

SABRETACHE

The Journal and Proceedings of
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SABRETACHE

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The aims of the Society are the encouragement and pursuit of study and research in military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment and kindred matters; the promotion of public interest and knowledge in these subjects, and the preservation of historical military objects with particular reference to the armed forces of Australia.

Constitution and Rules

The Constitution and Rules of the Society are printed in the January-March 1993 and April-June 1997 issues of Sabretache respectively. Section 12 of the Constitution was amended in the June 2010 issue of Sabretache.

Sabretache

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Editorial

I am very pleased that Justin Chadwick has accepted the role of editor for *Sabretache* following my resignation due to a recent increase in work and family commitments.

I will continue to look forward to receiving forthcoming *Sabretache* issues and to reading articles by previous contributors and, in particular, new contributors.

I am particularly grateful for the support given to me by Nigel Webster and Russell Linwood. To enthusiastically entrust me with the role of Editor for *Sabretache* was a privilege that I valued highly.

Outgoing editor Paul Skrebels made a significant contribution to the quality and integrity of *Sabretache* over many years. I wish him well for his future projects and thank him for the generosity of spirit and expertise shared with me during the several months leading to my planned commencement as editor.

My best wishes for 2019 to all MHSA members, supporters and contributors, and to Justin as he moves *Sabretache* forward.

Katrina

It is with pleasure and a degree of trepidation that I commence as editor of *Sabretache*. The journal has an illustrious history that I intend to continue and build upon. I would like to thank Paul Skrebels for all his help in getting me up to speed and to (quickly) get this edition to print. Future editorials will be of a more traditional nature, but at this stage I think that this edition has some very interesting articles that all readers will enjoy.

Justin Chadwick

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THE 6TH AND 7TH MACHINE GUN BATTALIONS DURING WORLD WAR II

Joseph A. Morgan

Introduction

During World War I and II, machine gun battalions were established to provide direct fire support by concentrating medium machine guns at divisional level in the Australian and British Armies, augmenting the light machine guns that were organic to each standard infantry battalion. Four such battalions were raised to support the divisions of the Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF) during World War II and these saw extensive operational service. In addition, several light horse regiments were also converted to machine gun battalions, while three other battalions were raised in the Militia by consolidating the machine gun companies of several infantry battalions. Of these, two – the 6th and 7th Machine Gun Battalions – undertook operational service in New Guinea.

While the exploits of the four 2nd AIF machine gun battalions are quite well celebrated, those of the 6th and 7th Machine Gun Battalions have largely been overshadowed by their more famous counterparts. This is no doubt in part due to the less glamorous nature of their service; nevertheless, the personal sacrifices of those who served in these units should not be thought of as less important and the history of these units offers many insights for those interested in some of the finer points of the evolution of the infantry and the defence of Australia during World War II.

Background

The Australian Army first implemented the machine gun battalion concept during World War I. In the final months of the war, the Army raised five machine gun battalions by consolidating previously existing machine gun companies. Each battalion was equipped with medium machine guns to provide direct fire support at divisional level to the troops fighting in the trenches, in addition to the light machine guns organic to standard infantry battalions. Several squadrons of light horse machine gunners were also raised to support operations in the Middle East. Following the war, the concept disappeared from the Army's order of battle, as medium machine guns were embedded into the post war infantry battalion structure. However, in the final years before the outbreak of World War II, as concerns of war in Europe grew, the Army converted several Militia light horse regiments into machine gun battalions. When the four divisions of the Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF) were raised in 1939-40, provisions were made for a machine gun battalion in each division, designated 2/1st through to the 2/4th.¹

¹ Dennis et al 1995, pp. 371-372; Kuring 2004, pp. 83-84; Festberg 1972, pp. 39-56.

Within the Militia, which existed separately to the 2nd AIF and for a period maintained a different organisational structure, medium machine guns remained organic to each infantry battalion. These were organised into three platoons, assigned to the battalion's support company along with a mortar platoon. This structure existed throughout the early war years, until sometime in early to mid-1942 when the Militia was reorganised to bring it closer to the British Army structure. This saw the creation of a headquarters company, which subsumed the mortar platoon; it appears that this reorganisation was only partial, though, as the machine guns remained, being organised into a machine gun company (designated 'E' Company) of three platoons.² Nevertheless, in August 1942, the decision was made to remove these companies from the Militia infantry battalion structure, and concentrate them within separate machine gun battalions. This resulted in the re-creation of the 5th Machine Gun Battalion, which had existed during World War I,³ and the establishment of two new battalions: the 6th and 7th. Of these, the 5th undertook garrison duties in the Torres Strait, while the other two saw operational service in New Guinea, alongside the more famous units of the 6th and 7th Divisions.⁴

6th Machine Gun Battalion

The 6th Machine Gun Battalion was formed in New South Wales on 22 August 1942, when the fighting in New Guinea hung in the balance for the Australians. The unit was formed through the consolidation of the machine gun companies of several infantry battalions from the 1st Division.⁵ These included the 1st, 13th, 17th, 18th, 20th/19th, and 34th Infantry Battalions, with small numbers of reinforcements from other battalions including the 2nd and 41st Infantry Battalions.⁶ Equipped with 48 Vickers medium machine guns (as well as other small arms such as Bren guns, rifles and revolvers) and a large number of motor vehicles of all descriptions, including motorcycles, it had a strength of between 700 and 800 personnel and was organised into four companies, designated 'A' to 'D', along with a headquarters company consisting of various support platoons, and a battalion headquarters. Just over 220 personnel operated the machine guns, with the rest providing support. Support personnel included signallers, electricians, stretcher bearers, storemen, drivers, caterers, mechanics, clerks, builders, butchers, and supply personnel.⁷ Although formed from several Militia units, the battalion was granted Australian Imperial Force status, indicating that at least three-quarters of the battalion's personnel volunteered for overseas service.⁸

¹ Dennis et al 1995, pp. 371-372; Kuring 2004, pp. 83-84; Festberg 1972, pp. 39-56.

² Kuring 2004, p. 139; Campbell 2007, p. 2.

³ 'AWM4 Subclass 24/5: 5th Australian Machine Gun Battalion'. *Australian Imperial Force and Commonwealth Military Forces unit war diaries, 1914-18 war*. Australian War Memorial. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG1000639/>. Accessed 26 August 2018.

⁴ McKenzie-Smith 2018, pp. 2.355-2356.

⁵ McKenzie-Smith 2018, p. 2.355.

⁶ Campbell 2007, pp. 1-2.

⁷ Campbell 2007, pp. xxvii-xxiv; Kuring 2004, pp. 206-207.

The battalion concentrated at Narellan and then Wallgrove, southwest of Sydney. Its first, and ultimately only, commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Hearne, who had previously served on the staff of the 28th Infantry Brigade and in the 1st Infantry Battalion. In mid-October 1942, the battalion was ordered to move to Dapto, near Wollongong, completing a 65-mile route march.⁹ On 16 May 1943, some of the battalion's personnel, training around Shellharbour, helped rescue the 62-man crew of the 9,000-ton US tanker, *Cities Service Boston*, which had become shipwrecked near Bass Point. All members of the crew were saved, but four members of the battalion drowned after being washed off the rocks. For their actions, these men were decorated with the Soldier's Medal by the United States government.¹⁰ A memorial to the men was unveiled at Bass Point in 1968.¹¹

In July 1943, the battalion deployed to New Guinea, replacing the 7th Machine Gun Battalion, which returned to Australia the following month. There, they were assigned to support the 3rd Division, and were initially based around Ward's Airfield, before moving to Donadabu, in September, where they supported the 7th Infantry Brigade. In October 1943, the battalion was transferred to the 7th Division, taking part in the campaign in the Ramu Valley.¹² Leaving one company in Port Moresby, the battalion was flown to Gusap airfield. There, they manned defensive positions and carried out patrols in the surrounding area. Throughout this period, the company in Port Moresby provided reinforcements to those at Gusap, until it was disbanded.¹³ There was heavy fighting in the distance around Shaggy Ridge during this time, and Japanese stragglers nearby, so the danger was real enough, although the battalion was not called into the fighting. Nevertheless, its positions did come under attack from Japanese aircraft on several occasions and the conditions in the Ramu resulted in a high rate of disease, with over 80 percent contracting malaria.¹⁴ One member of the battalion, Corporal William Carter, died from disease during this period.¹⁵

In March 1944, the 11th Divisional Carrier Company moved to Gusap and relieved the 6th Machine Gun Battalion. The 6th was subsequently flown back to Dobodura, and from there they proceeded to camp at Semina, before embarking for Australia in two drafts aboard the transport *Katoomba*. Most of the battalion returned via Townsville in March, while 'C' Company proceeded directly to Sydney a month later.¹⁶ After leave, the battalion re-formed at Wallgrove, but was later informed it would be disbanded as it was no longer required for operational service, being deemed surplus to requirements.

⁸ Campbell 2007, p. xxviii; Grey 2008, p. 183.

⁹ Campbell 2007, pp. 5-11.

¹⁰ Campbell 2007, pp. 58-72.

¹¹ 'US *Cities Service Boston* (6th Machine Gun Battalion) Memorial'. Monuments Australia. <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/disaster/maritime/display/23008-us-cities-service-boston-6th-machine-gun-battalion-aif-memorial>. Accessed 19 August 2018.

¹² McKenzie-Smith 2018, pp. 2.355-2.356; Campbell 2007, p. 98

¹³ Campbell 2007, p. 120; Dexter 1961, pp. 594; McKenzie-Smith 2018, p. 2.355

¹⁴ Campbell 2007, pp. 186 & 193.

¹⁵ 'William Henry Carter', Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1693489>. Accessed 18 August 2018.

The Australian Army was contracting in size at this time, as manpower was required to be diverted to vital war industries, and the strategic situation no longer required such a large number of men under arms as US troops had taken over the main responsibility for fighting in the Pacific.¹⁷

The disbandment process began in June, but was not completed until December 1944. Its personnel subsequently transferred to other units or were discharged. Despite their experience in New Guinea, many were made to endure jungle warfare training at Canungra, Queensland, before being sent as reinforcements to other units, including the 2/24th Infantry Battalion as well as several other machine gun and pioneer battalions. Many saw action during operations to retake Borneo in 1945, taking part in the fighting on Tarakan, Balikpapan and Labuan. At least twelve former battalion members were killed during these actions.¹⁸ Graham McKenzie-Smith records that the 6th was later awarded the 'Liberation of Australian New Guinea' battle honour for its service.¹⁹

7th Machine Gun Battalion

Formed on 2 November 1942, in Port Moresby, the battalion was initially designated the 'New Guinea Force Machine Gun Battalion'. This was short lived, though, as it was renamed the '7th Machine Gun Battalion' a month later. Like the 6th, the 7th was formed through the amalgamation of the machine gun companies of several Militia infantry battalions: in this case, the 3rd, 36th, 39th, 49th, 53rd and 55th.²⁰

The battalion's first commander was Lieutenant Colonel Terrence Farrell, an accountant and Militia officer who assumed the role on promotion from the 53rd Infantry Battalion. Upon establishment, the battalion was assigned to the 6th Division, and was the only unit of its kind deployed to New Guinea.²¹ Its first camp was located near Ward's Lookout, and during the early days of the battalion's existence morale was considered to be quite low, as many soldiers regretted leaving their old battalions, especially those that had lost friends during the fighting along the Kokoda Track earlier in the year.²²

Initially, the battalion manned beach defences around Port Moresby, defending against an attack by sea, as fighting took place further north around the top of the Kokoda Track (at Oivi and Gorari), and around the Japanese beachheads at Buna-Gona. In January 1943, 'A' Company was sent to Milne Bay to support the 11th Division, while other elements were sent to support Kanga Force and the 17th Brigade around Wau. Augmented by

¹⁶ McKenzie-Smith 2018, p. 2.355; Campbell 2007, pp. 193-199.

