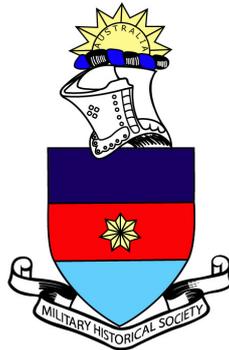


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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

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

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

www.mhsa.org.au

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

EDITORIAL

On a recent trip to Sydney I had the opportunity to catch up with a dear friend and fellow Society member, Captain Tony Walker (retd). We had a good time discussing various topics of mutual interest: Australian Army colour patches – which inspired my contribution to the Collectors' Corner column in this issue; the Sydney Roosters – whom Tony, as a long-time supporter, still calls Easts; and an idea of his which I think might have 'legs' as far as *Sabretache* readers are concerned. Waving a rather thick tome in front of me, he declared, 'We should have an Australian version of this!' The book was *World War II: 4,139 Strange and Fascinating Facts*, by D. McCombs and F.L. Worth (Wing Books, New York, 1983). At first glance it looked like one of those items found in the remainder baskets in front of a newsagency, but once I had overcome that prejudice, I could see his point.

As you might imagine, the book is full of information presented in bite-size chunks: potted biographies of major figures; battles and campaigns described in a paragraph; lists of various kinds; all in alphabetical order by subject. So you can discover that actor Robert Mitchum was discharged from military service because he claimed six dependants; that the *Ilmen* and *Kola* were two Soviet ships accidentally sunk by the submarine USS *Swordfish* in 1943; and that sixteen was both the number of B25s in Jimmy Doolittle's air-raid on Tokyo and the number of P38s on the mission that shot down Japanese Admiral Yamamoto's plane. Not surprising, perhaps, is that entries involving Australia's participation in the conflict are few and flawed. We are told under 'Balikpapan, Borneo', for example, that on 'the last D Day invasion of World War II' the Australian 77th Division (sic) landed 'under the personal command of General Douglas MacArthur' (p.38).

An Australian version, says Tony, instead of listing American cartoonist Bill Mauldin, would include Alex Gurney, creator of the comic strip *Bluey and Curly*. Rather than reading about American singer Kate Smith, we would find out about Donald Smith, the Australian tenor reported missing in action in New Guinea but who turned up alive and went on to an illustrious postwar career. Instead of John F. Kennedy and *PT109*, we would learn about the heroism of Lt Cdr Robert Rankin and HMAS *Yarra*. And what about the politicians who served and the service personnel who became politicians? Then there are the photographers, reporters and historians: Silk, Parer, Hurley, Long, Wilmot; the entertainers: Rafferty, Pate, Finch, Tingwell; the sporting stars: test cricketers, Wallabies, Kangaroos, Olympians, AFL players; the women of note: Sisters Savage and Bullwinkel, and the founders of the women's and support services; the VC and other gallantry winners; not to mention the tanks, planes, ships and other hardware and equipment, as well as the campaigns, battles, camps, training grounds ... and so it goes.

Yes, there are Wikipedia and other online resources, but there is an element of instability and uncertainty about internet sites and their content. What then for cultural memory if all we have to rely on is the internet? Tony suggests that the collection would be lent gravitas and continuity if it were published in the same format as the official histories of WW2. The volume would sit comfortably next to those works and be could consulted and updated accordingly. It's worth a shot, and what better source of information than readers of *Sabretache*? So please send in your contributions, and from time to time you may see some of them appear in a special column in the journal. And from there – who knows? Here's looking forward to the production of an *Australian World War 2 Factfinder*.

Paul Skrebels

THE EDGE OF THE STORM: COOKTOWN, CAIRNS AND TOWNSVILLE AT WAR

Keith Richmond

In the dark days of 1942 and 1943, the war in the Pacific impacted significantly on Australia. Yet in comparison with many other theatres of war, the damage remained limited – shelling of coastal cities, submarine activity, and some air attacks. In the north, aerial attacks assumed a definite pattern – the brunt was taken by Darwin (bombed 64 times with over 200 deaths¹), along with various Northern Territory airfields, and areas of the Western Australian coast, especially Broome (with over 80 deaths). Far North Queensland (FNQ) fared better: while often overflown by reconnaissance aircraft, the highly vulnerable Horn Island off the tip of Cape York was attacked on ten occasions, Townsville was bombed only three times, while Cooktown and Cairns suffered no raids although an aircraft off course bombed outside of Mossman, north of Cairns, causing one casualty. Amusingly, the Axis news broadcasts claimed that the bombing of Townsville was a disaster for the Allies – Radio Tokyo said in early August 1942 that raids had been some of ‘the heaviest since the fall of Singapore’, while Radio Berlin in early September claimed that Townsville had been evacuated because of the ‘particularly violent Japanese raids’.²

FNQ was saved in part because of its geography – Horn Island and Cooktown were presumably perceived as minor threats, Cairns was just within bombing range of the Japanese Mavis aircraft but there was a reluctance to stray so far south, while Townsville, being 1086km from Port Moresby, was outside the normal range of the enemy. And yet the string of airstrips from Townsville north must have been of concern to the Japanese a relatively short distance away. This article seeks to review the preparations for war in FNQ, and as a second strand, to sketch some of the dislocation that occurred with the influx of both US and Australian troops. As a minor theme it will also look at the tensions that arose because of the presence of black US troops at a time when Australia was firmly in the grip of its White Australia policy.³

Preparations for War

The attack on Pearl Harbor introduced a sense of urgency to preparations for war. From that date there were restrictions on commercial broadcasting stations transmitting at night, air raid shelters were built in main business districts, some minefields were laid and plans were made to establish a flying boat base at Cairns.⁴ Australia was recognised as the logical springboard for American troops to force their way to Japan, and attention turned to infrastructure needs.⁵

In early January 1942, Major General George Brett said US Forces in Australia (USFIA) wanted major air bases at Darwin, Townsville and Brisbane in order to ‘build up the defensive capacity of Australia to make it a second England’.⁶ Initially the intention was to establish airstrips and roads to launch attacks against the Japanese in the Philippines (that is, using

¹ Other reports say 65 times.

² ‘Reports on Axis Radio on the Townsville Bombing Raids’, www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/tokyorose.htm.

³ As the terms ‘African American’ and ‘Caucasian’ were not used in the war years the original terms ‘black’ and ‘white’ will be used to highlight the racial issues of the time.

⁴ Timothy Bottoms, ‘Defending the North: Frontline Cairns (1940-1946) – an historical overview’, *etropic: electronic journal of studies in the tropics*, vol.8 (2009), <http://www.jcu.edu.au/etropic>, p.1.

⁵ Albert Palazzo, ‘Projecting Power: The Development of Queensland as a Base for War’, *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, vol.19, no.6, May 2006, pp.878-891.

⁶ Hugh Casey, *Airfield and Base Development, Volume VI, Engineers of the Southwest Pacific 1941-45*, US Army Forces in the Far East, Washington DC, 1951, p.3.

Darwin as a base and staging to the west) but the rapid enemy advances put paid to this and so attention turned to facing the Japanese in New Guinea (using bases in the north, including Queensland and the Northern Territory hinterland, to stage northwards). With the intensity of air raids on Darwin, it was relegated to being a significant port and attention turned to making a major air base at Brisbane, while Townsville was to become a secondary base.⁷

The demand for bases was part of a suite of requests – prior to Pearl Harbor, Brett had decided that American aircraft would be shipped in kit form to Brisbane and Townsville then assembled at Townsville and flown to the support of the Philippines by way of Cloncurry, Daly Waters and Darwin. Later Townsville was selected as one of the links of the South Pacific ferry route, flying US aircraft across the Pacific. In October 1941 following US requests, Australian engineers did some expansion of civil airfields at Rabaul, Port Moresby, Darwin and Townsville to handle heavy bombers. Then in November 1941 General Brereton had talks with Australian Air Force officials concerning the proposed ferry route: agreement was reached to upgrade airstrips at locations including Townsville, Mareeba, Charters Towers and Port Moresby, although the Japanese attack occurred before much work could be undertaken.⁸ Then there was a need for supplementary air bases to form the line of the Inland Ferry Route to enable the flying of aircraft from Melbourne to Cloncurry. As late as May 1942, there were only three airfields in the north that could accept Flying Fortresses and Marauders: Garbutt, Horn Island and Port Moresby; and indeed, when General Brereton had arrived in Australia in November 1941, he could not fly his personal Fortress beyond Brisbane.⁹ From January 1942 onward, ports in Queensland were designated as links on the ship shuttle service from the southern ports, thus requiring urgent dredging operations at Townsville, Cairns and other centres.

To construct airfields, roads and other projects, an Allied Works Council was formed from representatives of US services, civilians, the Australian Army and the RAAF and this body coordinated all civilian activity on military projects, while the Civil Construction Corps controlled civilian manpower such as plumbers and carpenters. To this mix was added the services of Royal Australian Engineer units, the US Navy Construction Battalions or Seabees, and the RAAF engineer units of its Works Wing.¹⁰ From December 1941, RAAF Advanced Operational Bases began to be developed at bases including Cairns, Townsville, and Cooktown, as well as a host of other now largely forgotten sites including Coen, Higgins, Elliot, and Iron Range. Subsequently a number of emergency fields were constructed all the way to the Cape.¹¹ Americans intent on establishing quick links found not only limited men and building materials. There was a baffling array of rail gauges and under-developed ports, plus an inability to rail goods from Adelaide to Darwin. Any roads used for military purposes needed serious re-building.¹² Union control of vital industries such as ship loading led to continuing frustration.¹³ The area of FNQ became known as Base Section 2, and a selection of projects

⁷ Hugh Casey, *Engineers in Theatre Operations, Volume I, Engineers of the Southwest Pacific*, US Army Forces in the Far East, Washington DC, 1947, p.36.

⁸ Eric Bergerud, *Fire in the Sky: The Air War in the South Pacific*, Westview, Boulder CO, 2000, pp.53, 55.

⁹ Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, AWM, Canberra, 1962, pp.185 and 520

¹⁰ Casey, *Airfield and Base Development*, pp.8-9.

¹¹ Bottoms, p. 1; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 1954, p.1; 'Military Airfields in Australia and the Western Pacific During World War II', www.ozatwar.com/airfields.htm

¹² As General Chamberlin on Macarthur's staff expressed it, 'Everything that is developed is on a miniature scale', quoted in Palazzo, p.881.

¹³ For a discussion of problems in construction at this time, see Casey, *Engineers in Theatre Operations*, pp.32-35. For union activity on the waterfront, see Bottoms, p.5. As an example of US ingenuity overcoming union

undertaken include the following.

By early 1942, engineers had built airstrips at Woodstock south of Townsville, and to the north at Reid River and Torrens Creek. Other strips followed at Charters Towers 135km from Townsville, at Mareeba near Cairns, and Horn Island. In August 1942 there was still a demand for 32 runways at 22 airfields although by December 1943 there were 28 airfields in Queensland (mostly around Townsville) and another nine around Darwin and a few near Perth.¹⁴ The massive Garbutt airfield at Townsville was completed by January 1943, complete with half a million square feet of covered storage and the air depot doubled in size during 1943-1944. Satellite strips for Garbutt included Bohle River, Aitkenvale, Ross River, Antil Plains, Breddon, Charters Towers and Woodstock.¹⁵

Transport was always difficult in the north. An Inland Defence Road from Ipswich to Townsville was commenced in late 1942, although it was not able to be completed. The only link between Townsville and Cairns was the inadequate rail system and the coastal road which was impassable in the wet.¹⁶ Cairns was selected for shipbuilding operations and the assembly line facility became fully operational in July 1943, constructing an average of 5.5 LCVPs (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel) per day. It is claimed some 1000 LCVPs were constructed at Cairns.¹⁷

To cope with the expected 9000 hospital beds needed,¹⁸ a 480-bed hospital was constructed in Townsville by the simple method of taking over a city block and joining the houses together. A 450-bed hospital was built in Aitkenvale in Townsville's west, and 250-bed hospitals operated at Charters Towers, Woodstock, Cloncurry, Mareeba and Cairns. A 1200-bed hospital was established on the Atherton Tablelands at Rocky Creek in 1943¹⁹, and two smaller hospitals were erected by naval construction battalions in Townsville, one of 100-bed capacity and the other of 120 beds. In late 1944, prefabricated hospitals were built at Jungara near Cairns and at Black River, 15 miles north of Townsville. In early 1944 a hospital was built at Ross River near Townsville.²⁰

In addition, stores depots and cold storage facilities were constructed, as were ammunition facilities, major fuel dumps at Cairns and Townsville, a major steam laundry and a horse remount centre. Also, naval construction included a new naval air station at Palm Island north of Townsville and a naval base at Cairns for PT boats (including US Motor Torpedo Boat Base 4).²¹ By the end of 1943, the war had moved on and it was no longer necessary to boost the weak infrastructure in Base Section 2, so new construction slowed and eventually stopped.²²

intransigence, see the actions of Karl Polifka in Glen Infield, *Unarmed and Unafraid*, Macmillan, New York, 1970, p.103.

¹⁴ Bergerud, pp.59-60.

¹⁵ Palazzo, p.887, says there were approaching 200 airstrips and emergency fields in Queensland.

¹⁶ Casey, *Airfield and Base Development*, pp.31-32.

¹⁷ Casey, *ibid*, pp.32-35. Also see US Army, *History of the Second Engineer Special Brigade: US Army, World War II*, The Telegraph Press, Harrisburg PA, 1946, pp.25 and 30, where it describes the joint exercises between the US engineers and the Australian 9th Division at Trinity Beach. It also suggests that some 30-40 LCVPs were being built a day!

¹⁸ Casey, *Engineers in Theatre Operations*, p.54.

¹⁹ Palazzo, p.886, says Rocky Creek had five hospitals and 5000 beds.

²⁰ Casey, *Airfield and Base Development*, p.36.

²¹ Vera Bradley, *I Didn't Know That: Cairns and Districts, Tully to Cape York, 1939-1946, Service Personnel and Civilians*, Boolarong Press, Brisbane, 1995, p.214.

²² Casey, *Airfield and Base Development*, pp.36-42.

Cooktown

Cooktown has always been a town of limited size, restricted because of frequent cyclone activity and problems of access. As it was the last centre of any size before the Cape, it became a significant early warning centre for the Allies. Beyond Cooktown to the Cape, there were both established and emergency strips as noted above. Some of these strips had sizeable aircraft protection, such as Horn Island with both US and RAAF fighter squadrons,²³ while the Iron Range airstrip housed the 90th Bombardment Group (Heavy).²⁴

In 1939 there were no roads connecting Cooktown with the south so supplies were brought in by boat; there was no public electricity or water supply and no telephone link. By early 1942 both the white and Aboriginal populations were evacuated to the south and only about 40 locals remained with some 300 servicemen.²⁵ In 1937 an airstrip known as the Civil Drome was established and by 1940 it warranted a garrison of soldiers to guard it. The strip also gathered around it a weather station and a radio station (Airadio Station Cooktown). Much earlier in 1913, Cooktown Maritime Radio was set up as part of AWA's national network of stations to make contact with ships at sea, and in 1939 the RAN established a War Signals Station to identify all ships passing, with the information being sent to naval headquarters in Melbourne. In October 1940 No 24 Squadron with Wirraways arrived at the Civil Drome, and four Hudson bombers came a few days later. The extra aircraft additional to the civilian Dragon Rapides meant that the strip needed upgrading if it was to function as a military base and little was achieved until the Japanese invasion at Pearl Harbor. Within weeks the strip was upgraded and associated works including bomb storage and installation of fuel storages completed, and in January 1942 the RAAF took control of the base.

Early 1942 saw much activity: the arrival of men of 51st Aust Infantry Battalion to guard Cooktown (all their heavy equipment such as trucks had to be sent by barge), a field survey company arrived to create maps of the area, and an HF/DF radio station was established to detect aircraft. Cooktown increasingly acted as a vital re-arming, re-fuelling and staging point for aircraft moving to or returning from New Guinea, with some wounded being transferred to the local hospital. The role of the air base was especially vital during the battle of the Coral Sea, by which stage there were three Hudsons on the base. To protect the Civil Drome US anti-aircraft units arrived in mid-May, and 3 US Army Hospital unit came at about the same time. Later from April 1943 to September 1944, the Americans set up FRUDETS (Fleet Radio Detachment of the Seventh Fleet), a unit designed to listen in on enemy radio transmissions. As well, an Air Sea rescue launch service operated from January 1944.

Given the inadequacies of the Civil Drome an alternative was urgently needed and what became known as the Mission strip was brought into operation by the end of 1942. Mostly the USAAF used the Mission strip while RAAF aircraft stayed at the Civil Drome.²⁶ Slowly elements associated with the Civil Drome were transferred to the Mission strip: this included the US 15th Weather Squadron that arrived in the area in September 1942, and No 44 RDF (radar) Station that became fully operational in January 1943. Fear of a Japanese resurgence in Dutch New

²³ 'Horn Island', at www.airforce.gov.au/raafmuseum/research/bases/horn_island.htm, and 'Military Units at Horn Island Qld During World War II', at www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/muhornisland.htm.

²⁴ Alan Powell, *The Shadow's Edge: Australia's Northern War*, Melbourne UP, Melbourne, 1992, pp.160-162.

²⁵ For the role of Cooktown see Don Sinclair and John Shay (eds), *Cooktown at War: A Record of Activities in Cooktown During World War Two*, Cooktown and District Historical Society, Cooktown, 1997/2005, passim, and Bradley, p.119.

²⁶ Roger Marks, *Queensland Airfields World War II – Fifty Years On*, Roger Marks, Mansfield Qld, 1994, p.40.

Guinea in March 1943 forced work to be done on improvements such as splinter-proof pens.²⁷ Mission strip saw a range of aircraft over the period, including Beauforts, Vultee Vengeances and Lockheed Venturas.²⁸

In its isolated state, Cooktown boasted only rough living for its 350 residents. It had little of anything whether beer, water or accommodation. Yet segregation persisted – the black soldiers were excluded from the best café in town. But for the most part all suffered in the same and demanding environment.²⁹

Cairns

If Cooktown was the early warning centre then Cairns was the vital intermediate link – it was the advance centre with limited fighting capacity and with access to a significant training area including the Australian Army's Jungle Training Establishment on the Atherton Tablelands. Its population in 1941 was 15,700 after some 5-7000 residents were evacuated, including nearly 80% of all children, and a further 6780 Italian-Australians were interned as were Japanese-Australians. Then in January 1942 a further 1000 women and children were evacuated.³⁰

The main role of Cairns lay in air services; 24 Squadron was based there from mid-1941 and later 75 Squadron arrived.³¹ Cairns was also a major refuelling point on the coastal air service route to cater for the influx of US aircraft, and Air Vice Marshal Bostock approved the continuation of both Cairns and Cooktown as refuelling points in June 1942, although work on splinter-proof revetments ceased at Cairns at that time. However, the lack of an all-weather strip became urgent through most of 1942 with urgent demands for this upgrading being voiced in July, September and October. By the end of 1943 the Cairns strip had expanded into an all-weather three-runway airfield.³² The importance of the airfield meant that the US 565th Air Warning Battalion, the 41st Troop Carrier Squadron, and RAAF 10 Local Air Supply Unit were all based there. By March 1944 a new bomb handling jetty was constructed. On 7 May 1942 the RAAF withdrew its Catalinas from Port Moresby to Bowen: squadrons were also based at Trinity inlet. In November 1942, two squadrons, Nos 11 and 20, moved to Cairns.³³ Martin Mariner flying boats arrived in July 1944.³⁴

Cairns was close to the Grafton Passage, a route through the Barrier Reef, with access to New Guinea.³⁵ Shipbuilding and port facilities were important, and it offered a mooring site for PT boats. Other units included the US 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, a unit of the Australian artillery that arrived in December 1942 and the US 411 Engineer Base Shop Battalion. Also, the Cairns Harbour Board organised the construction of facilities for a 40-man radar unit at Fitzroy Island.³⁶ The Atherton Tablelands played a vital role in training and as a rest area. On occasions the numbers of troops in training there reached 100,000 and the average over time was 40,000.³⁷ Cairns was also important in the growing of agricultural produce for the

²⁷ Marks, *ibid.*

²⁸ Bradley, p.121.

²⁹ Sinclair and Shay, pp.23, 27, 28-29, 31.

³⁰ Bottoms, p.2.

³¹ Marks, p.45.

³² Casey, *Airfield and Base Development*, p.29.

³³ 'Cairns', at www.cairnsblog.net/2009/12/history-bites-cat.

