wales, Governor Lachlan Macquarie purchased £10,000 worth of Spanish silver dollars. These coins came to New South Wales on 26 November 1812 on the merchant ship *Samarang* from Madras, via the Honourable East India Company. A central hole was punched to devalue the coin and to prevent them being smuggled out, creating two different coins: the 15 pence 'dump' (the restruck central plug) and the 5 Shilling 'holey dollar' (with an over-stamp on the host coin around the hole). These coins, the first official coinage produced specifically for use in Australia, circulated until 1822 when they were recalled to be replaced by sterling coinage.

The Emden Commemorative Medal is a unique decoration – a late 19th century Mexican silver coin which made its way to the Philippines and beyond, recovered from the treasury of an Imperial German cruiser, mounted to reward Australian sailors, and bearing Chinese chop marks from the Far East. While Emden Medals are reasonably scarce, and obtaining an original holey dollar is out of the question for the majority of collectors, certainly there is enough militaria and associated collectables for the interested enthusiast, subject of course to the usual budgetary constraints. No doubt these constraints will become more significant when values rise as the centenary of the Sydney-Emden engagement approaches.

RAAF CATALINAS MINE MANILA BAY: DECEMBER 1944

PART 1

Peter Hill

The only long-range attack aircraft available to the RAAF in the Southwest Pacific during most of World War 2 was the PBY Catalina flying boat produced by Consolidated Aircraft in the US. The Catalina was not an obvious aircraft for this role. Designed in the mid-1930s as a long-range patrol bomber, the Catalina was considered to be largely obsolete in terms of performance at the onset of the war.¹ The Catalina's twin Pratt & Whitney 1,200hp Twin Wasp radial engines may have proved to be super reliable but their power output was more typical of the 1930s than the 1940s. The result was a very modest cruising speed that exposed it to jokes about it being the only plane to suffer bird strike from the rear,² but, more importantly, left it very vulnerable to any enemy attack that was pressed home. This was compounded by the fact that the plane was lightly armoured and lightly defended with only five machine guns for defence. The Catalina's somewhat ungainly appearance and expansive wing area did not help its cause with references to it as a flying plank.

Nevertheless the Catalina went on to achieve an outstanding war record in both the Atlantic and Pacific spheres of war. The Catalina's ability to fly immense distances while carrying a comparatively heavy payload and its freedom from needing constructed runways gave it a versatility that was not conceived of in the original design specifications.³ This versatility was especially valuable for a small regional air force such as the RAAF working in an operational backwater characterised by vast oceans, numerous islands and poor infrastructure.

In the desperate days of 1942, the RAAF's two Catalina squadrons (11 and 20 Squadrons) were asked to do whatever was needed. Catalinas undertook long-distance night bombing raids against Japanese airfields and harbours, long-range reconnaissance, convoy protection and anti-submarine patrols, rescue missions to retrieve downed aircrews and personnel from threatened outposts, delivery of provisions to coast watchers in enemy controlled territory and secret missions for Allied intelligence.⁴

By early 1943, though, the strategic situation had begun to turn. Once the Japanese perimeter in the Southwest Pacific had been successfully challenged in New Guinea and Guadalcanal, the RAAF could begin to consider the usage of its expanding air resources in a more offensive capacity. The RAAF's options, though, were severely constrained by the lack of a long-range heavy bomber. Although the RAAF had been promised a supply of Consolidated Liberators, the demand for this highly successful bomber was such that the first RAAF Liberators did not arrive until February 1944 and did not become generally available for operational purposes until early 1945. In terms of the overall war effort in the Southwest Pacific this may not have mattered because the US Army Air Forces were well resourced with 'heavies'.

¹ In mid-1940 the Catalina's manufacturer, Consolidated Aircraft, was considering discontinuing production. C. Gaunt & R. Cleworth (eds.), *Cats at War: The Story of RAAF Catalinas in the Asia-Pacific Theatre of War*, Sydney, 2000, p.29.

² Arthur Sandell, *Dicing with Death: An airman's account of his training and operations against Japan*, Fairbairn ACT, 2001, p.40.

³ The Catalina had a range of approximately 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometres) and could carry a payload of 4,000 lbs (1,800 kilograms) on racks under its wings. *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁴ Gaunt & Cleworth (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.29.

The RAAF, though, still had its long-range Catalinas and from April 1943 until the end of the war it developed a new and novel usage for these flying boats which saw RAAF Catalinas visit every major port and strait in the Southwest Pacific Theatre and ultimately along the south China coast to plant aerial mines with pinpoint precision. The laying of mines from low flying aircraft was pioneered by the Luftwaffe in 1939 when they mined the Thames River with newly developed magnetic mines. The RAF quickly saw the potential and began a large scale ‘gardening’ (as mine-laying was called) program of its own in enemy controlled coastal areas and waterways.⁵

The use of aerial mine laying in the Pacific, though, was more uneven. At the start of the Pacific conflict the US did not have a coherent strategy on mine-laying and did not develop one until early 1945 when the conflict moved closer to the Japanese mainland. This lack of a unified approach was reflected in the early decision to allocate a mine-laying specialist to each Pacific theatre commander to merely provide advice.⁶ The principal US theatre commanders in the Southwest Pacific, though, were generally unresponsive. When pressured by Admiral Nimitz, the US Naval Supreme Commander in Honolulu, to devote more of his air resources to mine-laying, Gen MacArthur responded in January 1943 ‘that planes could not be spared for mine-laying when more direct action promised greater results.’⁷ MacArthur’s aggressive air commander, Lt Gen George Kenney had, according to his allocated mine-laying specialist, ‘a poor opinion of mining and was unwilling to spare planes for mining if bombing was at all possible.’⁸ The reality was that the US Fifth Air Force in the Southwest Pacific was an Army Air Force and was ‘unaccustomed to dealing with such apparently naval work as precision sea mining.’⁹ As a consequence it flew only a single B24 mine-laying mission from Port Moresby in June 1943.

The RAAF, however, took to the idea with enthusiasm and from April 1943 substantially allocated two and then three squadrons of Catalinas to the role. Initially flying from Cairns and then Darwin, and later from captured island bases, RAAF Catalinas laid mines in most of the key Japanese controlled harbours and straits throughout the Netherlands East Indies and islands of the Southwest Pacific. An important factor in the RAAF’s enthusiasm for aerial mine-laying was the return to Australia from the European theatre of servicemen such as RAN Commander E H Carr, a mine and torpedo warfare expert, who had direct experience of Britain’s very successful aerial mine-laying campaign. It was quickly seen that aerial mine-laying could play an important part in the disruption of Japan’s over-extended maritime empire. The mine-laying of vital straits and shallow waters could also complement other forms of attack by forcing enemy shipping into deeper waters where it was more vulnerable to submarine attack, and by bottling it up in harbours where it was vulnerable to attack by

⁵ John S Chilstrom, *Mines Away! The Significance of U.S. Army Air Forces Minelaying in World War II*, Thesis presented to the Faculty of The School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1992, pp.15-17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.18-19; also W F Craven & J L Cate (eds), *The Army Air Forces in World War II, Volume 5, The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki June 1944 to August 1945*, Washington D.C., Office of Air Force History, 1983 (reprint), p.662.

⁷ National Archives Australia [NAA]: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations: Phoenix Report.

⁸ Chilstrom, *op.cit.*, p.21.

⁹ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations: Phoenix Report.

bombing.¹⁰ Another consideration that may have played a part is that aerial mine-laying with long range Catalinas was almost the only option available to the RAAF to play a direct role in the wider offensive against Japan. As the war turned against Japan it became increasingly apparent that Australian forces in the Southwest Pacific Theatre were being marked for a secondary role of containing and clearing out by-passed Japanese positions.¹¹

The main limitation on the RAAF's mine-laying activities, though, was the lack of aircraft compared to the possible targets.¹² To compensate for lack of numbers, the effectiveness of the RAAF's mine-laying policy depended on the ability to lay mines with absolute precision in the principal enemy waterways. This required a high degree of skill and enormous endurance on the part of Catalina crews. All members of the nine-man crew were essential but, in the circumstances of long-range mining missions in the endless waters of the Southwest Pacific, the key relationship was almost certainly that of pilot and navigator.

A typical mission would entail navigating by maps, compass and stars to find a target a thousand miles or more away, finding a predetermined landmark in the dark (e.g. a headland or small island) and using this 'datum point' to begin a low-level and carefully timed run on a pre-determined flight course that resulted in two to four mines being dropped within about 10 metres of the required position.¹³ If this level of precision was not achieved, the long flight was probably wasted because the mine would not be placed in the desired shipping channel or lane. The ideal was to drop the mines and begin the return journey without even being noticed. 'The success of mine laying,' as one Catalina navigator later put it, 'depended on stealth, on not advertising one's presence.'¹⁴

If caught in searchlights and anti-aircraft fire, a slow and low-flying Catalina in the course of its mining run was a highly vulnerable target. To improve the odds, Catalinas were painted matt black, only attacked at night and only attacked in groups of two or three aircraft and rarely more than a handful. This greatly improved the odds of sneaking in and sneaking out. This also recognised the fact that the RAAF did not have sufficient Catalinas to sustain any substantial level of losses.

The one major exception to this policy of attacking in small numbers occurred in December 1944 when, as the result of a request from US naval planners,¹⁵ the RAAF Catalina squadrons were called upon at short notice to mine the entrance to Manila Bay in support of the US

¹⁰ See N.P. Engel, 'Mine Laying by Catalina Aircraft – The Beginning,' in A.E. Minty (ed.), *Black Cats: The Real Story of Australia's Long Range Catalina Strike Force in the Pacific War*, RAAF Museum, Point Cook, 1994, pp.100-4.

¹¹ A. Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude: ideas, strategy and doctrine in the Royal Australian Air Force 1921-1991*, Canberra, 1992, pp.68-9.

¹² NAA: A1196, 60/501/155, Mine laying operations of the RAAF, 1943-1947.

¹³ The precision was achieved through basic mathematics. For instance, the Catalina could be instructed to fly due south from a specified datum at a height of 300 feet and a ground speed of 100 knots. At the given speed, direction and height, it was relatively simple to convert the distance from the datum to the desired mine position into time flown that the bomb aimer could count off in seconds once the Catalina had crossed the datum. For the arithmetic to work, though, it was essential for the crew to maintain the required direction, height and speed throughout the mining run. Even the tiniest variation would mean that the mine would miss the channel and the mission would be wasted. See, for instance, 'Recollections by Tom Broughton' and K Hamilton, 'Catalina Operations', in R Cleworth (ed.), *The Fabulous Catalina*, Sydney, 2006, pp.9-10 & 56.

¹⁴ Sandell, *op.cit.*, p. 99. Also see pp.115-20 for an excellent account of astronomical navigation.

¹⁵ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations; and B Eneberg, *As I Saw It: The wartime Career of Bernard (Bill) Eneberg with his Experiences with 20 & 42 Squadron Catalinas & 113 ASR Flight*, self-published, 2003, p.16.

amphibious invasion of the Philippine island of Mindoro. The capture of Mindoro was considered a vital step preparatory to the capture of the Philippine's capital of Manila as it would enable the US to establish land based air superiority in the area.¹⁶ While Mindoro was not believed to be strongly defended, the major threat to the amphibious landing was considered to come from intervention by Japanese naval units. While US carrier planes had heavily attacked Japanese shipping in Manila Bay, isolating the field of battle by mining Balabac Strait to the west of Mindoro Island and Manila Bay to the east was also considered necessary. These operations, as a post mission report put it, 'forged two important links in the chain of defence covering the Mindoro landings.'¹⁷

As the RAAF's Catalina squadrons were the only available force in the Southwest Pacific Theatre that had developed the necessary skill and experience for this type of mission, Catalinas from 76 Wing operating from Darwin were called upon at short notice to undertake the mission. In the event, this was to be the RAAF's only direct operational involvement in the Philippines campaign.¹⁸ On the nights of 28, 29 and 30 November a total of 16 Catalinas operating out of Morotai Island were used to plant 60 British and American mines in Balabac Strait to protect the western flank of the landing. Balabac Strait was the most likely route for Japanese naval vessels based either at the important base of Brunei Bay or in the Netherlands East Indies. The mines were equipped with delayed arming devices to preclude the field being cleared before the Mindoro landing.¹⁹ The scale and importance of the operation was significant but for experienced Catalina crews the operation was relatively routine.

Mining Manila Bay, though, was a much more complex operation and proved to be the largest and most involved mine-laying mission undertaken by the RAAF. A detailed description of this little known operation provides a very good insight into the high level of planning and operational expertise necessary to ensure the success of RAAF mine-laying operations.

Manila Bay is a large bowl shaped bay about 48 kilometres across at its widest and 19 kilometres across at its entrance. It is perhaps the finest natural harbour in Southeast Asia. The entry to Manila Bay is dominated by Bataan Peninsula to the north and the town of Cavite to the south with the strategically important island of Corregidor dividing the entrance into two distinct channels. The small island of El Fraile, which had been converted into a concrete fort by pre-war US engineers, also helps to break up the entrance. All these positions at the entrance, and Manila City itself, were known to be heavily defended at the time of the mission. Unfortunately less was known about other defensive positions around Manila Bay.²⁰ The Manila area was also known to be at the centre of Japanese air defences in the

¹⁶ The key to the steady advance of MacArthur's Southwest Pacific forces along the northern coast of New Guinea, through the Moluccas and on to the Philippines had been the ability to seize lightly defended strategic positions and to use these to establish land based air superiority in the area to provide an umbrella for the next strategic advance. See *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, (prepared by his General Staff), Washington DC, facsimile reprint, 1994, vol. 1, pp.167-8.