¹⁷ Johnston 2005, p. 14; Johnston 2002, p. 190.

¹⁸ Campbell 2007, pp. 210-222.

¹⁹ It should be noted that Gordon Maitland does not credit the 6th with this battle honour, nor does Alexander Rodger. See Maitland 1999, p. 143 & Rodger 2003, p. 362.

²⁰ McKenzie-Smith 2018, p. 2.356; Campbell 2013, pp. 11-15.

²¹ Campbell 2013, pp. 11-12.

²² Campbell 2013, p. 15.

two companies from the 2/1st Machine Gun Battalion,²³ they were flown in to provide protection to the airfield there, due to concerns that the Japanese would attempt to capture the area in order to carry out a flanking attack on Port Moresby. The advance party from 'B' Company arrived on 31 January, while the remainder of the company arrived aboard six US C-47s the following day.²⁴

The battalion's first action came on 3 February, when the guns were fired in support of Commandos from the 2/3rd Independent Company who were withdrawing west of Wau. The next day, they supported an attack aimed at clearing a Japanese form-up point, which resulted in over 300 Japanese killed. Shortly afterwards, the battalion suffered its first casualty when the airfield came under air attack. Throughout February, the company was dispersed around the Wau area, occupying various defensive locations. The following month, a platoon was dispatched to several positions around Mubo, from where they mounted patrols in the vicinity. Air attacks on Wau continued throughout this time, while the gunners also came under Japanese mortar and artillery fire, and suffered heavily from illness. In July, they were withdrawn from Mubo back to Wau, and from there back to Port Moresby, with the move being completed by early August.²⁵

Meanwhile, around Port Moresby, the remaining elements of the battalion (Headquarters, 'C' and 'D' Companies) were reinforced in January 1943 by a small number of Royal Australian Air Force personnel. The following month, more reinforcements arrived from the 6th Divisional Carrier Company. These men initially formed a new company, designated 'Z' Company, although they were later absorbed into 'A' and 'B' Companies. The battalion undertook intensive training and weapons testing during March, and over the coming months continued to man defensive positions against a potential invasion, and provided details for labouring and construction tasks.²⁶ In June 1943, the battalion was designated as an AIF battalion.²⁷

By mid-1943, many of the battalion's personnel had been deployed overseas for over 18 months, including service before having joined the 7th. The company around Milne Bay, having carried out gruelling patrols across the Stirling Ranges and enduring air raids for the past seven months, returned to Australia in August 1943 aboard the US transport Howell Cobb. Meanwhile, the rest of the battalion at Port Moresby was relieved by the 6th Machine Gun Battalion, and returned to Australia the same month aboard the troopship Duntroon, moving into camp at Kairi, in Queensland, and eventually coming under the command of the 3rd Division (in November 1943).²⁸ Leave was delayed while anti-malaria treatments were administered, but the troops were finally sent home in early and mid-September. Upon their return at the end October, training began again, building up to jungle warfare and amphibious landing training around Trinity Beach in early 1944.²⁹

²⁴ McCarthy 1959, p. 558; Campbell 2013, p. 58.

²⁵ Campbell 2013, pp. 58-68.

²⁶ Campbell 2013, pp. 69-78.

²⁷ Campbell 2013, p. xx.

²⁸ McKenzie-Smith 2018, p. 2.356; Campbell 2013, pp.56 & 90.

²⁹ Campbell 2013, pp. 91-101.

While it seemed likely that the battalion was being prepared for further operational service, this was not to be, and in early March orders were received stipulating that the battalion would be disbanded. Over the coming weeks personnel began marching out, and finally, on 28 April 1944, the last entry was made in the battalion's war diary and the unit ceased to exist. Like the 6th Machine Gun Battalion, many of the 7th's personnel went on to serve with other units. The commanding officer, Farrell, for example commanded the 61st Infantry Battalion in the final stages of the Bougainville campaign.³⁰ Many others went on to serve in other machine gun battalions such as the 2/1st, 2/2nd or 2/3rd.³¹

In recognition of its service, the battalion received one battle honour: 'South West Pacific 1943'.³² Five members of the battalion are listed on the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour, as having lost their lives while serving with the unit.³³ Two of these died from illness, two were killed in motor vehicle accidents and one was accidentally shot.³⁴

Conclusion

Both units suffered similar fates, being deemed surplus to requirements and ultimately broken up to provide reinforcements. After the war, the Army returned to a structure where medium machine guns were placed organically within standard infantry battalions.³⁵ As the nature of warfare has evolved towards task organised combat teams, it is unlikely that such units will ever be raised in the Australian Army again.

The experiences of the 6th and 7th Machine Gun Battalions may not seem significant compared to some of the other machine gun battalions, which saw considerable combat throughout the war in North Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific. However, it should be remembered that their service in Australia and New Guinea, while largely in a defensive role, was not without its danger, and at the time, the men were no doubt frustrated at their limited opportunities for combat. They might not have been in the right place at the right time to win fame, but these soldiers had their part to play, and when called upon they did their duty. Surely, that is all that any nation can ask of its soldiers.

Compared to some other units, the coverage of the 6th and 7th Machine Gun Battalions has been limited, until recently. Both are briefly mentioned in a volume of the Official History series, but the Australian War Memorial's excellent archive of online war diaries unfortunately does not yet include access to those of the 6th or 7th. John Campbell's recent work on each battalion, however, has resulted in two detailed and well illustrated

³⁰ 'Farrell, Terence Joseph', *World War 2 Nominal Roll*, Commonwealth of Australia. www.ww2roll.gov.au/Veteran.aspx?serviceId=A&veteranId=237996. Accessed 2 September 2018.

³¹ Campbell 2013, p. 103.

³² McKenzie-Smith 2018, p. 2.356; Maitland 1999, p. 142.

³³ '7th Machine Gun Battalion', Roll of Honour search, Australian War Memorial. https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people?roll=Roll%20of%20Honour&facet_related_units=7th%20Machine%20Gun%20Battalion. Accessed 28 August 2018. ³⁴ Campbell 2013, p. 119.

³⁵ Dennis et al 1995, p. 372.

books, and has added considerably to our knowledge of each unit. Campbell's works offer an insight into a largely unknown aspect of Australia's military heritage, providing many interesting facts that can help us understand the development of the infantry as well as the day-to-day experiences of Australian soldiers playing their part in the defence of their country. This last aspect is potentially the main strength of these books, and highlights the importance of the topic – although it may limit the appeal to some – as it should be realised that soldiering is mostly without glamour but there is honour and value in just getting the job done, whatever it is.

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‘HITLER’S SECRET WEAPON’: BLACKLISTED BEER AND THE CANTEENS INQUIRY

Justin Chadwick

There is an old military saying that soldiers receive one beer, per man, per day, perhaps. While not advisable in combat conditions, military authorities realized the importance of beer for troop morale during leave and garrison periods. To provide welfare support for serving Australians the government established the Australian Defence Canteen Service. Placed under the directorship of Edward Holden, the chairman of the motor body builder General Motors-Holden’s, the canteen service sought to provide quality goods that soldiers wanted. Following a tour of inspection of canteen services in the Middle East, Holden decided to cancel all orders for Toohey’s beers following complaints of the beer being flat and lifeless. Toohey’s demands for explanation came slowly. But when an inquiry into the canteen services over allegations of corruption was called the company saw an opportunity for recompense. This article will explore the events that led to the black-listing of Toohey’s beers from Australian canteens in the Middle East and the subsequent inquiry into Holden’s decision.

Welfare services have always been an important part of any soldier’s service experience. Soon after the outbreak of war in 1939, the Australian Defence Canteen Service (ADFC) was formed from the Garrison Institutes, which had provided canteens during the interwar period. The Federal government provided £20,000 for fittings and stock for canteens throughout Australia with the Temperance Council offering £10,000 for fruit juice and milk bar equipment.¹

To oversee the ADFC in Australia and abroad it was decided by the government to appoint a civilian as Controller of Canteens. Edward (Ted) Holden, the chairman of motor body builder General Motors-Holden’s, was given the role in February 1940.² According to one newspaper report, as ‘a tribute to his organizing ability’.³ Holden was a good choice. He had been instrumental in the expansion of Holden’s motor body builders, located in Adelaide. He introduced innovative manufacturing processes and management methods that made the company the largest body-builder in the Southern hemisphere.⁴ The Depression, though, almost forced the closure of the company, but was saved by a merger with General Motors. Holden lost his role as managing director, but remained chairman, giving him time to pursue a political career.

Holden was similar to other leaders of industry who donated their time and expertise to the war effort. As the conflict in Europe intensified, the government appointed the

¹ Letter from Minister for the Army to Colonel Henley, GOC Tasmania, 1939, NAA P617/428/1/29.

² Appointment of Holden as Controller of Canteens, 1940, NAA MP508/1/50/701/130.

³ ‘Mr Holden Appointed’, *The News* (Adelaide), 3 February 1940, 5.

⁴ ‘Holden’s Mammoth Works’, *The News* (Adelaide), 6 August 1923, 11.

⁵ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Steel Master: A Life of Essington Lewis*, Macmillan, Melbourne (1971), 147.

managing director of BHP, Essington Lewis, Director-General of Munitions, who was later to be described as an 'industrial dictator' skilled at 'winnowing the essential arguments from the inessential'.⁵ Laurence Hartnett, the managing director of GM-H, was given the directorate of Ordnance Production; W Smith, managing director of Australian Consolidated Industries, became director of Gun Ammunition Production; the directorate of Aircraft Production was assigned to Harold Clapp, chairman of the Victorian Railways Commissioners; and Thomas Donaldson, from ICI, was appointed Director of Explosives Supply; with the Materials Supply Directorate going to Sir Colin Fraser, a director of Broken Hill Mining Companies.⁶



Figure 1: 'Some of Australia's Munitions Leaders Seen by Hanna', an example of industry captains who contributed to the war effort, Melbourne *Argus*.

Located in Melbourne, Holden's canteens headquarters included a deputy controller, Major WS Hosking, with a committee in each State to administer camps in their area. On his appointment Holden told reporters that canteens were to be 'as attractive as possible, using refrigeration, supplying the goods soldiers want, and seeing that goods supplied are of proper qualities'.⁷ Holden immediately conducted a national tour of inspection, reporting that plans for canteens on troopships for the AIF and the militia were well progressed. Canteen boards had been established in each State and were making their facilities, according to Holden, 'as much like soldiers' clubs as possible'.⁸

The importance of canteens to soldiers was promoted in Parliament. Victorian Senator Charles Brand argued that if the 2nd AIF were to go overseas then British wet canteens would be made available to Australians. He could 'see no valid reason why this force should not have a wet canteen under military control and administration. The hours would

⁶ SJ Butlin, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945: War Economy*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra (1955), 312-313.