³⁴ Marks, pp.44 and 47. Also Historical Soc of Cairns, *Catalina Sorties from Cairns 1942-1945*, 1981, pp.1 & 3.

³⁵ Casey, *Airfield and Base Development*, p.22.

³⁶ Bottoms, pp.4 and 13.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.4.

servicemen. It became the centre of a large-scale research study headed by Brigadier Fairley into the treatment of malaria, and some 900 men volunteered to test anti-malarial substances.³⁸

Cairns was also vital as a training ground for undercover work, with General Blamey approving a new training camp at Cairns in June 1942. This was known officially as Z Experimental Station (ZES) and it occupied a large house known as 'Fairview Farm' or more familiarly the 'House on the Hill', a short distance out of Cairns (the site is now a block of units complete with commemorative plaques). Trainees were able to conduct jungle training in the scrub around the house, and learn to use limpet mines in the town swimming baths. The facility was taken over in 1944 by NEFIS (Netherlands Forces Intelligence Services). Inter Services Liaison Department (ISD) established a communications net in June 1942, with stations at Darwin, operated by the Dutch, and Cairns run by ISD and Secret Intelligence Australia. The ISD recruited members from the three services to conduct missions behind enemy lines, and in May 1943 ZES became M/Z Force; these men lived at 'Fairview.'³⁹ Timothy Bottoms sums up the changes made to Cairns in the war years:

the changes could most obviously be seen in the improved infrastructure developments: sealed Gillies and Kuranda Range Roads, rail extensions, wharf facilities, an extensive malarial drainage system, not to mention the extension and sealing of many roads on the Tableland. The Cairns Harbour Board, for example, gained nearly £1,000,000 in improvements effected by the US Navy.⁴⁰

Cairns was subjected to strains as the services moved in and this had an effect on the local community, although it was never as severe as in Townsville. There was massive construction activity on airfields and facilities, and the number of service personnel in the town jumped significantly. Pressures on basic services grew; as an example, accommodation for the air force personnel was acute, and the pilots took over Hides, Central and Empire Hotels while the sergeants had the Oceanic.⁴¹

Racial tensions were also present. Following discussions between Prime Minister Curtin and General MacArthur, it was agreed that black troops would be either sent to remote northern areas of Australia, or if not possible, kept segregated in areas such as Brisbane.⁴² Cairns was one of these areas where the black troops were sent and the tensions – remembering that this occurred in a country advocating White Australia and at a time when the US services were unashamedly segregated – led to some unpleasant incidents. In Cairns there was a riot at the US Services Club and all black personnel were banned from entry.⁴³ Brothels, comprising mixed race women volunteers from Melbourne, were set up for the use of black men.⁴⁴ While Cairns may not have had the same reputation as Townsville, it remained a large troop centre

³⁸ D.P. Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1958, p.622. Also see Earle Page, *Truant Surgeon: The Inside Story of Forty Years of Australian Political Life*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1963, pp.367-369, where Page and a small team including Hamilton Fairley worked on the problem of malaria in New Guinea and Australia. They discovered endemic tertiary malaria around Cairns, and recommended wide-scale drainage of low lying areas.

³⁹ Bradley, pp.165-166; Alan Powell, *War By Stealth: Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau 1942-1945*, Melbourne UP, Melbourne, 1996, pp.20, 21, 65, 196.

⁴⁰ Bottoms, p.6.

⁴¹ Bradley, p.182.

⁴² See Tom O'Lincoln, 'A Mutiny Against Racism', <http://socialistworker.org/2012/02/15/mutiny-against-racism>, p.2.

⁴³ Kay Saunders, *War on the Homefront: State Intervention in Queensland 1938-1948*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1990, p.77, and Bradley, pp.305-306.

⁴⁴ Bradley, p.170.

with social problems.

Townsville

Townsville hosted a bewildering array of service units, American and Australian,⁴⁵ and was the nerve centre of activity. To take some examples, Townsville was the centre of Northern Air Headquarters and controlled operations at Port Moresby, Darwin, Archerfield and Garbutt; in April 1941 an Area Meteorological Office was established at Townsville; Area Combined Headquarters for Allied Intelligence including Coast Watcher operations moved from Port Moresby to Townsville in May 1941; in January 1942 Townsville became headquarters of Base Two of the US Armed Forces in Australia; and in January 1944 the US V Air Service Area Command was based there.⁴⁶ The impact of these and a myriad of other units moving to Townsville was enormous: the population of 15,000⁴⁷ swelled to 128,000 at times,⁴⁸ with the addition of some 100,000 troops hugely outnumbering the locals. To add to the dislocation, the Army took over 670 properties from local citizens. Some 5-7000 citizens were evacuated.⁴⁹

Townsville became a staging point for one of the Southwest Pacific's first amphibious operations. When the decision was made to invade the Woodlark and Kiriwina islands (to the northwest of Milne Bay), the Woodlark land force comprised the US 112th Cavalry Regiment and associated troops based in Townsville. Some 2600 troops embarked from Townsville on 25 June 1943.⁵⁰ In time Townsville achieved the status of being not only the biggest base in north-east Australia⁵¹ but 'an installation unmatched in size and production potential anywhere outside of the United States and England'.⁵²

By June 1941 RAAF 24 Squadron was based at Garbutt, flying Hudsons, Wirraways, Kittyhawks, and Airacobras. In February 1942 the US 7th Bomber Group arrived including 435 Heavy Bombardment Squadron. To support them, associated units included a US Radio Sonde unit, No 5 Communications Flight, No 42 RDF Wing, a detachment of No 1 Air Ambulance, and US 317 Troop Carrier Group while the USATC established the Pacific Air Wing air maintenance facilities. Also Short Empire flying boats operated from Cleveland Bay in 1941/1942. Satellite fields housed other squadrons such as 7 and 84 Squadrons at Ross River, and at Bohle River pilots undertook fighter conversion courses. Among the great pilots who were based in Townsville for a period were the top-scoring ace Richard Bong, and Karl Polifka, the talented photographic reconnaissance pilot.

Garbutt air base fulfilled two interrelated functions. First it was the main forward base for attacks on Japanese forces in those grim days of 1942. Heavy bombardment missions by squadrons such as the 435th left Townsville with their B-17s and flew to Port Moresby where

⁴⁵ See Bradley, pp.405-409 for a listing of units.

⁴⁶ See <http://home.st.net.au/~dunn/raaf/11sqn.htm>, p.3.

⁴⁷ Statistics vary enormously. H. Jaffa, *Townsville at War: A Soldier Remembers*, Foundation of Australian Literary Studies, Townsville, 1997, p.49, says Townsville had a population of 14,882 while Bradley, p.62, says the population was about 15,000 but fell to 7000 in January 1942. Others say it was initially closer to 30,000; see the next footnote.

⁴⁸ Population figures are inconsistent; Gay Halstead, *Story of the RAAF Nursing Service 1940-1990*, Nungurner Press, Metung, Victoria, 1994, p.135, says it was 128,000 at peak; other sources give figures of around 100,000. Clearly the number varied according to circumstances and the actual time being discussed.

⁴⁹ Bottoms, p.2.

⁵⁰ John Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, US Army, Washington DC, 1990, pp.55-57.

⁵¹ Casey, *Airfield and Base Development*, pp.1-6.

⁵² W.F. Craven and J.L. Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II: Volume IV, The Pacific, Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944*, Office of Air Force History, Washington DC, 1983, pp.103-104.

they refuelled, then flew over the Owen Stanleys to attack sites such as Lae or Salamaua; or flew across to Rabaul, then returned to Port Moresby for refuelling and thence back to Townsville. The operations took some 36-48 hours with the crews being about 18 hours in the air. The aim was to launch two missions a day, although by August 1942 an advance flight with four aircraft had moved to Moresby. In addition to bombing runs 435th Squadron conducted search and reconnaissance runs in the New Guinea and New Britain areas.⁵³

Second, the Townsville base became the outstanding air depot for all forward forces. According to Craven and Cate, 'the advantages of having a central supply and maintenance depot some 600 miles from Port Moresby were immeasurable'.⁵⁴ One of the key roles became the conversion of aircraft for tropical and support activities such as reinforcing the aircraft fuselage to withstand the addition of multiple cannon. By September 1943 some 175 B-25Cs and B-25Ds had been converted for low-level strafing; then they converted the B-25G in a similar manner albeit at a cost of 234 man hours per aircraft. Also, by March 1944 56 P-38s had been modified.⁵⁵ The base also introduced new equipment such as 'special propeller tools, a jig-filing machine, an indicating apparatus for hollow-steel propellers and an electrical arc welder for high melting point solder on armatures'.⁵⁶ In addition, Townsville became a manufacturer and assembler of components ranging from full assembly of aircraft and vehicles to tyres and tubes, engine parts, and belly tanks (these offered supplementary fuel supplies for fighters and bombers, and permitted the fight to be waged much further away onto New Britain and along the northern littorals of New Guinea).⁵⁷ In 1944, by then re-named RAAF Station Garbutt, it became an outstanding communications, medical evacuation and rescue centre excelling in repair and modification work.⁵⁸

In non-aviation related matters, ship repairs to vessels such as Fairmiles, minesweepers and corvettes were conducted at the slipways in South Townsville.⁵⁹ There was an experimental research program on the effect of mustard gas in the tropics, which was conducted at Townsville and also at Brook Island off Cardwell.⁶⁰ Townsville was also important in food production for the troops: as of early 1942, the main centres for canning meat for export were Gladstone, Rockhampton and Townsville.⁶¹ But adding around 100,000 troops to the town led to massive social changes. As Moore says, 'The result was chaos unknown or unequalled on the rest of the Australian continent during World War II'.⁶²

We can identify four main problem areas. First, accommodation and services were severely taxed, and visiting units soon commandeered the most desirable locations in the town from convents to hotels. As a passing US serviceman noted, as of November 1942 the town was in a sad state with little beer and less warmth; the shops were either shut or nearly so and 'nothing was for sale'; the attitude of the locals was antagonistic and 'Townsville had really suffered

⁵³ Craven and Cate, pp.8-9.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, p.104.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, pp.199, 587.

⁵⁶ *ibid*, p.199.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, pp.171, 198

⁵⁸ Halstead, p.135.

⁵⁹ G. Copeman and D. Vance, *It Was a Different Town, being some memories of Townsville and District 1942-45*, Thuringowa City Council, Thuringowa, 1992, p.46.

⁶⁰ Mellor, p.375.

⁶¹ S.J. Butler and C.B. Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977, p.511.

⁶² J.H. Moore, *Over Sexed, Over Paid and Over Here: Americans in Australia 1941-1945*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1981, p.146.

from the war'.⁶³ Second, the dominance of servicemen and women over the locals caused serious strains. The services had first preference for everything from water to fruit and vegetables; by sheer numbers they monopolised everything from seats at the movies to restaurants; and the evils they brought with them ranging from petty crime to prostitution irritated the locals. Third, their numbers and their access to alcohol created an unpleasant city in which to live; Townsville developed a reputation as a rough town. As an official report noted, locals were afraid to venture out at night 'for fear of the "disorderly elements among the troops" who roamed the streets after nightfall "in hundreds"'.⁶⁴ As a soldier who staged through Townsville described it to me, Townsville was 'a bloodbath' and fights were common. Perhaps the best description comes from one American who said that Townsville was 'the hottest, dirtiest, lousiest, toughest and most overcrowded troop town this side of Louisiana'.⁶⁵ And finally, the sexual imbalance created many tensions. We note the presence of many women's groups such as Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (some 170 operated W/T and signal equipment) and Australian Women's Army Services (some of whom were involved with operating the range-finders and searchlights on Castle Hill), plus the nurses from the numerous hospitals. This meant that a highly social time was possible for those who could attend dances or other social events.

Of course there was the dark side: many drunken brawls took place, fights occurred over the limited number of women, and there were numerous shooting incidents. The unpleasantness of the environment led to a raft of (usually untrue) stories, many of which have become accepted as fact. One relates to the alleged promiscuity of WAAFs in Townsville where a trainload of 500 pregnant WAAFs was sent south with a message scrawled in chalk on the side of the train, 'return when empty'.⁶⁶ Another story involved two trainloads of soldiers, one American and one Australian, meeting at a siding and shots being exchanged. This was also largely mythical. In reality, an American prisoner under loose guard at Inkerman south of Townsville shot an Australian soldier and in turn some Australian soldiers arriving soon after on a train went looking for the prisoner and shot him.⁶⁷

There were about 2000 black troops in Townsville by May 1942, mostly on construction work (they built Giru and Woodstock strips), and they were provided with a brothel at Stuart.⁶⁸ Their presence led to a range of incidents – it did not take much to incite racial tensions.⁶⁹ Equally, as black men in a white land, they resented being engaged in menial jobs such as construction and stevedoring, and their access to any sort of fun, be it leave, beer, or meeting white women, was severely restricted. Officially there was no fraternisation between the blacks and whites, whether Australian or American, and any black man convicted of rape of a white woman was executed. Thus a Red Cross nurse was raped in Townsville in January 1944 and four black men were convicted; they were executed in Papua as Queensland had abolished the death penalty!⁷⁰

One story that has been given a new audience concerns the Townsville race riots of May 1942. Estimates of the deaths arising range from 19 through to none. The 96th Engineers Special Service Regiment (Colored) was camped at Upper Ross: they were engaged in constructing

⁶³ Gwendolyn Hall, *Love, War, and the 9th Engineers (Colored)*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1995, p.124.

⁶⁴ See I.N. Moles, 'Townsville During World War II', <http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:241786/Lec>, for an overview of the problems faced by the citizens of Townsville; p.227 describes the gangs.

⁶⁵ 'Front-line Townsville 1942', at www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww2/bfa/townsville.htm, p.5.

⁶⁶ Moore, pp.192-193.

⁶⁷ 'Two Shot Dead on a Train at Inkerman on 12 November 1942', in www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/inkerman.htm.

⁶⁸ Copeman and Vance, p.19.

⁶⁹ Moore, p.192.

⁷⁰ O'Lincoln, pp.3-4.

airfields. There had been a fight involving 100 men in April. Then a riot on 22 May began with an argument between enlisted men and officers, culminating in some 700 rounds being fired, many at white officers in slit trenches. US journalist Robert Sherrod, embedded with the unit, drew up a report and passed it to visiting US congressman Lyndon B Johnson, who in turn passed it on to the President. It is likely some of the leaders were incarcerated in either the Garbutt stockade or the Stuart prison.⁷¹ Other altercations between black troops and the whites occurred during 1942 in Brisbane, Miles, Ipswich, Torrens Creek, Ingham and Mt Isa.⁷²

Conclusion

The three main centres in FNQ served different roles. Cooktown acted as forward lookout, Cairns as advance base of operations, while Townsville in the south was the base from which bombers and fighters attacked the enemy in the early stages, then it changed to being a major repair and maintenance depot, while remaining the administrative centre of military operations in the north. Similarly, and depending on the ratio of the population of the town to the level of service troops, social dislocation occurred; this was especially so in Townsville where problems were massive, but it affected Cairns to a lesser extent, while in Cooktown the desperate attempts at survival pushed most social unrest to the background.

In all three towns, however, there were tensions because of the presence of the black troops which did little to create an easy relationship with either Americans or Australians. It is surprising to realise that the level of enemy activity directed against Cooktown, Cairns and Townsville was minimal, consisting of rare bombing runs and occasional reconnaissance flights. At a time of greatest inter-Allied cooperation, the most serious danger in these towns was between US and Australian soldiers, and between civilians and service men and women.

The war in FNQ deserves an extended and reasoned assessment that takes into account the massive dislocation of the region in all aspects of life, from the US ‘invasion’ in all its manifestations, to the level of activity that went into reshaping the sleepy north into a vital part of the Allied march on Japan. Many aspects of that wartime energy can be seen today in the extensive infrastructure that is present, a tribute to the enthusiasm of the Americans and the cooperation of the Australians with often limited resources. The linkage of the two contributed not only to victory but brought a new sense of vitality to towns in the north.

-o0o-

Nancy Wake Musical – Call for Support

I am an Australian playwright and lyricist currently working on a musical inspired by the life of WW2 heroine Nancy Wake. I am currently seeking expressions of interest for this musical that will be produced in Melbourne next year. I wonder if there are any WW2 historians in the Society who may be interested in being involved or offering support? Please go to our website <http://www.thewhitemousemusical.com> for more information about what is involved. [Interested members should contact the playwright directly. – Editor]

Chris Croyden

-o0o-

⁷¹ See *The Weekend Australian*, 11-12 February 2012, p.1, and the same source, 13 February, p.7; ‘LBJ Reveals GI Mutiny’ at <http://ozebook.com/wordpress/archives/22057> which includes an excerpt of the paper to Johnson on the black situation; and interview with Peter Dunn, www.readersvoice.com/interviews/2011/11/peter-dunn-p3/.

⁷² ‘LBJ Reveals GI Mutiny’.

TWO TO TWO THOUSAND: CAPTURED BY A NOMINAL ROLL OF 2ND AIF POWs IN ITALY

Katrina Kittel

It started with a list. In 2012 a fellow researcher, Bill Rudd, sent me a copy of the British War Office (WO) lists of WW2 prisoners of war in Italy.¹ Bill had begun constructing a nominal roll of Australian Imperial Force prisoners of war (AIF POWs); I was an enthusiastic recruit, but a rookie in researching such a large POW cohort. My 2011 starting point had concerned only two Australian prisoners in Italy, my father and his mate. Bill, ex-VX39694, brought that number to three. I enlisted in Bill's campaign, and awaited further orders. Would this objective be met? Surely it would be a straightforward mission, to compile a nominal roll from the official War Office list with reference to a number of other sources in our arsenal?

Research Collaboration: 'Every prisoner needs a trusted mate'²

My fellow researcher Bill became a trusted mate and mentor. He had been previously engaged in compiling nominal rolls, including the AIF in Switzerland, and Free Men in Europe.³ His ambitious concept to construct a nominal roll of AIF POWs in Italy cried out for a collaborator. Bill brought his expertise in quantitative data, whereas I yearned for the human story, the qualitative data. Bill, as a former Sapper, was trained to construct, and to clear barriers for the forces to advance. I offered my civilian training in drill and technique, from undergraduate history studies, and skills as a librarian. In an unusual balance of research approaches, our duo comprised an erstwhile historian being held prisoner by a former prisoner turned historian. This was an opportunity not to let pass. Historians yearn to hear at least one inside perspective from 'someone who was there'. Such voices bring their bias, but their perspective is what we wish to know. Veterans of WW1 are now lost to us. Before too long, the veterans of captivity in WW2 will be as well.

My long-distance ally and I fired envelopes and emails back and forth across the NSW-Victoria frontier, and looked to the battle strategy. Bill sourced intelligence on the estimated size of the Australian contingent we were to encounter. I had dug my trench. My interest in two POWs, then three, would cascade to curiosity about the wider cohort of Australians in Italy as POWs. But, how many Australians were in Italy?

Preliminary Data Collection

'In Udine concentration camp there were over a thousand Australians'⁴

'there were 1500 Australians at (57) Udine'⁵

'At this stage [Dec 1941] the camp consisted of about 1,000 prisoners, mainly Australians'⁶

¹ WO 392: The War Office, Directorate of Prisoners of War, Prisoner of War Lists – Second World War. Sub-series WO 392/21: Imperial prisoners of war held in Italy. Section 2: Australian Army. August 1943.

² Comment by NX40603 Lloyd Moule. Conversation with author, 2012.

³ VX39694 Bill Rudd, *ANZAC POW Free Men in Europe*, www.aifpow.com. This site has been selected for preservation in Pandora, the National Library of Australia's web archive. *AIF in Switzerland vol.1* is in the Australian War Memorial collection.

⁴ NAA, B883, NX21419, William Blair, extract from 'Statement by Repatriated Navy, Army or Air Force Prisoners of War', p.2, 11 November 1944.

⁵ NAA, B883, VX16600, Kenneth Calder, extract from 'Statement by Repatriated Navy, Army or Air Force Prisoners of War', p.2, 21 October 1944.

⁶ AWM54, 779/1/22, *Reports and Statements by Major R.T. Binns 2/8 Field Ambulance and Capt. E.W. Levings*

'About September 1942, this camp was enlarged ... The increased number of prisoners brought the camp strength up to ... About 2,000 Australians, 2,000 New Zealanders and a few hundred English and few hundred Indians'⁷

Such estimates regarding POW numbers at one large camp in Italy provided us with a point of departure. Bill, and my first two prisoners, NX60337 Colin Booth and NX33357 Peter Erickson, were amongst this cohort interned at the permanent camp 57 Grupignano, near Udine.⁸ With an approximate contingent of two thousand troops to 'capture', we needed a battle strategy. Grupignano was known to be a main permanent camp, but there were other smaller camps at the time these estimates were made.