¹⁷ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

¹⁸ G Odgers, *Air War Against Japan, 1943-45*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1957, pp.301-2 & 374. The only other direct RAAF involvement in the invasion of the Philippines was the late call for the No 3 Airfield Construction Squadron to assist with urgent runway construction on Mindoro Island. Given the level of demand, there was an acute shortage of engineer and airfield construction strength in the Southwest Pacific Theatre.

¹⁹ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

²⁰ NAA: A705, 166/5/852, FO Barbour R.C., Casualty; Air Commodore R. B. Burrage, 'The Mine Laying of Manila Bay,' in A.E. Minty (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.209.

Philippines and was well protected by a network of radar stations and air bases. As a post mission report summed it up, mining ‘a very strongly defended harbour with slow flying Catalinas’ presented special ‘difficulties’.²¹ The overriding challenge, then, was how to complete the mission without incurring an unacceptable level of losses.

The first challenge for mission planners was to design a minefield that would effectively close the entrance to Manila Bay but to locate it in a position that kept the mine-laying planes away from the known strongly defended areas such as Corregidor, Cavite and Manila City. Based on the depth of water and the target widths of the 2,000lb Mark 25 and 1,000lb Mark 26 American mines to be used, mission planners readily calculated that a total of 60 mines laid in two fields would be sufficient to close Manila Bay for at least the duration of the Mindoro landings. As minesweeping in Manila Bay, with its large area of open water, would be comparatively easy, some of the larger Mark 25 mines were to be fitted with one to three day salt ‘washers’ to delay arming of the mine and some of the Mark 25 and 26 mines were fitted with a Periodic Delay Mechanism or ‘ship counter’ device which allowed a set number of ships to pass over before detonating.²² The purpose was to increase the time required for clearing a safe channel and to make life as difficult and as uncertain as possible for Japanese minesweepers.

A study of available charts and aerial photographs suggested that the most suitable location for the primary field was an eight-mile stretch of water between Lukanin Point and San Nicolas Light a little inside of the main entrance to Manila Bay. A minefield at this point would close off the north and south channels while still being at least 5 miles from the heavy AA located at Corregidor and other entrance areas. The primary field was to be reinforced by a second line of mines laid across the most direct route from the entrance to the Manila City docks.²³

As Catalinas could carry two Mark 25 mines or four Mark 26 mines, it was calculated that 24 sorties would be needed to complete the mission. Hard experience, though, had demonstrated that the risk of mining a defended target was at its lowest on the first night.²⁴ As Manila Bay was the most heavily defended target yet contemplated, the mission would need to be completed by 24 planes operating over the target in the shortest possible time on the one night. The mission was initiated with an order from RAAF Operational Command to No 76 Wing in Darwin for 24 Catalinas to participate in a ‘courting’ operation (mining missions were referred to as ‘courting’ or ‘serenading’) to Manila Bay which carried the code name ‘granny’. The mission was calling for the use of at least half of the RAAF’s four operational Catalina squadrons on just one mission. This in itself was an indicator of the mission’s urgency and importance.

A ‘top secret’ meeting consisting of the Wing Commander, Group Captain Reg Burrage, the Wing Operations Officer, Sqn Ldr Norm Robertson, and the three squadron commanders of

²¹ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

²² NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations. Salt washers or plugs had a predetermined dissolving time in water based on the density of the salt. Once dissolved, water was able to enter a small opening and activate a diaphragm which thereby armed the mine. See I. Clempson, ‘My Air Force Days,’ in Cleworth (ed.), *The Fabulous Catalina*, p.261.

²³ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

²⁴ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

the Wing, John McMahon from 43 Squadron, Athol Wearne from 20 Squadron and John Costello from 42 Squadron, soon established that they could only make available 18 aircraft at that stage.²⁵ On 7 December 11 Squadron, based at Rathmines on Lake Macquarie near Newcastle, was ordered to supplement the mission with 6 Catalinas.²⁶ The 11 Squadron Catalinas, commanded by Wing Cdr Keith Bolitho, hurriedly departed for Darwin on 9 December where they assembled on the 10th with Catalinas from 20 and 43 Squadrons based in Darwin. The Catalinas from 42 Squadron flew in from their base at Melville Bay on the morning of the 11th. For the first and only time crews from all four Catalina squadrons were brought together for one mission and, for the first and only time, the commanding officers of the four Catalina squadrons had all decided to personally participate in the one mission.²⁷

At this stage only the Wing and squadron commanders knew the details of the operation target. The finer details of the operation, though, remained to be resolved and for this reason the Wing Commander, Operations Commander and Mine Warfare Officer from RAAF Command Headquarters were to accompany the Catalina crews where they were to report for final briefing to Admiral Wagner, the Commander of the US Seventh Fleet's logistics force, Task Force 73, aboard the seaplane tender USS *Currituck* based at Leyte Gulf in the southern Philippines.²⁸

Hurried enquiries to Leyte, though, indicated two immediate problems. While the American naval tender USS *Heron* was available to refuel and provide for the Catalinas, the mission base at tiny Jinamoc Island in Leyte Gulf could only accommodate 12 Catalinas at any one time. As all Catalinas would need to stage through and refuel at the safe anchorage of Woendi²⁹ in the Schouten Islands off the northern coast of Dutch New Guinea, the solution was to split the Catalinas into two flights and arrange for the second flight of 12 Catalinas plus a reserve plane to hold over at Woendi and fly into Jinamoc on the morning of the mission.³⁰ Unfortunately this meant that half the crews would be faced with a tiring overnight flight immediately before the night of the operation.

The second problem was that the newly created airstrip at Leyte Gulf did not have the capacity to handle B24 Liberators ferrying mines.³¹ This left no option but for armourers to load either two Mark 25 or four Mark 26 mines on to the Catalina wing racks in Darwin - no simple task in itself – with each plane carrying its maximum allowable load all the way to the target. This, too, added to the mission's difficulties.

On 11 December six Catalinas from 11 Squadron and six from 43 Squadron departed Darwin Harbour for the first leg of their trip to Woendi Island. Take off in a fully-loaded (or overloaded) Catalina was always a tense time for crew and often an impressive visual display

²⁵ Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.206.

²⁶ NAA: A11280, 7/30/AIR Part 1: No 11 Squadron – Squadron Operations. Wing Commander Bolitho's Catalina detoured through RAAF Command Headquarters in Brisbane to pick up the RAAF's Mine Warfare Officer.

²⁷ Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.206.

²⁸ NAA: A11280, 7/35/AIR, Report on Radar Countermeasures Support for the RAAF Minelaying Operations on 14/15 December 1944; Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.206.

²⁹ A US forward base had been hastily established at Woendi following the bitter fighting for the strategically important adjacent island of Biak between May and August 1944.

³⁰ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

³¹ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

for onlookers. In this instance, the morning water at Darwin was very smooth and this added to the difficulty of breaking free from the water within the two minutes that the engines were allowed to be run at maximum take-off power for the heavily-loaded aircraft. One 11 Squadron Catalina only managed to struggle free on the third attempt.³²

After a long day flight over northern waters and enemy-held territory in western New Guinea the first flight of Catalinas landed in the evening at the tiny coral island of Woendi off the northern coast of Dutch New Guinea. In August 1944 American army engineers had hastily established a well-equipped forward base and airstrip on Woendi in support of MacArthur's northern advance towards the Philippines. The US navy personnel based there were 'most co-operative and helpful'³³ and, after refuelling, an evening film, a good meal and an overnight stay in huts, the first flight departed Woendi early on the 12th for another long day-flight to their forward base at Jinamoc Island in Leyte Gulf in the Southern Philippines.³⁴

At much the same time on the 12th, the second flight of six Catalinas from 20 Squadron and seven from 42 Squadron departed Darwin and followed the same daytime route to Woendi. The heavily-loaded Catalinas in the second flight also struggled to break free of the Darwin Harbour water. Bill Eneberg, the navigator on a 43 Squadron Catalina (A24-96) carrying two enormous 2,000-pound Mark 25 mines, later wrote in his diary: 'very 'hairy' take-off, just under 2 minutes'.³⁵

As the first flight of Catalinas arrived at Jinamoc on the evening of the 12th and taxied up to their allotted naval tender, the USS *Heron*, they were welcomed by the sight of a Japanese bomber strafing a nearby airstrip.³⁶ US forces had first landed in the Philippines at Leyte Gulf on 20 October and Jinamoc Island was right on the front line. Japanese troops were still fighting desperately in the nearby hills of Leyte Island and the area was not considered to be secure until the end of December.³⁷ The conditions at Jinamoc, as Wing Commander Bolitho later put it, 'were very crude and the facilities at our disposal practically nil', although 'the American personnel did all in their power to assist us.'³⁸ The dominant impression was one of constant rain and foul-smelling and oozing mud. In this environment US engineers were preoccupied with pitching tents, laying board walks and landing equipment and supplies.³⁹ To further complicate matters, the USS *Heron* was only a very small tender and 'proved quite inadequate to the task of tending 25 aircraft'. While the *Heron* coped with the pre-mission refuelling 'fairly satisfactorily' there were 'long hold-ups' for basic maintenance.⁴⁰

³² Office of Air Force History (OAFH), No 11 Squadron Narrative Report, December 1944: W K Bolitho, 'Sea Mining Operations – Manila Bay – Luzon – 14 December 1944.'

³³ OAFH, No 11 Squadron Narrative Report, December 1944: W K Bolitho, 'Sea Mining Operations – Manila Bay – Luzon – 14 December 1944.'

³⁴ NAA: A8681, 1945/4928, Public Relations Bulletin, 'Catalinas from Australia mine Manila Bay – prelude to invasion'; NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

³⁵ Eneberg, *op.cit.*, p.16

³⁶ NAA: A8681, 1945/4928, Public Relations Bulletin, 'Catalinas from Australia mine Manila Bay – prelude to invasion.'

³⁷ See, for instance, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, vol. 1, pp.235-8; Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.207.

³⁸ OAFH, No. 11 Squadron Narrative Report, December 1944: WK Bolitho, 'Sea Mining Operations – Manila Bay – Luzon – 14 December 1944.'

³⁹ Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.207.

⁴⁰ OAFH, No. 11 Squadron Narrative Report, December 1944: WK Bolitho, 'Sea Mining Operations – Manila Bay – Luzon – 14 December 1944.'

The rudimentary conditions and problems with the airplane tender were partly alleviated by the hospitality and conviviality of their American naval hosts from US Task Force 73.⁴¹ Group Captain Burrage and Sqn Ldr Robertson, despite their self-consciousness at their grimy appearance, were both asked to dine at Admiral Wagner's table. Unfortunately, though, Task Force 73 Intelligence personnel could not provide what the senior RAAF commanders most needed and that was up-to-date intelligence about Japanese naval shipping likely to be encountered in Manila Bay. On the following day Gp Capt Burrage and Sqn Ldr Robertson spent the best part of the day 'ploughing around the mud' of Jinamoc and Leyte visiting the various US headquarters,⁴² but the only information obtained was that a Japanese aircraft carrier had been sighted alongside a wharf some two or three days before and that enemy night fighters were known to be based near Manila.⁴³ Slow and low-flying Catalinas were vulnerable enough at the best of times without having to tangle with night fighters or fly over the anti-aircraft armaments of major naval units. This lack of clear intelligence was a cause of much concern.⁴⁴

Nor were Task Force 73 Intelligence personnel confident about Japanese radar in the target area but, fortunately or fortuitously, they did at least suggest that contact should be made with the radar specialists within the Office of the Chief Signals Officer from Section 22 of the General HQ of the Southwest Pacific Area.⁴⁵ These discussions were to prove vital for the Section 22 staff seemed to take a particular interest in the operation. It is likely that they were in a better position than most to realise the hazardous nature of the planned operation.

Taking account of known enemy radar positions, Section 22 staff proceeded to draw up the best flight track to the target and into and out of Manila Bay. By following this track and by flying below 100 feet at certain points, it was believed that all radar stations could be bypassed with the exception of the stations near Manila City and the station on nearby Lubang Island. As these stations would still give a 15 to 30 minute warning before the planes reached the target area, Section 22 devised a strategy to confuse or 'blanket' enemy radar in the Manila Bay area to allow the mine-laying Catalinas the opportunity to gain entrance to the Bay with a minimum of warning to the enemy.⁴⁶ To this end, they also made available to the operation a US Navy Catalina 'ferret' loaded with radar jamming transmitters and strips of aluminium foil called 'window' and 'rope'.⁴⁷

The use of short strips of aluminium foil to 'blind' enemy radar was pioneered by RAF Bomber Command and first used over occupied Europe in 1943.⁴⁸ The cloud of small aluminium strips operates to swamp the radar with a myriad of return signals. 'Rope' was a further refinement with each unit consisting of three 400-foot strips of aluminium foil. Each

⁴¹ Burrage, *op.cit.*, pp. 207-8; and Eneberg, *op.cit.*, p. 17

⁴² D Vincent, *Catalina Chronicle: A History of RAAF Operations*, Paradise SA, 1978, p.73; and Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.208.