⁷ 'Controller of Army Canteens', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 5 February 1940, 14.

⁸ 'Plans For Canteens in Army Camps', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 22 February 1940, 16.

be regulated and the quality of liquor guaranteed'. For those 'who did not desire a glass of beer after a strenuous day's work', the Salvation Army or YMCA were available. 'To deny the members of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force such liquid refreshments', continued Brand, 'as they are accustomed to in private life is distinctly unfair. It penalizes patriotism'.⁹ Brand was in a good position to comment on the welfare of soldiers. He served in the South Africa War, as brigade major for the 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade, at Gallipoli and commanded the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade in France, being promoted brigadier general. Brand's postwar appointments included command of the 3rd Military District and the 1st Division, and in 1925, as major general, appointed second CGS and later Quartermaster-General. Following his retirement from military life Brand entered politics, winning a Senate seat with the United Australia Party where he promoted veteran and defence issues.¹⁰



Figure 2: Palestine Brewery Crown lager label; Toohey's Club Lager label.

Holden's visit to canteens at Australian camps in the Middle East in August 1940 proved valuable. He was able to inspect the facilities that had been established and interview canteen personnel and patrons. Of particular importance for many of the men was the quality of the beer available. As the weather became hotter, demand for beer increased. Causing concern for Holden and the rest of the canteens staff was the Australian dislike for the local beer or that imported from Britain. The locally brewed beer, produced at Rishon, south of Tel Aviv, was described by one Australian soldier as 'a mixture of sheep dip and castor oil with a few barrels of tar tipped in to colour it', and, unsurprisingly, 'didn't appeal'.¹¹ The British beers were too heavy for Australian palates, which preferred

⁹ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (Senate), 23 November 1939, 1530.

¹⁰ Justin Chadwick, *Sword and Baton: Senior Australian Army Officers from Federation to 2001: Volume One*, Big Sky Publishing, Newport (2017), 74-78.

¹¹ 'Letters from Palestine', *Crookwell Gazette* (NSW), 22 May 1940, 7.

lighter, lager style beers. To overcome the scarcity of Australian beer, the Deputy Director of Canteen Services (Middle East), Lieutenant-Colonel George Gee, arranged for a local brewery, the Palestine Brewery Company, to make a product more akin to Australian tastes.¹² The result was 'Crown' lager, sporting an oval shaped label with a gold crown atop a map of Australia. Across the map was CROWN and around the edge of the label was 'Brewed to Australian Standards. For the Australian Army Canteen Institutes'.¹³ While a substitute when Australian beer was unavailable, it was deemed either too sweet,¹⁴ or weak, flat and lifeless by members of the AIF.¹⁵

While the local beer was cheap, the troops preferred Australian product with most popular brands available.¹⁶ Tooth's and Toohey's were prominent in canteens. By the end of 1940 Australian beer exports were valued at £195,740, a dramatic increase over the £26,452 of the previous year.¹⁷ Simultaneous to Holden's arrival in the Middle East was the unloading of 250,000 bottles of Australian beer, which had arrived just after stores had been depleted.¹⁸ But, while the troops were appreciative of their preferred thirst-quenching tippie, the volume of beer being shipped abroad attracted negative publicity. Frank Clune, honorary commissioner for the Australian Comforts Fund, returned to Australia after six month's in the Middle East and complained that navy and merchant marine personnel risked their lives to transport Australian beer. Valuable shipping space had been taken up by more than 80,000 cases of beer over two years, while Egyptians continued with meat rationing.¹⁹ In February 1941, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* reported on a letter from a soldier complaining that the AIF was short of butter, but there appeared plenty of shipping space for beer. Sydney Archdeacon RBS Hammond said it was 'a scandal', while other clergymen pointed out that the AIF should have both butter and beer.²⁰ In Brisbane, in June 1941, the Anglican synod deplored the shipping space devoted to beer rather than foodstuffs, such as butter, meat and fruit, and munitions.²¹

Troop reaction to any reduction in Australian beer deliveries to the Middle East drew approbation. One soldier wrote that the Victorian Council of Churches demand to curtail the export of beer was counterproductive. 'War is no Sunday school picnic. It is nasty and cheap, and crude and sordid', he wrote,

the rigours of desert warfare under a Middle Eastern sun have done nothing towards quenching their thirst. Australian beer does that and the regulations applying in most Army canteens – one bottle per man per day, perhaps – will not make drunkards of them.²²

¹² 'A Problem in Beer', *Age* (Melbourne), 13 May 1940, 8.

¹³ 'Beer For The Boys', *Smith's Weekly* (Sydney), 21 September 1940, 18.

¹⁴ 'Troops Empty 12,000,000 Bottles', *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 16 June 1942, 7.

¹⁵ 'Beer Supplies in Middle East', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 15 May 1942, 4.

¹⁶ 'Another Digger Army on Egyptian Sands', *Herald* (Melbourne), 11.

¹⁷ 'AIF in Middle East Give Boost to Beer Export Figures', *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 5 April 1941, 3.

¹⁸ 'Mail and Beer for AIF in Palestine', *Newcastle Sun*, 8 August 1940, 2.

¹⁹ 'Lives Risked For Beer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 1942, 7.

²⁰ 'AIF Getting Beer Before Butter', *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 16 February 1941, 6.

²¹ 'Beer for Overseas Forces', *West Australian*, 24 June 1941, 9.

²² 'Beer for Overseas Forces', *West Australian*, 24 June 1941, 9.

‘Tobruk Rat’, writing in the Melbourne *Herald*, said that the critics would alter their views if they spent a few months in desert conditions like those encountered by the AIF.

While Australian-made beer was a priority for the canteens, not all beer was appreciated by the troops. Soon after Holden’s arrival in the Middle East he heard complaints of one



Figure 3: Mobile canteen truck Western of El Alamein, July 1942. AWM 024657.

specific brand of beer. Described as ‘Hitler’s secret weapon’, Toohey’s beer had been reported by mess and canteen sergeants as ‘practically unsaleable’.²³ Gee had received the first complaints in mid-1940 of Toohey’s beer being flat and sour. Subsequently a cable was despatched to the Canteens Board in Australia that ‘Toohey’s Flag beer far below standard. Troops refusing to buy’.²⁴ Gee’s report to Holden stated that canteen sergeants had criticized Toohey’s beer and while troops complained verbally, none were prepared to make their objections in writing.²⁵ A quartermaster in charge of a truck which had crossed 200 miles of desert, returned without beer because Toohey’s was the only brand stocked in the canteen.²⁶ Holden’s reaction was to confirm the cable sent to Australia by Gee in October to cease all orders of Toohey’s beers and ban them from sale in AIF canteens.²⁷

Toohey’s initial response, even before Holden’s return to Australia, was to request a report about the complaints. Gee contacted Major John Agar, attached to the Canteens

²³ ‘Beer Called ‘Hitler’s Secret Weapon’’, *Truth* (Sydney), 19 April 1942, 19.

²⁴ ‘Said Beer was Flat’, *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate* (New South Wales), 16 June 1942, 4.

²⁵ ‘Supplies for Canteens’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 June 1942, 11.

²⁶ ‘Says Soldiers Disliked Beer’, *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 20 June 1942, 6.

²⁷ ‘Scene at Canteens Inquiry’, *Age* (Melbourne), 10 July 1942, 3.

Services in the Middle East, asking for a response. Agar collected almost 100 replies, some were abusive and crude, which he destroyed, but overall, troop preference was for Victorian brands of beer.²⁸ The report was delivered to Toohey's in September, a delay that drew the ire of the company, outlining troop and canteen personnel attitudes toward their products. Gee sent a cable to Toohey's: 'Club lager, Flag ale condemned by canteens, troops generally. We can't give you better evidence than that'.²⁹ Toohey's, unsurprisingly, was displeased with the delay and the summary of the report.



Figure 4: Members of the first convoy to leave Australia celebrate 1000 days of overseas service, Gaza, October 1942. AWM 025074.

Toohey's time for justice came soon after. In January 1942, the Army Minister, Frank Forde, called an inquiry into the handling of the Canteen Services finances, following concerns raised by the Australian Comfort Funds. The inquiry, presided over by Eric Spooner, the Member for Robertson (NSW), with Charles Morgan, Member for Reid (NSW), and Wilfred (Bill) Dovey, KC, met for the first time in February 1942 in Sydney. Spooner, a chartered accountant, entered politics in June 1932, and, during his first day in the Legislative Assembly, fell asleep during the long session. When stirred by an interjection, he awoke, smiled and returned to his slumber. However, he was an active member of parliament before he won the federal seat of Robertson in October 1940. His abilities were shown by his appointment as Minister for War Organisation and Industry

²⁸ 'Beer for Middle East Canteens', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 30 June 1942, 6.

²⁹ 'Troops Empty 12,000,000 Bottles', *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 16 June 1942, 7.

in June 1941.³⁰ Charles Morgan had been elected to federal parliament in 1940, and has been described as ‘an excellent local politician but in national politics an inconspicuous figure’.³¹ Wilfred (Bill) Dovey, a member of the AN&MEF in 1914, studied law whilst teaching. Admitted to the Bar in June 1922, he was appointed KC in 1935, being involved in royal commissions and state and federal inquiries.³² After a brief meeting of the inquiry, Spooner announced that the board thought it necessary, in the public interest, to make the inquiry open to the public. The terms of reference, given to the board of inquiry by the federal government, included claims of corruption in purchasing, and complaints by Toohey’s ‘that their products were excluded from purchases made in Australia for sale in the Near East’.³³

While the inquiry’s initial concerns were over corruption, they soon focused on the question of beer supply. John Shand, representing Toohey’s, directed questions to witnesses on the cancellation of orders for Toohey’s beer. Shand had established himself as a barrister skilled in libel and compensation cases and courtroom tactics. Shand’s legal studies were interrupted in 1918 when he served with the Royal Air Force in the Middle East as a kite-balloon officer and was admitted to the Bar in November 1921.³⁴ During evidence Shand questioned Major Maxwell Moffatt, a canteen purchasing officer, over his knowledge of the banning of Toohey’s beer in the Middle East. Moffatt, who was the general manager of purchasing for Coles, stated that the cessation of orders for Toohey’s occurred before his appointment, but he was aware of the events. He knew of the report requested by Toohey’s, which he received in September 1941.³⁵ The following day, Commander Allan Freyer, another canteen purchasing officer, appeared before the enquiry, stating that Palestinian beer was inferior to Australian beer. He told Shand that the Controller-General of Canteen Services, Holden, had returned from his tour of inspection with confirmation of the disapproval of Toohey’s beer amongst the troops. Under the advice of Gee, due to limited shipping space, beers from South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania were not purchased. Though if spare space was available, beer from these states was included.³⁶

Further evidence reinforced the troops’ dislike for the Toohey’s product. Chief paymaster of the AIF in the Middle East, Colonel Guy Moore, stated that complaints about the beer had been discussed at a canteens board meeting. He said that supplies of Australian beer were problematic and that the Palestinian Brewery was approached to make up the shortfall. However, the response of the Australians to the locally-brewed drink ‘was very hostile’. Moore told the inquiry that he had tried the Palestinian beer and ‘would

³⁰ CJ Lloyd, ‘Spooner, Eric Sydney’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/spooner-eric-sydney-8608/text15035>, accessed 18 December 2018.