We bunkered down to our daily drill. Firstly, we looked to the WO list of prisoners in Italy. We divvied up the alphabet. To compile our own version, we extracted four columns of data from the WO list: prisoner service number; surname and initials; unit, and any Italy camp number listed for each prisoner. Camp numbers, we observed, were mainly 57 (Grupignano), 106 (Vercelli's prison farms), and 78 (Sulmona officer's camp). The WO list, however, did not include a camp number against every prisoner entry. This signalled a shortfall of ammunition; we needed more sources. The addition of a 'Comments' column brought our fledgling nominal roll to five columns.

Bill also had access to the WO lists for German occupied territories.⁹ Similar to the WO Italy lists, there was only one German camp listed, but these lists contained a German POW number for each prisoner. We created two more columns to include German camp number, and German POW number.

Parameters and Assumptions

'historians do not discover a past as much as create it; they choose the events and people that they think constitute the past, and they decide what about them is important to know.'¹⁰

We had chosen our POW cohort, and now we moved forward to record on our roll what we determined was important to know. Battle lines were drawn, and arbitrary parameters put into place.

Bill was aware of other skirmishes to note. Colin, Peter and Bill were part of a draft of hundreds of POWs who were transported from Grupignano camp 57 in April 1943 to work the rice fields west of the Vercelli region, between Turin and Milan. Vercelli, camp 106, comprised about 30 working farms, which had on the whole been allocated camp numbers, such as camp 106/1, a sub-camp near Vercelli at San Germano/Pettiva. The WO lists did not delve into this extra layer of 106 complexity, which Bill wryly dubbed as 'an alphabetical and numerical minestrone'.¹¹ As we knew the farms to which Bill, Colin and Peter had been allocated within the 106 farm complex, we set up another column to record 106 sub-camp numbers where known. To record

R.M.O. 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment A.I.F on Gruppignano P.O.W. Camp Italy, 1943. Statement of estimate by Major Binns at time of his arrival at 57 on 1 December 1941.

⁷ *ibid.* Statement of estimate by Major Binns in June 1943.

⁸ The spelling of Grupignano by POWs was frequently 'Gruppignano'.

⁹ WO 392: The War Office, Directorate of Prisoners of War, Prisoner of War Lists – Second World War. Sub-series WO 392/2: Imperial prisoners of war held in Germany or German-occupied territory. Section 2: Australian Imperial Force. September 1944.

¹⁰ Howell, M. and Prevenier, W. (2001) *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*, Cornwell University Press. p.1.

¹¹ Brian W. Sims, UK researcher, has assisted Bill Rudd's attempts to identify Vercelli's 106 sub-camp numbers and locations.

other camps, including the officers' camp at Sulmona, 78, smaller camps, and hospitals, another column crept in, to record any camp other than 57 and 106.

We were widening the battle arena. With additional data, the Italy POW context would be better represented. The conventional weapon of the WO list would be tested. My initial assumption that compiling a nominal roll would be a straightforward task, by relying on the calibre of an official War Office document, was being challenged. Although it would add to the complexity of our nominal roll, our sources demanded more columns, as we were besieged with events and information that we believed were important to know. In particular, the experiences of POWs following the Italian Armistice of early September 1943 would complicate the picture, as prisoners were propelled onto new locations, as well as periods of evasion.

The columns of our nominal roll were stretched in the attempt to follow the footsteps of prisoners on the move to other locations in Europe, or within a tumultuous northern Italy.

Supplementary Sources: 'collective punishment'¹²

Our daily drill became more demanding, as it was essential to cross-check each WO prisoner entry against other sources to confirm service numbers, and to flesh out full name details. The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) online WW2 Nominal Roll was viewed for each POW, and full names were entered onto our roll. We noted any discrepancies between the WO list and DVA record. We checked that DVA annotated 'Yes' in the POW field for prisoners on our list.¹³ Digging deeper into the dust-free environment of digital files, we viewed digital National Archives of Australia (NAA) B883 service files. These army personnel files offered additional cross-references, and revealed more intelligence to fill in our chosen columns of data.¹⁴

Bill and I worked through the WO lists as well as available supplementary sources. We were able to draw on our respective collections of literature, memoirs, unit histories, and to revisit information gathered from chats and correspondence with veterans and families. Bill could dig back to material gathered for his research over many decades, including his list of Swiss arrivals. Our widening arsenal of primary and secondary sources gave us ammunition to test the strength of the WO list data. It became apparent that the WO lists were not precise. Men were missing on the WO document, including a number of prisoners known to have died in captivity before the WO Italy list was completed.¹⁵ On the other hand, a number of men who were killed en route to Italy were present on the WO Italy list.

We thus completed the first stage of transposing WO entries to our roll, and had added a number of prisoners noted as missing from the WO list. This resulted in an eventual 'parade' of approximately two thousand Australian prisoners of war.

¹² A number of POWs made reference to 'collective punishment' at camp 57, on their 1944 Statements by Repatriated Prisoners of War. Examples include VX25132 Stan James and VX42495 John 'Dick' Gardner.

¹³ Department of Veterans' Affairs, WW2 Nominal Roll, <http://www.ww2roll.gov.au>. DVA have been responsive to amend the online roll for records that were incorrectly listed as 'No' in the POW field. These amendments have subsequently been referred for the Australian ex-Prisoners of War Memorial in Ballarat.

¹⁴ National Archives of Australia, <http://www.naa.gov.au/>. B883 series in particular but we attempted to identify all relevant digital files.

¹⁵ Examples of POWs who died in Camp 57 but who were not listed on WO lists include WX7406 'Ted' Newbey and WX1982 Edward Symons.

Hidden History within a Nominal Roll: ‘surrounded ... ordered to surrender’¹⁶

Momentum built into mayhem. The men on our roll became more than rank and service number. We were surrounded by a melting pot of primary and secondary sources of varying reliability, which would complement, converge or diverge in their information. Columns on our roll saw further input as we selected what we considered important. Our roll included men who ambushed us with an alias, men who popped up in a mate’s memoir, men who were with their brothers and fathers, men of varying ages and men claiming to be various ages. As we came to learn more about individuals on the roll, it was as if they had been ‘lying doggo’, ready to come out of hiding, with stories of fascinating experiences that the official lists could not flush out.

During first phase of cross-checking POW details with NAA digital files, we found that there were digital records for less than half of the prisoners on our list. I took leave from home duties to visit Canberra. The NAA and AWM reading room staff, always helpful, obliged me with battalions of files. I was compelled to surrender. The main goal was to plod through them to note camp locations. It was impossible, however, to ignore tantalising tangents such as letters, reports and statutory declarations. One file could be ‘quiet’ but another would erupt with information that extended beyond the space allocated to our ‘Comments’ column. One example was to read of the recapture of a dozen escaped prisoners near the Italian-Swiss border. Norm Freeberg, his mate Paul Lavallee, and most of their small group of evaders came face to face with Italian soldiers at the Swiss-Italian frontier village of Macugnaga, to be recaptured and taken into German captivity.¹⁷ Our roll had recorded Paul’s and Norm’s camps as 57 and 106, and German camp 18A, but even such simplistic recording of locations, with no further annotation, can imply that there was direct transfer between the Italian and German camps.

Our ‘Comments’ column awaited more interesting information to surface. Rich recounts are rarely included in service files; this qualitative information was the stuff of private records. As we noted information gleaned from available memoir sources, the men seemed to stand up from the spreadsheet and share a little more of their stories, their mates and their nicknames. Our roll contained brothers, and a father and son. Most of these familial or friendship duos were able to stay together throughout captivity, and during evasion. We noted what was relevant to the roll, and went along for the ride. Bob Ward wrote that he was with Ted Peachey, so we knew that Ted could be noted as being in the same subcamp. It did become difficult to follow them at times. ‘Sturdy Legs’ had lost touch with ‘Mouley’ along the way, but had crossed paths with ‘Lofty’, and at least one of the several ‘Blueys’. An unnamed South African with a bad heart had to holler for a mate Jack who had gone ahead on the trail. But Jack may not have been Jack, but rather a John who answered to ‘Jack’. ‘Happy’ was indeed happy staying underground in Italy to await the arrival of the US Army. Fred became ‘Federico the partisan’, ‘Sturdy Legs’ turned out to be a Norm, whereas another Norm preferred to be called ‘Bill’, as did one of the men called Albert. Disappointingly, no source has elucidated which man on our list had a name other than ‘Five-Miler’.¹⁸

This parade of prisoners was evolving into more than a list of names and service numbers. Many crossroads were revealing themselves, and as researchers we are the richer for being

¹⁶ NAA, B883, NX60337, Colin Booth, extract from ‘Statement by Repatriated Navy, Army or Air Force Prisoners of War’, p.1, 22 October 1944.

¹⁷ AWM, PR88/185, NX23800, Norman Freeberg, *A Synopsis of Prisoner of War Camps*.

¹⁸ Examples of background information taken from a number of unpublished memoirs provided by families of POWs, or during conversation with families.

open to the tangents and signposts as they appear. We were engaged on many battle fronts, with our allied forces of DVA, NAA, Unit Associations, veteran and family contacts acting as sentries for source information at numerous outposts. Our effective period of service was lengthening. This was to becoming a prolonged campaign. Our families would report us as missing in action.

Evaluation of Sources: ‘Historians are prisoners of sources that can never be made fully reliable’¹⁹

Our reconnaissance uncovered much of interest that would inform our expanding roll. A lull in active service, however, was necessary to allow for reflection on sources and strategy, and on decisions about the relative veracity of historical documents or portions of them.

The WO Italy lists are a pre-Armistice snapshot that was captured through a filtered lens. The Directorate drew on Red Cross and other data.²⁰ The WO list is not equipped to portray the complexity of prisoner movements post-Armistice, from mid-September 1943. With this particular document as our starting data, we needed to remain aware that its information was filtered, that it was a unique context in place and time, and that bias may have entered its compilation and editing. Was the omission of men who died in camp to avoid blame? The WO lists forgot them, but their fellow prisoners did not, and nor will we.

There are internal inconsistencies in the WO document. Not every man on the list has a camp against his name, and it is not always the last camp they were in. The listing of only one camp in Italy, and for Germany, was at odds with the multiple transfers for many prisoners. Furthermore, the WO list snapshot would perpetuate errors that a veteran created by enlisting under false name. The men had muddied the water themselves. One POW listed, Melvin Maynard, never went to war, but his younger cousin Allen did, by adopting his older cousin Melvin’s name and date of birth.²¹ Frank Jansen and James Moody are the same man, as revealed through a statutory declaration after his service.²²

However, the WO list proved to be reliable with regard to the service numbers for men listed, with names and numbers matching the vast majority men listed, if we allow for a number of minor spelling errors. WX5704 Cozman is an intriguing exception. No veteran by this surname is listed on DVA Roll. This service number pertains to surname Clifton, a non-POW according to DVA roll. A perusal of the Clifton hard copy file on a future NAA visit may unveil another use of alias.

Support troops, in the form of supplementary sources, are useful reinforcements to this research. Memoirs are particularly informative. Edwin Broomhead’s memoir *Barbed wire in the sunset* brought to light a number of his fellow 2/8 Field Ambulance POWs who were not

¹⁹ Howell, M. and Prevenier, W., op cit, p.2.

²⁰ National Archives, UK, has been updated with a caveat submitted by UK researcher Brian W. Sims: WO 391/21 is ‘a compilation of lists of members of the Allied Forces who were reported by Italian or Red Cross sources as being prisoners in Italian hands, minus those known officially to have died in Italian hands. The document includes men listed who died as a POW at sea in 1942, and also some listed as being in Libyan camps or buried in Greece. Camp locations are given where men were last known to be, in most cases’
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/details?Uri=C2581749>.

²¹ Background information provided by family of Melvin and Allen Maynard, SX13037.

²² NAA, B883, NX38537, Frank Jansen. DVA has annotated WW2 Nominal Roll to include NX17873 James Moody in relevant fields.

on the WO list.²³ Many of these were repatriated POWs, before the date of the WO list. We also drew on other titles in our respective stores of literature regarding Australian POWs in Europe.²⁴

How do we evaluate primary sources by the men who were there? The convergence of recounts by more than one source can be considered indicative of reliability. POW Statements and Liberation Reports are very useful but even so, some were out of step with other sources. We must remind ourselves that during turbulent periods of POW lives, writing a liberation report in a mixed state of exhilaration and stress, after years of captivity and evasion, is more than enough to muddle memories of dates and details. We must forgive them! As sources are sometimes at war with each other, it can be difficult to discern the most reliable source. All sources can be considered imprecise in some way, whether from bias, imperfect memory, or selectivity.

Methodology and Reflection: ‘use sources reliably’²⁵

Further debrief of the battle strategy was warranted. The arbitrary parameters we set during the construction of the roll needed to be clearly defined. Our roll does not extend to the men who died in field hospitals in North Africa as prisoners of war. Bruce Templeman, NX58486, exemplifies this group who fall outside our arbitrary parameters, and our working definition of ‘AIF POWs Italy’. Bruce died the day after he was captured at Alamein in July 1942. The DVA Online Roll acknowledges him with a ‘Yes’ in its POW field. Indeed he was, but Bruce was not to continue on into Italian hands. On the other hand, our roll does include the prisoners who were killed as a result of torpedo attack during their transport across the Mediterranean on the *Nino Bixio*.²⁶ Our roll, therefore, comprises those who as prisoners were to either reach Italian soil, or who had left North Africa and were in transport to Italy.

Howell believes that a basic task of historians ‘is to choose *reliable* sources, to read them *reliably*’.²⁷ In reply to Howell, we need to look further than the *reliability* of sources, to our understanding and interpretation of sources. Brian Sims reiterated this, from his decades of research in the UK, and he offered his scrutiny of WO lists, with comments such as:

WO 392/21 is a compilation of lists of members of the Allied Forces that were reported by Italian and Red Cross sources at various times between 1940 and 1943 as prisoners in Italian Hands. Camp Locations where given are where the men were last known to be in most cases. Some who died at sea in 1942 are given as still located in Italian Camps. The only way to get an accurate Camp is by checking the man’s Escape or Liberation Report.²⁸

Brian kindly provided a number of these UK Archive reports to assist us with our data analysis. We collaborated to adjust our objective and strategy in the field as varying conditions became better known. The field of action could widen. Bill has also engaged in a mission to research

²³ (SX5729) E. Broomhead, *Barbed Wire in the Sunset*, The Book Depot, Melbourne, 1944.

²⁴ Relevant literature was perused for additional information. This included titles by historians, published and unpublished memoirs. As this was done by both Bill and I, a bibliography is not included here.

²⁵ Howell and Prevenier, p.2.

²⁶ Bill Rudd was a survivor of the *Nino Bixio* torpedo attack. Bill attended the site of Camp 57 Grupignano on the anniversary of the torpedo attack on the *Nino Bixio*, to unveil a memorial wall within the chapel on the site commemorating the Australian and New Zealand POWs killed in the attack. The memorial wall was a project between Bill and a NZ friend and fellow *Nino Bixio* survivor, Charles Watkins. See Bill and Tony Rudd’s website <http://www.campo57.com/products.html> for details of the 2014 installation of the memorial.

²⁷ Howell and Prevenier, p.2.

²⁸ Brian Sims, 2014, email correspondence with author.

RAAF personnel who also became POWs in Italy.²⁹

Nominal Roll Progress and Complexity: ‘gained objective’ from the ‘total effective period’³⁰

Although we were surrounded by data, were we still lacking reliable equipment to engage in this battle, to reach the objective? From our evaluation of sources and methodological reflection, do we consider that we have served an effective period of war service? Reflecting on our nominal roll, and the aim to capture not only prisoners in Italy but those who were en route to Italy, we accept that ‘The Roll’ may never capture all of them. It is nevertheless a significant contribution. It amends the WO lists, and that is a worthwhile achievement. There are currently in excess of two thousand Australian men listed on the guest list for tea with Mussolini. It remains a work in progress.

If, however, we assume that these two thousand are close to the target, we can begin to consider certain trends suggested by the roll. It provides a picture, for example, of the Australian units which surrendered troops to Italy. Units with high numbers in Italy include the 2/28, 2/24, 2/15, 2/32 Battalions and the 2/3 Anti-Tank Regiment. Others with smaller numbers of POWs include 3 Light Anti-Aircraft Regt, 2/43, 2/48 and 2/17 Bns, 2/8 Field Ambulance, and the Aust Army Service Corps. POWs in Italy comprised a cross-section of AIF servicemen, with most being captured in the North Africa campaign. There was, however, a number of unexpected POWs, such as those who had come from the Greece and Crete campaigns. These included veterans who evaded capture and transfer to German camps during these campaigns, but were subsequently captured by the Italians. One such example is VX16600 Ken Calder.³¹

The inclusion of data on German camps is limited, but has been useful to illustrate the movement from Italian captivity. Most of the two thousand identified POWs in Italian hands were to become POWs in German hands. Most were to be transferred from Camp 57 soon after the Armistice. For them, a further string of camps and outcomes would follow, but this is beyond the parameters of our roll. Nevertheless, anything that is interesting to note, such as known subsequent escape, is noted in the ‘Comments’ column.

The roll does show that most escaped prisoners in Italy were in the Vercelli 106 sub-camps at the time of the September 1943 Armistice. Bill, Colin and Peter were part of that mass escape from the hands of Italian authorities, to enter into the lives of the Italian populace for varying periods of time. The ‘Comments’ column reveals that over four hundred POWs were to make it to Switzerland. So far, no Australian has been identified as perishing on the border frontier. Small numbers of escapers were to reach Allied lines, or to remain in Italy with civilians, Italian Resistance, and British missions. Tragically, our ‘Comments’ column includes about ten men who as escaped AIF POWs were killed by Italian Fascist groups or in action with German forces.

Nominal rolls tend to hide complexity, unless we dig deeper. Italy is a perfect example. POWs were interned in a series of transit and permanent camps. The situation in Italy in late 1943 added to the complexity of following the footsteps of the prisoners after the Italian Armistice.

²⁹ Bill Rudd has collaborated with Tom Roberts re RAAF POW. Tom is author of *Wingless: A Bibliographical Index of Australian Airmen Detained in Wartime*, 2011.

³⁰ A number of POWs made reference to ‘gained objective’ with regard to circumstance of capture, on their 1944 Statements by Repatriated Prisoners of War. Examples include WX7579 Lawrence Arnold and WX11932 James Chesson. The phrase ‘Total effective period’ appears on a Discharge Form for Lawrence Arnold and others.

³¹ NAA, B883, VX16600, Kenneth Calder.

The complexity of who is behind wire, and then outside the wire, is not represented in a list of names and camps alone, despite the correctness of the camps listed.

For the two thousand or so AIF POWs who have been identified, and for those yet to be identified, the ongoing objective is to view every service file and other relevant NAA/AWM records, such as interrogation reports, war crimes files and private records. The nominal roll and its columns invite further filling-in. On our respective battle fronts, Commanding Officer Bill Rudd, with myself as batman, have not yet elected to be discharged from service.

Postscript

Vale Brian Sims. Brian's decades of research began with one prisoner of war, his father, a British POW who drowned when an Italian ship on which he was being transported, the *Scillin*, was sunk in the Mediterranean on 14 November 1942. That research extended to a wider POW cohort. Brian gained great insight into the UK Archives and the workings of the Discovery catalogue. He generously shared his understandings of terminology, file series and search strategies; as well as files sourced through his own archival diggings. His communications will be missed by researchers who valued his wit and straightforward talk about his discoveries and deductions.



Above: A photo taken in July 2015 in Melbourne. From left, Bill Rudd, Keith Anderson (nephew of a POW escaper; committee member 2/24 Battalion Association); the author; Alastair Davison (Secretary, 2/24 Bn Association; volunteer guide Shrine of Remembrance); Ray Tabram (son of a POW escaper).

THE AUSTRALIAN ATTACK IN THE BATTLE OF AMIENS, 8 AUGUST 1918: A TRANSLATION OF THE OFFICIAL GERMAN VERSION – PART 3

David Pearson and Paul Thost¹

This is the third of a four-part series involving a translation from relevant pages of the German Official History pertaining to the Australian attack at Amiens. The original work is titled *Die Katastrophe des 8. August 1918 (Schlachten des Weltkrieges, Band 36)* [The Catastrophe of 8 August 1918 (Battles of the World War, Volume 36)] by Thilo von Bose, published by Gerhard Stalling: Oldenburg i.O./Berlin, 1930. The translated pages are from Chapter V(b) ‘Between the Somme and the rail line Amiens – Chaulnes’ and Chapter V(e) ‘Conclusion’.