⁴³ Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.208.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.209.

⁴⁵ NAA: A11280, 7/35/AIR, Report on Radar Countermeasures Support for the RAAF Minelaying Operations on 14/15 December 1944.

⁴⁶ As Squadron Leader Norm Robertson later indicated, the key consideration for the success of the mission was the degree of surprise which could be achieved. See NAA: A705, 166/5/852, FO Barbour R.C., Casualty.

⁴⁷ NAA: A11280, 7/35/AIR, Report on Radar Countermeasures Support for the RAAF Minelaying Operations on 14/15 December 1944. The routes to be flown by the minelaying Catalinas and the US radar-jamming Catalina are in the map at the end of this article (see p.24).

⁴⁸ See, for instance, K. Wilson, *Bomber Boys: The Ruhr, the Dambusters and bloody Berlin*, Cassell Military Paperbacks, London, 2006, pp.18, 241-3.

unit of 'rope' was intended to present the radar image of a heavy bomber. The use of 'rope' for this mission was highly experimental for it was believed to be the first such use in the Pacific Theatre.⁴⁹

The RAAF Wing commanders requested that the reserve Catalina from 42 Squadron also be loaded with 'window' to increase the radar jamming effort and Section 22 staff devised a flight path for this Catalina and advised the crew on the use of 'window'. The Wing commanders also requested a diversionary bombing raid at the time of the mission in an effort to disrupt Japanese night fighters that were based near Manila.⁵⁰ Photographic reconnaissance of the area around the datum points was also requested but unfortunately was not available in time.⁵¹ Besides increasing the difficulty of visually identifying the datum points, there was a concern that the Japanese were making a habit of placing small arms fire around obvious geographical points that could be used as the starting point for a mining run. The purpose was to shoot at anything black that was flying slow and low.

On the morning of Friday 14 December the second flight of 12 mine-laying Catalinas and the reserve Catalina flew in to Jinamoc. According to the post mission report to the US Chief of Naval Operations, the crews on the second flight had already been 'briefed on mining runs and on the general plan of the operation' at Woendi.⁵² It is less clear, though, whether they were also briefed on the intended target, although many must already have guessed their destination with some apprehension.⁵³

During the morning of the 14th, the captains and navigators from each crew on the first flight were individually briefed on their particular mining run by the Mine Warfare Officer. Each captain and navigator was given a Briefing Slip which detailed the datum point for the commencement of the run, the bearing and height to fly, the distance from the datum to the first drop and the spacing for subsequent mines. The captains and navigators were also given maps showing the track to the target and the mine dropping zone with the datum prominently marked. The navigators then plotted the position of their mines on the chart and compared this with the relevant positions plotted on the Mine Warfare Officer's master chart of the minefield. The practice of individually briefing crews was considered to be one of the major reasons for the high level of accuracy achieved by the RAAF mine-laying campaign.⁵⁴

At 1pm there was a mass briefing for all crews. In fitting with the basic nature of their temporary operational base, the briefing was held on an area of flat rocks at the edge of the water.⁵⁵ The squadron commanders of 43 and 11 Squadron briefed on the track to the target,⁵⁶ the intelligence officer of 43 Squadron briefed on radar positions and known flak positions; the Mine Warfare Officer and the Operations Officer briefed on mine characteristics and

⁴⁹ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

⁵⁰ Burrage, *op.cit.*, p. 208

⁵¹ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

⁵² NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

⁵³ Bill Eneberg, a navigator on this second flight, states that they were not briefed on the target until arrival at Jinamoc. See Eneberg, *op.cit.*, p.17.

⁵⁴ See 'Aircraft Mine Warfare in the Southwest Pacific Area November 1943-March 1944' in NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

⁵⁵ Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.208.

⁵⁶ A copy of the map used for the approach to Manila Bay can be found in Eneberg, *op.cit.*, p.18c.

jettison procedures in case mine drop points were missed. Escape points in the event that a damaged aircraft had to put down in the sea were also given.⁵⁷

A crucial consideration in planning the operation and in briefing the crews was how to get this number of planes into and out of the target area in the minimum time but without any mid-air collisions. Mission planners were very aware that the tight constraints on the operation made mid-air collisions a high risk. The captains were therefore instructed that aircraft were to take off and circle Jinamoc until all planes were in the air. Planes were to fly singly to the target at a steady speed of 90 knots and about two minutes apart.⁵⁸ Near Manila Bay the aircraft were to divide into two flights. Group A, consisting of 15 planes mostly from 42 and 43 Squadrons, would attack across Manila Bay from the western or Bataan Peninsula side of the Bay and lay the principal minefield. The 43 Squadron Catalinas carried 12 large Mark 25 mines while the 42 Squadron Catalinas carried 6 Mark 25 mines and 12 smaller Mark 26 mines. At much the same time, Group B consisting of 9 planes from 11 and 20 Squadrons would attack from the southeast and lay the secondary field. 11 Squadron carried 24 Mark 26 mines with 20 Squadron carrying 12 Mark 25 mines.⁵⁹

Each flight was to fly a non-intersecting course across Manila Bay and out the other side. The two groups were to lay their mines from a different height but each aircraft within the group would fly at the same height. The captains in Group A elected to drop their mines from 400 feet on the calculation that 'there was more chance of annihilation from A.A. at 1200 feet than there was from parachute failure on the Mark 25 at 400 feet.'⁶⁰ The crews on the southern flight elected to drop their mines from just 200 feet.⁶¹ Aircraft on each flight were to use a common datum point from which to commence their mining runs.⁶²

Crucially, captains were instructed that their aircraft were to make their mining runs immediately the target area was reached 'and to execute the run smartly without manoeuvring around to find datums'.⁶³ The circumstances were such that it was more important to get on with the mission rather than to line up a perfect mining run. Captains were also briefed about the arrangements for radar jamming and diversionary bombing. Somewhat apologetically, Wing Cdr Burrage explained their lack of success in obtaining intelligence on the presence of naval units in the Bay and mentioned the possible presence of an aircraft carrier.

Finally Burrage wished them good luck for the mission but 'couldn't escape the feeling that the crews were being sent off with very little idea of the degree of opposition likely to be met.'⁶⁴ Bill Eneberg from 43 Squadron recorded in his diary that some of their American colleagues 'solemnly' shook their hands 'when they learned that we were going to Manila'.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations; Burrage, *op.cit.*, p.208.

⁵⁸ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

⁵⁹ OAFH, No. 42 & 43 Squadron Narrative Reports, December 1944.

⁶⁰ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

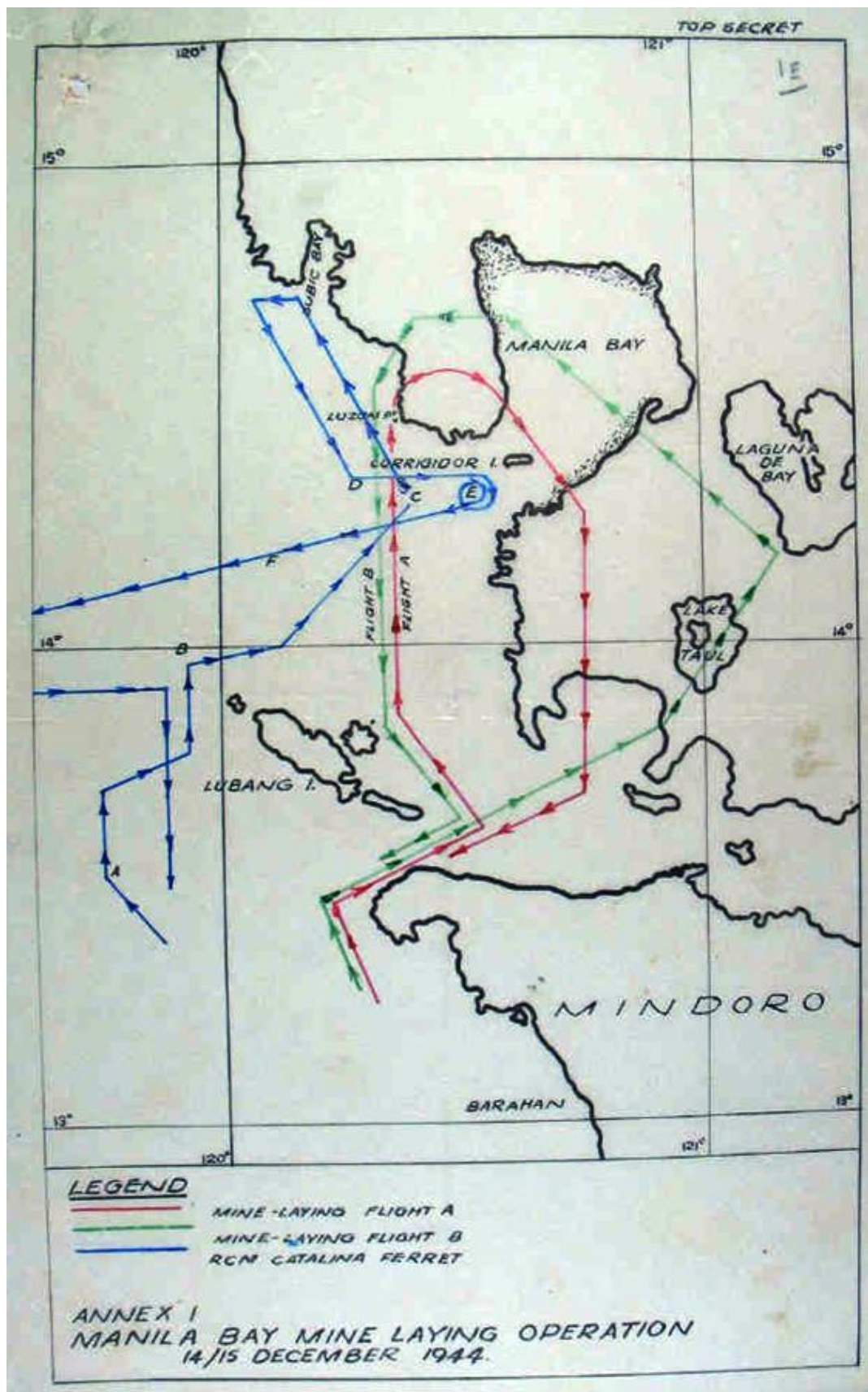
⁶¹ NAA: A9186, 30, RAAF Unit History Sheets No. 11 Squadron.

⁶² OAFH, No. 11 Squadron Narrative Report, December 1944: WK Bolitho, 'Sea Mining Operations – Manila Bay – Luzon – 14 December 1944.'

⁶³ NAA: A11093, 373/21A5, RAAF Command Headquarters – 7th Fleet reports on RAAF mine-laying operations.

⁶⁴ Burrage, *op.cit.*, pp.208-9.

⁶⁵ Eneberg, *op.cit.*, p.17.



A BOY FROM DUNOLLY

Danielle Hircock¹

Louise Cumper knew that her young son's relentless determination and courage would stand him in good stead in his life. Douglas William Sinclair Cumper was born in February 1897 in the small country town of Dunolly in Victoria. He was one of six children, born to Louise and George Cumper, who were prominent members of the gold mining town, George being a miner in the Dunolly mines. Doug was close to his younger brother, Dick, who always liked to look out for him. Dick followed in his footsteps by joining the senior cadets while Doug was away. On a picnic at nearby Bet-Bet, Doug and Dick enjoyed exploring the wonders of the Australian bush. Doug remembered singing 'Happy Birthday' to his brother as they sat on flat rocks surrounded by flannel flowers, while their father tended to the fire.

Doug spent his youth in Dunolly, before moving with his family to Prahran when he was a young teenager. From ages 14 to 18, he served in the junior and senior military cadets in his local area battalions, developing crucial disciplinary and leadership skills that would be essential for his future service in the First World War.

Doug enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces in July 1915 and was assigned to the 4th Reinforcements of the 24th Battalion AIF. He spent several months training in the Broadmeadows Training Camp, Victoria, before he departed Port Melbourne on the *HMAT Hororata* in September, with members of his battalion, as well as recruits of the 22nd and 23rd Bns. Drawn from the state of Victoria, the 24th Bn was comprised of many fine soldiers, who would, over the course of the war, earn the battalion a Victoria Cross, six DSOs and 29 MCs, among other honours.

The 24th Bn was introduced to fighting in the Armentieres region of France, before late in July 1916 they were moved in to replace units of the 1st Australian Division on the Pozieres battlefield. Passing the large gaping hole that was the Lochnagar Crater, Doug's battalion headed towards the battlefield where thousands of Australian soldiers were to face the horrors of the Somme.

Doug and his fellow soldiers crossed the Pozieres-Bapaume Road, before reaching Kay Trench, near the eerie-looking Pozieres cemetery and an apple orchard, where the battalion suffered under a salvo of five-niners from the German line. On 4 August, the 24th Bn launched an attack on Old German Line One, racing through the heavy darkness to reach a well-reinforced enemy trench. The Germans were waiting for them and staunchly defended the position they were keen not to abandon. Doug and his fellow soldiers were quick on the offence and this soon amounted to a large number of enemy casualties.