³¹ Papers on Parliament: Lectures in the Senate, 64 Parliament House, Canberra (2016), 4.

³² Malcolm Broun, ‘Dovey, Wilfred Robert’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dovey-wilfred-robert-bill-10039/text17701>, accessed 18 December 2018.

³³ ‘Open Inquiry Begins on Canteens’, *News* (Adelaide), 18 February 1942, 5.

³⁴ John Slee, ‘Shand, John Wentworth’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/shand-john-wentworth-11663/text20837>, accessed 18 December 2018.

³⁵ ‘Supplies for Canteens’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 April 1942, 7.³⁶ ‘Canteen Orders’, *Age* (Melbourne), 16 April 1942, 4.

³⁶ ‘Canteen Orders’, *Age* (Melbourne), 16 April 1942, 4.

not recommend it'.³⁷ Gee informed the inquiry that he began receiving complaints in either July or September 1940 that Toohey's beer was 'flat and sour'. He had found that Toohey's beer in the Middle East differed from that in Australia. As to why the beer was flat and sour, Gee said that it may have been due to faulty bottle caps.³⁸ Another reason, according to Gee's evidence, was that one consignment went to London and arrived in the Middle East via Capetown.³⁹ Gee also told the inquiry that the beer rejected by Australian troops was readily accepted by British troops when sold through their canteen services.⁴⁰



Figure 5: A 9th Division soldier drinks the first beer for some time, El Alamein, November 1942. AWM 042077.

When Holden presented evidence in June 1942, he faced an increasingly hostile Shand. On his first day before the inquiry Holden stated that he 'had never intended to convey the impression that Toohey's Ltd had been guilty of misconduct in its supply of beer to the Middle East'. He heard complaints of Toohey's Flag ale and Club lager on his visit to the Middle East in 1940 and found the same feeling in some canteens on his return to Australia. When Holden mentioned that he had been asked whether Toohey's was specially brewed, cheaply, for export to the troops, Shand asked if it was fraudulent. Holden responded that if his report insinuated fraud then it was not his intention and that it may have been 'a careless statement'. Shand saw an opening, asking Holden whether he admitted that his report on the beer 'was made without trying to ascertain what vicissitudes Toohey's beer had been subjected to on its way to the Middle East?' Holden replied that it was possibly not a fair statement. At this point Dovey queried Holden's claim that 'Toohey's conduct was most reprehensible... Deterioration and poor quality beer are one thing, but deliberate exploiting of the troops would be a shocking thing'. Holden apologized that it appeared that way, but he and rest of the Canteens Service 'were very annoyed about the quality of the beer'.⁴¹

³⁷ 'Beer Supplies in Middle East', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 15 May 1942, 4.

³⁸ 'Troops Empty 12,000,000 Bottles', *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 16 June 1942, 7.

³⁹ 'AIF Beer Troubles', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 June 1942, 7.

⁴⁰ 'Supplies for Canteens', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 June 1942, 11.

⁴¹ 'AIF Canteens Inquiry', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 June 1942, 7.

During the final hearings in Sydney, Dovey summarized the proceedings with regard to Toohey's. For him the questions that required answers were whether the suspension of beer orders from Toohey's was honest and, if so, just, and whether the ban was justified. Further, was the handling of Toohey's request for information on the complaints and whether the report's criticisms were justified.⁴² At that hearing Sir Mark Sheldon, chairman of directors of Toohey's, submitted correspondence demanding information on the complaints against his company's beer and reminded the members of the board that Toohey's had been supplying beer to the troopships and British canteens without complaint.

As the inquiry continued in Melbourne Shand pressed harder on Holden and his legal counsel. When Holden requested evidence from canteen sergeants to prove that troops in the Middle East would not drink Toohey's it was refused. Representing Holden, Wilbur Ham, KC, when closing the argument for the request, stated there was no charge for Holden to answer beside 'a perfectly nebulous set of suggestions and insinuations'. Holden had, according to Ham, 'given up important work to gratuitously carry out services for the Canteen Board' and thus should be allowed to inspect evidence 'to ascertain if there were any allegations against him except a series of insults'.⁴³ Shand followed the line of enquiry given by Dovey in Sydney, arguing that Holden's actions in banning Toohey's beer 'was neither justified not justifiable' and that evidence was only hearsay. The ban on

Toohey's beer, continued Shand, was 'so arbitrary that no logical human being would have done it, unless it was for some reason'. It was not Gee, but Holden who took action after examination of a few canteens, said Shand. While every brewery had problems with flatness, only Toohey's was isolated. Shand completed his argument by stating that Holden's attitude after his return from the Middle East 'indicated a knowledge that he had done something which he could not justify'.⁴⁴

As the hearings continued Ham was forced to defend Holden's reputation. Shand's accusation that the ban was not honestly made was concluded by claiming Holden was 'unfitted for high position'.⁴⁵ In reply, Ham told the inquiry that Holden had acted within his rights as Controller-General when he banned Toohey's in the Middle East. The troops told him that they did not want it or buy it. So Holden, considering it his duty to ensure that soldiers received what they wanted, decided to cancel orders from Toohey's. Nowhere throughout all the evidence given, continued Ham, did Shand produce proof that Holden had 'acted dishonestly, improperly, and unfairly'. Holden, a man who had 'patriotically and without remuneration' given his time, was attacked for dishonesty repeatedly by Shand.⁴⁶ Holden had 'no grudge against any brewery' and there was no evidence that Holden had acted dishonestly or unfairly.⁴⁷

⁴² Canteen Services Inquiry, NAA MP742/1/1/7/1012.

⁴³ 'Scene at Canteens Inquiry', *Age* (Melbourne), 10 July 1942, 3.

⁴⁴ 'Canteens Director Attacked', *News* (Adelaide), 13 July 1942, 3.

⁴⁵ 'Ban on Toohey's Beer', *Western Mail* (Perth), 16 July 1942, 60.

⁴⁶ 'Mr Holden "Acted Within Rights"', *News* (Adelaide), 20 July 1942, 3.

⁴⁷ 'Banning of Beer', *Age* (Melbourne), 21 July 1942, 3.

After five months and 63 sitting days, the board of inquiry sent its report to the Minister for the Army, Forde. Tabled in Parliament in September 1942, the 'Canteens – Report of Board of Inquiry' found that the exclusion of Toohey's beers was unjustified and the action the Controller-General of the Canteens Service, Ted Holden, was 'capricious and arbitrary, and unfairly discriminated against Toohey's'.⁴⁸ Parliament was subsequently informed that the report did not demand any criminal proceedings from the government against Holden and that any disciplinary action would be taken by the Department of the Army.⁴⁹ No further action was taken against Holden, but the entire episode caused great distress to him. Shand's attacks during the inquiry upset Holden, particularly the assault on his honour and allegations of dishonesty, and impacted upon his health.⁵⁰ Holden, though, continued his director-general appointment until 1945 when he resumed his position at GM-H. He commenced promoting the local manufacture of a low-priced car until his retirement as chairman due to ill-health in 1947.

The canteens inquiry reflected a side of war that is little investigated. The supply of goods was an important part of the Canteen Services role to improve the welfare of troops. On his appointment as Director-General, Ted Holden took on the position with all seriousness and sought to supply goods that the soldiers wanted and of a proper quality, as designated in his job description.⁵¹ This desire to accommodate the needs of troops serving overseas resulted in Holden's decision to cancel orders for Toohey's beers following his visit to canteens in the Middle East. For Toohey's, the loss of income in the lucrative supply to Australian troops was substantial, particularly as they were the only brewery to be black-listed. The canteens inquiry provided a platform for Toohey's to air its grievances and the company employed an experienced barrister in John Shand to argue its case. His tenaciousness in attacking the decision, and Holden personally, reflected the importance of the contracts to Toohey's, particularly when total overseas beer sales had increased to £195,740 in 1940. However, while Shand's tactics were typical of his courtroom behavior, his attacks on Holden were extreme, especially the questioning of Holden's abilities to fulfill his role as controller-general. Using Dovey's framework of honesty and justification, Shand prosecuted Toohey's case with vigour and ultimately won. Holden's reason for the black-listing of Toohey's beers was made with the understanding that he was abiding by his directive, to supply quality goods for service personnel in the canteens under his control. Canteen personnel and patrons had complained of the poor quality of the locally brewed beer and Toohey's product, thus giving cause for Holden's decision. While part of Toohey's defence was that the British troops did not complain about their beer, it appeared that Australian service personnel had higher expectations of their 'one per man, per day, perhaps'.

⁴⁸ Canteens – Report of Board of Inquiry, NAA MP742/1/50/1/389A.

⁴⁹ Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, (House of Representatives), 1 October 1942, 1302.

⁵⁰ Nancy Buttfeld, *So Great a Change*, Ure Smith, Sydney (1979), 264.

⁵¹ 'Controller of Army Canteens', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 5 February 1940, 14.

THE RIGHT MEN FOR THE JOB: BRIGADIER-GENERAL TALBOT HOBBS AND INTERNAL POLITICS IN THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

William Westerman

At the outbreak of the war Joseph John Talbot Hobbs was easily the best choice to command the Australian Division's artillery. Born in London in 1864, he moved to Perth, Western Australia, at the age of 23, developing a professional career as an architect while also pursuing his interest in citizen soldiering. He excelled at both activities, particularly the latter, investing a considerable amount of his time and money on his own military education.¹ Hobbs, as one historian noted, 'took soldiering seriously'.² His primary interest was the artillery, and rose steadily through the ranks until he commanded combined arms formations. By 1914 he was a colonel, in command of the 22nd Brigade in Western Australia.

Appointed to command the Australian Division's artillery soon after war was declared, Hobbs remained in this role throughout the Gallipoli campaign and even temporarily commanded the division in October. After the withdrawal from the peninsula, the artillery, like all those that had fought on Gallipoli, needed to recover from the hardships of the campaign. From December 1915 to March 1916 the 1st Australian Division's artillery rested, reorganised and re-equipped in Egypt, preparing to enter the maelstrom of the Western Front. Hobbs's challenge over these months was to manage the transition of the 1st Divisional Artillery (and the AIF's artillery more generally) as it moved from a pre-war conception of artillery power to the ever evolving style of combat seen on the Western Front, which required heavy and intense contributions from the artillery, all while expanding the size and composition of the force under his command.