This is a literal translation. The authors have tried to keep as true to the original text as possible, although some effort has been made to make it more readable by the application (in places) of plain English techniques. The original pagination is indicated within the translated text in square brackets, while footnotes as they appear in the original are marked with asterisks. Footnotes added by the authors are numbered and formatted as standard footnotes. Any additional text by the authors appears also in square brackets. For ease of reference portions of Map 2 from von Bose showing the Australian attack are included in the colour section located in the middle of this issue, and are referred to as [Fig.3.1] and so on.

*

[page 106] **Between the Somme and the rail line Amiens-Chaulnes**

3) 41st Infantry Division

The 41st Infantry Division held one of the most important and most difficult sectors of the front of the army. The sector was important because it was bisected by the great Army Road Amiens-Péronne, intersected by the junction Chaulnes-Nesle, and it was difficult because of the unobstructed view and the level surface of the terrain. This, given the enemy's superiority in the air and the advantage offered by his elevated positions, prohibited any movement during the day and showed up any defence installation, any footpath on an aerial picture and did not offer the slightest hindrance to the use of tanks. A narrow, deep disposition of the infantry and artillery of the division would have been all the more important. But of all things this front – measured at the H.W.L.² – had a width [page 107] of 4.4km; no less than 16 infantry companies were employed in and in front of the H.W.L. and nine immediately behind, so that the total of two-thirds of the infantry stood without any defence-in-depth. And it was impossible to withdraw a complete battalion of the three regiments to constitute a reserve or for an extended rest period. Three only could be withdrawn of Regt. 152, and only two companies with a machine gun section each of Regts. 18 and 148. Even so, the manning of the front was extremely weak. In the case of Regt. 152 that had by far the most men in the trenches, each company deployed in the first line had to cover a sector of more than 300m. In general, 60-75 percent of the troops were in the forefield, the rest in the H.W.L. Here too, the order that the strong but due to the width of the front inevitable manning in the forefield had to fall back on the H.W.L. if an assault was recognised to be a major attack on the H.W.L., turned into boring theory. Due to the violence of enemy artillery fire, the rapidity of the advance of the Australians and as a result of the dense fog, the forefield troops had hardly had time to fall back anywhere

¹ See Part 1 of this series, *Sabretache* vol.56, no.1 (March 2015), pp.4-15, for the authors' biographies, acknowledgements and introductory remarks.

² H.W.L. = *Haupt-Widerstands-Linie* (Mainline of Resistance) (General Staff, 1918: 188).

and were therefore missing in the H.W.L. The absence of defence-in-depth had been a serious worry for the Division long before the 8 August, especially as they repeatedly received reports from the front suggesting that a major attack was about to take place. As mentioned (see page 28) their request for a reduction of the sector had been unsuccessful. The Division dealt with it by pulling back in the night from 3 to 4 August the H.W.L. that had previously been close behind a field observation line, to the A.SCH.ST.,³ so that the area between the most advanced positions and this new H.W.L. had gained at least some depth. Of course the latter had hardly been completed, there could be no talk of a continuous trench, there were almost no shellproof shelters; obstacles were only just indicated. An Artillery Position was not yet in existence.

Even the artillery, on the whole, stood very far ahead. The Division upon its continuous insistence had been allocated another *Felda. Abt.*⁴ (II./27) on 5 August and had achieved by their deployment to both sides of Bayonvillers an increased depth of the artillery position. Yet even now there was not a single gun further than 4.5km from the H.W.L., the majority of the batteries were located much closer.

The heavy artillery, too, was to be reinforced significantly; four batteries of the *Garde-Landwehr Fuß.*⁵ Battalion had been allocated to the Division, however, unfortunately [page 108] only few were in position. Of the 1st Battery only two guns had been emplaced in the position of the 5./Res. Foot Artillery 4. The latter was to be relieved and had only one gun left ready to fire. The 2nd Battery had arrived in their position in the night of the 8 August and had only just mounted two of their *Mörser*⁶ which had not been adjusted yet when the enemy drumfire started. The 3rd Battery had not arrived yet and the 4th had only just reached Proyart. Therefore, there were really only 15 guns of the Heavy Artillery ready to fire, only 36* with the Field Artillery, so that each gun in the entire sector of the Division would have had to cover, on average, 86m during curtain fire. It was also disadvantageous on this occasion that the majority of the batteries had to support the reconnaissance attack of Regt. 148 (see page 116). The ammunition used during this (assault) reduced the ammunition available in the firing positions to a two-day ration, so that several batteries ran out of ammunition later on during the enemy attack.

* The II./Field Artillery 27 had only three guns per battery. As far as Field Artillery 79 is concerned, three tank guns and two damaged guns failed from the start for curtain fire. The 1st Battery had been withdrawn.

As a result of this reconnaissance attack there were even more downsides. There was the assumption of a strong enemy reaction and retaliation fire and the infantry had been advised not to remain outside their shelters unnecessarily. The operation finished at about 5.00am. As 20 minutes later the enemy drumfire commenced, the infantry said to itself: this is the retaliation and has no other reason; so they sought the best possible shelter. However, the artillery did not commence their defensive fire immediately, so that decisive, unused minutes went by to the benefit of the attacker.

³ A.SCH.ST. = *Artillerie-Schieß-Stand* (Artillery Position). Hereafter, Artillery Position is used instead of A.SCH.ST.

⁴ *Felda* = *Feld Artillerie* (Field Artillery) (General Staff, 1918: 181). Hereafter, Field Artillery is used.

⁵ *Fuß* = *Fuß Artillerie* (Foot Artillery) (General Staff, 1918: 184). Hereafter, Foot Artillery is used.

⁶ *Mörser* = (21cm) mortar (heavy howitzer) (General Staff, 1918: 104).

The position astride the *Römer* Road was entrusted to Res. Captain Hatzfeld,⁷ leader of III./152 as K.T.K.,⁸ an officer with a lot of experience and with exceptional dash, respected by his troops: ‘A man to whom we all extended our trust, he could lead his people’ (from the report of Res. Lieutenant Buhk I./152).

Res. Captain Hatzfeld has noted in his records dating back to those days:

5.20am heavy English artillery fire started, it was directed on the entire front before me. At first my operation centre received only little fire. A thin fog restricted visibility, but not to an extent that would have prevented us from seeing the light flares from the front. The request for a destructive barrage [page 109] and curtain fire was immediately relayed to the Regiment at Bayonvillers. Our artillery fire commenced quickly, was heavy to begin with but soon weakened. [See Fig.3.1, p.31.]

From 5.30am the enemy artillery fire on my operation centre and the Artillery Gully* became heavier. At the same time the fog became remarkably denser as the enemy was using smoke shells. Soon the fog was so thick that we could not even see the *Ferme*⁹ from the northern road ditch, even though it was just across on the southern edge of the road. As of now and during the entire battle we could not perceive anymore optical signals. The other methods of sending messages also failed. The *Erdtel*¹⁰ station at the 2nd Company and Regimental HQ no longer responded, the telephone lines were shot to pieces immediately. As the major attack was later on recognised as such, I tried to send a message with a carrier pigeon, however, she turned right back in the fog.

*What is meant is the gully north and south of Lamotte.

Shortly after 6.00am our artillery all but stopped.

At first I had thought this to be retaliation fire for the reconnaissance attack of our 148th, and then thought that it was a local attack. As a result of the uproar it was also not possible to determine the extent of the English fire. I received no instruction at all from the rear, and no report from the front for 1¼ hours. So I was left to believe until about 6.00am that this attack could be managed exclusively by the troops in the H.W.L., at worst with intervention by the 2nd and 1st Companies who had instruction to do so. The duration and power of the English fire, that covered especially our artillery, raised my doubts.

At 6.00am at my operation centre I had already assembled all the forces at my disposal in order to prevent the enemy from entering Warfusée, likewise the 4th and 8th Companies (under orders of the B.T.K.¹¹) were to participate in a counterattack.

Although the enemy artillery fire on the operation centre was no longer as heavy, I could not hear any fire from the machine gun nests that otherwise usually announced the approach of an attack. At about 6.40am about 12 men of the 12th Company returned alongside the *Römer* Road and reported that the enemy had penetrated the H.W.L. Shortly

⁷ Res. Captain Hatzfeld (III./152 I. R.) is mentioned in Bean, 1942: 536 in connection with the attack by the 31st Bn (8th Bde).

⁸ K.T.K. Stand = *Kampf-Truppen-Kommandeur* [– Stand] (Commander of the Front Line Troops [General Staff 1918: 194] – Stand [position]).

⁹ French word for a farmhouse, used here and later on by the German officer.

¹⁰ *Erdtelegraph* = Power Buzzer (telegraphy) (General Staff, 1918: 44). A German communication method used in the First World War.

¹¹ B.T.K. = *Bereitschafts-Truppen-Kammandeur* (Commander of the supports) (General Staff, 1918: 176).

after that a report arrived from the 8th Company according to which the enemy was sitting in the position of the 1st Company. I now immediately ordered the 8th Company to commence the counterattack and to relieve the 1st Company. I also sent the order for the counterattack to the 2nd, with the left wing alongside the road. The artillery messenger was sent to the next battery with the request to support the counterattack against the attack on the H.W.L. The messengers were certainly too late, for soon thereafter Lieutenant Seifert, 2nd Company, arrived with a bullet in the right upper arm and reported that the enemy had taken the position of his company.

Now the attack against my operation centre was to be expected imminently. Preparation for the defence as per sketch (4) [Fig.3.2]. [page 110] I was hoping to hold out for a while and thus give the Divisional Reserves time to arrange the counterattack. Now the first assault began south of the street. In the fog I saw the silhouette of a tank appear and drive against the machine gun nest *Lerche*. The three machine guns fired at once heavily but could not stop it. The tank drove over them. As Lieutenant von Frantzius, leader of the 3. M.G.K.¹² determined later on, one machine gun had been destroyed, a number of the crews killed in action. I could no longer observe the further course of the battle south of the road. While the fog had lifted just a little, so that the buildings of the *Ferme* became visible, my view to the left was obstructed by them. My guess is that the left section of the skirmish line was eliminated or taken prisoner by the tank and the infantry that was following closely behind.

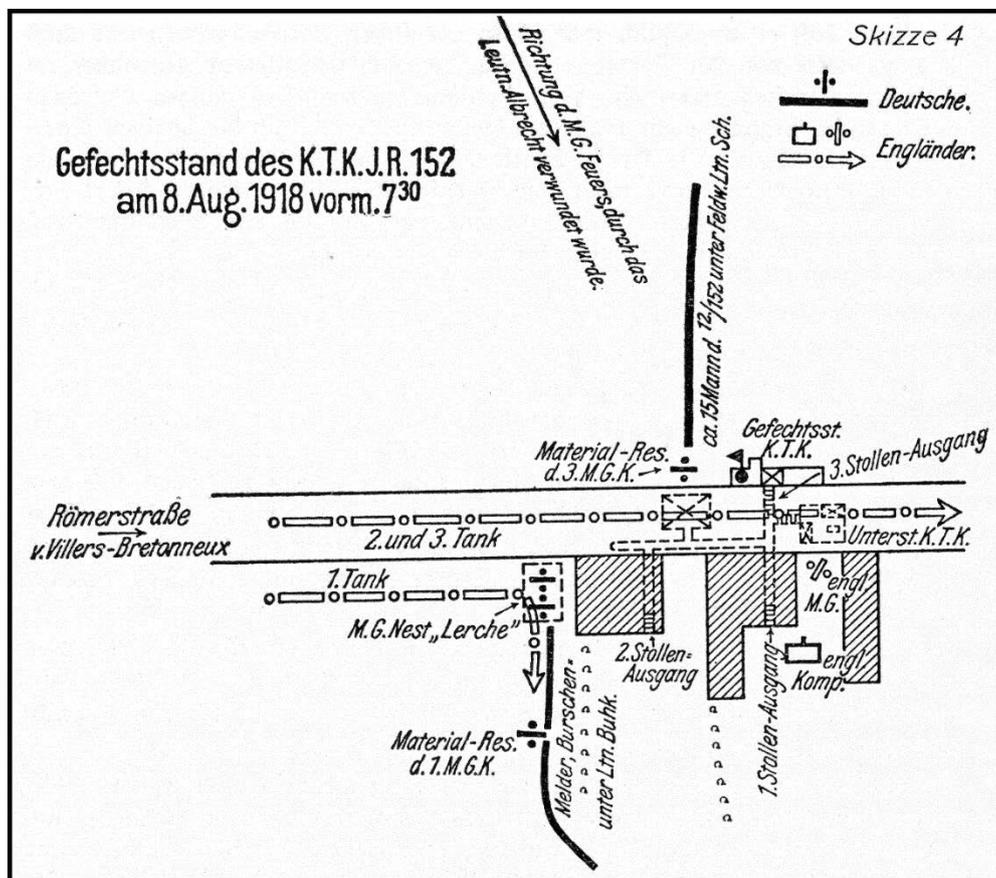


Fig.3.2: Sketch 4: Operation Centre of the K.T.K., Infantry Regt. 152 at 7.30am on 8 August 1918.

¹² M.G.K. = *Maschinen-Gewehr-Kompanie* (Machine Gun Company) (General Staff, 1918: 197). Hereafter, Machine Gun Company is used instead of M.G.K.

The right wing and the operation centre came soon after under machine gun fire from halfway to the right side. During this fire the adjutant, Res. Lieutenant Albrecht, who stood behind me, was hit by a bullet from the side through his face. At the same time a second tank approached us on the road that was unsuccessfully fired at by a machine gun in front of me. The tank passed by the operation centre without stopping; the machine gun dodged away to the right side and both gunners were killed.

Now one could see the area around the operation centre. The skirmish line to the right of the road had disappeared. I never learnt [page 111] the reason why. The energetic and dutiful Sergeant-Major-Lieutenant¹³ Schwentowius had probably been unable to rally the shaken 12th Company personnel in the heavy machine gun fire [of the enemy] after they had been fighting in front of and in the H.W.L.

The *Ferme* on the left side of the road was occupied by the Australians; in the gateway, from behind a house corner, they just mounted a Lewis gun. None of our gunners were left to be seen, only we four officers were left uninjured (Res. Captain Hatzfeld, Lieutenant von Frantzius, First Lieutenant Zickler, the leader of I./152 and the B.T.K. and A.V.O.¹⁴ Res. Lieutenant Müller). We now started a close-combat firefight with the Australians and had the satisfaction that they did not dare to attack our trench hole in spite of their numerical superiority. *Lange Zickler*¹⁵ fired the last bullet by means of which he killed a Tommy in the gate. Then the firing was quickly stopped by a third tank. We got out of the way of the monster as it rolled on the road and jumped into the gaping hole of the entrance of the dugout and quickly slid down the stairs. And right away hand grenades were thrown into both entrances.

The game was over! I had all diaries, documents and maps destroyed. Then we waited to see what the Tommy would do now. For a while he did not do a thing. It was only at about 8.00am that a man came down carefully, addressed us, came closer as I replied and then let us climb up the stairs, [which were] damaged by hand grenades, out into the clear. There were a large number of dead and wounded Australians laying in front of the farmhouse. So our defence had been worthwhile for something.

During the first attack south of the road there was not just one tank but also several others involved, some of which turned around at first or extended to swing further south round about Warfusée-Lamotte. The enemy infantry had also comprehensively advanced from the south and was therefore able to enter the *Ferme* quickly, as all three machine guns had been destroyed.

This local fighting round about the K.T.K. operations centre had been preceded by tough fighting of the most advanced companies. The early penetration of the right wing of the Regt. 15 could not have remained without serious consequences. There the enemy had already reached the H.W.L. between 6.15am and 6.30am. Both Vice-Sergeant Gralke and Sergeant-Major-Lieutenant Gensing 9./152 agree that their position had been attacked at about 7.00am from the right flank and from the rear. Following embittered fights with hand grenades during which *inter alia* Sergeant-Major-Lieutenant Gensing was wounded and one ensign killed, their resistance broke down when they also came under heavy frontal attack. It is unknown whether this encirclement, which almost certainly also destroyed the 2nd Company, proceeded to

¹³ *Feldwebel-Leutnant* = (Sergeant-Major-Lieutenant [only appointed in war]) (General Staff, 1918: 51).

¹⁴ A.V.O. = *Artillerie-Verbindungs-Offizier* (Artillery Liaison Officer) (General Staff, 1918: 173). See page 95.

¹⁵ Presumably the nickname of First Lieutenant Zickler, *Lange* [tall] Zickler.

overcome the 10th Company or whether the 10th was overwhelmed by a frontal assault. At any rate, a [page 112] platoon of the 12th Company under command of Vice-Sergeant Bodzian was also attacked from behind. He writes:

Suddenly they called out: Tommy behind us! True enough, a tank approached us at an angle from behind and now we heard hooray calls behind us, too. But we could not see a thing in the terrible fog. Now we also fired to our rear. Our people stood firmly in the trench, all machine guns were firing. Then there were three heavy tanks approaching us from the front, one behind another on the road and behind them we heard the hooray calls. Therefore enemy from the front and the rear, there was no going forward or back. So far as I could observe in this hellfire, the storm troops from the rear were the first in our trench and tossed hand grenades. The last thing I heard was the call from our machine gun on the left: Our ammo is finished! Then there was a terrible crash next to me, a tank drove across the trench right next to me, then another crash and I became unconscious.

Res. Lieutenant Goergel says about the battle of the 1./152:

At about 7.00am a few runaways of the 3rd Company came back and shouted: The Tommy is sitting in the front! A counterattack was impossible because of the dense fog. To keep the ranks closed I gave the order: 'Fire to the front. All ammunition is to be fired except the last 10 rounds!' The heavy machine gun and the two light machine guns were buried by direct hits after about ten minutes. The third light machine gun and the two light mortars kept on firing. From the front we did not get a single rifle shot. Shortly after 7.30am we heard the humming of tanks behind us and a little later two tanks drove from behind across our trench, fired with machine guns from the side and shot our people down except for about 20 men. Tight skirmish lines of Australians followed immediately behind the tanks, at-the-double and yelling wildly, and pulled us out of the trench.

The 8./152 must have had a similar experience; they were probably attacked before the 1st Company from behind on the right and maybe by those tanks that had turned away in front of the K.T.K. Survivors of it with two machine guns were rallied by a section of 2./Pi. 26¹⁶ under the command of Ensign Schleich on the western edge of the *Kirch* depression. As they were threatened with encirclement there as well this group retreated to the eastern ridge of the depression, settled there for renewed defence until they were completely surrounded. Only two pioneers returned.

However, the resistance of the 152nd was more successful and lasted longer than that of the neighbour regiments. Even though the reports of the participants refer to a later timeframe, it is certain that there was still fighting west of Warfusée when, for example, all fighting battalions and reserves of the 13th Infantry Division had been eliminated. This seems to be confirmed by reports of the enemy referring to the stronger resistance in this sector (see page 79). [page 113] Yet even the devotion of the group Hatzfeld, of whom only a few survivors were able to fight their way to the east, was unable to affect the final outcome. Of the stand-by battalion two officers and the main part of the 4th Company only returned; they appeared to be particularly stunned by the fire that had been directed onto the 7./Field Artillery 58, because they retreated without being involved in any infantry fighting. Already at 6.00am none of the guns of this battery were able to continue firing, as of 7.00am fire of unseen machine guns hit the battery position. Soon after First Lieutenant Berghaus, K.T.K./15, made it through the fire and reported about the fate of his battalion (ref. page 99), the remaining gun crews retreated to

¹⁶ Pi = *Pionier* (Pioneer) (General Staff, 1918: 201). Hereafter, Pioneer is used.

the 3./Field Artillery 58, which was, however, also no longer able to directly intervene against the enemy infantry. For at this time (about 7.30am) the enemy further to the right had already taken his first target of the attack, while the fog had not yet dispersed. The battery must ultimately have been completely encircled because they lost 29 men missing in action. It was only worse for the 2./Foot Artillery 151, of which not one man returned.¹⁷

There was a valid reason for the early silence of the sub-group of Field Artillery North (III./79) that stood south and southeast of Lamotte and that had at first given lively destructive fire, as reported by Captain Hatzfeld. As far as the 9th Battery is concerned, all three guns were destroyed early on by enemy fire. After being involved with barrage fire until shortly after 5.00am during the operation of Regt. 148, the 8th and 6th Batteries had soon exhausted their ammunition.