As dawn broke over No Man's Land on 5 August, the Australian line was shocked into action by German shells dropping near their newly gained position. Out of the air dropped a mighty shell near where Doug was standing, causing the trench wall to collapse, knocking Doug

¹ Dr Danielle Hircock is a young writer with a passion for Australian post-Federation history, in particular, the Australian military. She has been on a challenging journey to write the true narrative of her relative, Sgt Douglas Cumper, bringing to life his voice and story. This included travelling back to the Western Front in 2006 to rediscover the battlefields of the First World War. Her book, *And the Son Will Rise* was the main component of her PhD thesis.

unconscious and burying him alive. The scene was thrown into chaos, as his comrades a little further up the trench struggled to reach him, calling for stretcher bearers. Hands scratched anxiously at the soil, until Doug's body was found and he was pulled to the surface.

Stretcher bearers hurriedly attended the scene and Doug was carried to the Regimental Aid Post (RAP), going in and out of consciousness, gazing vaguely at the movement around him – wounded men gathering themselves off the ground, people hurrying past, the shadowy figures of the stretcher bearers carrying him to his salvation. Situated off the Courcellette Road, the RAP was a flurry of activity – dozens of wounded men gathered in a tight knot around the low-beamed entrance. Doug was swiftly placed on a stretcher bed and attended to by the Regimental Medical Officer, Plant, who dressed a shrapnel wound on his left shoulder with anti-tetanus serum and iodine. Doug stared at the medical supplies in large boxes, while a primus stove simmered nearby, a hot billy of tea brewing on top.

Doug was evacuated from the battlefield and spent the next nine months in French and English hospitals, being treated for concussion shellshock and a racing heartbeat. He returned to his battalion on 18 March 1917 to find that many of his mates and leaders had fallen in action on the Somme while he had been away from the front.

On 3 May 1917, the 24th Bn struck off for the front line at Bullecourt, where Doug once again faced the battlefield, under the courageous leadership of Capt Edward Smythe of A Coy. Doug watched as young boys newly enlisted fell beside him in the rush towards the German line. Very lights followed the boys' footsteps, flickering eerily over the lumpy ground. Upon reaching the first German line, Doug and his comrades got to work at the awful task of clearing enemy dead and scattered body parts.

Doug and his fellow soldiers next found great solace in the activities that took place in and around the river running through the Ancre Valley. After enduring the dreaded scabies inspection, the men ran stark naked into the water which provided relief from the itching of the chats and much merriment besides. Old wine barrels and makeshift rafts were employed by some ingenious types and Doug felt as though the horrors of days before were left far behind.

The 24th Bn then started on a march to Pozieres, where the ruins of Mouquet Farm were visible in the near distance, bringing to mind the mates who had been lost in that awful muddy mess. A service began and the men's heads remained lowered as each thought of friends lost. Doug thought of the friends he had lost from his company – Alfred Hawkins, Michael Paley, James Bickley and of whose fate he only knew upon his return. A lowering sun in the sky reflected the strangely peaceful and reflective mood, closing the service with its final remarkable rays.

On 20 August 1917, Doug was recognised for his leadership skills and promoted to Sergeant by his Commanding Officer and in the middle of September, the battalion moved with great anticipation into the Flanders sector. The men set to work constructing bomb pits and slept in dugouts cut into the side of the Ypres Canal, where fat rats were numerous and ran over their sleeping bodies.

Rain began to fall on 4 October, ensuring an ominous start to the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge. Lieut-Col James issued instructions to his battalion, who were to attack in four waves, in anticipation for the heavy Australian barrage which was to fall 150 yards ahead of the

soldiers' starting position. Doug and the others endured what seemed an endless wait, before the sky was alight with a random German flare, soon followed by the sharp snapping of an enemy machine gun. The battalion was surrounded by a salvo of high explosive shells and Doug quickly ordered those under his care to the relative safety of a nearby trench. Evidence of the shells' destruction surrounded Doug: men with heads detached from their bodies, a lifeless body with its arm hanging by a small amount of sinew. Soldiers wriggled into the trench, pressing their bodies into the wall, desperate for protection.

As though in mercy, the Allied barrage roared into action, and with relief, Doug and his men managed to struggle over the ground, ears nearly bursting with the din echoing around them. Upon reaching the German line, there was a clash of action, as bayonets were drawn and soon the ground was littered with dead Germans and Australians alike. After the dust settled and the new allied line was secured, Doug was taken under the wing by Lieut Noble of A Coy and under the supervision of Capt Smythe, he learned more of the importance of leadership, communication with his men and ensuring his men's morale remained high.

Daisy Wood was a small copse of trees marked carefully on a military map – one of the main targets before the battalion would attack Passchendaele Ridge in an attempt to shift the Germans from their hold on the town. Despite the continuing rain and the unmanageable conditions of the boggy ground – as well as the fatigued state of the Sixth Brigade battalions – higher command insisted that the attack continue. With their sister battalions – the 22nd and 23rd – the 24th left the relative safety of its own trench line to head towards the German line.

Machine guns rattled and snipers' bullets shot out at the approaching soldiers. Flashing through his mind was a quick image of his younger brother's face, laughing, merry, as he quickly blew out his birthday candles. In a flash, the flames were gone. As he was leading his men across the front, a German sniper chose his target and Doug was killed instantly. He was 20 years old, falling three months short of his 21st birthday. He is buried in Tyne Cot Military Cemetery, alongside 11,000 other Commonwealth soldiers who died on the watery Flanders battlefields.

Editor's note

WW1 Nominal Roll page, AWM133, 12-091:

2135 Sgt CUMPER Douglas William 24th Battalion 13.7.15 K.I.A. 9.10.17

WW1 Embarkation Roll:

6th Infantry Brigade, 24th Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements

2135 / Cumper, Douglas William Sinclair / Private / 19 / Boot salesman / Single / etc.

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HAVE YOUR SAY

Readers – want to respond to something you've seen in *Sabretache*?

Contributors – need to answer readers' feedback, or to update information you've had published?

The 'As You Were ...' column is there for you!

Email the editor at editor@mhsa.org.au and have your comments included in the next issue.

FACT AND FICTION: ON EDITING AND ANNOTATING *THEY HOSED THEM OUT*

Robert Brokenmouth¹

I honestly don't know of any other book which has annoyed me as much as John Beede's *They Hosed Them Out*. Each week after school, my father would take me down to the public library, which had a larger and more interesting array of books than my primary school library. I was a rather enthusiastic reader, always lugging home the maximum armful of books allowed. On the first visit I drifted toward the adult section. I was of course initially attracted to the lurid science-fiction and war covers and basically anything that wasn't as boring as the immediate world around me.

On creaking Tower of Pisa-esque paperback carousels lounged many battered 1970s paperbacks. However, *Rear Gunner*, featured a bomber (which I recognised as a Wellington) with its bomb-bay doors open, about to unload over a burning town while searchlights, marker flares and a blazing bomber dotted the background, while the doughty rear gunner blazed away heroically at something off to the left. I snaffled it instantly, read it eagerly. Although there was a strange sense of 'something not quite right' with it, at the tender age of nine I wasn't going to get too critical. Hell, there was a world of books out there. The thing was, *Rear Gunner* was really addictive; over the course of the next couple of years I borrowed and reread it at least twice more.

Having already read and reread my father's copies of Gibson's *Enemy Coast Ahead*, Cheshire's *Bomber Pilot* and Hillary's *The Last Enemy*, as well as my own copies of Brickhill's *Reach for the Sky* and Williams' *The Wooden Horse*, you can imagine my state of mind regarding Allied aviators in World War Two. Heroes all, in a quite black-and-white sense. John Beede's *Rear Gunner* therefore made a mighty impression, partly because its convincing, down-to-earth nature captivated me, and partly because it told of a side of aviation warfare I had little suspected. In other words, here was a real man with real emotions who put himself in a rather difficult position. Well, several difficult positions, actually.

By the time I'd read Don Charlwood's *No Moon Tonight* and his Bomber Command diaries (*Journeys into Night*), excellent though they are, I was convinced that Beede's book, in which he relates many, many incidents not directly related to the usual aviation life as well as some thrilling battle sequences, was essentially a superior read. What I didn't know was that it had been previously published under another, better title: *They Hosed Them Out*. Beede's breadth and scope seemed remarkable; then and now, *They Hosed Them Out* is another world for me.

Reading as a child, I doubt I much considered the difference between fact and fiction. It was all one – either what I was reading told a story well, or it didn't. But I knew – even at that tender age – that it was likely that some facts in non-fiction would be, shall we say, 'tweaked in the story's favour'? Unless you are one of those people who exclusively read either non-fiction or fiction, we are all the same in this regard. Only our tastes in what makes a good tale, or a good tale well-told, make us different.

¹ Robert Brokenmouth is 48, engaged, and enjoys stories as well as history, the company of music as well as musicians. Currently working in an antiquarian bookshop, his last book was in 1996, *Nick Cave, The Birthday Party and Other Epic Adventures*.

Reading ever more widely as an adult, I retained a particular interest in the Allied bombing war. Every now and again I would encounter a copy of Beede's book and instantly open the wallet, dodging the gnats to extract the shrapnel. Every time I encountered it I'd read it and wonder what on earth the Lanc was doing on the cover since it doesn't feature in any significant way in the book.

Some discrepancies puzzled me, particularly as I grew to notice factual inconsistencies. I guessed that the misleading covers had more to do with selling the book (hell, who except the veterans and historians had heard of the Ventura or the Boston, or the 2nd Tactical Air Force in the sixties and seventies?). Even the 'bootleg' Wingate-Baker edition featured a Lanc on a night-raid – a famous photograph which has been used on numerous other bomber books which actually did feature Lancs. Put simply, *Rear Gunner* AKA *They Hosed Them Out* told a story of nobility and shabbiness, horror and boredom, sex and disgust. It didn't matter if a few facts were a bit out; the story was the important thing.

A writer with a similar bent for the story in preference to pure fact is Gerald Kersh. Not read enough now, Kersh's *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson* and *They Died with Their Boots Clean* reflect some of his World War Two experiences with the Grenadier Guards. Like John Beede, Kersh's work always has the ring of truth, even when he is writing the most fantastic of fiction, such as in the short stories 'Whatever Happened to Corporal Cuckoo?' or 'Men without Bones'. Kersh wrote what was presented as fiction, acknowledging his real experiences but carefully ensuring that no confusion could exist. We shall have to wait until a biography of Kersh is published to discover just how close to the truth his Guards' stories are.

Another writer who used his memoirs as the basis for novels is Dan Billany, in *The Trap* and its sequel, *The Cage* (with fellow POW David Dowie). Published in reverse order, both have a solid factual basis, but the reader would be unwise to treat them as completely true. Billany had already published novels and knew what the reader always wants is a bloody good story. Billany's two novels (or fictionalised memoirs, if you like) are incidentally extremely important examples of the effects of battle and confinement on a man, the more so because they do tell a story and seek to locate resolution. However, when military folk embark on non-fictional tales of their adventures, it is astonishing how some areas are focused upon to the detriment of others in order to 'simplify' the story. That is, these non-fictional memoirs are not entirely truthful either. For example, in the popular imagination from World War One onwards, fighter pilots were always dashing knights of the air; such men were criticised in their day by bomber men as being full of themselves.

German pilots Heinz Knoke in *I Flew for the Fuhrer* and Fritz Wentzel in *Single or Return* are both remarkably selective as they depict their fighting days; their tales seem to lack a certain grounding in reality. Similarly, Richard Hillary's *The Last Enemy*, while certainly a work of literature, is most definitely a slanted (if not canted) tale. Ivan Southall's *Softly Tread the Brave* is clearly a well-spun tale of heroism by the now largely-forgotten mine-disposal officers; essentially correct in the base facts, one always wonders about the everyday life of the hero – because heroes are not as we would prefer them, separate from their time and people. When we read these books we know what we're in for: a simplified form of the truth; it's a story, not a detailed history.

In a contemporary review of *They Hosed Them Out*, Leslie Jillett remarked that the work *bears on every page the stamp of authenticity and can be thoroughly recommended for the graphic, unblinkered insights it gives into the author's three years' experience in RAF*

bombers operating over Europe from England. Even so, the more frequently I returned to the book (like an ant to the picnic), the more I was frustrated with these apparent inconsistencies. In short, I longed to discover more about the author – wondering also whether he would ever be rediscovered by a later generation. I noted the Australian Military Classics series, and Charlwood's inclusion, and was puzzled that Beede's book was not included.

During the early 2000s, after seeing large amounts of money poured into films making World War Two air battles physically believable (even if the writers' understanding of the people and the times seemed woefully lacking), I had an idea for a story set around an Australian squadron, and dutifully began researching the subject. Realising that my story was not quite ready and not quite right, in 2009 I found myself rereading *They Hosed Them Out* for what must have been the tenth or twelfth time – but the first in over 15 years. This time I noticed a large array of small but irritating problems. Beede begins the book in 1942, yet has Hitler's 1941 invasion of Russia occur later on. His dialogue swaps between using the names of the men when they are on the ground to their roles – and nicknames – in the air. This reflected good RAF practice at the time and presumably was done to help readers understand that practice, but is confusing nevertheless.