At the start of 1916 ANZAC consisted of 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions and the New Zealand and Australian Division in addition to unattached formations such as the 8th Australian Infantry Brigade and somewhere between 35,000 and 40,000 Australian and New Zealand reinforcements.³ It was clear that the number of men available far exceeded the existing formations and units available for them to reinforce, and thus the need for additional Australian Divisions (as well as a separate New Zealand Division) was self-evident. Rather than raising the new Australian divisions entirely out of reinforcements, their infantry strength would be drawn primarily from 1st Australian Division and 4th

¹ A.J. Hill, 'Hobbs, Sir Joseph John Talbot (1864-1938)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hobbs-sir-joseph-john-talbot-6690/text11539>, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed 2 May 2016; C. Longmore, 'Celebrities of the A.I.F.: No. 53 Lieut.-Gen. Sir J. Talbot Hobbs K.C.B., K.C.M.G., V.D.', *Reveille*, 1 January 1935, p. 8.

² Robert Stevenson, *To Win the Battle: The 1st Australian Division in the Great War* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 26.

³ C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Volume III The A.I.F. In France: 1916* [hereafter *AOH Vol III*], twelfth edition, (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941), p. 32.

Brigade, which would split their existing battalions and designate half their men to form the core of new battalions for the new divisions. These were to be named the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions (the 3rd Australian Division was currently being raised in Australia). The Australian and New Zealand contingents now consisted of two corps, I and II Anzac Corps.

Although this scheme worked reasonably well for infantry units, it was more difficult for 'specialist' artillery elements of the 1st Australian Division, which lacked sufficient men or guns to maintain its own strength, much less be the repository for two entirely new divisional artillery contingents. This was also the case for equipment, as Hobbs' gunners were unable to remove all of their existing 18-pounders at the end of the Gallipoli campaign, with many being left in situ.⁴

Furthermore, the existing artillery composition of Australian and New Zealand divisions needed to expand in order to match those of the British divisions on the Western Front. The commander of the British troops in Egypt, General Archibald Murray, acting on the wishes of the War Office, decided that the Australian and New Zealand artillery must be brought up to the scale adopted for New Army divisions.⁵ Divisional artillery of three field artillery brigades of three batteries needed to increase to three field artillery brigades of four batteries plus an additional brigade of three howitzer batteries.⁶ This was no small task; on 18 February 1916 the entire Australian compliment of artillery was eighteen batteries, which was increased to thirty-six with the expansion of the two new divisions, but needed to expand to a total of sixty batteries, or twelve per division, to accommodate the War Office's request.⁷

Divisional artillery also required a brigade of 4.5-inch howitzers to compliment the three field brigades of 18-pounders. Unable to equip these units successfully in Egypt, personnel would be raised for these units but they would not receive their guns until they arrived on the Western Front.⁸ Further reorganisation took place in France to bring Australian divisions in line with the remainder of the BEF. Instead of a designated howitzer brigade, in the British Army each divisional artillery brigade consisted of three 18-pounder batteries and a howitzer battery. The AIF attempted to integrate this organisation, but because Australian divisions only contained three howitzer batteries, one of the four brigades consisted of three field artillery batteries only.⁹ Brigade ammunition columns were also abolished and reconstituted as the divisional ammunition column, in line with artillery operating under divisional control, rather than being a brigade asset.¹⁰

⁴ David Coombes, *The Lionheart: A life of Lieutenant-General Sir Talbot Hobbs* (Loftus, NSW: Australian Military History Publications, 2007), p. 95.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 64.

⁶ 1 March 1916, Headquarters, 1st Australian Divisional Artillery war diary, March 1916, AWM4, 13/10/18.

⁷ Bean, *AOH Vol III*, p. 64.

⁸ 6 March 1916, Headquarters, 21st Australian Field Artillery Brigade war diary, March 1916, AWM4, 13/43/1.

⁹ David Horner, *The Gunners: A History of Australian Artillery* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1995), pp. 116-117.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 117.

With these changes taking place, Hobbs found himself embroiled in the politics of the AIF's reorganisation. As the composition of the AIF's artillery underwent significant change much of the burden for managing this fell to Hobbs as the senior and most experienced Australian artillery officer. Of the two Royal Artillery officers appointed as I and II Anzac Corps' CRAs, neither Brigadier-General C. Cunliffe Owen (CRA I Anzac Corps) nor Brigadier-General W.D. Nichol (CRA II Anzac Corps) appeared to exert as much influence of Hobbs did during this time.¹¹ The virtual non-existence of corps formations in the British Army structure before the First World War meant that the role of the corps' artillery officer, the Brigadier-General Royal Artillery (BGRA), was not well thought out. During the initial stages of the war they exerted very little influence over the corps' artillery planning and execution, which was generally handled by the various CRAs.

Thus Hobbs was in a position to influence the composition of the Australian artillery, particularly as it related to personnel. An expanding AIF required an increased number of officers and other ranks. Experienced men could be used as the nucleus for training and preparing new batteries for action in France and Flanders. The shortage was very apparent when the new howitzer brigades were raised, as they were formed from the men of various ammunition columns and elsewhere, and could only commence their training once they had arrived in France.¹²

Throughout mid to late February, Hobbs managed the promotion and appointment of officers within the artillery formations.¹³ While all AIF divisional CRAs in Egypt faced the problem of finding suitable officers and other ranks to fill the dozens of new artillery units being raised, Hobbs was in a unique position. During the Gallipoli campaign the full burden of providing artillery support belonged to 1st Divisional Artillery, as 2nd Divisional Artillery only in Egypt in December 1915.¹⁴ Hobbs, therefore, commanded the AIF's most experienced gunners, a prime commodity to bolster the experience of the newer division's artillery.

He lost some of his most senior subordinates early. On 16 February he met with Birdwood's chief of staff (and architect of the reorganisation), Brigadier-General Brudenell White, to discuss the supply of officers, NCOs and men for the new 4th and 5th Divisional Artillery.¹⁵ The next day he met with his brigade and battery commanders and requested that they submit recommendations of which officers, NCOs and men were to receive promotions and/or transfers.¹⁶ That same day he informed Lieutenant-Colonels Charles Rosenthal and Sydney Christian that they would command the 4th and 5th Divisional Artilleries

¹¹ Bean, *AOH Vol III*, p. 67n.

¹² *ibid*, p. 64; Horner, *Gunners*, p. 113.

¹³ Headquarters, 1st Australian Divisional Artillery war diary, February 1916, AWM4, 13/10/17.

¹⁴ Horner, *Gunners*, p. 112.

¹⁵ Joseph John Talbot Hobbs diary, 16 February 1916, SLWA, Battye Library, MN 1460, ACC 5523A/2; Charles Rosenthal diary, 16 February 1916, SLNSW, MLMSS 2739/Vol. 1; 16 February 1916, Headquarters, 1st Australian Divisional Artillery war diary, February 1916, AWM4, 13/10/17.

¹⁶ Rosenthal diary, 17 February 1916.

respectively.¹⁷ Hobbs had now lost all three of his original field brigade commanders, with his other original field brigade commander, Lieutenant-Colonel George Johnston, promoted to CRA, 2nd Australian Division, in December 1915.¹⁸

By the end of 17 February Rosenthal was informed that Hobbs had recommended Majors King and Hughes (both battery commanders in the 1st Australian Division) and Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver Tunbridge, commanding the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column, to be the brigade commanders in 4th Divisional Artillery.¹⁹ Christian's new brigade commanders, Majors Lucas and Phillips from 1st Divisional Artillery, were likely recommended the same day. On 18 February Hobbs began interviewing candidates for command in the artillery as well as sending through reports on potential new officers and other ranks to White.²⁰ That day he saw 40 candidates for commissions, 35 of whom qualified.²¹ Although he did not have the authority to directly appoint or promote officers (which came from Birdwood and AIF headquarters), his recommendations clearly carried weight and his decisions had influence.

Possibly concerned that he was losing too many of his experienced subordinates, Hobbs was cautious about recommending all of his battery commanders for promotion, even though most probably deserved it. As a result, by 22 February some friction had emerged. Majors Reginald Rabett, 2nd Battery, and Hector Caddy, 5th Battery, were some of Hobbs's original officers and had served with distinction on Gallipoli (Rabett was awarded the CMG and Caddy was recommended for two MiDs, although he received neither). When the promotions and appointments for the new formations became known, Rabett and Caddy discovered that neither was to receive a promotion, while officers junior to them were being appointed to command brigades.²² Both went to see their commander on 22 February to complain. Hobbs told them that he had selected officers for commands in the new divisions, writing in the war diary: 'in the interests of the service were best (in my opinion) qualified for the positions'.²³ Neither accepted this explanation, with Rabett making several remarks for which he needed to apologise the following day.²⁴

Ill feeling towards Hobbs's handling of the artillery reorganisation went further. On 24 February Rosenthal observed: 'Several officers very much upset over letters received from Gen. Hobbs re their qualifications'.²⁵ On 26 February Hobbs saw Lieutenant Charles Gavan-Duffy, 6th Battery, who had appealed against his lack of promotion, and after a

¹⁷ Rosenthal diary, 12 February 1916; 17 February 1916, Headquarters, 1st Australian Field Artillery Brigade war diary, February 1916, AWM4, 13/29/15; Rosenthal diary, 17 February 1916.

¹⁸ George Jameson Johnston service record, NAA, B2455, JOHNSTON G J.

¹⁹ Rosenthal diary, 17 February 1916.

²⁰ Talbot Hobbs diary, 19 February 1916.

²¹ 18 February 1916, Headquarters, 1st Australian Divisional Artillery war diary, February 1916, AWM4, 13/10/17.

²² Rosenthal diary, 17 February 1916.

²³ 22 February 1916, Headquarters, 1st Australian Divisional Artillery war diary, February 1916, AWM4, 13/10/17.

²⁴ 23 February 1916, Headquarters, 1st Australian Divisional Artillery war diary, February 1916, AWM4, 13/10/17.

²⁵ Rosenthal diary, 24 February 1916.

discussion with Hobbs he withdrew his protest.²⁶ The next day Hobbs saw Lieutenant Lloyd, attached to 2nd Divisional Artillery Headquarters, who also protested against his lack of promotion. Unlike Gavan-Duffy, Lloyd refused to withdraw his formal protest.²⁷ On 28 February Hobbs, along with Lieutenant-Colonel Bessell-Browne, OC 2nd Field Artillery Brigade, and the brigade-major, conducted an interview with OC 6th Battery. Hobbs noted: 'I warned him that I had heard that he had criticised the recent recommendations for appointments and promotions - he admitted he had to some extent done so. I warned him of the consequences that might ensue'.²⁸

Hobbs's attitude towards these officers (and other men in 1st Australian Division's artillery) is probably not an indication of malice towards them, but rather the desire to retain them within his own command. Of the nine battery commanders with whom he began the war, one had died, one was invalided from Gallipoli never to return, two were to command two of 1st Division's field artillery brigades, with a further three to command field artillery brigades in other divisions. That left Rabett and Caddy as the only two battery commanders who had not been promoted or made a casualty – a fact neither of them failed to notice. In this context their indignation at their CRA was warranted, but throughout this period Hobbs demonstrated that he was reluctant to give away good men, and being left without any experienced battery commanders was a situation he probably sought to avoid.