The course of the battle for the 6./Field Artillery 58 and the II./Field Artillery 27 turned out to be more favourable. Their positions had been less subjected to the enemy drumfire and they were positioned 1-1.5km to the east of the first target of the enemy attack. When the enemy assembled anew at 9.20am the fog had lifted enough so that all four batteries had been given sufficient visibility. The newly deployed tank squadrons on the other side were to experience this. At first the 6./Field Artillery 58 was to become active, however, only with two guns, because one of the three had just been made unserviceable. But those two – pulled out of their shelter at 8.15am for direct firing – immediately recognised the enemy infantry columns that appeared from the *Kirch* depression.¹⁸ From 1300m the first shells hissed away and caused them to disappear rapidly. Then a tank pushed forward in the same direction, then two more from the southern exit of Lamotte, [page 114] and all three were forced to a halt. The enemy artillery did not appear to have their observers up front as yet, for otherwise they could have quickly finished the guns standing uncovered. So a while went by before the next targets appeared: another three tanks from the eastern side of Lamotte. They, too, had to stop very soon. Finally yet another tank had worked its way forward from the left to 60m and threatened to penetrate the position after having caused several casualties of the gun crews with his guns and machine gun. In the last moment they succeeded to knock it out, too. There can be no doubt about these successes of the battery as they have also been confirmed by members of the Field Artillery Regiment 79. Res. Captain Rothe, Lieutenants Sasz and Selig III./79 as well as Lieutenant Lau 6./79 and Lieutenant Erwe 8./79, while they retreated, had joined the 6./Field Artillery 58 and participated significantly in their firefight. The mainstays of the 6./58 were Vice-Wachtmeister Reese,¹⁹ Sergeant Niemann and Sergeant Wessel.

But after these successes the enemy skirmish lines had come precariously closer. As well, as more and more tanks appeared on the *Römer* Road and especially from near to the left, this brave crew had to retreat. Now it was the turn of the 4th, 5th and 6./Field Artillery 27. From about 9.20 to 9.45am they, too, fought in a similar manner tanks and riflemen with even greater success. The combat reports of those batteries report up to ten tanks as destroyed, of which some had certainly been under fire from the 6./Field Artillery 58 as well. At any rate, in this sector a severe gap was inflicted in the enemy tank squadrons by the outstanding attitude and effect of those four batteries that could have been of noticeable importance. But especially on and south of the *Römer* Road the enemy had not only put into combat numerous heavy tanks but also a battalion of light armoured vehicles (12 units) that – driving very fast – could not be

¹⁷ See Bean, 1942: 542-543.

¹⁸ See Bean, 1942: 554-555.

¹⁹ *Vice-Wachtmeister* (Vice-Sergeant-Major) Reese (6./58 Field Artillery) is mentioned in Bean, 1942: 555. *Wachtmeister* = (Sergeant-Major [of cavalry or field artillery]) (General Staff, 1918: 160).

mastered by the II./Field Artillery 27, the more so as their ammunition was getting exhausted. At about 9.50am the batteries had to be abandoned, after all three guns of the 5./27 [5./Field Artillery 27] had previously been made unserviceable.

The mobile tank [anti-tank?] battery 1./Field Artillery 79 that had been based in Proyart also got involved in this fight.²⁰ It had been in position on the northern exit of Bayonvillers, had also been able to stop several tanks and was then the only one of the regiment able to [page 115] limber up the guns again. However, as the enemy was now as close as 400m he was able to shoot down the team of horses of one gun. It had to be left behind.

There are only cursory reports available about the battle of the Infantry Regiment 18 in the central sector of the 41st Infantry Division [see Fig.3.3, p.32]. We can take from English reports that the Australians were never held up for any length of time and that their attack on the first target was executed as scheduled. Of the members of two K.T.K. staff and the ten companies deployed of the Infantry Regiment 18, only eight officers and 50 men returned. Apparently the most advanced companies were completely surprised; the assault operation of the 148th, conducted right next to the left wing of the regiment, contributed even more to this surprise than it did in the case of Regt. 152. The 10th and 7th Companies were also attacked immediately by tanks and strong skirmish lines and were overrun. The small crew of the K.T.K. on the right and the 1st Company, on the other hand, were prepared for the attack. There was a short, very close-up firefight during which the staff of the 1st Battalion, which had not yet been relieved, suffered heavy casualties: the leader of the Battalion, Captain Riechert, was mortally wounded, the Adjutant, Res. Lieutenant Gr. Bernstorff and the leader of the 3rd Machine Gun Company Lieutenant Anders were killed in action. The procedure as described by the mortar officer of the regiment, Lieutenant Klopke, repeated itself everywhere: He had been surprised by the drumfire in the front line, then met at first with the leader of the 11th Company and thereafter returned to his main mortar position with the rolling artillery fire that was moving eastwards:

There was terrible destruction to be seen. All mortars and ammunition buried! My people had started to dig it all out. We were able to make two ready to fire. I heard the mortar nests right and left behind us commence curtain fire. There was feeble rifle fire ahead of us. Then I already heard the engine sounds of tanks that we were facing now for the first time. I integrated men who had come back from the 11th Company as welcome reinforcements for my position. Then the leader of a mortar called out to me that there was a tank on our right. In fact, a big shadow pushed past us, just discernible in the dense fog, and disappeared from view after a few minutes. Our full attention was now directed to our front, from where we expected the enemy to turn up. In the fog we could determine now and then their flat steel helmets but they stayed at a respectful distance. Suddenly our position came under attack from our left rear and from the front. We had been by-passed in the fog. During the following hand grenade fighting a majority of my people were killed or wounded.

[page 116] At the centre of the K.T.K. on the left, *Rittmeister* von Kries,²¹ a messenger arrived at 6.30am with the news that the enemy was already standing in the rear of the company. A half-hour later the first Australians appeared in front of the 15-strong rifle crew of the control centre and were held at bay until the envelopment from right and left was becoming touchy

²⁰ Perhaps mentioned in Bean, 1942: 561.

²¹ *Rittmeister* (Cavalry Captain) von Kries (II./18 I. R.) is mentioned in Bean 1942: 533, 561-562 probably in connection with the attack by the 21st Bn (6th Bde) and later apparently with the 46th Bn (12th Bde). *Rittmeister* = (Captain of cavalry or train) (General Staff, 1918: 123).

here, too. At the last moment *Rittmeister* von Kries was able to escape to Marcelcave with a few of his men.

At 7.20am the enemy had completely occupied his first objective.

*

[NOTE: From page 116 to 129 there are only few sentences that refer to involvement of and actions by Australian forces. These have been identified and translated along with their relevant page numbers. The majority of the narrative here concerns English and Canadian troops. However, as the study from page 129 is again of general interest, Part 4 will commence from that page.]

[page 121] The fact that the six batteries round about Marcelcave could not achieve a satisfactory result was inevitable given the rapidity with which the Australians and Canadians were advancing; they, too, had no idea if the attack had commenced and how far it had advanced already.

[page 126] The English Cavalry Corps had the task to reach the third target of the attack as early as possible by overtaking the leading infantry lines of the Canadian and Australian Corps and to hold it until the arrival of the infantry, in order to immediately advance then to the German rear links on the line Chaulnes-Roye. For this purpose the 1st Cavalry Division from the area northeast and the 3rd from west of Cachy had followed the 5th Australian and 2nd Canadian Divisions. At about 10.15am their leading units had reached the line Ignaucourt-Marcelcave. As left column of the 1st Cavalry Division, reinforced by 16 light tanks, the 1st Cavalry Brigade had remained close up to the Australian infantry north of the rail line Amiens-Chaulnes and had crossed their leading lines at the level of Bayonvillers-Guillaucourt. Their next target was Harbonnières which was encircled from the north and the south. But then their further advance met German resistance at Vauvillers and south of Harbonnières.

[page 127] The armoured cars had achieved the greatest advance. The 17th Armoured Car Battalion (with 12 cars) had crossed the leading line of the Australian infantry east of the *Römer* depression on the great road.

The series concludes with Part 4 in the next issue.

*

References

- Bean, C.E.W. 1942. *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918, Volume VI: The A.I.F. in France: May 1918–The Armistice*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- General Staff, 1918. *Vocabulary of German military terms and abbreviations* (2nd edition, July, 1918). London: The War Office.
- von Bose, T. 1930. *Die Katastrophe des 8. August 1918 (Schlachten des Weltkrieges, Band 36)* [The Catastrophe of 8 August 1918 (Battles of the World War, Volume 36)]. Gerhard Stalling: Oldenburg i.O./Berlin.

THE AUSTRALIAN ATTACK IN THE BATTLE OF AMIENS, 8 AUGUST 1918: A TRANSLATION OF THE OFFICIAL GERMAN VERSION – PART 3 (MAPS)

David Pearson and Paul Thost

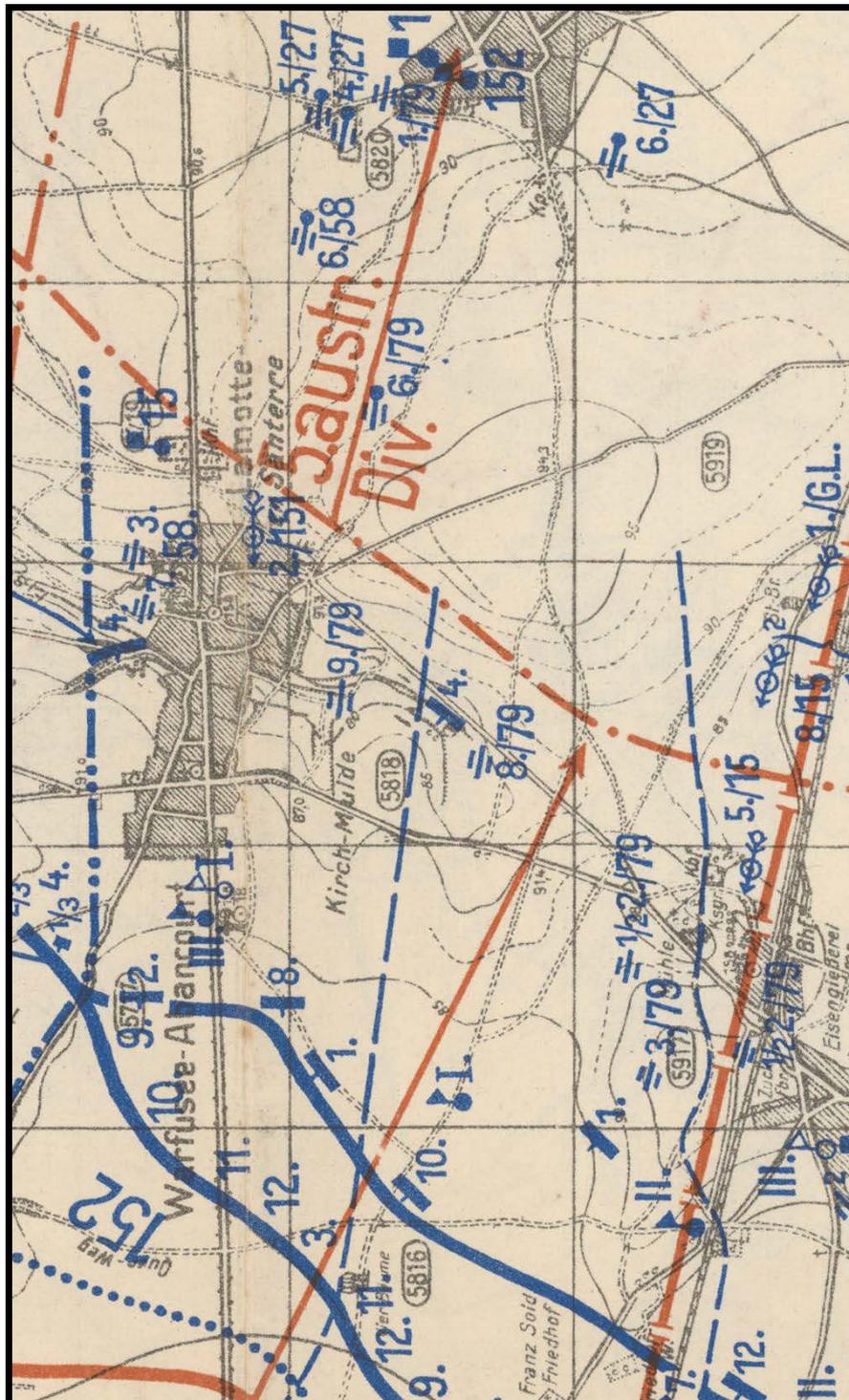


Fig.3.1: A portion of the German map of the Amiens battlefield from von Bose (1930: Map 2) showing the positions of the I./152 Infantry Regiment (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Companies); III./152 Infantry Regiment (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Companies); 4th, 5th and 6./Field Artillery 27 (6./27); 3rd, 6th and 7./Field Artillery 58 (7./58); 1st, 6th and 9./Field Artillery 79 (9./79); 2./Foot Artillery 151 (2./151) and other units north and south of the Roman Road into Warfusée. Scale: each grid square = 1000m²

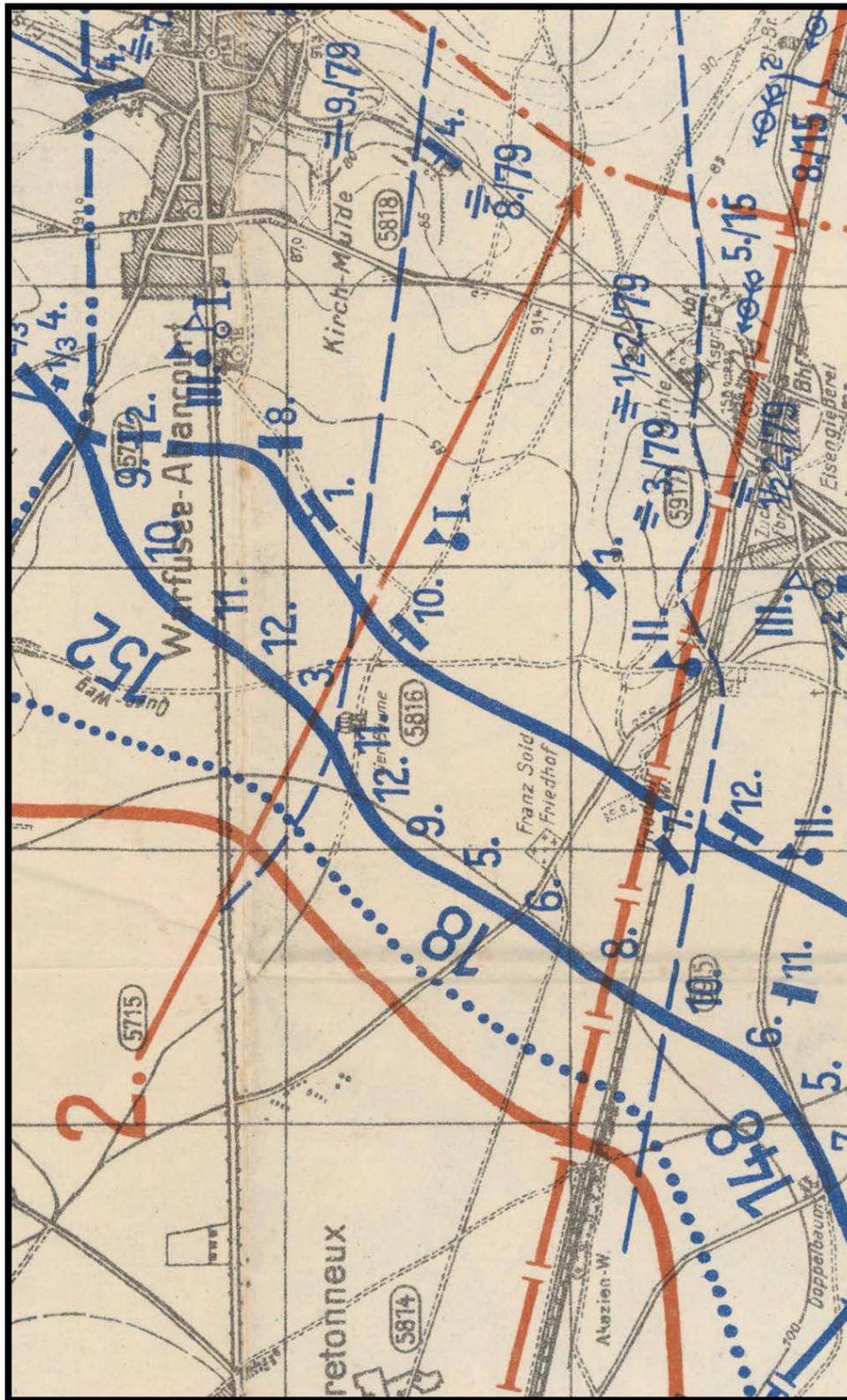


Fig.3.3: A portion of the German map of the Amiens battlefield from von Bose (1930: Map 2) showing the positions of the II./18 Infantry Regiment (5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Companies); III./18 Infantry Regiment (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Companies); 2nd, 3rd and 8./Field Artillery 79 (8./79); 5th and 8./Foot Artillery 15 (8./15) and other units south of the Roman Road and north of the Canadian Corps advance. Scale: each grid square = 1000m²

COLLECTORS' CORNER**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY REGIMENT BADGE****Anthony F. Harris**

While there are a number of books available to identify military badges and insignia, it is not often we find documents relating to their manufacture, quantities produced, origins of design, etc. In this regard, the following snippet from an Adelaide newspaper speaks for itself, and suggests perhaps that the badge was not introduced until about three or four years after raising the regiment:

Provided the quality and price is all that is desired, there is no occasion to send out of the State for goods which can be made in it. This remark is specially applicable to the manufacture of military medals which have been struck by Mr. H.D. Robson of North Adelaide for the South Australian Infantry Regiment, whose members are chiefly in the country districts. Mr. Robson has made the first lot of badges ever produced here, and the workmanship is most creditable. The design is his, and everything connected with the medal. The badge is of German silver metal, and consists of a wreath of eucalyptus leaves, emblematic of this State, surmounted by the British crown. A monogram 'S.A.I.R.' of the regiment is embossed in the centre, with a polished background, and there is an inside border with the words 'South Australian Infantry Regiment'. The dimensions are 2 in. x 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. The dimensions of the badge for the collar, of a similar design, are 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. x 1 in. The regiment is purely a volunteer one, and this is the first badge it has had of its own. The number of badges struck is 1,600.

Source: *The Observer* (Adelaide, South Australia), 6 July 1907, p.30.

DETAILS, DETAILS ...

Paul Skrebels

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate two Australian Army colour patches which were added to the Standing Orders (SO) for Dress promulgated during the interwar years. Both are listed on the official colour charts as 'details', that is, they were intended for issue to personnel of particular corps serving in non-divisional units located around the country.



Fig.1 (left) shows Australian Army Medical Corps Details, consisting of a rectangle 2½ x 1½ inches (63mm x 38mm) in brown – the AAMC colour – with a red 'notched' bar. (This design was also used on some non-divisional patches of the Royal Aust Artillery and Aust Army Service Corps, in the appropriate colours of those corps.) It was authorised around 1925, as it first appears in the SO chart for that year, and was worn up until the first years of WW2, sometimes with a grey background from 1939 if the wearer had AIF status.

Fig.2 (right) shows Signals Details, and is an equilateral triangle with 2½-inch (63mm) sides, in the white over blue colours of the Signal Corps. It has a rather 'Great War' appearance – it might even be taken for a British 'battle patch' of that period by the unwary. However, it wasn't actually authorised until 28 February 1941, although it was apparently issued to some units a year beforehand. It was worn by Militia Signals personnel up until the middle of WW2, but examples were also manufactured with the AIF grey background.



The curious thing about these particular insignia is that they were each superseded during the course of WW2 by a bewildering array of colour patches created (not always with official approval) for a multiplicity of units raised within the AAMC and Signal Corps. Although they now keep collectors and researchers busy (and often confused!), their profusion proved the bane of the Army hierarchy and led, paradoxically, to the return to a single patch for each corps as part of the Arm of Service scheme introduced from 1944. *Plus ça change*, it seems.

... AND A MYSTERY



Fig.3 (left) depicts a patch not found in any of the usual sources. From its design, colours and manufacture it appears to be an Australian WW2 item belonging to a unit of the AAMC, but this is by no means certain. It has 2-inch (50mm) sides, and while I show it standing on its point with the bar pointing east-west, the bar could point north-south or the whole patch could just sit on one edge. If it is Australian and AAMC, it reveals a curious reversal of colours, in that the brown and grey areas are transposed. If not an outright fantasy item, it could be a manufacturer's error – as frequently occurred with certain patches – or it could be intended for some hitherto undocumented unit.