I sat back and thought about all this (and more) for a while, and finally decided I wanted to find the author and talk to him, if indeed he was still alive. After a bit of a search, I discovered that the author was in fact John Bede Cusack, and who had, as I half suspected, died many years ago. However, I found that his daughter, Kerry McCouat (nee Cusack), was listed in the white pages. I also found that *They Hosed Them Out* had not been published for some ten years, and then by a publisher in a small print run. Because *They Hosed Them Out* is so heavily soaked in Beede's own experience, and because his substantial recall of detail and the constant barrage of small incidents told with the air of a practiced raconteur, it would be fair, I thought, to assume it was entirely compiled from the author's diary and letters, with his log book somewhere close at hand.

I was incorrect. Knowing the identity of 'John Beede' allows much to fall into place. John's older sister was Dymphna Cusack. Something of a marked woman after winning a landmark Worker's Compensation court case, she was transferred from teaching at a school where she had potential career advancement to Bathurst, where apparently she had none. Roundly branded as a Communist, Dymphna may have been more Commie in principle than in actuality, as was the way of many lefties in Australia at the time. Stalin's and Mao's wholesale abuse of their people was at the time unknown, unreported or disbelieved as propaganda (and I'm sure we all know at least one grizzled old loon who either states that the slaughter was either capitalist propaganda or politically necessary).

When John Bede Cusack's doctor advised him to write his experiences down in an effort to reduce the symptoms of his war-induced neurosis, the result was a sprawling manuscript. Then, when on a necessary stay with John, Dymphna read the manuscript, she suggested he take it to the Australasian Book Society, at that time heavily influenced by the Australian Communist Party. Perhaps Dymphna recognised a certain larrikin-esque accord between John's writing and the ABS's platform of encouraging dissenting voices of whatever stripe. John's book was published using a pseudonymous variant of his middle name; irrespective of the accuracy of the story itself, there were many small anomalies which many veterans would have instantly spotted. The chronology, as Cusack had written it, was somewhat historically out; thus, the weld-marks from memoir to novel were clearly visible. Although at least two contemporary reviewers (including Max Harris) likened *They Hosed Them Out* to

Charlwood's *No Moon Tonight*, it was probably the pseudonym and the weld-marks which for many years caused the book not to figure significantly as Australian military classics were republished in the 1980s and 1990s.

However, had John used his own surname, it is very likely that comparisons would be drawn with his infamous sister, which would not have been favourable to either the book or Dymphna. There was also the consideration that, if some of John's comments and experiences regarding the RAF and RAAF were related as factual, legal action could well have been instigated; not the sort of thing an independent publisher would want to incite – especially not one linked so closely to the Australian Communist Party.

I suspect the ABS wanted a story, not an actual memoir; the market at the time was swamped with military memoirs, often of significant figures. Since Cusack's operational service was in three aircraft most Australians would have been unfamiliar with, I think it likely that he was asked if he could write about something more familiar to the public. The Wellington was well-known from such films as *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* (1942). Cusack had flown in Wimpys as a gunnery instructor after his two operational tours, and I suspect he found a cobbler or two and examined their logbooks in the company of beer. The accurate and remarkably moving first edition has a silhouette of a Lanc on an RAAF roundel, which of course is part of the larger confusion about this book. Cusack then typed two actual drafts, sometimes altering his experience only in superficial details, sometimes exaggerating and inventing other incidents. I suspect the ABS's original editor trimmed the final manuscript for pace, reader impact and financial efficiency. Given *They Hosed Them Out*'s official description as fiction written from personal experience, it is now impossible to be sure in most cases precisely whether the characters Cusack refer to existed outside of his imagination or not.

A plan began to form. I wrote to Kerry asking if it might be possible to republish *They Hosed Them Out*, but with a biography of her father, and with notes and an afterword (placing John Bede Cusack in perspective) by me. Kerry's cheerful acknowledgment was gratifying – and augmented by a bulging packet of photocopies. Here was further material by John, several chapters' worth, most of which had not been included by the original editor. Also, there were a few articles by John while on active service which had been published in magazines back in Australia. I could examine these and decide whether their inclusion would enhance the book or not.

Comparing the unpublished manuscript pages with the published book, I confess to feeling some irritation toward the original editor. Unjust, I suppose, but I felt he should have spotted the tiny flaws which could have been so easily rectified; also, several action sequences had been cut which surely should have been included. There's more, but let's be charitable. After all, the author had to approve the final draft. In the meantime, these extra chapters and paragraphs delighted me. Instantly, *They Hosed Them Out* was now even broader, more humorous and better balanced. Looking again at the ABS's first edition, it now began to bother me. I felt as if the editor had deliberately ignored the actual story – that of an Australian in a strange land – in favour of making political points.

It was at this point that I discussed the potential of the book with Michael Bollen, the man behind Wakefield Press. Michael read the first edition and agreed to look at publishing an extended version as long as both Kerry and I could come to an agreement on terms. My next request to Kerry was for photocopies of photographs and John's log book. Comparing John's

log book to the chronology of *They Hosed Them Out* provided several surprises. Firstly, John's first operational posting was to 464 Squadron of the Second Tactical Air Force, not a Wellington squadron in Bomber Command. This alone did much to explain the chronological discrepancies of the original, but made me wonder just how accurate his account was. After digging a little harder, I discovered that his fictitious Wellington experiences tracked very closely to the record of No 12 Squadron RAF. Whether this was by accident or by design, I simply cannot say.

A significant theme in *They Hosed Them Out* concerns the number of ops 'John Beede' completes. However, John Bede Cusack not only did not serve in Bomber Command, he also completed his period as a gunnery instructor (in the book, Beede wangles out of his instructional duties after completing three tours). This also alters the nature of John Beede's battles with Kodak House, which may not have happened to John Bede Cusack. As a two-tour man who had completed over fifty ops, Cusack could never be asked to return to ops if he didn't want to. It did strike me that, had Cusack's fictionalisation never occurred, we would be looking at a very different book indeed. It also struck me that, had he written just one more draft, the result could have been close to an Australian Alistair Maclean.

After further investigation of many of the events Cusack describes, I realised there was a significant problem, which was probably partly influential in the Australasian Book Society resorting to a pseudonym: John makes several claims, which a lawyer might call 'unsubstantiated', regarding the honesty of certain RAAF officers. The trouble for me was not, I realised thankfully, to prove or disprove these allegations, but to emphasise that, certainly at this remove, we have no real way of knowing how true John's claims are. They might be spot-on, or they could be based on wobbly hearsay. Even if the individuals were easily identifiable, revealing these identities without substantial evidence could lead to a lawsuit – not something I'd wish on any publisher. One of the problems with the written word is that unconsciously we tend to regard what is written as fact, especially when we have few reliable yardsticks to measure by. There have been a number of non-fiction books which have been thoroughly researched, but include either howlers, made-up-facts, or instances where the writer has taken something not very solid and built a case upon it with the deliberate intention of creating a sensation and a career.

Perhaps the best-known book on the European bombing war where the writer, despite his extensive research, came to an entirely erroneous conclusion, so blurring the facts that his name is a byword for 'revisionist historian', is *The Destruction of Dresden* by David Irving. Irving appears to have based his book's entire thrust on an unsubstantiated rumour which he seized upon and tried to make a case for. Despite Irving's research providing a great deal of insight into how the Germans handled the Allied bombing, *The Destruction of Dresden* has sowed confusion and fomented hatred and ignorance for decades. Irving's reputation as a historian was shaken, and despite many further well-researched assaults on the 'conventional truths' of World War Two (including a biography of Göring), his later books seemed to lead him irrevocably to an inexcusably pro-Nazi and Holocaust-denying stance, for which he has been jailed. Currently, no publisher will touch him.

After gaining tentative approval, then, there was a few months' delay while I hoped that the text of *They Hosed Them Out* could be scanned into a word-processing program. When that hope collapsed I gritted my teeth and got on with the inevitable typing (mostly during my Christmas break), blending in the extra material and editing the text for sense, error and context. Many and inventive were the curses. Many were the times I was rightly thumped for

surliness, rudeness and general curmudgeonliness by those who love me. Many were the mince pies left unscoffed, the champers left to warm and flatten.

Despite the smell of burning martyr, however, I found myself increasingly thrilled with the experience. I was astonished by how many questions I discovered as a result of this process; far more than would have arisen had I simply edited a scanned manuscript. It was a confusing process in some ways. As John Beede's fictitious time in the Wellington squadron in Bomber Command contradicts John Bede Cusack's log book, I initially thought my notes should reflect the divide between John Beede and John Bede Cusack, as if they were two sides of the same coin. However, I eventually came to realise that the best way to approach my notes would be to point out some of the discrepancies as notes, but without correcting the text. John Cusack's book would then stand closer to how he envisaged it as a novel, but with its few flaws acknowledged rather than being airbrushed out.

As I typed, I discovered that one of the more exotic aspects of the book was that the marks still showed between the factual memoir and the fiction John welded into it. Because the notes explain this slight unevenness, the book makes for a fascinating document in a much broader sense, separate from the military interest. The questions *They Hosed Them Out* raises in a literary sense are quite significant. Reflecting back, what I find most interesting is that some of John's most convincing sequences are the ones which we know he essentially either made up or embellished, which for me proves the rule that although a writer should always write about what they know best, sometimes the truth of the matter emerges more clearly from fiction, however lightly or heavily it may be based on fact. I wonder now about Alistair Maclean's *HMS Ulysses*, based on his actual experiences aboard *HMS Royalist*, and what his actual experiences had been.

Rereading Mike Henry's *Air Gunner* in tandem with *They Hosed Them Out* was also interesting. Henry was an air gunner who also flew twin-engine night bombers and day bombers, bouncing about from squadron to squadron, including the airfields that Beede/Cusack inhabited. Although Henry's career is fascinating, it's clearly and painstakingly all drawn from his log book – but there's precious little visceral, gritty detail, and is more light-hearted than seriously thrilling. Apart from the incidental aircraft types and use, the only real similarity to Henry's book is the drinking excesses. Put more simply, *They Hosed Them Out* delves into the mucky reality, while *Air Gunner* is more 'jolly chaps together', a perspective which Cusack refutes quite strongly. Reading Kristen Alexander's *Jack Davenport* also allowed me to see another dimension. Davenport went through similar initial experiences to John, but Davenport's career was considerably different. For example, instead of being 'volunteered' as an air gunner because his surname was at the beginning of the alphabet, because of his proficiency at wireless he was able to get himself remustered from the WOP/AG course into a pilot's course. Reading Davenport's alternative career to Cusack's, one can only marvel at the vagaries of fate. If the likes of Jack Davenport is a forgotten Australian hero only now recently receiving wider recognition, perhaps *They Hosed Them Out* can now be regarded in its rightful place as an Australian classic, written by an unjustly forgotten Australian author.

The issue of the Beede's pseudonym is resolved, and as for his weld-marks, well, consider this: three astonishingly clumsy novels were all best-sellers in their day, and all remain robustly in print. Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, Stoker's *Dracula* and Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* all bear clunky weld-marks. Having typed out the entirety of John Cusack's book, pored over it with an editor's eye, a writer's eye and a history buff's eye, I can say that,

short of John's original manuscripts magically coming to light, this version is the best we are going to get. There are controversial elements which clash with our modern sensibilities, with what we believe or what we would like to believe of our war heroes, the wartime RAF and RAAF, and the English at war. I have tried to provide sufficient perspective and direction for further investigation by academic and amateur alike. History is not just written by historians, but by participants; if there is no market for a participant's true story, there is always a market for a thriller based on truth.

The issue of fact versus fiction, on the other hand, will continue, if only because we can't believe the truth is the really true. In *They Hosed Them Out*, fiction frees Beede from truth's precise requirements (names, dates, places), yet allows him to write the truth as he remembers – and chooses to remember it. *They Hosed Them Out* allows us a glimpse of what was an enormously emotional few years for the author. However, in the end truth's actuality matters little, for when we ourselves are gone the conundrums will remain without us, possibly a little more convoluted than when we first arrived. *They Hosed Them Out* remains a simple tale well-told, with many diversions. We follow John Bede Cusack's adventures, some actual, some of his own making, with fascination and delight.

Books mentioned in the text; author, title, date of first publication:

- Kristen Alexander: *Jack Davenport*, 2009
 John Beede: *They Hosed Them Out*, 1965
 John Beede: *Rear Gunner*, 1976
 Dan Billany and David Dowie: *The Cage*, 1949
 Dan Billany: *The Trap*, 1950
 Paul Brickhill: *Reach for the Sky*, 1954
 Don Charlwood: *No Moon Tonight*, 1956
 Don Charlwood: *Journeys into Night*, 1991
 Leonard Cheshire: *Bomber Pilot*, 1943
 Guy Gibson: *Enemy Coast Ahead*, 1946
 Guy Gibson: *Enemy Coast Ahead*, 2003 (uncensored edition)
 Mike Henry: *Air Gunner*, 1964
 Richard Hillary: *The Last Enemy*, 1942
 David Irving: *The Destruction of Dresden*, 1963
 Thomas Hughes: *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, 1869 (first illustrated edition)
 Gerald Kersh: *The Nine Lives of Bill Nelson*, 1942
 Gerald Kersh: *They Died With Their Boots Clean*, 1943
 Gerald Kersh: *Nightshades and Damnations*, 1968 (short stories)
 Hans Knoke: *I Flew for the Fuhrer*, 1953
 Anne Rice: *Interview with the Vampire*, 1976
 Ivan Southall: *Softly Tread the Brave*, 1960
 Bram Stoker: *Dracula*, 1897
 Fritz Wentzel: *Single or Return*, 1954
 Eric Williams: *The Wooden Horse*, 1949

JUST AN ORDINARY BLOKE: 417420 WARRANT OFFICER W J SANDERCOCK, RAAF

Peter Harvey¹

William James (Bill) Sandercock was born at Payneham SA on 14 June 1915. His father, William Ralph Sandercock, a salesman, enlisted in the AIF on 5 July 1915, 3 weeks after Bill was born. As No 424, B Company, 32nd Battalion, he took part in the Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916 and was wounded in the shoulder. He was one of the over 5000 casualties suffered by the 5th Division AIF on that disastrous afternoon and evening. He returned to active service in France in December 1916 and survived the war, eventually becoming a grape and orange grower on a block in the Berri area.