On 5 March White and Hobbs called a meeting for the next day with Rosenthal and Christian 'to settle the allotment of Officers & others to 1st 4th & 5th Div Art'.²⁹ Rosenthal hoped that 'all Artillery appointments will be settled finally'.³⁰ At the long conference that followed, Hobbs, who Rosenthal described as 'very loth to part with any officer,' eventually released Rabett and Caddy (and several other officers) to the new divisions.³¹

Despite much of the personnel movement being finalised on 6 March, there continued to be some fall-out between Hobbs and Rosenthal on the issue. On 9 March, Hobbs wrote that Rosenthal was 'giving me a good deal of trouble through various ways he is trying to filch Officers N.C.Os & men from my command for his own'.³² The next day Rosenthal noted: 'Wrote to Gen. Hobbs re getting from 1st DA certain N.C.Os. and men to be given commission in 4th D.A. He refused to let either N.C.Os. or men receive promotion'.³³ The culmination of these grievances came in the form of Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver Tunbridge. As previously noted, Tunbridge, the former OC 1st Division Ammunition Column, was appointed to command 12th Field Artillery Brigade in 4th Division on 21 February 1916.³⁴ Rosenthal was 'not quite happy' with Tunbridge, noting that he had

²⁶ Talbot Hobbs diary, 26 February 1916.

²⁷ Talbot Hobbs diary, 27 February 1916.

²⁸ Talbot Hobbs diary, 28 February 1916.

²⁹ Talbot Hobbs diary, 6 March 1916.

³⁰ Rosenthal diary, 5 March 1916.

³¹ Rosenthal diary, 6 March 1916.

³² Talbot Hobbs diary, 9 March 1916.

³³ Rosenthal diary, 10 March 1916.

³⁴ Oliver Allan Tunbridge service record, NAA, B2455, TUNBRIDGE OLIVER ALLAN; Rosenthal diary, 21 February 1916.

‘never even commanded a battery’ previously.³⁵ Throughout the remainder of February, Rosenthal seems to be handholding Tunbridge as he learnt how to command a battery.³⁶

Until now, the 1st Australian Division had been losing personnel and assets to strengthen the other Australian divisions. Yet on 29 February this trend halted and then reversed – Birdwood had received orders that I Anzac Corps was to prepare to move to the Western Front within a fortnight (a move that was later pushed back a week due to shipping shortages in the Mediterranean).³⁷ This delay was fortunate, because the reorganisation and training was far from complete, and even by mid-March the 1st Australian Division’s artillery was, according to Hobbs’s biographer, ‘still nowhere near its full complement of men or equipment’.³⁸ To assist the division to become combat ready, the 3rd Field Artillery Brigade returned to Hobbs’s command.

This was insufficient, however, and with the 1st Australian Division needing to leave Egypt quickly, on 2 March Brudenell White informed Rosenthal that he would have to give 12th Field Artillery Brigade to the 1st Australian Division for it to become the division’s howitzer brigade.³⁹ Accordingly, it was transferred on 4 March 1916 and designated the 21st Howitzer Brigade (later to be renamed the 21st Field Artillery Brigade after the further reorganisation in France).⁴⁰ Ten days after the 12th Brigade came under Hobbs’s command, Tunbridge was appointed AAG, Cairo.⁴¹ The imprint of Hobbs’s influence on the situation is suspicious, and Rosenthal could not help but be perturbed by the disparity in influence between himself and his former commander, writing: ‘Rather strange that 2 weeks since he should have been quite suitable as a Brigade Commander for my new 12th Brigade, but when it is transferred back to 1st Division he appears to be unsuitable. Inconsistency somewhere’.⁴²

Hobbs needed to manage this sweeping change in the composition of his command, balancing the enlargement of the AIF with maintaining his own strength. On reflection, Hobbs probably erred towards the latter, rather than considering the requirements of the AIF’s other divisions. Although this can be seen as being selfish, his primary requirement was the command of his own artillery, the task for which he would be judged once his men returned to combat. He was answerable to the divisional commander for the effectiveness of his guns, and it is understandable that he wanted to have the best gunners under his command that he could.

³⁵ Rosenthal diary, 23 February 1916.

³⁶ Rosenthal diary, 27 February 1916.

³⁷ Coombes, *Lionheart*, p. 99.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 98.

³⁹ Rosenthal diary, 2 March 1916.

⁴⁰ 4 March 1916, Headquarters, 1st Australian Divisional Artillery war diary, March 1916, AWM4, 13/10/18; 6 March 1916, Headquarters, 21st Australian Field Artillery Brigade war diary, March 1916, AWM4, 13/43/1.

⁴¹ Tunbridge was official transferred on 21 March 1916 to be AAG, Cairo, although both the brigade’s war diary and Rosenthal indicates that the actual transfer occurred well before. Oliver Allan Tunbridge service record, NAA, B2455, TUNBRIDGE OLIVER ALLAN; 14 March 1916, Headquarters, 21st Australian Field Artillery Brigade war diary, March 1916, AWM4, 13/43/1; Rosenthal diary, 13 March 1916.

⁴² Rosenthal diary, 13 March 1916.

Nevertheless, this period in Egypt had by no means entirely weakened Hobbs' artillery. He had certainly lost many of his best officers and NCOs to the new divisions, but he had received reinforcements and had promoted promising junior leaders. Although the effectiveness of the 1st Australian Division's artillery was most likely reduced over this period, Hobbs was arguably better off than his two former subordinates, Rosenthal and Christian, particularly after the field artillery brigades that had been loaned to them returned to Hobbs's command. The 1st Australian Division artillery left Egypt on 22 March and arrived in Marseilles six days later. After all the issues in Egypt, when Hobbs's field artillery brigades left Alexandria for France they had a core of experienced men around whom effective batteries could be further trained and developed. The subsequent experience on the Somme that year showed how important artillery (both the guns and the gunners) was to fighting and winning the war.

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MHSA 2019 NATIONAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

The Western Australian Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia will be hosting the National Biennial Conference of the Society from 7 to 10 June 2019. The conference will be held at The Australian Army Museum of Western Australia's historic Artillery Barracks, Burt Street, Fremantle, see <https://armymuseumwa.com.au/>.

Following registration on Friday 7 June, the conference officially opens on Saturday morning with papers presented throughout the day. The Conference Gala Dinner will be held at the prestigious Fremantle Sailing Club on Saturday night with Tim Britten CV as guest speaker. Tim is the recipient of Australia's highest civilian gallantry award for his bravery in the aftermath of the 2002 Bali bombings. Presentations will continue on Sunday with the opportunity to engage with the Federal Council and Branch representatives while the Army Museum will be open for attendees to explore to much improved facilities.

Over the period 2009-2016 the Army Museum underwent a major \$2.5 million upgrade to all of its galleries, some details of which can be viewed from this link to the museum's website (<https://armymuseumwa.com.au/galleries/>). These galleries are a massive improvement from those seen by those members who attended the last WA Conference in 2008. The museum was smaller then, as we shared Artillery Barracks with WA University Regiment. With their move in 2008, the Army Museum took over the entire Barracks and so was able to substantially enlarge the galleries and the themes.

The 2019 MHSA Biennial Conference therefore is a wonderful opportunity to visit the superbly redeveloped galleries. There is something for everybody!

More information can be found at <https://2019conference.mhsa.org.au>

FOR CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY: AUSTRALIAN WARRANT OFFICERS WHO WERE DECORATED DURING WW1

Clem Davis

There is a saying that an army marches on its stomach, but its effectiveness depends on the quality of its senior Non Commissioned Officers. Is this true for the Australian army in WW1? As a volunteer in the online gallery of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) I come across many interesting stories, but one of a particular Warrant Officer (WO) who had been awarded a Military Cross in World War 1 piqued my interest. Certain questions immediately arose, such as whether WOs could be awarded MCs? If so, how many were actually awarded in WW1? How many became WOs after being decorated? How many WOs became officers who were subsequently decorated? What was the ratio between awards made to Warrant Officers compared to the other ranks?

In order to answer some of these questions I have analysed the data available on the AWM Honours and Awards database and individual personal records from National Archives Australia. To simplify the investigation, these results are confined to those WOs who had been decorated as WOs (either as a permanent appointment, acting or temporary when awards were made). This analysis does not include those men who were decorated before they became a WO and who were not then awarded any more decorations, or those who served as a WO without receiving a decoration who may have been subsequently decorated after being commissioned. It also does not include those who may have been recommended for a decoration but not awarded, apart from those recommended for an MC. The positions of WO used in this study include Staff Sergeant Major (SSM), Company Sergeant Major (CSM), Squadron Sergeant Major (SQSM), Battery Sergeant Major (BSM), Chief Petty Officer (CP), Chief Engine Room Artificer (CERA) and AFC Warrant Officers; Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (RQMS -WO2); and Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM - WO1). Awards under investigation include the Military Cross (MC), Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and Bar, Distinguished Service Medal (DSM), Military Medal (MM) and Bar, Medal of the Order of the British Empire (BEM), Meritorious Service Medal (MSM), and Mentioned in Despatches (MID).

For this analysis Warrant Officers were identified by looking at each individual award. In the case of MCs this was relatively easy, as the recipient would have had a service number. However, commissioned officers in WW1 were not allocated numbers. For men who were promoted from the ranks their numbers were subsequently dropped. The rest was just hack work and it may be that one or two names have slipped through the net. There were also cases where the recommendation was made prior to being a WO, but actually awarded after promotion (not included) and on one occasion a 2nd Lieutenant was decorated whilst serving as acting CSM (included). While this analysis does not include foreign awards it should be noted that 61 foreign awards were awarded to WOs, with 27 of these being awarded to WOs who were decorated. Another decorated WO was also awarded a foreign award as a sergeant.

An Analysis of British Awards

The questions then arise as to how these numbers of decorations awarded compare to the overall numbers of WOs, and whether WOs had a higher rate of awards than the ordinary soldier. In order to determine this I have used the following assessment as set out in Table 1 to determine the nominal numbers of those who served as WOs in the AMF for WW1

Table 1: Nominal breakdown of Officers and Warrant Officers in the AIF during WW1

Total number of men who served overseas in WW1	332,000
Total number of officers (assuming ratio 1/30)	12,000
Total number of OR/NCO/WO	320,000
Number of CSM & equivalent (ratio 1/100)	3,200
Number RQMS (1/1000)	320
Number RSM (1/1000)	20
Miscellaneous (including Naval CPO)	160
Total WO	4000
Total number OR/NCO below WO	316,000

Table 2 (below) summarizes all those men who have been decorated as a WO. From this table it can be seen that just over 20% of decorated WOs received multiple decorations, just over 10% received awards before becoming a WO whilst 10% were decorated more than once as a WO. Overall, it appears that around 20% of all WOs were decorated as a WO (754/4000). Given that there would have been many more men decorated before becoming a WO without a subsequent award as a WO, it can be argued that often these men were promoted because of their previous reputations and a decoration was an indication of their abilities as a soldier and as a leader. The fact that they had already received one decoration may also have led to further decorations.