The red-on-grey aspect vaguely recalls a square patch in those colours issued to Voluntary Aids in 1942 (see Glyde, item no.1376), but this is pure conjecture on my part. Needless to say, any information about this patch is most welcome!

References: *Australian Army Colour Patch Register 1915-1949*, Dept of Defence, Canberra, 1992.

Keith Glyde, *Distinguishing Colour Patches of the Australian Military Forces 1915-1951: A Reference Guide*, The Author, Claremont, 1999.

THE ORIGINS OF THE BEERBURRUM SOLDIER SETTLEMENT

Paul Sutton and Chrissy Fletcher

On 28 June 1914 Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb, assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Austria-Hungarian Empire in Sarajevo. The murder unleashed a chain of events that was to plunge the entire world into conflict within six weeks. In faraway Australia few people had heard of Sarajevo, Bosnia or Serbia but the aftermath of this assassination was to change Australia forever in a myriad of ways. One such consequence was to transform the small Queensland railway siding on the North Coast Line under the shadow of Mt Beerburrum into an agricultural settlement specifically established for ex-servicemen.

The Beerburrum Soldiers Settlement, approximately 65km north of Brisbane, was established in 1916 as one of many settlements throughout Queensland for ex-servicemen returned from the Great War. Its aim was to provide the opportunity for ex-servicemen to establish themselves on the land at a reasonable cost, as a reward for their efforts and sacrifice in serving their King, their Empire and their Country. While ultimately the scheme as a whole was a failure, it did survive for a decade as a state-sponsored initiative. Many of these ex-servicemen remained on the land around Beerburrum and many of their descendants are still there to this day.

The aim of this article is to illustrate how the Settlement came into being as a result of the tumultuous chain of events which began in Sarajevo that day in the summer of 1914, and what remains today of the settlement. It will examine how the insignificant rail siding on the North Coast Line became the widely publicised manifestation of the government's repatriation and reintegration programme for returned soldiers.

With the declaration of war between Britain and Germany on 4 August 1914, Australia saw itself plunged into the conflict from the outset. In Queensland, the Commonwealth camp at Enoggera in Brisbane was the centre for administering the state's effort and was the reception centre for Queensland recruits. In August 1914 a total of 1481 had volunteered and by the end of the year 6150 Queenslanders had rallied to the cause. By the time the AIF went into action on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 this number had risen to over 10,000. By war's end Queensland had contributed 57,700 men or approximately 14% of the entire AIF recruits.¹

While there might have been a degree of euphoria at the outbreak of the war, Queensland itself was in political and social turmoil. The state had long had the reputation of being militant, which saw a significant growth in trade union membership in the years since Federation, and the unions were beginning to make their presence felt. A series of well-organised strikes throughout the state in previous years had seen significant gains in the employment conditions of the workers, though the General Strike in Brisbane in 1912 had been heavy-handedly suppressed by the Denham government of the day which led to bitterness between the social classes. As the Labor movement in Queensland became more organised so too did its Labor Party political wing under the leadership of Thomas Joseph Ryan and Edward Theodore, whose common sense 'moderate' approach to socialism was finding support among both urban workers and their rural cousins.²

The beginning of the war coincided with – or perhaps it is fairer to say caused – an economic recession in Queensland. Exports of agricultural produce almost immediately dried up as all

¹ Ernest Scott, *Australia During The War* (7th Edition), Angus and Roberston, Sydney, 1941, Appendix 3.

² Raymond Evans, *A History of Queensland*, Cambridge UP, 2007 pp.147ff.

available shipping was required to ship men and materiel to the war zone, while much of the metal industry, which was heavily reliant on German customers, inevitably suffered. The knock-on effects were job losses and price rises which mostly affected the working classes, thus fuelling their growing sense of frustration and bitter resentment of the elite.³ This all ultimately had an effect in the state elections in 1915 when Ryan and his Labor Party were swept into office with their agenda of social reform and greater state involvement in the economy and workers' conditions. It was the Labor Party that was to manage the soldier settlement schemes within Queensland.

As a country, Australia had little experience of how to integrate returned servicemen into society. Its first military forays overseas, the Maori and Boer Wars, saw relatively low numbers involved and so reintegration was not problematic. But the numbers that had enlisted in 1914/1915 meant that when the time came for the soldiers' return, significant issues would be encountered in reintegrating them into society and the workforce, and that adequate plans would need to be in place. Given the priority of early 1915 was still to win the war rather than to worry too much about peacetime, the debate, such as it was, came more from the concerned members of the public expressing themselves in newspapers rather than governments formulating repatriation policy.

Until the middle of 1915 the state authorities' main priority, naturally, was to recruit, equip, train and dispatch the volunteers as quickly as possible. Little thought was given as to what would happen to these men on their return to Australia – be they fit or maimed. The early months of 1915 saw a trickle of soldiers being returned to Australia whose services in the AIF were no longer required. Either they were sick, medically unsuited to soldiering, those who were sent home for varying degrees of ill-discipline or those who had returned from the expedition against the German possessions in New Guinea. It was around this time that questions began appearing in the press asking what was to be done to assist these returnees to settle back into civilian life. As these men were mainly sick rather than maimed, the main concern was to find them employment. It became commonplace for jobs to be advertised as 'suitable for returned soldiers', as explained in *The Truth*, a Melbourne newspaper in January 1915: 'It should thus become a duty, devolving upon either the Government or the community itself to ensure recognition of the claims of returned soldiers in the matter of employment, and, in any case, to ensure preference for soldiers, all else being equal, over the loafers who refused to turn to when the Empire called'.⁴

The concept of discharged soldiers receiving land goes back at least as far as the Roman army. The notion of rewarding soldiers with land to set themselves up for the rest of their lives was always a big incentive for men to join the army in the first place. This was a common reward scheme and throughout the history of the British Empire, soldiers and civilians alike were able to obtain land in the various colonies and dominions in return for the service they had provided to the Crown.

One of the first proponents of land settlement for soldiers was an Australian, Herbert E. Easton of the British Immigration League, an organisation which encouraged immigration from Britain prior to the war. Easton happened to be in Britain when war was declared and took it upon himself to publicly declare it was Australia's obligation to provide land for any British soldier who wished to take up a new life on the land in Australia after the war. In this he was

³ Evans, pp.154-155.

⁴ *Truth* (Victoria), Saturday 16 January 1915, p.1.

supported by Earl Grey who was commissioned by the British Government to ascertain the practicalities of widespread emigration of British ex-servicemen after the conclusion of the war. On Easton's return to Australia in mid-1915 he travelled the country extolling the merits and benefits of such a scheme to the Australian public and politicians alike. His trip was well publicised in the national press which did much to raise awareness to the Australian general public of the concept of land settlement for returned soldiers.⁵

Western Australia took the lead when one private individual offered Earl Grey's scheme

100,000 acres of fruit land in proximity to the railway, at £2 an acre, the purchase money not to be paid for 20 years. The owner further offers to advance £50,000 as working capital towards placing these proposed settlers on the land in such a way that neither interest nor capital need be paid by them until they are in a position to do so out of realised profits.

This generous offer spurred the Western Australian Minister for Lands to state that the Crown 'might see its way to make even a more liberal offer'.⁶ Not to be outdone, the Victorian State Assembly in May 1915 was suggesting they could also offer up land for Earl Grey's scheme, but it was South Australia that first legislated to provide a settlement scheme for returned Australian servicemen in December 1915.⁷

This awareness of the need to make provision for returned soldiers became more urgent once Australia heard the news that its forces had gone into action in Gallipoli in April 1915. The Federal Government on 2 May issued its first casualty list which was soon published in newspapers across the country. The horrors of war had suddenly become real, and it became apparent that repatriation would soon become an issue to be dealt with by the Governments.

Initially recruitment, and by extension demobilisation, of servicemen was seen as a state responsibility, but with the numbers involved the Federal Government was required to take the leading role in all aspects of the military administrative effort. In September 1914 a new Federal Government was elected under the leadership of Andrew Fisher. This ministry then established a Federal War Committee to oversee recruiting and associated activities at a national level. In August 1915 it was recognised that similar committees should be established at state and even district level, not just to co-ordinate recruiting (which had seen a drop in levels early in 1915) but also to direct the repatriation of invalids and provide assistance to them and their families, and to also deal with the question of land settlement for the returned soldiers. Initially, such activities were financed from the various patriotic funds raised in the states rather than from state or even federal financing.

The former Prime Minister, Mr Chris Watson, was given the role of unifying the activities of the various state war councils as well as to consider a scheme to provide employment for returned soldiers, and he was also directed to formulate a national land settlement policy on behalf of the Federal government which could then be put to the states for discussion and adoption. Watson travelled around Australia during the spring of 1915, giving his views on the land settlement issue and listening to public opinion on the matter before returning to Melbourne to finalise the Federal Government's plan. On 8 October 1915 Watson delivered an address to the newly constituted Queensland War Council regarding the Federal government's current views on the reintegration of servicemen into society at the end of the war. He explained

⁵ *The Land* (NSW), Friday 5 March 1915, p.6.

⁶ *Chronicle* (South Australia), Saturday 13 March 1915, p.42.

⁷ *The Register* (South Australia), Thursday 27 May 1915, p.8; *The Returned Soldier Settlement Act, 1915* enacted by the Government of South Australia, 23 December 1915.

how soldiers serving overseas would be sent a War Census Card from ‘which will be obtained their previous employers’ names, and nature of employment, etc etc in order that provision may be made, when they return from the War and discharged, for their employment’. He also stated that for those who returned incapacitated the Government would approach ‘Technical Colleges, Blind Institutions, etc ... with a view to training the men for employment in capacities other than those which they previously occupied’.⁸

With regards to the question of land settlement, Watson explained the Federal government’s idea

was to purchase land suitable for farming, the purchase to be arranged either from Government or private owners, by bonds, not cash. It was not the intention to make a gift of land so furnished to the soldiers but to allow them to occupy and eventually obtain title under the bond system, interest payable, being perhaps waived, during the first year or two of occupation.⁹

Watson went on to say that the funding was to come from ‘subscription, being obtained from all districts whether holding land suitable for settlement or not’.¹⁰ His suggestion was that the necessary financing come from local community fund-raising rather than from state or federal coffers.

By the time of Watson’s visit to Brisbane in October 1915 the Labor Government of Ryan had been in office for four months and had already started enacting its reform agenda. Two of Ryan’s most committed supporters in the government were Edward Theodore (who would replace him as Premier in 1919) and John McEwan Hunter who became Minister for Lands. As such Hunter was to play a significant role in the formulation and implementation of Queensland’s soldier settlement scheme.

In many ways this Labor government which held power until 1925, introduced many radical programs and projects, including the establishment of various state enterprises. Most were ultimately failures but the period ushered in an era of what we today might call ‘big government’, where the state government became involved in many commercial activities ranging from food production and distribution, public works and even hotel management. The land settlement for returned soldiers’ proposals of 1915-1916 in Queensland must be viewed with this government policy in mind, as it explains many of the ideas that manifested themselves in Beerburum.

At a meeting of the War Council during the week after Watson’s visit, Hunter was appointed Chairman of the Land Settlement Sub-Committee;¹¹ he then appointed the Under Secretary of Lands, Mr Gordon Graham, a career civil servant whose first post was a surveyor in the Lands Department in 1888 and who had worked his way up the ladder to this position in 1914;¹² the Member of the Legislative Council A.H. Whittington, an experienced pastoralist who was also President of the United Graziers Association and a fierce critic of the Ryan government;¹³ Mr A.H. Benson, previously an Instructor in Fruit Culture in Queensland and most latterly Director of Agriculture in Tasmania;¹⁴ and Mr Watts, the Land Commissioner to the committee, to assist him. This was undoubtedly an experienced committee with expertise in many aspects of

⁸ Queensland State Archives, Item ID314693, Minutes, 8 October 1915.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Queensland State Archives, Item ID314693, Minutes, 18 October 1915.

¹² *The Queenslander*, Saturday 3 January 1914, p.37.

¹³ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.12, Melbourne UP, 1990.

¹⁴ *Brisbane Courier* Friday 9 July 1915, p.8.

agriculture and farming, and which indicates the importance attached to the committee by the Government. Under Hunter's direction this sub-committee was charged with formulating the government's soldier settlement policy.

The sub-committee recognised from its very first deliberations the proximity to the railway of any proposed land settlement as a crucial element to eventual success of the scheme. In fact, a report to the War Committee dated 15 November 1915 stated 'the difficulty of locating sufficient suitable Crown lands near railway communication and it was suggested that owners of large areas of undeveloped lands along railway lines might be communicated with in order to ascertain if they were prepared to gift or grant a lease of such lands'¹⁵. The first reference in the minutes of the sub-committee to what was to become the Beerburrum Soldier Settlement further illustrates the importance of proximity to the railway. While the location was not mentioned by name, it was referred to simply as 'an area of Crown land on the North Coast line'¹⁶. In a time when the Queensland road system was not yet developed, the railway was the main artery for movement of goods and people around the state and laying of new track into undeveloped country was a precursor to opening of land for new settlement. So important was the need for railways in this regard that Ryan was to lament, after one of his numerous tussles with the unelected Legislative Council when they blocked his plans for the Many Peaks-Cannindah and the Orallo-Injune Creek railways in December 1915, that the construction of such railways 'would open large areas of land suitable for close settlement ... [T]his land ... was of a class that would be mostly required for the settlement of ex-servicemen ... I regard the action of the Council in rejecting these railways with a great deal of concern'.¹⁷

The sub-committee looked into all types of farming activities to identify which would be most suitable and where. No doubt Benson's expertise in this area proved beneficial. Both he and Watts looked into the possibilities of fruit, wheat and dairy in November and Benson even visited Stanthorpe to ascertain the likelihood of fruit farming there.¹⁸ Few locations seemed as promising as Beerburrum, being already Crown Land (and therefore not needing to be expensively resumed), and being close to the railway and seemingly fertile.

By the end of 1915 the Queensland government had in place the political will to act in this matter and had, through the activities of the War Council, the mechanism to identify and evaluate a multitude of options on how to proceed. What was lacking was any firm and practical method of funding the schemes – for it was apparent that financing such large-scale settlement could not come solely from the largesse of the population as had been suggested by Watson – nor did it have the legal or administrative apparatus to manage them. Without these in place there was little point in making any decision as to where these settlements would be located and what manner of farming they would practise. In consultation with the Federal Government, Watson drew up a series of proposals on the practical implementation of land settlement throughout the Commonwealth which were approved by the Federal Cabinet in January 1916. A meeting was called in Melbourne on 19 February 1916 to which representatives of all State Governments were invited to discuss this proposal and to gain agreement from the states. Hunter headed the Queensland delegation.

By the end of the meeting all the states had agreed to support the Federal Government's plan which, in essence, was that the provision of all land rests with the states; that the Federal

¹⁵ Queensland State Archives, Item ID314693, Minutes, 15 November 1915.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, Thursday 23 December 1915, p.10.

¹⁸ Queensland State Archives. Item ID314693, Minutes, 1 November 1915 & 8 November 1915.

Government would provide funds by way of loans to the states to allow them to make advances through their own banks to settlers and such money was to be made available to settlers at cost where possible; that State Governments liberalise their conditions applying to repayment of such loans; that the Federal Government establish a special national repatriation fund to which citizens be invited to subscribe to help raise additional funds; that provision be made for the immediate establishment of State Farms for the evaluation and training of inexperienced men who wished to take land; that a system be introduced whereby obviously unsuited men are identified and not given land; that interest on loans to settlers not exceed 2½ % in the first year and to be raised at a rate of ½ % per annum up to the rate of interest at which the loan money was raised; that on the condition that their military records proved satisfactory, that soldiers enlisted but not sent to the Front be allowed the same privileges as those extended to returned soldiers.¹⁹ Incomplete as these proposals were, they at least provided a national framework upon which each state was able to formulate its own settlement schemes and which clarified the source of funding and how such funding was to be managed. Hunter was able to report to the War Council on his return that all matters from the conference were receiving consideration by the Government, ‘and decisions on the matters would, he expected, be given at an early date, after which the Land Settlement Committee would become very much more active’.²⁰

With a basis of funding in place and general framework of principles established, the Queensland War Council was able to start its own substantive planning. Ultimately, the Government chose many locations throughout Queensland including Stanthorpe, Pikedale, Atherton Tablelands as well as numerous town plots around Brisbane. By the end of March 1916, the Government had decided that the Crown Land on the North Coast Line around the hitherto little-used railway siding at Beerburrum seemed worthy of further investigation as to its suitability of becoming the state’s largest soldier settlement, and Premier Ryan was able to announce at a by-election rally in Brisbane on 24 March that 44,000 acres in that vicinity was about to be surveyed. Hunter was able to report the same to the War Council three days later.²¹

On 31 March 1916 the Surveyor General, Allen Alfred Spowers, wrote a short note to one of the Land Department staff surveyors, Mr J.E. Muntz, advising him of the urgent need to survey some land in the Parish of Beerwah ‘adjacent to Beerburrum Railway Station ... [A]s the matter is urgent I should be glad if you would call on me in regard thereto at your earliest convenience’.²² Muntz was instructed to travel to Beerburrum forthwith and to ‘inspect, report and furnish designs for subdividing such ... areas ... as you consider suitable for the above purpose into farms from about 10 to 40 acres each’.²³ Prior to the settlement, Beerburrum consisted of a large forested area with a small railway station/siding that serviced a quarry on the slopes of Mt Beerburrum which belonged to the Redcliffe Town Council. Very few people lived in the area and they were mainly quarry workers and foresters.

In addition to the land survey to be undertaken the sub-committee further asked experts in pineapple cultivation, Mr Joseph Rose of Buderim and Mr Cameron, of Messrs Cameron Bros, to undertake an agricultural survey of the land and to report on the suitability of cultivation of pineapples and citrus fruits. In July both had reported back to the sub-committee, which recorded that Cameron was of the opinion

¹⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, Monday 21 February 1916, p.10.

²⁰ Queensland State Archives, Item ID314693, Minutes 13 March 1916.

²¹ *Brisbane Courier*, Friday 24 March 1916, p.8; Queensland State Archives, Item ID314693, Minutes 27 March 1916.

²² Queensland State Archives, Item ID101707, Correspondence – inwards.

²³ *ibid.*

that at first sight the country was disappointing but when carefully examined and gone over there was undoubtedly a large area that was most suitable for fruit growing and would give very fair return if used for pineapples, pawpaw, tomato or citrus fruits. In all places tested and where samples were taken the soil was of good depth and easily dug with a spade to a depth of eighteen inches. Accordingly it would be easy to work and while naturally well drained should retain moisture. In his opinion the country was suitable for the purpose for which it was proposed to utilise it.

Rose was to separately report that ‘in his opinion the area was a very suitable one and worthy of all the support that the Committee had the power to give’. The sub-committee went on to state that both gentlemen had

visited farms adjacent to the proposed settlement. The pineapples on these farms showed the most satisfactory growth, the fruit being of immense size and of fine quality in spite of the fact that the soil was about the poorest in the district and inferior in quality to any of the blocks on the proposed settlement.²⁴

By June Muntz had completed his survey of the land on the western side of the railway and commenced his survey of the eastern side. Muntz’s survey reports state that the land on the western side of the railing was superior in quality to that on the eastern side but it was the land on the eastern side that was the first to be settled. This was possibly a choice that was to have future ramifications as to the success or failure of the settlement.

On 7 August 1916 the sub-committee submitted its recommendation to the War Council that Beerburrum be selected as a suitable location for a state-sponsored soldier settlement and that a sum of £1000 be provided to commence formal construction. The recommendation was accepted by the War Council and submitted to the Cabinet for approval. On the following day the Cabinet approved the plan and agreed to provide the £1000 required.²⁵ Thus, barely two years after the outbreak of the war, the Beerburrum Soldier Settlement was born.

The plans for Beerburrum were indeed grandiose. Not only would 44,000 acres of virgin forest be cleared for the Settlement but a state-owned cannery was to be built nearby where the produce could be canned for sale and export. Plans were drawn up to move the railway line from its current location skirting the base of Mt Beerburrum to a less steep incline a few hundred yards to the east, with the land between being set aside for the town lots required to create a new township. It was intended that this township be the hub of the Settlement, containing not just the administrative offices but a general store, boarding house, School of Arts, blacksmith’s premises and more. There was also talk of building a district hospital.