And now back to young Bill, the ordinary bloke. He was student at Pulteney Grammar School in Adelaide from 1924 to 1930 when he passed Arithmetic, Maths 1 and 2 and Physics in the Intermediate exams. Those subjects would be useful for what lay ahead. He took part in athletics while at the School but didn't shine. Bill spent another year at the Barmera Higher Primary School before working as a viticulturist until 1940 and then at the Berri Distillery as a storeman. He joined the militia in 1938, serving in the 48th Bn – his service number was S26005. On 9 December 1939, in the Brighton Baptist Church, he married Sheila Nolan, who had worked in the State Department of Aboriginal Affairs. On 4 January 1941, Bill's only child was born – a boy, Charles.

Bill became a member of the RAAF Reserve in August 1941 and on Anzac Day 1942, aged 27, he was enlisted in the RAAF – No 417420. He was not a big bronzed Anzac: in his Attestation Form, he is described as having fair hair, blue eyes, height 5 feet 7¾ inches and weight 10 stone. He was honest; in answering the question '*Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power?*', he stated, '*Yes, diving off the jetty during prohibited hours – fined 30/-*'. Bill was accepted for air crew training and spent his first eight weeks at No 4 ITS (Initial Training School) as an AC2 (Aircraftsman 2). Having passed, he was posted to the following for more training as an Observer:

- No 2 AOS (Air Observers School), Mt Gambier
- No 2 BAGS (Bombing and Air Gunnery School), Port Pirie
- No 2 ANS (Air Navigation School), Nhill, Victoria

The classification of Observer was later changed to Navigator. He spent five months at those schools during which he was promoted to LAC (Leading Aircraftsman). Having completed the training successfully, he was posted to Canada for further training under the EATS (Empire Air Training Scheme). Under the Scheme, aircrews from various nations were trained in different countries away from the scene of hostilities. In the early days of the war, many airmen were posted to operational squadrons with little training and many suffered accordingly. The EATS allowed aircrew to be given increased training and experience. A good example is that of Flt Sgt Herbert Dootson, a navigator with No 138 (Special Duties) Squadron, RAF. Dootson was an Englishman, who enlisted in the RAF in January 1941. In August that year, after initial training, he was posted to Canada for further training. He returned to the UK in late December 1941 for more training. He then went to South Africa for

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seven months where he completed the course for navigators. Back in the UK, he eventually joined 138 Sqn in February 1943. Dootson was a member of the crew of a Halifax captained by Flt Sgt George Williamson, RAAF, which was lost on operations over Europe in April 1944. None of the crew survived.

Meanwhile, Bill Sandercock left Melbourne by ship for Canada on 3 February 1943, arriving on the 25th of that month. Three months' training followed, including six weeks at No 1 GRS (General Reconnaissance School) at Summerside on the NE coast of Canada. Bill left Halifax on 27 May 1943, arriving in the UK just over a week later. He was posted to No 11 PDRC (Personnel Despatch and Reception Centre) and, after several weeks cooling his heels there, went to No 3 OTU (Operational Training Unit) for two months. He had been promoted sergeant and after a further six months to flight sergeant.

At the time, many aircrews from the British Empire countries were posted to RAF squadrons where the need was great. There weren't enough RAAF squadrons in the UK to take the large number of fully-trained Australian aircrew types. In Bill's case, in September 1943, he was posted to 547 Sqn RAF for a few weeks, then to Nos 280, 281 and finally to No 279 – all RAF. The latter three were Coastal Command squadrons, mainly engaged in air-sea rescue (ASR) work – firstly from Thorney Island just off the SE coast of England, and then from stations at Leuchars, Dallachy and Banff, all in Scotland.

Most of Bill's active service, which totalled 15 months, was with 281 Sqn, from 31 December 1943 to 18 November 1944. During that time, he was promoted to Warrant Officer. 281 Sqn was formed in March 1942 for ASR work but, in November 1942, when flying Avro Ansons, was absorbed by 282 Sqn. However, 281 was reformed the same day with Vickers Warwick aircraft. The squadron motto was '*Volamus Servaturi*' (We Fly to Save).

The Warwick was designed pre-war as a twin-engine bomber, with a crew of five or six, a good range and armed with eight .303 machine guns (front, mid-upper and rear turrets). They were overtaken by the four-engine Stirling, Halifax and, of course, the Lancaster, and became used for ASR and transport duties. One type was able to carry a lifeboat up to one-and-a-half tons in weight, not a life raft. The lifeboat was carried under the fuselage and dropped by parachute. Among other things, the boat carried an engine and sufficient fuel to travel 100 miles. And so it was that Bill served in what some might say was the less glamorous role of an ASR navigator in a Warwick compared to being a navigator in a Bomber Command Lancaster. However, ASR crews did their bit – any downed airman rescued as a result of their work would agree.

On 18 November 1944 Bill left his usual crew, having been posted to 279 Sqn at Banff on the north coast of Scotland. The motto of the squadron was 'To See and be Seen'. From Dallachy and Banff, a strike wing of Beaufighters with Mosquitoes as escort attacked German shipping sailing along the coasts between Norway and Germany. ASR aircraft from 279 Squadron carried out patrols during such strikes because most of the flying was over the North Sea. It must have been comforting to crews of strike aircraft to know that help could be available if they were forced to ditch, either by enemy action or engine failure. To protect the enemy shipping, a force of Me109s and FW190s was based in Norway and reinforced because of shipping losses. At one stage, up to 95 German fighters were based in Norway. Bill moved with a detachment of 279 Sqn to Fraserburgh from the main base at Banff. Fraserburgh is near the most north-eastern point of Scotland, the closest point to Norway across the North

Sea. Both Banff and Fraserbergh would have been very cold and wet stations in winter.

On 11 January 1945, a strike force consisting of 21 Beaufighters from Dallachy and Banff, including aircraft from 455 Sqn RAAF, took off to attack enemy shipping off Norway. 455 Sqn's motto was 'Strike and Strike Again'. At 1330 hours on that day, Warwick 'B' of 279 Sqn, serial no HG209, took off to give ASR cover to that strike. The Warwick's crew of seven was as follows:

- Flight Lieutenant J H Moreton, RAF – Pilot
- Warrant Officer W J Sandercock, RAAF – Navigator
- three Wireless Operator/Air Gunners:
 - Flying Officer G G Galloway, RAF
 - Warrant Officer G W Mansfield, RAF
 - Flight Sergeant W Bryan, RAF
- two Air Gunners:
 - Warrant Officer F E Bentley, RCAF
 - Warrant Officer A F Goodall, RAF

While the original design of the Warwick was for five or six crew, it is likely that ASR aircraft carried an additional member to add another pair of eyes to those searching for ditched airmen – a very difficult task in the conditions prevailing in the North Sea in winter.

The strike aircraft were attacked by enemy fighters resulting in three Me109s and an FW190 being shot down for the loss of a Beaufighter and a Mosquito. These, and ASR Warwick HG209 with its crew of seven including Bill Sandercock, which failed to return from the operation. A report dated 29 January 1945 from the OC of the 279 Sqn detachment at Fraserbergh to the British Air Ministry Casualty Branch in London states that "*enemy fighter opposition was encountered and that Warwick HG209 failed to return to base. The aircraft was last seen over a ditched strike aircraft and was believed to be followed by an Me109*". No further word was heard of the Warwick, the remains of the crew lie somewhere in the North Sea, like so many others of many nations. ASR work was not particularly dangerous compared to Bomber and Fighter Command's operations. Only five Warwicks were lost on ops – but Bill was unlucky enough to be a crew member of one of the five. Perhaps the crew of his aircraft was concentrating on the ditched crew and got jumped by the enemy fighter.

Bill is named on the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede in Surrey with over 20,000 others with no known graves, and at the Australian War Memorial. He was awarded the 1939/45 Star, the Atlantic Star, the War Medal and the Australian Service Medal. Bill Sandercock was just an ordinary bloke, a family man, who served his King and Country well and lost his life doing so. This is my delayed salute to him – Bill was my uncle.

Editor's note

Readers wishing to read more about 279 Sqn's air-sea rescue operations may be interested in the following book:

Tom Docherty, *Dinghy Drop: 279 Squadron at War, 1941-1946*, Pen and Sword Aviation, Barnsley, 2007; ISBN 9781844154821

THE 'DIGGER PRINCE' AND CORPORAL SULLIVAN

Ken Wright¹

When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, the Australian Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, immediately promised Australian support for Britain 'to the last man and the last shilling'. Although the battlefields were very distant, Australia's membership of the British Empire ensured that there was strong (although not universal) public support for involvement in the war. Most Australians greeted the news with great enthusiasm. Volunteers rushed to enlist for an exciting war which was naively expected to be over by Christmas. Australians had, at the time, a natural strong sense of patriotism and loyalty to the 'mother country' and a tremendous pride in their king.

After the so-called 'war to end all wars' ended, the contribution made by Australia, New Zealand and Canada was so greatly appreciated that King George V approved two public relations goodwill tours as a gesture of thanks from a grateful Britain and his Majesty. His eldest son, the heir to the throne, Prince Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David Windsor, Prince of Wales, was given the task of thanking the countries, and in 1919 a successful tour of Canada was completed. The next scheduled goodwill trip was to encompass Australia, Barbados, California, Honolulu, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, Acapulco, the West Indies and Bermuda.

In March 1920, the 26,500 ton battle cruiser HMS *Renown* left Portsmouth bound for Australia and New Zealand.² On board, the 26-year-old Prince was accompanied by his cousin, 19-year-old Sub Lieutenant Lord Louis (Dickie) Mountbatten, Royal Navy. As the Prince wrote in his memoirs, he wasn't on the trip to negotiate treaties with foreign governments, or propound high Imperial policy to the Dominions. He was primarily to make himself pleasant, mingle with war veterans, show himself off to schoolchildren, cater to official social demands and in various ways, remind his father's subjects of the benefits of remaining attached to the British Empire – especially Australia, which was politically the most restless of the Dominions.

The arrival of HMS *Renown* on 26 May in Melbourne marked the beginning of the Australian tour. During his official horse-drawn carriage trip from the pier to Government House, a distance of eight miles, he passed an estimated three-quarters of a million people who lined the route to welcome him. The Prince of Wales's royal visit to Australia was extraordinarily popular and Australians warmed to his humour and modesty and thus his reputation grew. As an example, 100,000 attended the royal landing in the Domain in Sydney Harbour. Because Prince Edward had served in the Great War and had become admired among the Australian soldiers in the front lines, he became known throughout his tour as the 'Digger Prince'. This was seen as a great compliment from a nation who held its returned servicemen and women in such high regard. Prince Edward had served with the Grenadier Guards as a lieutenant and although he never actually served on the front lines, he made it his duty to visit the troops at

¹ Ken Wright began writing military articles in 2002 initially using memoirs of returned service men and women and combining historical background for the story. Lately, he has been finding little known military subjects to write about. His articles have been published in magazines and journals in Australia, UK, New Zealand, USA, South Africa and Canada. He is at present the Australasia correspondent for *Britain at War* magazine.

² HMS *Renown* was completed in 1916 and served with the Grand Fleet in the North Sea during the last two years of World War I. She was refitted in 1920 for the Prince of Wales's tour and refitted again in 1923-26 and again in 1939. She saw action against both the German and Japanese navies during WW2 and was finally scrapped in March 1948.

the front as often as possible. A Prince of the realm actually coming and mixing with the ordinary soldiers from Britain and the Dominions endeared him to the troops. He wanted to be with the men doing his share of fighting and he argued that if he was killed, his brother Prince Albert would be next in line to take his place. However, the British government was more concerned about the heir to the throne being captured by the Germans and held as a pawn in international politics, so he was relegated to a staff position behind the lines.

The Australian tour consisted of nine days in Victoria, eleven in New South Wales, four in Tasmania, eleven in Western Australia, six in South Australia and eight in Queensland. This heavy agenda and the enthusiasm that greeted him everywhere he went, meant he had to take a week's break from official duties. So too did his hand-shaking ability. In many photographs of the period, Prince Edward is seen shaking hands with his left hand. Having to meet and greet so many people, raise his hat in acknowledgement or as a salute, caused great stress to his already strained hand from the Canadian tour the previous year. He wrote in his memoir that he had to temporally retire his right hand from Imperial service. For example, on 28 May in Melbourne, he shook hands with approximately 20,000 people and was black and blue from the affectionate pats that his future subjects lavished on him.³

If Prince Edward was tired of official functions, balls, hand-shaking and speeches, he also took an unexpected break in his official duties. Heavy rains had weakened a section of the rail line on his journey between Sydney and Perth. On a sharp curve near Jarnadup in Western Australia on 5 July, the royal train derailed and his carriage and one other slid down an embankment and overturned. The Prince was found unhurt and reclining in the wreckage of his luxury coach. He cheerfully remarked, 'at last we have done something that was not on the official program', and even thanked the officials for arranging the 'harmless little railway accident'.