Table 2: Summary of those men who were decorated as a Warrant Officer

Total number of WOs decorated as WOs	754
Total number of awards to WOs as WOs	839
Total number of awards to men decorated as a WO	955
Total number of awards prior to being decorated as WO	80
Total number of awards subsequent to being promoted	36
Number of men with multiple awards who served as WO	156
Number of WOs with multiple awards as WO	76

According to the AWM Honours and Awards database (decorations awarded to the AMF for WW1), awards issued to men and women in the AMF for WW1 were as follows:

Table 3: Total awards issued to men and women in the AIF for WWI

Total awards	24,484
Foreign Awards	988
Total British Awards	23,496
Total awarded to OR/NCO	16,523

A breakdown of the decorations awarded to ORs and NCOs as determined from this database is listed in Table 4 below. This table indicates that though WOs made up around 1.2% of all OR/NCO they were awarded 5% of all awards to OR/NCOs (that is, WOs were awarded decorations at around four times the rate of ORs and other NCOs). Such decorated men would also have carried considerable weight with the soldiers themselves and provided the WOs with extra control in that their orders would be more likely to be followed, especially in the chaotic situations of fighting in the front line. This may have been of extreme importance in the AIF given that it was not only a fully volunteer force, but that the average age of the men on enlistment was in the mid 20's and who had probably already developed certain attitudes and behavioural patterns.

Table 4: List of the British decorations awarded to ORs and NCOs in the AMF in WWI

Awards issued to OR/NCO	No. issued	Awards to WO
VC	33	
MC to WO	36	36
Albert Medal	3	
DCM	1769	174
DCM Bar	28	8
DSM	17	4
AFM	2	
AFM Bar	2	
DFM	1	
BEM	1	1
MM	9939	55
MM Bar	1163	3
Second Bar MM	15	
Third Bar MM	1	
MID	2290	265
MSM (Gallantry)	14	
MSM	1216	293
MSM Bar	1	
Total	16,523	839

Detailed Analysis

WOs decorated before/after becoming WO

There were 80 decorations awarded to WOs before a senior NCO, and 36 decorations awarded to those men after being commissioned as an officer. The breakdown of these decorations is listed in Tables 5 and 6 below.

Table 5: List of decorations awarded to decorated WOs before becoming a WO

Awards pre-WO	Number
DCM	9
MM	31
MM bar	4
MID	28
MSM	8
Total	80

Table 6: List of decorations awarded to decorated WOs after becoming an officer

Awards Post WO	Number
VC	1
DSO	2
DSO Bar	2
MC	11
MC Bar	6
MID	11
MBE	3
Total	36

WOs awarded multiple decorations

From Tables 1 and 5 it can be seen that there were a considerable number of men decorated as a WO who received other decorations either before becoming a WO, as a WO, or after becoming an officer. The summary of the breakdown of these awards can be seen in Tables 7 and 8. Table 7 lists those WOs awarded decorations as WOs while Table 8 provides a summary of the total number of awards issued to all these men.

Table 7: Analysis of awards to decorated WOs in the AIF in WW1

Summary	Number	Awards
WOs with 3 as WO	9	27
WOs with 2 as WO	67	134
WOs with 1 as WO	678	678
Total	754	839

Table 8: Summary of all awards to those men decorated as WOs in the AIF in WW1

Total No. awards (all awards)	No. Men	Total Awards
9	1	9
5	2	10
4	4	16
3	27	81
2	119	238
1	601	601
Total	754	955

WOs awarded MC

Whilst WOs could be awarded MCs they were in fact quite rare. I have found that there were 66 recommendations for an MC to WOs with only 36 awarded. These awards appear to be given on an ad hoc basis, as some recommendations were downgraded whilst others were upgraded, as can be seen from Table 9. Only on ten occasions were no awards made.

Table 9: Analysis of WOs who were recommended for, or awarded, an MC

	Number	Total
Recommended and awarded	33	
DCM rec, MC awarded	2	
MM rec, MC awarded	1	36
Rec MC Awarded DCM2	13	
Rec MC Awarded MSM	3	
Rec MC Awarded Bar to DCM	1	
Rec MC Awarded MID*	2	
Rec MC Awarded Foreign	1	20
S/Total Awards		56
Rec MC, Not awarded		10

* One WO was recommended for an MC on two separate occasions. One was downgraded to a DCM and the other to MID.

A breakdown of those men who were awarded an MC either as a WO (36) or who subsequently were awarded an MC as an officer (11) is listed in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Analysis of those men who were decorated as WO who were awarded an MC either prior to being a WO, as a WO, or subsequent to being a WO

Award	As WO		As Officer		Total
MC (WO)	36			11	47
DCM (WO)	5		MID	9	
MM (WO)	1		MBE	1	
MID (WO)	11		DSO	1	
MM (OR)	2		DSO bar	2	
MID (OR)	5		MC Bar	6	
			VC	1	
Total (other awards)	24			20	44
					91

Table 11: Total number decorations issued to decorated WOs and who had been decorated with an MC either as a WO or as a commissioned officer

Total Awards	No. men	No. Awards
9	1	9
5	1	5
4	3	12
3	7	21
2	9	18
1	26	26
	47	91

Summary

It could be said that the Warrant Officer is the backbone of the army. The evidence from this analysis is that for the Australian forces in WW1 this was in fact the case. Overall, around 20% of all WOs were recognized for their services in some way, a figure that is around four times the rate of other OR/NCOs. While this analysis applies to those men who were decorated as a WO, it does not include those who may have been decorated prior to being promoted to WO and then had no more awards.

Of particular interest is the group of 47 men who were awarded an MC (or bar) either as a WO (36) or on becoming a commissioned officer (11) after being decorated as a WO, as just under half of these men were decorated more than once. Only ten WOs recommended for an MC were not decorated in some way.

The fact that these men were decorated may have also had a considerable impact on the rest of the army in both discipline and willingness of the men to obey orders given by these men, especially under fire. It could also be considered that the promotion of these men to the WO level was to a great extent due to their proven ability to handle men or manage situations in a crisis as indicated by their previous decorations.

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A TASMANIAN ARTILLERY POWDER HORN

John Presser

When the British 40th Regiment departed Tasmania it ended an association with the colony of over forty years. According to the Hobart *Mercury*, one of the most famous British regiments was the 40th, known as the ‘Excellers’, a play on the Roman numerals XL. The regiment saw service in North and South America and action under Wellington during the Peninsula campaign and later at Waterloo. The regiment, aboard convict ships, arrived in Australia in 1824 with a detachment being sent to Van Diemen’s Land. Beside their military duties, the regiment was used to capture bushrangers with many men settling in the colony. After four years the 40th transferred to India with a subsequent return to Victoria in 1852, serving during the Eureka rebellion and the New Zealand Wars.



Photograph 1: Powder Horn. Source: Author.

While the officers and men sailed, one relic remained behind: an artillery powder horn. This powder horn was described in a Hobart *Mercury* advertisement in 1914 as belonging to the 40th Regiment, being ‘first used in the Battle of Monte Video (1907) and carried through the Peninsular and Napoleonic Campaigns’. At the time the 40th Regiment of Foot in Hobart, the method of firing muzzle loading cannons with linstock slowmatch applied to the vent was changed to the use of friction tubes. A powder horn was sometimes used as part of the firing equipment with linstock slowmatch firing, the other method being the use of a “quill” in the vent, that is the base of a bird feather stem filled with mealed gunpowder.

A note has been placed inside the powder horn that states some of its provenance. In 1927 the powder horn was amongst old equipment destined for the scrap heap, but an Amy major, stationed at Port Arthur, stored them until purchased by a Sydney collector in 1972.

¹ ‘The Old 40th Interesting Relic’, *Mercury* (Hobart), 4 July 1931, 6.

² ‘Window of War Souvenirs at Brownells’, *Mercury* (Hobart), 5 October 1914, 2.

**‘DID ANYONE SEE A GUN?’
THE VEXED QUESTION OF OTTOMAN MACHINE GUNS AT
THE GALLIPOLI LANDING, Z BEACH, 4.30 A.M., 25 APRIL 1915**

James Hurst

‘Scientific results are always provisional, susceptible to be overturned by some future experiment or observation. Scientists rarely proclaim an absolute truth or absolute certainty. Uncertainty is inevitable at the fringes of knowledge.’

Joel Auchenbach, ‘The Age of Disbelief’,
National Geographic, March 2015, 41.

Introduction

One of the many contradictions in evidence to emerge while I was researching and writing my doctoral thesis on the Gallipoli Landing, was whether or not Ottoman machine guns opposed the initial landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) before dawn on 25 April 1915. In essence, the problem is that the vast majority of books on the campaign describe the covering force landing under enemy machine gun fire, yet recently some writers have claimed that no machine guns were present, as there is no evidence in Turkish sources that they were there. As recently as 2018 Australian historians were writing that the Ottoman riflemen opposed the landing ‘without machine gun support’,¹ ‘contrary to most histories ... they had no machine guns with them’,² and ‘some Australians mistakenly believed there were Turkish machine guns facing them as they landed’.³ Arguments and counter-arguments, by professionals and amateurs, here and overseas, have been exchanged for a number of years.⁴ I have avoided this mountain of contradictory internet-based information to try instead to find evidence or argument to provide common ground to connect these disparate points of view.

It is staggering that, after 100 years and more than a thousand books, articles, papers, conferences, films, documentaries and other television programs on the campaign, there is dispute over the answer to such a basic question about the best-known part of what is arguably Australia’s most famous battle. This paper will attempt to cut through this fog and confusion and attempt to clarify the matter, if possible. I will continue with a methodology I developed for my thesis, of using aggregation of detail to create a clearer, evidence-based foundation, from which to determine to what extent assumptions and

¹ R Stevenson, ‘Crisis in Command: Senior Leadership in the 1st Australian Division at the Gallipoli Landings’, in R Crawly and M LoCicero (eds.), *Gallipoli: New Perspectives on the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, 1915-1916*, Helion and Company, Warwick (2018), 331.

² C Roberts, ‘Brigade Command: The ANZAC Experience’, in *Gallipoli: New Perspectives*, 353.

³ Roberts, ‘Brigade Command’, footnote, 353.

⁴ <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=40505&page=38>. Accessed 8 February 2016.

misinterpretations of evidence might have influenced our perceptions of that dramatic morning. I will look primarily at the work of the main author of argument to the negative, Chris Roberts; an article arguing the positive, by Murray Ewen; and evidence I have uncovered over the years. The most thorough source of information about the Ottoman history of the day is the recently published *The Ottoman Defence Against the ANZAC Landing, 25 April 1915* by Dr Mesut Uyar.⁵ Neither this work, Roberts's *The Landing at Anzac: 1915*,⁶ nor Harvey Broadbent's *Gallipoli: The Turkish Defence*,⁷ were available when I undertook my doctoral study, and this paper provides the opportunity to include them in discussion.

There were no machine guns at the Landing

Chris Roberts, the main proponent of the 'no machine guns' argument, has presented his case in several works.⁸ I had earlier examined Roberts's impressive work on the Landing and had independently tackled many of the issues he published subsequently, though not the issue of the presence of Ottoman machine guns on 25 April. It is necessary therefore to begin by examining some of the existing case for the negative and as Roberts has presented the most thorough and convincing argument, to focus initially on his work.