To assist the returnees to learn about pineapple farming, a State Farm was established under the management of Rose, who became the supervisor of the Settlement. Labour gangs of ex-servicemen were employed to clear land for the Farm and to prepare the first lots for selection. The materials required started to be accumulated for this purpose: saws and axes for felling of the trees, explosives to blow up the stumps, poison to kill off the vegetation, horses and carts for the carrying, fertiliser for the soil, timber for housing as well as all the other necessities for human habitation. It was undoubtedly a massive state undertaking and very much in the tradition of the Ryan government’s policy of state involvement. These plans provoked a lot of interest in the local press, though it is fair to say that most of the expressions printed in the newspapers were far from supportive of the government plans, particularly in the *Brisbane*

²⁴ Queensland State Archives, Item ID314693, Minutes July 1916.

²⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, Wednesday 9 August 1916, p.7.

Courier where the editorial staff were very happy to print any letters received that were critical of the government's plans. This is perhaps not surprising given that the newspaper was very right-wing and critical of many aspects of the Labor Government.

It didn't take long for the State Farm to be cleared and buildings erected. The War Council was able to announce at the end of September 1916 that the first group of settlers had already travelled to Beerburrum to take up occupation with a view to receiving the first selections of land.²⁶ On 6 November 1916 the Governor General Munro Ferguson and his wife presided over the drawing of the lots by which the first nine settlers obtained their blocks of land. Private Ernest Bridge, 26th Battalion, drew Lot 489. Bridge had enlisted in February 1915 and landed on Gallipoli on 4 September 1916 but by 24 September he had been admitted to hospital with rheumatism and then caught pneumonia as a result of 'exposure to wet & cold', and was discharged as medically unfit in May 1916. Bridge didn't remain long at Beerburrum before heading north to Capricornia.²⁷ Private Robert Henry Searle, latterly of the 9th Battalion, obtained Lot 416. Searle, born in England, had enlisted in Townsville on 8 February 1915 after serving in the New Guinea expedition. He sailed from Brisbane on 21 October 1915 for Cairo where on 2 February 1916 was admitted to hospital with cystitis and then had appendicitis. He was invalided back to Australia in April 1916 and was discharged as medically unfit. Still at Beerburrum in 1919, he seems to have left shortly after.²⁸

Alec Stephens, 9th Battalion, enlisted 4 September 1914 and served on Gallipoli until hospitalised on 30 October 1916 with an unspecified sickness. After admission to hospitals in Gibraltar and England he was sent back to Australia in March 1916 and subsequently discharged. He remained at Beerburrum until at least 1919 on Lot 458.²⁹ Corporal Alfred John Alcock, 15th Battalion, originally from Northampton, England, enlisted in November 1914 and was present at the landings on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He was promoted to corporal the following day but was wounded in the arm on 7 August 1915. After periods in hospital in Malta and England he returned to Australia in March 1916. Alcock remained in Beerburrum until 1921 farming Lot 460.³⁰

John Smith-Scargill, 15th Battalion, enlisted May 1915 and landed on Gallipoli in October that year. He was shot in the chest, with the bullet lodging in his liver, and on 4 December 1915 he was evacuated to Alexandria and then back to Australia where he was discharged. By 1919 Scargill applied to give up his block as he wished to return to England to have his family doctor remove the bullet that was still in his liver. A settlement overseer was to write, 'the hot summer weather here is too much for him to bear under the present circumstances, he is unable to do any work and his mind is slightly affected by the heat'. Scargill was allowed to give up his land (Lot 464) and left for England in September 1920.³¹

Richard Derby Robertson enlisted into the Army Service Corps on 24 August 1914 and arrived in Alexandria at the end of May 1915. While there he was admitted into hospital on 25 July with severe tuberculosis. Immediately he was shipped off to England where he remained for a month before being returned to Australia and discharged. Robertson stayed on his block (Lot

²⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, Friday 29 September 1916, p.6.

²⁷ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier Ernest George Bridge.

²⁸ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier Robert Henry Searle.

²⁹ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier Alec Stephens.

³⁰ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier Alfred John Alcock.

³¹ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier John Smith Scargill; Queensland State Archives Series ID 14050, Dead Farm Files ID 71366; Ancestry.com.uk, *Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960*.

459) for barely 12 months before giving it up.³² James Robertson Munro, who had served in a Scottish regiment prior to the war, joined the 9th Battalion on 24 August 1914. Present at the Gallipoli landing, he was shot in the foot and evacuated to Egypt and then England before returning to Australia in March 1916. Munro drew Lot 462 where he stayed until 1923, though he was struggling to eke out an existence. In 1923 he was to write, 'I may state I've had a very hard time of it lately having to give away three of my little children for adoption too poor to keep them. I have three left. My average income all last year come to 29/4 a week'.³³

Clarence Burton Newman, a 21-year-old labourer from Victoria, enlisted into the 25th Battalion in July 1915. Newman saw no active service as he was hospitalised in Egypt with a severe heart condition that saw him returned to Australia and discharged in June 1916. Newman took Lot 463 but by January 1921 he was applying to give it up on medical grounds. He finally left Beerburrum during the winter of 1921.³⁴ Prior to leaving he wrote a book entitled *Give it a Name: The Secrets to Success*.³⁵ Thomas O'Malley, originally from Ireland, joined up in June 1915 and arrived in Egypt in January 1916 where it was immediately identified that he had defective vision in his left eye. So bad was this defect that he was discharged and returned to Australia. He took Lot 461. It is currently not known when he left Beerburrum.³⁶

The framework agreed to at the meeting of the State and Federal Governments in February 1916 of a general policy of Land Settlement, while a start, was far from a complete. In January 1917 at the Premiers' Conference, a common framework of land settlement was agreed to between the Federal and state governments. They agreed to formalise their land settlement schemes by enacting specific legislation in each state based on these basic agreed principles. It was also reaffirmed that the responsibility of repatriation was a Federal role and as such the State War Councils were to become state-based federal bodies.³⁷ As a consequence, in February 1917 Queensland passed the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act which detailed all the financial arrangements, the administrative procedures and compliance requirements under which all Queensland soldier settlements were to be administered.³⁸

By July 1917 the Under Secretary for Public Lands, Mr Graham Gordon, was able to report to Parliament as to the progress made. Of the 51,000 acres of Crown Land set aside, about

20,320 acres of this area have already been designed into 436 portions in areas from 20 acres upwards ... The principal industry of the area will be pineapple-growing, but other farming pursuits, such as poultry-raising and beekeeping, will be carried on. On the Settlement, a training farm has been established where returned soldier applicants are provided with temporary employment and instruction prior to being allotted a block for themselves; 54 acres have been cleared, ploughed, and planted with pineapples: one acre has been similarly prepared and planted with oranges; 30 acres have been cleared and ploughed ready for the coming planting season, and a further area of 60 acres has been cleared, and ploughing operations are in progress. Thus a total area of 145 acres has been cleared on the Settlement. Eleven houses have been erected and are occupied by soldier settlers, and four houses are now in course of construction. Seventeen of the farms have been fenced with three-wire fencing, the total length being about 10 miles.

³² National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier Richard Derby Robertson.

³³ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier John Robertson Munro; Queensland State Archives Series ID 14050, Dead Farm Files ID 71368.

³⁴ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier Clarence Blurton Newman.

³⁵ National Archives of Australia Series A1336, 8808.

³⁶ National Archives of Australia Series B2455 Personnel dossier Thomas O'Malley.

³⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, Friday 12 January 1917, p.8.

³⁸ 7 Geo V. No.32, The Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act of 1917, Queensland Parliamentary Papers, Queensland State Library, Brisbane.

Ringbarking operations have been completed on 100 acres. Two huts and a kitchen providing accommodation for 24 men have been erected on the Training Farm, also a storeroom, and quarters for the Supervisor. Several wells with good water supplies have been sunk. A general store for the convenience of the settlers has been erected. An area has been reserved for township purposes.³⁹

A year later the Under Secretary was to report further on progress:

In the nursery there are some 10,000 young orange and mandarin trees now ready for transplanting, and which are to be placed at the disposal of the settlers ... Stocks of all kinds of building materials are kept for supplying the requirements of the settlers. On the Settlement itself, 166 acres of pineapples have been on 36 farms. One hundred and forty acres have been cleared on 40 farms, 30 acres of which are ploughed ready for planting. To date 69 farms have been allotted, and 40 houses have been erected, all of which are occupied. Thirty miles of wire fencing have been erected. One hundred acres have been ring-barked, and the area has been fenced, and is utilised as a horse paddock for the settlement. Ten bores have been sunk and good supplies of water have been obtained at about 25 feet. An area has been surveyed as a township. A general store has been opened and is run entirely in the interests of the Settlement. A hall has been erected, in which a library has been installed. A school has also been built. Road construction works have been carried out on the Settlement.⁴⁰

A review of the various Post Office Directories shows in 1915, listed under Beerburum township, the names of only nine residents, but this had risen to 73 in 1918. In 1923, which is considered the height of the settlement, the population was given as 250. These figures, though not necessarily accurate, are a useful guide which relate only to the township of Beerburum itself and exclude Elimbah, Glasshouse and Beerwah, all of which also experienced significant population growth due to the Settlement.⁴¹

To sum up, the events of 1914/1915 that started in Sarajevo and which led to the creation of the AIF and deployment in Gallipoli and the Western Front, ultimately created the need for repatriation of soldiers to Australia, many of whom requested to settle on land at newly formed soldier settlements such as Beerburum. With the cessation of hostilities in 1918 and the repatriation of the majority of the AIF by the end of 1919, the requirement to settle soldiers on the land became a priority for the Government now led by Ryan's successor Edward Theodore. It was at this point that the settlement at Beerburum started to grow and by around 1924 consisted of approximately 1200 people. Throughout the life of the settlement, approximately 20% of the settlers had served in the British armed forces and had emigrated after the war as a result of the schemes formulated by Earl Grey. The balance was mostly Queenslanders with a few from other states. For all settlers, life on the settlement was challenging. The inconsistent quality of the soil, poor irrigation and the harsh extremities of the Australian climate worked against any efforts made by the settlers. Lack of experience and insufficient finances, coupled with the ill health of many of the settlers, led to the inevitable failure of many of the farms.

As a result, many of the settlers started to move away from Beerburum in search of a more reliable and regular income. A lot of the failures on the land were a direct result of the inexperience in farming techniques of the settlers, many of whom were obviously unsuited to

³⁹ *Report by the Under Secretary for the Public Lands under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act of 1917 – July 1917* p.2, Queensland Parliamentary Papers, Queensland State Library, Brisbane.

⁴⁰ *Report by the Under Secretary for the Public Lands under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act of 1917 – June 1918* p.3, Queensland Parliamentary Papers, Queensland State Library, Brisbane.

⁴¹ *Queensland Post Office Directory 1915-1916*, H. Wise & Co.; *Pugh's (Queensland) Official Almanac and Directory 1919*; *Pugh's (Queensland) Official Almanac and Directory 1923*.

an agrarian way of life, either through temperament or injury. Some settlers stayed on and battled to make a living from their land and then, once the Great Depression hit in the early 1930's, those still on the land had little option but to stick it out. With the onset of WW2 and the greater employment opportunities it created, many of the remaining settlers moved on, leaving only a handful of families remaining. In the years after WW2 Beerburrum remained a rural hamlet as other nearby towns expanded, and this marginalisation was further exasperated by the construction of the Bruce Highway to the east which removed Beerburrum even farther from the main communication arteries and regional relevance.

In a tangible sense, quite a few physical remains of the Beerburrum Settlement are discernible today. The location of the current railway station (then as now in the heart of the township) is because of the settlement. It was moved to its present location in 1919 from its position closer to Mt Beerburrum as the gradient there was too steep for trains to slow down enough to stop at the platform and then move off again. While the tracks and buildings might have been changed, its location at the end of the tree-lined Anzac Avenue (previous called Hunter Street after the Minister of Lands and another legacy of the settlement) would have been recognised by the settlers. On Anzac Avenue still stands the School of Arts, built by subscription in 1917 and looking now much as it did back then. As now, it acted as a communal centre for the township, hosting social events, meetings and polling booths. A close look at the current Beerburrum school reveals the original school structure erected in 1918. Long gone is the hospital perched on the slopes of Mt Beerburrum looking down over the Settlement – but the locals will tell you that after the bush has been burnt back you can still see the stumps upon which it was built. The cemetery still remains at the base of Mt Beerburrum and contains graves of some of the settlers. It is now unofficially cared for by the school community who each year conduct a re-dedication ceremony. This maintains a strong link between the school, the community and local RSL Sub-Branches who also attend the annual event.

Before the Settlement the only 'road' in the area was the Gympie road that ran to the west of Mt Beerburrum. Mr Muntz took great effort to survey and plan roads and tracks that criss-crossed the Settlement providing access to the farms. Many still exist today and can be easily plotted on a map. Many of the settlers' names live on in the names of these roads: Rapkins, Johnston, Ramm, Barr, Logie, Eaton, to name but a few. Even the road from Beerburrum to Donnybrook has its roots in the Settlement and was one of the first roads constructed by the newly created Main Roads Board in 1925. It wasn't just the roads that were built for the Settlement, so too were the bridges to cross the numerous creeks. Throughout the life of the settlement much energy was expended to make the creeks traversable for the settlers and their descendants.

Today, however, the most significant, though perhaps least obvious, reminder of the Settlement is the simple fact that the town of Beerburrum with a population of over 600 even exists. Prior to the Settlement there was no township of Beerburrum. It was merely a siding on the North Coast Line between Caboolture and the established towns of Beerwah, Glasshouse and Landsborough. Its existence then was to enable stone to be removed from the nearby quarry and afford daytrippers from Brisbane the opportunity to climb to the peak of Mt Beerburrum. The land around Beerburrum at the time was unsettled and virgin forest and there was little interest for it to be otherwise. The establishment of the settlement laid out the town and created a role for itself; it brought commerce to the area and made the land (relatively) productive; it created traditions and gave it a history. In essence it created the community that is there today.

THE IMMEDIATE DESCENDANTS OF MAJ GEN THOMAS VON PLUNKET (1716-1779), AN IRISH OFFICER IN AUSTRIAN SERVICE.

Jean Main

Major General Thomas von Plunket is believed to have been born in 1716 at Castle Plunket in the County of Roscommon, Ireland, and to have been a son of John Plunket and Bridget Fitzgerald. He had an illustrious career in the Imperial Austrian service, during which he was awarded the Knights Cross of the Order of Maria Theresa in 1758 and he became Governor and Commandant of the Citadel of Antwerp in 1770. He died on 20 January 1779 in Liege, where he is interred in the parish of St. Christophe with the English nuns.

As far as is known, Thomas von Plunket and his wife Mary D'Alton had ten children and while my initial research into his life, which appeared in *Sabretache* in 2003,¹ had only been about the General himself and to some extent that of his wife Mary, it did not touch upon his children. These, too, had noteworthy lives, living as they did during the upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars. Of course some lives were more interesting than others, but what is known about them follows below. Readers should note that not all dates are completely verifiable.

Mary Brigitte Charlotte Josephine Plunket

Mary Brigitte is said to have been born on 8 September 1757 at Louvain and to have been educated at the Austin Nunnery in Paris.² In due course she became lady-in-waiting to Louise-Marie-Adelaide de Bourbon-Penthievre, Duchess d'Orleans. On 13 October 1787, at Spa which lies about 20km SE of Liege, she married Francois de Beauvoir, Marquis de Chastellux who was very much her senior and had been a major general in the French expeditionary forces in the American War of Independence. He was also a writer and philosopher and a member of the *Academie Francaise*.

Chastellux had met George Washington while in America and who, upon hearing of his marriage, wrote a most congratulatory letter to him saying among much else, 'My dear Marquis, I can hardly refrain from smiling to find you are caught at last ... So your day has, at length, come. I am glad of it with all my heart and soul.'³ Others did not receive the marriage with such enthusiasm for in the *Recollections of Baron de Frenilly, peer of France 1768-1828*, de Frenilly wrote that after Chastellux's return to France he 'committed two pieces of stupidity: one by giving, like many others, a hundred louis for Mesmer's secret; the other by allowing himself to be drawn by Mme de Genlis into a ridiculous *manage de conscience*, at Spa, with Miss Plunket'.⁴

This dim view may well have been prompted by the fact that Mary has elsewhere been described as 'impecunious but well-connected'. Obviously a very different view was held by a Captain Swinborne who had visited the couple in 1787 and wrote that 'he [Chastellux] is the most passionate lover ever seen and cannot be away from her for a moment, and even sits by

¹ 'An Irish Life in Austrian Service', *Sabretache* vol.44, no.4 (December 2003), pp.25-28.

² Richard Hayes, *Biographical Dictionary of Irishmen in France*, M.H. Gill and Son, Dublin, 1949, p.28.

³ *The Papers of George Washington*, Digital Edition, ed. Theodore J. Crockett, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, Rotunda, 2008. Letter George Washington to Chastellux, Mount Vernon, April 25th [-1 May] 1788. <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founder/default.xqy?keys=GEWN-...>

⁴ <http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924024298444/cu31924024298...>

her at table'.⁵ The couple's happiness did not last for Chastellux died only a year after their marriage on 24 October 1788, but the marriage did produce a son, Alfred Louis Jean Philippe de Chastellux who was born posthumously on 20 February 1789.

During the French revolution's so-called Reign of Terror Mary was imprisoned at her former school, the Austin convent, from November 1793 to November 1794, probably as she was the widow of an aristocrat.⁶ On the whole, however, in Paris she presided over a fashionable salon and died in that city on 18 December 1815. Their son Alfred died on 2 October 1856 after an outstanding career both in the administration, the National Guard and later the government of France during the reign of Napoleon and the restoration. He was made an Officer of the *Legion d'honneur* on 20 April 1831. Though married he left no issue.

Maria, Charlotte and Brigitte von Plunket

Maria was born in 1760. Nothing is known of her life except that she is said to have been living in Catalonia in 1802.⁷ Charlotte was born in 1762,⁸ and by 1802 she was said to be married to someone called Oryan (most likely O'Ryan) and was governess to a Count Lanchoronski [sic] in Vienna. Charlotte was left a legacy of £500 by a Margaret Plunkett, spinster of Kings Cross, Bath, in her will proved 6 May 1814. Margaret had inherited from her two deceased brothers a plantation called Lyons in St John, Jamaica, including 'negro, mulatto, other slaves and cattle'.⁹ Her brothers had been James Plunkett of Bath and Matthew Plunkett. Alas, the will did not specify the relationship between the testatrix and the beneficiary. Brigitte is said to have been born in 1770 and to have lived in Andalusia in 1802.¹⁰ Nothing further about her life could be ascertained.

Johann von Plunket

Johann was born in 1763 and apparently suffered from poor health. This caused him to devote his life to the priestly profession and he joined the Irish Dominican Province. There he became Fr Thomas but due to his poor health he lived in Italy since 1794, first in Rome and later in Verona where he dedicated his life to the welfare of the sick. It is also recorded that he had been in receipt of an Imperial Austrian pension of 200 gulden a year.

According to one source Johann died in Venice on 8 December 1805 having contracted an illness during an epidemic while attending the sick at an Austrian military hospital.¹¹ Another source says that he died in Verona in 1806 but agrees that his death was caused while attending the sick at a hospital.¹² Venice or Verona; it appears that one or other of the parties may simply have misread the old handwriting used in recording his death. It seems that Verona is probably where he died but it likely was in December 1805.

Francis Joseph (Franz) von Plunket

Francis was born in Brussels in 1764 and was baptised there in the Abbey Church of

⁵ John G. Alger and S. Low, *Englishmen in the French Revolution*, Marston, Searle & Rivington, London, 1889, p.157.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Direktionsakt no.529 of 1890, War Archive, Austria.

⁸ Direktionsakt, *op.cit.*

⁹ Copy in the author's possession.

¹⁰ Direktionsakt, *op.cit.*

¹¹ Direktionsakt, *op.cit.*

¹² Catholic Record Society, *Obituaries* vol.12, 1913, p.97.

Coudenberg. This event was quite magnificent and was reported in great detail as news from Brussels, 17 April 1764:¹³

Last Thursday the second son of Lt General Plunkett, a proprietary colonel of a regiment of infantry, was baptized at the Abbey Church of Coudenberg. The godmother was Her Majesty, Queen Empress, who was represented by Madame and Count Cobenzel. All the preparations were done with pomp and dignity customary on such an occasion.