As part of his royal duties he was to mingle with ex-servicemen and women, review parades and award medals. When the war ended, thousands of Australian ex-servicemen, many disabled with physical or emotional wounds, had to be re-integrated into society and Prince Edward made a great impression with those whom he met. Although not mentioned in his memoirs, there was one medal presentation at Government House in Adelaide on 12 July that Prince Edward would have found particularly interesting. As he pinned the Victoria Cross on Corporal Arthur Percy Sullivan's uniform, he gave a big smile, and is reported to have said to Sullivan, 'Aren't you the man who ran away from my father?', referring to the fact that Sullivan had not remained in London for his Victoria Cross investiture by George V.

Arthur Sullivan enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Port Pirie, South Australia on 27 April 1918 and embarked from Melbourne 23 July aboard HMAT *Marathon*. Initially allocated as a reinforcement to the 10th Battalion, on 5 October he was posted to a reserve brigade in the Australian Artillery. Sullivan was promoted to acting corporal on 23 March 1919. The war finished before he was allocated to a unit in France but Sullivan, determined to see active service, volunteered for the British North Russian Relief Force. He was accordingly discharged from the AIF on 12 June and embarked with the BRNF as a member of the 45th Bn, Royal Fusiliers. In June and July 1919 the two brigades of the BRNF, made up of volunteers from at least a dozen countries including Australia, disembarked in Arkhangel in the frozen expanses of northern Russia, and relieved the original 1918

³ Many photographs of Prince Edwards travels were taken by Petty Officer Gordon Harrison from HMS *Renown*. His photograph album was purchased at auction by the Australian High Commission in 2004.

expeditionary force who had now become embroiled in the Russian Civil War.

Fighting a rearguard action on 10 August 1919, members of the relief force came to the River Sheika which was, at that time of the year, more a stinking swamp than a river. The crossing itself was about 300 feet wide, bridged by a series of logs and planks with a rough handrail. A rearguard tried desperately to hold the southern end of the crossing against the swiftly approaching enemy Bolshevik troops while their comrades struggled across in single file as quickly as possible. Among those crossing was a twenty-year-old British lieutenant, Charles Henry Gordon Lennox, Lord Settrington, the eldest son of the Earl of March. A bullet struck the lieutenant in the chest and he tumbled into the swamp. One of the rearguard, Cpl Sullivan, saw him fall in as well as three fusiliers. Sullivan immediately plunged into the swamp and up to his armpits in the black ooze, took hold of the wounded lieutenant and pushed him to the men still on the planks. While still under fire from the Bolsheviks, Sullivan helped two more fusiliers in the same manner but one further away was in dire straits. Sullivan was out of his depth now and unable to reach him so he went back to grab a length of broken handrail and struggled back through the swamp to the drowning man, who succeeded in grasping hold of the handrail. Both men made their way back to the planks to be helped out by their comrades and assisted to the far side of the swamp. The four men would undoubtedly have drowned without Sullivan's assistance. One of the Australians crossing the planks at the time, Pte Heathcote, described the crossing in his memoir: 'Many fell in only slightly wounded but once in that soaking sucking morass there was no escape. I saw some sad sights along the remainder of that swamp. Legs and arms sticking out of the mud and others on their last gasp.'⁴

Upon his return to Britain, Sullivan elected to return directly to Australia and not wait around for his investiture. Sullivan was not the only soldier to win the VC during the North Russian campaign. Another Australian, Sgt Samuel George Pearse, was posthumously awarded the VC for his action against an enemy blockhouse. He was buried at Obozerskaya but the grave today has disappeared.

On 11 October, HMS *Renown* steamed through the mist back into Portsmouth harbour. Prince Edward had been away for 210 days, visited 10 countries, 200 different towns and places and including land and sea, had covered nearly 46,000 miles.⁵ The Australian tour was deemed officially as a great public relations success. Sadly though, the 'Digger Prince' so loved by Australians never really got to know and really appreciate either the people or the country itself. As Prince Edward explains in his book:

I had a fine time in Australia. I liked its bigness, its adventurousness and its courage. But I must admit, without appearing ungrateful, that as personal experience the enjoyment of my journeyings in Australia was somewhat marred by the demands made upon me by the rigorous official schedule. The programme was my master; I did my best to obey. Just as I was beginning to absorb a few elementary facts about some place and to know a few people, the itinerary would reassert itself; I would be obliged to move on.⁵

On 20 January 1936, King George V died and Prince Edward ascended the throne as Edward VIII. Less than a year later, he abdicated the throne to marry his mistress, American socialite

⁴ Ernest Heathcote, 'Aussies in North Russia', AWM PR 89/140, p.12. Heathcote was born in Bathurst, New South Wales and enlisted in the AIF by adding three years to his age, making himself to be aged 16 and using the false name of Fredrick Manning Watson.

⁵ *A King's Story: The Memoirs of HRH The Duke Of Windsor*, Cassell, London, 1951, pp.157-61.

Wallis Simpson, who was divorced from her first husband and in the process of divorcing her second. This constitutional crisis meant as next in line to the throne, Prince Albert was to become King.

In 1937, Arthur Sullivan, now a civilian, was selected to join the Australian military contingent to be present at the coronation of Prince Albert who was to take the title of King George VI. Sullivan was re-enlisted in the Australian Military Forces and sent to London. His first duty in Britain was to hand over to the relatives, for burial, the ashes of his friend Sgt A Evans, VC, DCM of the Lincolnshire Regiment, who had died in Australia. On 9 April 1937, not long after he had handed over the ashes, Sullivan was returning to his quarters at the Wellington Barracks when he slipped and fell heavily, hitting his head against a gutter. He was taken to hospital but died soon after from a fractured skull. In London, Sullivan was accorded a full military funeral and among the dignitaries present were nine VC winners. The future King and Queen telegraphed the Australian High Commissioner in London expressing their condolences at Sullivan's death. His ashes were returned to Sydney and placed in the Northern Suburbs Crematorium in July 1937. A bronze plaque provided by the members of 1937 contingent was later placed on the gates at Wellington Barracks near the spot where he was killed.⁶ His Victoria Cross is currently on display in the Australian War Memorial Hall of Valour in Canberra. The 'Digger' Prince, officially the Duke of Windsor, died at his home in Paris of throat cancer on 28 May 1972.

Special thanks to Peter Burness, Senior Military Historian, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Recommended reading: Michael Challinger, *Anzacs in Arkhangel*, Hardie Grant, Melbourne and London, 2010.

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SOCIETY NOTICES

Copyright Fees for Authors' Articles

Outgoing Federal Treasurer Mr Tim Lyon draws members' attention to the following change of procedure regarding the claiming of copyright fees for contributions to the journal:

The Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) collects copyright fees for educational and government use of *Sabretache* articles. Previously, this money has been collected on your behalf by the Military Historical Society of Australia from CAL and could be claimed back from the MHSA.

Please be aware that this is no longer the case.

The Society will not collect money on your behalf in the future. If you wish to continue to receive copyright fees, you should register with CAL as an individual via:
http://www.copyright.com.au/Creators_Publishers/Writers/Writers_and_CAL.aspx

This process is very simple and takes very little time.

⁶ Wellington Barracks is approximately 300 metres from Buckingham Palace.

***Sabretache* Writers' Prize 2012**

Federal President Mr Rohan Goynes is pleased to announce that the winner of the *Sabretache* Writers' Prize for 2012 is:

- Kristen Alexander (ACT Branch), for her article 'Australian Knights of the Air and their Little Touches of Chivalry'

Heartiest congratulations to Kristen, whose article will appear in *Sabretache* in due course. The Federal Council wishes to acknowledge the generous support of the judging panel, Dr Peter Stanley and Mr Anthony Staunton (QLD Branch), for their time in judging this year's entries.

The *Sabretache* Writers Prize is awarded annually and the details of the 2013 Prize will be announced in the December issue of *Sabretache*.

Closure of the Albury-Wodonga Branch

Temporary Secretary of the Albury-Wodonga branch of the MHSa, Mr Nigel Horne, regrettably announces that owing to steadily decreasing attendances and the lack of members to take up official roles, the Albury-Wodonga Branch of the MHSa has closed.

Remaining members are transferring to correspondence memberships, the PO Box has not been renewed, and branch records will be archived. Any funds held will be donated to the local RSL sub-branch – where the meetings were held – in appreciation for the use of its facilities.

Mr Horne adds that he is extremely disappointed at being faced with the decision: 'For ten years we had a viable, prominent and effective branch. However, it has steadily declined since 2008'.

Mapmaking Service for Articles

Contributors to *Sabretache* who would like maps created specifically for their articles may wish to contact Dr Michael Braund, an experienced cartographer who has offered his services to the journal, at the following email address:

mandolin@webone.com.au

Contributors will not only have the opportunity to have maps designed specifically to suit their articles, but also will be able to avoid any copyright issues arising from the use of maps from other sources.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

World War 1 Volunteer Badges

J K Haken

The Army regularly published orders, first General Orders (GO), then Military Orders (MO), and finally Australian Army Orders (AAO), from Federation until the creation of the Australian Defence Force in 1976,¹ but these rarely included the description of insignia. A notable exception concerned Volunteer Badges issued for service in World War 1, which were the subject of a number of orders issued over several decades. During May 1916, four badges were approved by the Department of Defence;² shortly after, in June, the instructions were cancelled and re-issued in modified form.³ The badges were issued soon after,⁴ and are described with their entitlements as follows.

Badge, Volunteer, Home Service

(Fig.1, woven version.) The badge was issued to persons aged 18 to 45, and to those over 45 employed by the Defence Dept, who had volunteered for active service overseas, but who had been informed in writing by the Defence Dept that permission to serve was withheld owing to their services being required in Australia. The badge was issued to medical or veterinary students on signing an agreement that they would be available for active service immediately they passed the final examination. The badge was not issued to first-year students.



Fig.1 Home Service Badge – woven version



Fig.2 Medically Unfit Badge

Badge, Volunteer, Medically Unfit

(Fig.2.) The badge was issued to persons of military age who had volunteered since 1 July 1915 for active service outside Australia, but who had been certified by a duly qualified medical officer to be medically unfit for such service.

¹ D. Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, Oxford UP, Melbourne, 2001.

² MO 230/1916.

³ MO 279/1916; *Adelaide Register*, 1 June 1916, p.6.

⁴ *Hobart Mercury*, 22 June 1916, p.5; *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 12 September 1916, p.22.

Badge, Volunteers, Munitions Worker

(Fig.3.) The badge was issued to persons who had volunteered for active service but had been informed in writing by the Secretary, Munitions Committee, or in the case of Defence Dept employees, by the Secretary, Defence Dept, that they had been debarred from enlisting; also to persons who had enlisted but had been discharged prior to embarkation for overseas, their services being required for the manufacture of munitions. Munitions workers who had volunteered for active service and found medically unfit were not eligible to receive the badge.

Badge, Discharged Returned Soldier

(Fig.4.) The badge was issued to officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men who had returned to Australia from active service and had been discharged, excepting those who had been sent back for misconduct or suffering from a disease brought about by their own neglect.



Fig.3 Munitions Worker Badge



Fig.4 Returned Soldier Badge

Regulations and Conditions

All badges remained the property of the Commonwealth of Australia. The first three badges were not issued to men with manifest disease or deformity. Any unauthorised person wearing any of the badges, or any badge so nearly resembling such badge intended to deceive, or any person without lawful authority supplying a badge, was guilty of an offence against the War Protection Act 1914-1915. Any person without written authority of a competent military authority, who sold, bartered, exchanged, traded in, gave away or in any way whatsoever disposed of or dealt in any badge, or any colourable imitation of such a badge, was guilty against the same Act. Further, any person who offered or exposed for sale any of the badges was guilty of an offence under the Act. Any merchant, trader, dealer or shopkeeper on whose behalf or whose place of business any of the badges were offered or exposed for sale or sold, exchanged, traded or disposed of contrary to the regulations of the Act, was guilty of an offence.