Their Excellencies came in a grand cortege of three carriages drawn by six horses and all the bells of the church were rung. They were received at the main door of the church by the Abbot, who was clothed in his pontifical vestments and assisted by his clergy. He presented holy water to Their Excellencies as they entered and two sections of the Noble and Royal Companies of Archers and Halberdiers took part in the procession.

When Their Excellencies had taken their places on the dais the Abbot, assisted by his senior Vicar General, who is the Chief Chaplain of the royal troops in the Low Countries, baptized the baby who was given the name Francis Joseph.

It was a quite remarkable beginning to a life that was to be cut short in its prime. In 1780 Francis entered the Imperial Technical Military Academy aged 16.¹⁴ There he was a boarder with a fee of 400 florins having been paid. In due course he graduated and began his active military life on 4 May 1782 as an ensign in Infantry Regiment (IR) Loudon (Nr.29).

By 1788 he was a Captain-Lieutenant in IR Richard Count D'Alton No.26 and 1789 found him mentioned as a Grenadier-Captain. On 30 September of that year, when he was only twenty-five years old, Francis was mortally wounded during the Turkish war. It was during the storming of Belgrade when 'with the 4th column Captain Count Plonquet of D'Alton [Regiment] led his company into the palisades with uncommon courage, crossed these and pushed back the enemy, however while doing so he received three serious and mortal wounds'.¹⁵ He succumbed to his wounds on 6 October 1789.¹⁶

Katharina von Plunket

Katharina was born in 1766 and very little is known of her life. She is listed in the book *The Irish Dames at Ypres*, by Patrick Nolan (Dublin, 1908). Her name appears in Appendix E in a section entitled 'Some past pupils of the Abbey School' and reads:

Plunket, Catherine: Entered school April 23, 1772.

Remarks: Daughter of General Plunket; parted hence 20 July 1780.

Katharina's aunt, one of her mother's sisters, Catherine D'Alton, religious name Lady Bernard D'Alton, had been elected abbess there in 1760.

Isabella von Plunket

Isabella who was born in 1768 became a nun in the English Augustinian Convent at Louvain. Her religious name was Sr Benedict Joseph, OSA. Her community fled Flanders in 1794 after the suppression of religious houses and she settled at St Monica's Priory in Spetisbury, Dorset. She died there on 19 July 1826 aged 58, in the 36th year of her religious profession. In an

¹³ *Collectanea Hibernica: Sources for Irish History*, vol.10, 1967, p.135.

¹⁴ *Geschichte der k. und k. Technische Militaer Akademie*, Friedrich Gatti, Vienna, 1901, vol.1 p.322.

¹⁵ 1789 Feldakt. Turkish War 9/20 and 9/26.

¹⁶ Direktionsakt, op.cit.

appendix to her obituary it also stated that ‘the Empress Maria Teresa had allowed an annuity to the amount of £14 sterling to the daughters of General Plunkett, one of whom (Isabella) was a religious in this community, which was paid from an Abbaye [sic] in Germany until the year 1794’.¹⁷

Maximilian von Plunket

Maximilian was born in Linz, Upper Austria, in 1769. He entered the Imperial Technical Military Academy on 9 April 1783 when 16 years old. Like his brother Franz he was a boarder with a fee of 400 florins having been paid.¹⁸ At the completion of his training on 6 July 1786 he became an ensign in IR Pellegrini No.49. From 1783 to 1793, lastly as captain, he served in IR D’Alton and was made a major in 1793 on the staff of the General Quartermaster and Aide-de-Camp to Maj Gen Count D’Alton.

In 1796 he was a Lt Col in IR Manfredini and in 1779 Colonel in IR Lattermann which was then in Italy. Finally in 1798 he transferred in the same rank to the then newly created IR Count Ignaz Gyulai No.60.¹⁹ While serving with this regiment and taking part in heavy fighting in early June 1799 in what became known as the First Battle of Zurich, Field Marshalls Hotze and Petrarsch ‘praised particularly the Activity and Zeal of the Colonel Count Plonquet of the Sixtieth Regiment of Infantry’.²⁰

Perhaps it is not surprising that later that year, when in the Grisons (Switzerland) his career came to a sudden end when ‘he fell before the enemy on 25 September 1799 in a skirmish near Schennitz’.²¹ This rather brief description provides the fact of his death but gives no detail as to how it came about. There are indeed a number of differing versions but the following appears to be a quite likely one and relates to the action from 20 to 28 September 1799.²² From this it seems that after hearing of French troops being in the vicinity,

General Hotze,²³ whose headquarters were at Kalterbrun,²⁴ got on horseback a little before four and rode immediately to Schennis [sic]. At the entrance to the village he peremptorily forbade his officers to go any further, and went forward himself accompanied or rather followed by only two dragoons, one of whom he sent back immediately with a message to Colonel Plunkett to bring up the 60th Regiment of Infantry as fast as possible.

In the course of a few minutes a discharge of musketry was heard on the side of the village where the General had gone, and immediately the General’s horse returned without its rider. The dragoon who was with him also returned and said that he had seen the General fall, and the enemy rush forward to seize him. Two fruitless attempts were made to rescue his body, one by Colonel Plunkett, in which that officer fell at the head of his regiment, the other by the Grantz hussars, who also lost their colonel in the attack.

Maximilian’s loss was deeply felt by the regiment. They carried his lifeless body with them when withdrawing from the area and subsequently halted near the village of Lichtensteg.²⁵

¹⁷ Catholic Record Society, Obituaries, vol.12, 1913, p.174.

¹⁸ *Geschichte der k. und k. Technische Militaer Akademie*, op.cit. vol.1, p.339.

¹⁹ Direktionsakt, op.cit.

²⁰ *London Gazette* no.15162, 25 July to 27 July 1799, p.747.

²¹ Direktionsakt, op. cit. - Schennitz - present day Schaenis, Canton of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

²² William Wickham and Richard Bentley, *The Correspondence of the Right Honourable William Wickham from the Year 1794*, London, 1870, vol.2.

²³ Friedrich Baron von Hotze, 1739-1794, Field Marshall in Austrian Service.

²⁴ Now Kaltbrunn, Canton of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

²⁵ Now Lichtensteig, Canton of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

There the regiment fought an hour-long rearguard action to gain time for the solemn burial of Colonel Count Plunkett's body.²⁶ Hotze was buried in the cemetery of the parish church of St. Gallus in Bregenz, the capital of the province of Vorarlberg in Austria. Near the entrance to the church there is a memorial in the form of an obelisk bearing the following inscription:²⁷

Here rests Friedrich Baron von Hotze, k.k. Austrian Major General, commander of the Order of Maria-Theresa, honoured citizen of Bregenz, Feldkirch and Bludenz. He died a hero's death for his monarch and the fatherland near Schaenis [sic] in Switzerland on 25 September 1799.

By his side fell his Chief of General Staff Max Plunket, k.k. Colonel of Infantry.

This memorial was erected by their Companions in Arms and the citizens of Bregenz to honour these heroes.²⁸

There is however one more event in the life of Maximilian von Plunket that should be included and concerns his private rather than his military life. It so happened that while he was stationed in Italy he had met Lucia Mocenigo nee Memmo, a descendant of one of Venice's most ancient families. Although she was married at the time she was very much alone due to her husband's prolonged absences. Thus it came about that in 1798 Lucia and Maximilian fell in love and began an affair which, in due course, produced a son born on 9 September 1799. Two weeks later the child was christened in the church of Santa Maria Zobenigo and was given the names of Massimiliano Cesare Francesco with the baptismal entry saying 'parents unknown'. It was just two days after the death of his natural father, who may indeed not have known that a son had been born to him.

It would appear that Lucia's husband did not discover the existence of this child for four years, but as the couple were otherwise childless he decided to accept it as his own. The child's name was changed to Alvisetto Mocenigo and his birth was legitimised by Lucia's husband making a false declaration that this was his and Lucia's natural son.²⁹

Thomas von Plunket

Thomas was born in Vienna in 1770 and is said to have entered the Theresian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt on 23 June 1783.³⁰ In due course he was mustered out to IR Count D'Alton as ensign on 22 January 1788. He transferred to IR Archduke Ferdinand in 1789 and at the end of 1799 he transferred to the staff of the Quartermaster-General. In 1801 he was a major in IR Count Ignaz Gyulai No.60 and on 17 September 1805 he was promoted to Lt Colonel.³¹

Now considerable controversy attached to his military career, for on 25 May 1806 at a village called Rottenmann (close to the Upper Enns Valley) he surrendered without resistance three battalions of Austrian and two of Styrian militia to the opposing French. In many quarters he

²⁶ Rudolf Freiherr von Fiedler and Leopold Pick, *Geschichte des k.u.k. Infanterie Regiment Freiherr von Appel No.60*, self-published by the Regiment, 1898, p.28.

²⁷ *Texte zur Dorfgeschichte von Untervaz: So starb General Hotze*, Untervazer Burgenverein, Untervaz, 1951, p.2.

²⁸ Author's translation.

²⁹ Andrea di Robilant, *Lucia in the Age of Napoleon*, Faber and Faber, London, 2007, p.160. Though a novel, this book is said to be based on Lucia's diaries and contains an entire chapter devoted to Lucia's affair with Colonel Plunkett.

³⁰ Johann Svoboda, *Geschichte der Theresian Militaer Akademie in Wiener Neustadt und ihre Zoeglinge*, Vienna 1894, vol.1, p.213.

³¹ Direktionsakt, op.cit.

was hence looked upon as a traitor, but later opinion exonerated him, as based on the events of that day this action seemed to have been a reasonable one to take.³² Perhaps it was this that led to his retirement on 16 April 1806. Despite this Thomas was scarcely retired when two years later, on 31 July 1808, he became commanding officer of the 4th Battalion of the newly formed k.k. Landwehr (Militia) for the district of Wienerwald, and when the k.k. Landwehr was dissolved on 1 March 1810 he retired once more.

He was active again in 1813 when he became commanding officer of a Landwehr Battalion (second reserve) to IR Archduke Rudolph and in 1816 he became commanding officer of a Landwehr Battalion attached to IR Archduke Carl.³³ Finally it should be mentioned that he distinguished himself in fighting near Parma (northern Italy) on 2 March 1814 when he was mentioned by General Nugent, and in the fighting on the river Nura (northern Italy) on 14 March 1814 when he was mentioned by General Starhemberg.

He retired once again at the end of July 1820 and his pension was forwarded to him in 1813 to Zadar (now Croatia), in 1835 to Venice, then to Brno (now Czech Republic) and from 1837 to Milan where he died on 12 June 1842.

Conclusion

At the time their adherence to the Catholic faith drove numerous Irish to seek their fortunes on the continent. One could find them in many continental armies or well-placed in administration while others were there to study for the priesthood. Not all made good but that is only to be expected. As far as Maj Gen Thomas von Plunket's family is concerned it seems that all his sons were destined for the army, but when Johann's health did not permit this he became a Dominican priest. Even so he was not altogether removed from the military life, for he died because he assisted the sick in an Austrian military hospital.

It also seems that in all probability any daughter who had not married was likely to have become a nun. It is a pity that so very little could be discovered about these daughters except for one, and this only because she married well. Today we can look back upon this period and its expectations and say that truly it is a vanished age.

-o0o-

SOCIETY NOTICES

Gallipoli Issue of *Sabretache*

On 24 July 2015, the Department of Veterans Affairs confirmed that the Federal Council had acquitted the ANZAC Centenary Grant for the Special Gallipoli issue of *Sabretache*. The Department thanked Federal Council for participating in the scheme. Federal President, Rohan Goyne, thanks the members of the Council and contributors to the Gallipoli Issue for making it a collective success for the Society.

Rohan Goyne, Federal President

-o0o-

³² Hans von Zwiedineck-Suedenhorst, *Das Gefecht bei St. Michael und die Operationen des Erzherzoge Johann in Steiermark, 1809*, Innsbruck, 1891, p.16.

³³ Letter of 11 August 1993 from Austrian State Archive, War Archive.

THE DOODLEBUG HUNTERS: AUSTRALIAN PILOTS vs HITLER'S V1s

Rohan Goyne

These particular 'Doodlebug Hunters' were Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) pilots who were serving in the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1944 and who engaged German V1 Flying Bombs which were launched at Britain. Last year marked the 70th anniversary of their efforts against Hitler's terror weapon, the V1.

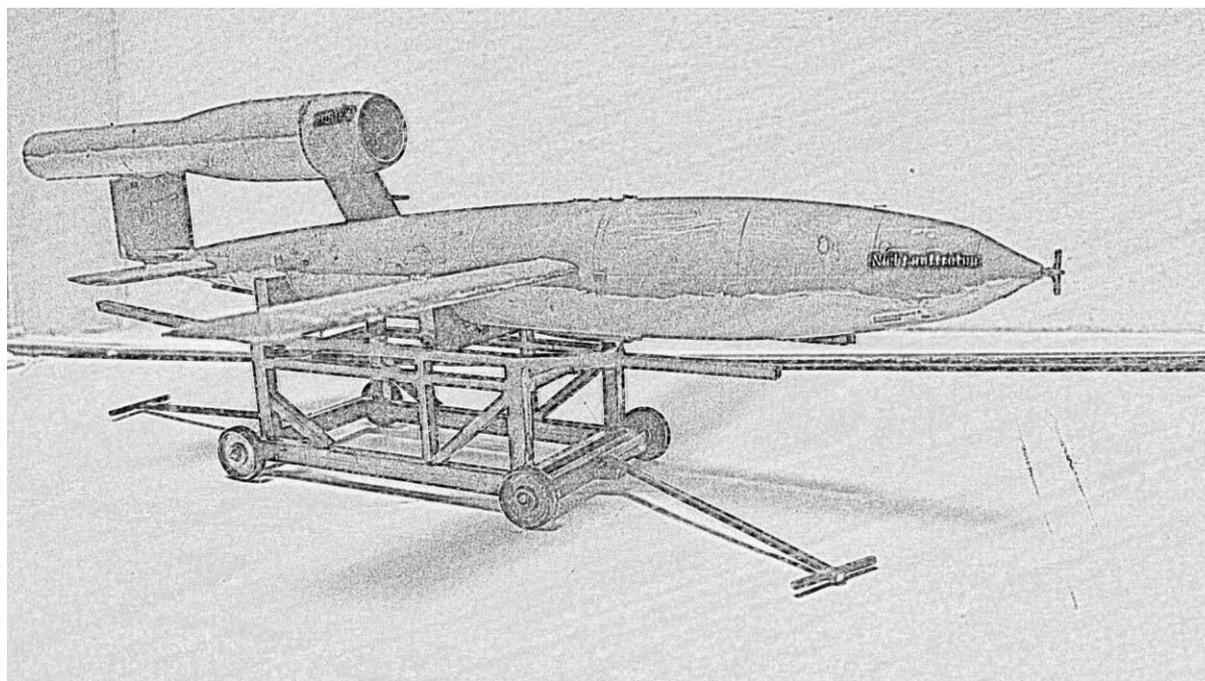
The data specifically for the Australian pilots is drawn from squadron records data for all RAF and American fighter pilots as compiled by Brian Cull.¹ The Australian pilots were attached to RAF squadrons, Nos 3, 41, 137 and 165, and they flew a variety of single-seater fighters with sufficient speed to intercept the V1s over Britain. These actions took place from May to July 1944. Their confirmed kills are listed below:

Pilot Name	Squadron	Date	No of V1s	Aircraft
Flt Sgt D.J. Mackerras	3 Sqn	16/6/44	½	Tempest V
		17/6/44	½	
		23/6/44	1	
		25/6/44	1	
		27/6/44	1	
		3/7/44	1	
		11/7/44	½	
		12/7/44	½	
		14/7/44	1	
		20/7/44	1	
		23/7/44	2	
		26/7/44	2	
		28/7/44	½	
			TOTAL= 12½	
Flt Sgt H.J. Bailey	3 Sqn	18/6/44	1+1/2	Tempest V
		23/6/44	1+1/3	
		27/6/44	1	
		5/7/44	2	
		6/7/44	1	
		7/7/44	1	
		16/7/44	1	
		18/7/44	½	
		23/7/44	1+1/2	
		28/7/44	1	
			TOTAL=11 5/6	
Wr Off R.S. Adcock	3 Sqn	18/6/44	½	Tempest V
		20/6/44	1	
		4/7/44	½	
		23/7/44	½	
			TOTAL=2½	

¹ B. Cull, *Diver! Diver! Diver*, Grub Street, London, 2008, pp.386-429.

Flt Sgt C.R. Bundara	165 Sqn	29/6/44 14/7/44 20/7/44	1 1 1 TOTAL=3	Spitfire IX
Fg Off R.E Anderson	41 Sqn	22/6/44 9/7/44	½ ½ TOTAL=1	Spitfire XII
Wr Off J.A. Horne	137 Sqn	22/6/44 28/6/44	1 1 TOTAL=2	Typhoon Ib
Flt Sgt R.J. Hughes	165 Sqn	23/6/44 27/6/44	1 1 TOTAL=2	Spitfire IX

The V1 flying bomb (Reprisal Weapon 1) had a maximum speed of 640km/h and an operational range of 250km. By May 1944, the Germans had produced around 2500 of the flying bombs for use against Britain.



*Above: A photograph in sketch relief of the V1 flying bomb from a scale model in 1/72 scale.
(R. Goyne 2014)*

With the end of V1 campaign the Germans had launched approximately 10,500 V1s against Britain of which fighter aircraft accounted for approximately 2250.² The RAAF pilots detailed above accounted for approximately 1.5% of the total confirmed kills.

These Australian pilots were involved in a little-known contribution to the air war in Europe in 1944 and another relatively unheralded episode in the military history of the Royal Australian Air Force.

-o0o-

² Cull, pp.7-8.

THE FORMATION OF NAVAL FORCES IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

John Haken

While naval defence of the Australian colonies, although in effect minimal, was the responsibility of and provided by the Royal Navy, both New South Wales and Victoria possessed volunteer naval forces, albeit of limited capabilities.¹ The forces were effectively naval gunners with barely seaworthy ships.

Federation followed, after Colonial Conferences and a referendum. Royal Assent for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia was given on 9 July 1900. A proclamation of 17 September 1900 indicated that union of the Colonies would occur on 1 January 1901. To allow an orderly transfer of Colonial Departments to the Commonwealth, the NSW Department of Defence and other NSW Departments occurred on 1 March 1901.² A Defence Act was drafted in 1901 by a Conference of former Senior Colonial Officers but was not accepted by Parliament.³ The act was withdrawn and a new Defence Act of 1903 was enacted on 1 March 1904 and remains the principal act, although in the intervening years over a hundred Amending Acts have been enacted. In the interim period, the Naval Forces operated under the existing Colonial Acts.

The General Officer Commanding the Military Forces, Major General E.T.H. Hutton, a serving British Officer, was appointed on 26 December 1901. He was former General Officer Commanding the New South Wales forces (1893-1896) and of Canada (1898-1900).⁴ He requested command of the naval forces of the Commonwealth but was refused.

The naval forces were reorganised by the Commonwealth on 1 September 1902. The New South Wales forces consisted of the New South Wales Naval Brigade, the New South Wales Naval Artillery Volunteers (disbanded 16 July 1902) and St George Naval Artillery Volunteers (establishment gazetted in 1900 but never raised).⁵ The Naval Forces in New South Wales were downsized by approximately half by the Commonwealth reorganisation. On reorganisation the Naval Staff was abolished, the Captain Commanding being placed on the Retired List, effective 30 June 1902; Paymaster retired 1 August 1902; Chief Engineer, placed on Reserve List 1 October 1902; Staff Surgeon, retired 17 January 1902, subsequently attached to Newcastle Detachment.⁶ A disbandment notice concerning the Ambulance Corps, New South Wales Naval Brigade was effective 16 July 1902 and Ambulance Corps New South Wales Naval Brigade (Newcastle), effective 31 July 1902. No details of these units (if ever raised) are available. The Commonwealth Naval Forces progressed slowly with the formation of The Royal Australian Navy on 10 July 1911, King George V having granted the title Royal.

-oOo-

¹ J.K. Haken, *Lineage and Officers of the New South Wales Naval Forces 1863-1902*, Monograph no.199, Naval Historical Society of Australia, September 2003.

² *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* no.91, 20 Feb 1901.

³ Defence Act 1901. Withdrawn 26 March 1902 and not enacted.

⁴ The Military List of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1 February 1904; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* no.5 54, 31 March 1902.

⁵ *New South Wales Government Gazette* no.989 8243, 10 Oct 1900; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* no.43 476, 5 Sept 1902.

⁶ *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* no.32 314, 11 July 1902; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* no.43 476, 5 Sep 1902; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* no.57 593, 5 Dec 1902.