Particular care was emphasised in the issue of badges, which were to be numbered and recorded by specified authorities with registers with provision for recipients' signatures. Employees who were subsequently permitted to enlist in the Australian Military Forces, or

who resigned or were discharged from the service for which they were granted either a Home Service or Munitions Worker Badge, had to return the badge to the officer who issued it. The penalty for failure to return the badge was 20 pounds.⁵

The badges were available in Hobart from 22 June 1916, and presumably in other states about the same time.⁶ In July 1916 discharged nurses became entitled to the Discharged Returned Soldier Badge.⁷ During August 1916 the Home Service and Discharged Returned Soldier Badges were issued in woven form. The Returned Soldier's badge was to be worn one inch (25mm) below the sleeve head of the jacket or greatcoat, half of the khaki material to show on each side of the badge. A long list of medical conditions for which the badge was not issued was published.⁸ On 25 November 1916, woven arm badges were authorised for medically unfit volunteers. The wearing of the badge was optional.⁹

It was observed during 1921 that some members of the Permanent Forces who had volunteered for active service, but whose services had been required in Australia, were still wearing the Home Service arm badge. As the British War Medal had by then been awarded to persons who had unconditionally volunteered for active service abroad, it was notified that when the ribbon of the British War Medal was worn on military uniform, the arm badge should not be worn.¹⁰ These instructions were subsequently cancelled, without comment, on 31 August 1934.¹¹

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VALE, JOHN KEEGAN

One of military history's better-known identities, Sir John Keegan, passed away on 2 August 2012, aged 78. The following is extracted from his obituary in the *Guardian*, 5 August:

‘Sir John Keegan ... possessed a rare ability to describe warfare from the standpoint of the frontline soldier. For this he depended in great part on imagination, since poor health prevented him from wearing a uniform. ... His third book, *The Face of Battle* (1976), made his name as a fine writer and is still widely regarded as his best despite more than 20 other works. He portrayed the life of the common soldier in three great British battles: Agincourt (1415), Waterloo (1815) and the Somme (1916). He used original sources to bring out the physical and mental aspects of warfare, including bloodlust, fear, comradeship and the ugliness, dirt and even stink of the battlefield. ... In 1986 Keegan joined the *Daily Telegraph* as defence correspondent, later defence editor until his death. The books continued to appear in a steady, prizewinning stream. ... Histories of both world wars, of military intelligence and *War in Our World*, the printed version of his Reith lectures of 1998, added to an impressive body of work. Keegan was knighted in 2000 and further honoured with membership of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.’

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⁵ MO 279/1916; *Adelaide Register*, 1 June 1916, p.6.

⁶ *Hobart Mercury*, 22 June 1916, p.5; *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 12 September 1916, p.22.

⁷ MO 314/1916.

⁸ MO 395/1916.

⁹ MO 532/1916.

¹⁰ MO 208/1921.

¹¹ AAO 181/134.

A THORN IN THE FOOT OF THE ‘WOULD-BE’ JAPANESE EMPIRE: A SUMMARY OF AIR RAIDS ON THE AUSTRALIAN MAINLAND

Bill Appleton¹

Phase One, December 1941 to 19 February 1942: ‘Out of a Blue Sky, the Dark Cloud Came Rolling’

At the close of 1941 decisions were made to provide anti-aircraft defence to Rabaul in the form of two 3-inch guns, and to reinforce the batteries at Port Moresby and Darwin with additional 3.7-inch static mounted guns. Fighter aircraft were simply not available. Japan had not yet entered the war, Singapore was in place, and the situation was not generally taken seriously.

However, the ‘dark cloud’ did start rolling. It rolled from Kota Bahru, down the Malay peninsula towards Singapore. It rolled across the Philippines, confining Gen MacArthur in Corregidor, and it moved across the Dutch East Indies. False alarms were common, caused by occurrences such as an unidentified floatplane being sighted over Goulburn Island, which is some 200 miles from Darwin. These alerts were quite unnecessary and, during daylight hours, were an unwarranted interruption to routine work in the town, on the waharves and to all service sites and camps.

- 10 January 1942: HMS *Repulse* and HMS *Prince of Wales* sunk by Japanese aircraft.
- 20 January 1942: Japanese submarine *J124* sunk by HMAS *Deloraine*, USS *Edsell* and USS *Alden* south of Bathurst Island.

Phase Two, 19 February to 16 March 1942: ‘All, all alone’

During this phase the only air defence of Darwin or, for that matter, Adelaide or Perth, was the AA guns. Except for the P40 of Major Pell, which was destroyed in the second raid, all aircraft had been put out of action early in the first raid. The Japanese raids during this phase were intended firstly to neutralise the port of Darwin, and secondly, to prevent any withdrawal of forces to the Australian mainland and from there regroup and mount a counterattack on conquered territory. No attempt was made to invade or occupy mainland Australia at this stage, due to commitments in China and a shortage of shipping. By occupying a chain of presumably undefended islands as far east as Fiji and establishing suitable bases, Australia would be isolated and finally occupied at leisure.

The definition of an air raid has so far not been stated. A distinction has been made between a reconnaissance, whether armed or not, and a raid where bombs were dropped or strafing occurred. The prefix ‘A’ indicates a raid on the Darwin Fortress area. The prefix ‘B’ indicates a raid generally accepted as within the Darwin ‘area’ – lying roughly between Humpty-Doo and Hayes Creek (Fenton and Long Airstrips) – but outside the Fortress area. The prefix ‘C’ indicates raids on the remainder of the Australian mainland. Reconnaissance intrusions have not been listed even though defensive action by fighter aircraft and/or anti-aircraft artillery was initiated.

¹ Bill Appleton served during World War 2 in the 2nd Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, and now lives in the ACT.

Raid no.	Date	Time	Force B=bombers F=fighters	Target
A1	19 Feb 42	0958	152B, 36F	Darwin harbour, town and RAAF, 8 ships sunk
A2	19 Feb 42	1200	54B	RAAF
C1	3 Mar 42	?	?	Broome, 24 aircraft destroyed, 70 killed
C2	3 Mar 42	?	?	Wyndham, 1 aircraft destroyed, 1 ship sunk
A3	4 Mar 42	1234	8F	RAAF, Winellie
A4	16 Mar 42	1432	2B, 7F	RAAF

- 17 March 1942: 9th Squadron of US Army Air Force 49th Pursuit Group arrives at Batchelor.

Phase Three, 16 March to 24 April 1942: 'The Yanks are Here'

The arrival of the P40 fighters vastly improved the defences and, although dogfighting tactics were employed at first, it was soon realised that keeping a standing patrol over the RAAF area at about 20,000 feet gave the P40s an initial height advantage over the light, fast agile and cannon-armed 'Zekes', and results became more favourable. Improvement in the operation of the Long Range Early Warning Radar made the provision of a standing patrol unnecessary.

Raid no.	Date	Time	Force B=bombers F=fighters	Target
A5	16 Mar 42	?	14B	RAAF, 2 killed 4 wounded
A6	19 Mar 42	1246	7B	Larrakeyah
C3	20 Mar 42	?	?B?F	Broome, 1 killed
C4	20 Mar 42	?	8F	Wyndham
C5	20 Mar 42	?	2F	Derby
B1	22Mar 42	1130	?B	Katherine
A7	22 Mar 42	1130	2F	RAAF
A8	28 Mar 42	1330	7B	RAAF
A9	30 Mar 42	1541	7B	RAAF
A10	31 Mar 42	1314	2 flights	RAAF
A11	31 Mar 42	2200	3B	RAAF
A12	2 Apr 42	1533	7B 3F	Darwin township
A13	4 Apr 42	1347	7B 6F	Civil aerodrome, Parap
A14	5 Apr 42	1213	7B 4F	RAAF

- 18 April 1942: Attack on Japanese mainland by B25s under command of Col Jimmy Doolittle. As a result, fighter aircraft withdrawn to Japanese mainland.
- 22 April 1942: 'Sparrow Force' contacts Darwin from Timor.

Phase Four, 25 April to 23 August 1942: A Sledgehammer to Crack a Peanut

The Betty bomber was no lightweight. Originally designed for four engines, development of a larger engine allowed its redesign to be quite effective with two. It reportedly carried a one-tonne bombload from Dili to Darwin confidently. Appropriately the first of these heavy raids was on Anzac Day 1942.

Raid no.	Date	Time	Force B=bombers F=fighters	Target
A15	25 Apr 42	?	24B ?F	RAAF
A16	27 Apr 42	1200	17B 9F	RAAF

- 4-8 May 1942: Coral Sea Battle. Japanese lose carrier *Shoho*; US lose carrier *Lexington* with carrier *Yorktown* badly damaged. Japanese forces retreat.
- 31 May 1942: USS Chicago attacked in Sydney Harbour by Japanese midget submarines.
- 4-5 June 1942: Battle of Midway Island. Japanese lose four carriers: *Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Hiryu* and *Soryu*. – the same carriers which attacked Darwin. US lose carrier *Yorktown*.

Raid no.	Date	Time	Force B=bombers F=fighters	Target
A17	13 Jun 42	pm	27B 12F	RAAF
A18	14 Jun 42	am	18-25F	nil
A19	15 Jun 42	1130	27B3F	Oil tanks
A20	16 Jun 42	1200	2B ?F	Oil tanks
A21	25 Jul 42	2045	3B	Narrows
	25 Jul 42	2300	3B	Raid aborted – no report of bombs
C6	26 Jul 42	0100	2 Emily flying boats from Rabaul	Townsville
A22	26 Jul 42	2130	3B	Vesteys
A23	27 Jul 42	2215	1 flight	RAAF, Knuckeyes S/L
C7	28 Jul 42	?	1 Emily flying boat	Townsville
A24	28 Jul 42	0120	3B	RAAF
C8	29 Jul 42	?	1 Emily flying boat	Townsville
A25	29 Jul 42	0455	6B	Oval, Knuckeyes S/L
A26	30 Jul 42	0415	3B	Civil aerodrome
A27	30 Jul 42	1330	25B 12-20F	RAAF

Phase Five, 23 August 1942 to 17 January 1943: 'None Shall Sleep'

- August 1942: 76 and 77 RAAF Squadrons arrive at Strauss and Livingston Strips. 31 Sqn Beaufighters to Coomalie Creek.

Taking over from the 49th Pursuit Group, the RAAF squadrons also at first attempted to dogfight the Zeke, but quickly developed confidence in the Early Warning Radar. While Hughes was heavily bombed in daylight, the fighter strips were unmolested, and night raids continued with each full moon. Rumour accounted for the heavy daylight raids as a by-product of bomber deliveries to the Solomons. This rumour was supported by reports of the raids ceasing, to be followed a day or two later by a heavy raid on Port Moresby.

Raid no.	Date	Time	Force B=bombers F=fighters	Target
B2	23 Aug 42	1155	27B 15F	Hughes Field
A28	23 Aug 42	2101	2B	Leanyah
B3	23 Aug 42	2200	1B	Noonamah
A29	25 Aug 42	2359	2B	Civil aerodrome
B4	27 Aug 42	?	4B	Cox Peninsula
A30	27 Aug 42	0215	2 flights	Botanic Gardens
A31	30 Aug 42	0239	6B	Oil tanks
B5	31 Aug 42	0415	3B	Cox Peninsula
A32	24 Sep 42	0315	?	Berrimah gunsite, S/L
A33	25 Sep 42	0414	?	NE of oval
B6	26 Sep 42	0519	?	Hughes, Livingstone
B7	27 Sep 42	0441	?	Bynoe Bay
A34	27 Sep 42	0522	?	South of oval
B8	24 Oct 42	0402	?	Batchelor, Pell Field
A35	24 Oct 42	0457	?	RAAF
A36	24 Oct 42	0615	?	RAAF
A37	25 Oct 42	0509	?	Ludmilla Creek
A38	26 Oct 42	0504	?	Naval HQ, Don Hotel
A39	27 Oct 42	0220	?	?
A40	23 Nov 42	0315	18B	?
A41	25 Nov 42	1115	3B	?
B9	26 Nov 42	0420	8 x 3B	Coomalie Creek
A42	26 Nov 42	0420	8 x 3B	Darwin town
A43	29 Nov 42	1216	6B	SW of Berrimah

- 17 January 1942: Spitfire squadrons (codenamed Capstan) arrive. 54 Sqn RAF to Civil aerodrome. 452 Sqn RAAF to Strauss. 457 Sqn RAAF to Livingstone.

Phase Six, 17 January to 12 November 1943: The Wheel Turns

B24 Liberator bombers now operated from Fenton and Long, ranging as far as Rabaul. Strips at Millingimbie and Kalumburu were used to refuel Spitfires and Beaufighters, thereby extending their range.

Raid no.	Date	Time	Force B=bombers F=fighters	Target
A44	20 Jan 43	0015	?	Ironstone S/L
B10	20 Jan 43	1520	16B	Coomalie Creek
A45	20 Jan 43	2340	2B	Francis Bay
A46	15 Mar 43	1114	24B 25F	Oil tanks
A47	2 May 43	0952	21B 20F	RAAF
B11	9 May 43	1110	7 'Sally'	Millingimbie
B12	10 May 43	1043	9 'Zeke'	Millingimbie
B13	28 May 43	?	8 'Betty' 6 'Zeke'	Millingimbie
A48	20 Jun 43	1048	27B 21F	Winellie, Fort Hill
A49	23 Jun 43	1100	9B 9F	East Point
B14	6 Jul 43	1115	27B 21F	Fenton
B15	16 Jul 43	1200	27B 21F	Fenton
B16	20 Jul 43	2140	9B	Fenton and Long
B17	20 Jul 43	2246	9B	Coomalie Creek
B18	21 Aug 43	0314	?	Fenton, Pell and Coomalie Creek
B19	16 Sep 43	0003	9B	Fenton and Long
B20	19 Sep 43	0323	?	Fenton and Long
B21	27 Sep 43	1033	22B ?F	Kalumburu Mission
A50	2 Nov 43	0345	?	Parap and RAAF
B22	12 Nov 43	0540	?	Batchelor and Coomalie Creek

Summary: Raids on Fortress area (A) – 50
 Raids within Territory (B) – 22
 Other mainland raids (C) – 8
 Total mainland raids – 80