'With the exception of Peter Hart's *Gallipoli* and Ed Erickson's *Gallipoli: The Ottoman Campaign*', writes Roberts, 'both the English language books and popular opinion describe the Australians coming ashore under machine-gun fire'.⁹ Certainly, the majority of the Australian Gallipoli books re-hash the existing story and therefore perpetuate the image of a landing under machine gun fire. The researchers who rely on primary sources also mention machine gun fire at the Landing, but for a different reason: those who were there believed they were being fired at by enemy machine guns.

Lieutenant-Colonel Şefik Bey, commander of the Ottoman 27th Regiment, the force who opposed the initial ANZAC landing, makes no mention of machine guns in his sector of the coast, and as it is barely conceivable that he would not have mentioned such important weapons had they been present, the implication is that they were not. The Ottoman strategy was to keep the coast lightly defended, with the main forces inland, ready to counter-attack when the landing locations became known. Şefik's regiment possessed a machine gun company, of four Maxim machine guns, which operated under his command and was camped with him near Maidos, on the Dardanelles side of the peninsula. Thus when the

⁵ Mesut Uyar, *The Ottoman Defence Against the ANZAC Landing, 25 April 1915*, Big Sky Publishing, Sydney (2015).

⁶ Christopher AM Roberts, *The Landing at Anzac: 1915*, Big Sky Publishing, Sydney (2013).

⁷ Harvey Broadbent, *Gallipoli, The Turkish Defence*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne (2015).

⁸ Primarily Christopher AM Roberts, 'Turkish Machine-guns at the Landing', *Wartime* 50 (2010) 14-19; and Roberts, *The Landing at Anzac*.

⁹ Roberts, *Landing*, 169.

¹⁰ Roberts, *Landing*, 11.

¹¹ Roberts, *Landing*, 169.

¹² Roberts, *Landing*, 169. In his 2nd Edition, Roberts quotes more sources, but his argument remains much the same; Roberts, *Landing at Anzac*, (2 Ed.), 204-209.

initial landing was made at Z Beach, it was opposed by some of Şefik's troops, but not his machine guns. When Şefik launched his counter attack, his machine gun company went with him. They would fight at Z Beach, but later, not against the initial landings.

Roberts backs Şefik's account by describing German doctrine, adopted by the Turks, and adding that due 'to the Maxim's tendency to jam, deployment of single guns was actively discouraged and in some cases forbidden'.¹⁰ He takes this point further by stating that 'The Turks ... assert that there were no machine-guns on the beaches'.¹¹ He continues that the 'clearest example' of the contradictions between Australian sources 'refers to the landing on North Beach ... Lance Corporal Bert Dixon ... and Bugler Fred Ashton ... mention landing under rifle fire'.¹² This is contrasted with Albert Facey's autobiography, *A Fortunate Life*, which stated that 'the Turks had machine-guns sweeping the strip of beach where we landed'. Roberts concludes that as these three men 'were in D Company of the 11th Battalion', they 'would have landed ... at the same place at around the same time — so why such a significant discrepancy?' He concludes that Facey 'was never at the Landing',¹⁴ and that as his service record states that he 'did not arrive at Gallipoli until 7 May', Facey's account was 'clearly fabricated'.¹⁵

In 2010 I investigated this issue and Facey's Gallipoli narrative in general.¹⁶ I agree that Facey's account of the Landing is unreliable, but my jury is still out as to whether he was present or not. Facey's service record once contained a hand-written letter, written in 1978 by Bert himself, to Central Army Records Office, referring to the issue of, as I recall, his Gallipoli medallion: 'As far as I can remember we joined the battalion the day before the landing'.¹⁷ Curiously, this letter does not at the time of writing appear in the scanned digital version of Facey's record.¹⁸ Facey did not need to have been at the Landing to be eligible for the medallion, and clearly believed what he had written in his book, namely that he was present at the Landing. Furthermore, I have evidence of a number of other 2nd and 3rd Reinforcements joining the 11th Battalion before the battle,¹⁹ but whose service records state that they did not join their unit until later, one of them on the same day as Facey.²⁰ The explanation is more likely to lie in errors in service records than 'fabrication'.

¹³ Roberts, *Landing*, 169.

¹⁴ Roberts, *Landing*, (2 Ed.), 205.

¹⁵ Roberts, *Landing*, (1 Ed.), 169; (2 Ed.), 205.

¹⁶ James P Hurst, 'The Mists of Time and the Fog of War: A Fortunate Life and A.B. Facey's Gallipoli Experience', *Melbourne Historical Journal*, 38 (2010): 77-92.

¹⁷ War service records, NAA B2455.

¹⁸ War service records, NAA B2455, <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3546196>, Accessed 14 October 2015.

¹⁹ Hurst, 'Fog of War,' 81.

²⁰ Hurst, 'Fog of War,' 81-83.

²¹ James P Hurst, 'Dissecting a Legend: Reconstructing the Landing at Anzac, Gallipoli, 25 April 1915, using the experience of the 11th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force', PhD thesis, ANU, Canberra (2013).

²² Colonel Sir De Lacey Evans, letter, (nd), in *Waterloo Letters*, Major-General HT Siborne (ed.), Cassell and Company, London (1891), 64.

²³ Letters from the Front', *The Albany Advertiser*, 9 June 1915, 3.

With regard to discrepancies between the sources cited: unfortunately, the history of this day is full of such discrepancies. For many reasons two men landing alongside each other would see, recall and record things differently.²¹ Nor is this new. When Captain William Siborne was trying to reconstruct the battle of Waterloo, fought 100 years before the Gallipoli Campaign, he received from one of the battle's participants, Colonel Sir De Lacy Evans, the sympathetic comment that 'You speak of the difficulties you have in reconciling different accounts of eyewitnesses. This is only what invariably occurs. There is scarcely an instance ... of two persons, even though only fifty yards distant from each other, who give of such events a concurring account'.²² Moreover, it is not correct that all of D Company of the 11th Battalion landed 'at the same place at around the same time'. Dixon's account, when quoted more fully, actually describes wading ashore, 'under very heavy artillery and rifle fire ... The Turks have an enormous lot of martino (sic) guns'.²³ Roberts refutes that the first troops landed under heavy artillery fire, and quotes one part of Dixon's account, but not the references to artillery fire. The point is that most Australian accounts of the Landing are like those of Dixon, Ashton and Facey – they are a mish-mash of information. This does not mean such accounts should be arbitrarily dismissed, but to surrender their evidence they have to be examined in context. The reference to 'martino guns', for example, may or may not refer to the initial landing, nor is it clear whether 'machine guns', or Peabody Martini rifles, is meant, presumably the former. Research shows that Dixon was in fact wounded in the afternoon of the first day, not on 29 April as stated,²⁴ so we can at least presume that his account describes 25 April.

The next account quoted, by 'Sergeant John Swain ... 12th Battalion', also mentions Turkish machine gun fire. I agree with Roberts's comment that 'Exaggeration ... is not uncommon among soldiers, some of whom are apt not to allow the truth to interfere with a good story',²⁵ though there are many reasons for distortion and exaggeration. Such discrepancies will bring the reliability of the evidence into question, but do not necessarily invalidate it all. More to the point, if Swain's and Facey's accounts are considered unreliable or fabricated, why use them?

A search for references to enemy machine guns in Volume I of C. E. W. Bean's *Official History of Australia in the War, The Story of ANZAC*,²⁶ does, as Roberts points out, give the impression that the guns are breeding in the shadows. The reason is that Bean simply did not know the truth, and was reporting what he had heard. Inflated 'kill' figures might be expected after an action, but exaggeration does not mean there were no kills. Similarly with the report of Major A. Jackson, who wrote that there 'appeared to be two machine-guns' firing on him.²⁷ Roberts wrote that Jackson's 'use of the word "appeared" indicates that this was speculation rather than a definite sighting'.²⁸ Would not good machine

²⁴ Roberts, *Landing*, 169.

²⁵ Roberts, *Landing*, 169.

²⁶ CEW Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War, The Story of ANZAC, vol. 1* (11 ed.), Angus and Robertson, Sydney, (1941), 278.

²⁷ Roberts, *Landing*, 170; quoting 7th Battalion War Diary April 1915.

²⁸ Roberts, *Landing*, 170-171.

gunners be expected to position their guns so as to not be obviously visible? Jackson was there, and believed his party were being fired on by ‘machine-guns and rifles’; the fact that he may not have been able to see the gun or guns does not mean there were none.

Roberts states that, ‘Had two machine-guns also been present’ at Fisherman’s Hut, opposing Jackson’s party ‘500 to 600 rounds a minute ... would have torn into the boats, in this maelstrom it is unlikely that any of Jackson’s men would have remained unhurt’.²⁹ This conclusion seems reasonable: the light was rapidly improving and the men in the boats were concentrated and slow moving targets. But assumption is not fact. On 28 June 1915, the 11th Battalion sent men to lie out on a bald spur in daylight, exposed to rifle and machine gun fire and aimed shrapnel fire. The men endured this for most of the afternoon, suffering 21 killed and many wounded; but the fact is many came through unscathed, virtually defying logic. Moreover, Jackson’s party did indeed suffer heavily. Roberts continues that no unit recorded ‘capturing a machine-gun on 25 April ... they were prized captures and were always recorded’.³⁰ The extreme brevity of unit war diaries and record-keeping at the time questions this assertion. The 11th Battalion, its diary describes, ‘Landed under heavy musketry and machine gun fire and stormed the cliffs ... occupied forward ridge ... Capt WR Annear was killed ... During Sunday and Monday trenches were dug under heavy fire’. The entry is only about 120 words in length, reflecting the brevity of record keeping at the time. Annear was not the only 11th Battalion officer killed at the Landing, but the other killed and wounded were not mentioned – would a trophy be more worthy of mention than the deaths of officers? Moreover, where is the evidence that at this early stage of the war, machine guns were prized trophies and ‘always recorded’? In the confusion and desperate fighting on the morning of 25 April, would anyone have stopped to claim or record a prize, especially as the troops had been ordered not to stop?³² Might not a captured machine gun have been put to good use, rather than be kept as a trophy? The 3rd Brigade’s diary does not record the capture of a machine gun, but it does mention ‘2 boatloads 11th caught by machine gun on beach’. The 1st Division war diary also records the covering force landing under ‘machine gun’, ‘musketry’ and ‘shrapnel fire’.³³

Roberts asserts that Plugge’s Plateau was an unsuitable position for machine guns. Most accounts place the gun on Ari Burnu, rather than Plugge’s. The post on Ari Burnu enfilades the beaches to both north and south. The argument continues that ‘it would have been extremely unlikely that the Turks could have manhandled the 69-kilogram monster up the steep slope of Plugge’s Plateau’.³⁴ I am not aware of anyone suggesting that they did, but the Australian and New Zealanders’ machine gunners carried their guns and equipment up higher features than Plugge’s.

²⁹ Roberts, *Landing*, 171.

³⁰ Roberts, *Landing*, 170.

³¹ 11th Battalion War Diary entry 25-27 April 1915, AWM 4/23/28.

³² Appendix No 3 of 19/4/15, Headquarters, 1st Australian Division War Diary entry, 18 April 1915, AWM 4/1/4/23/2; N.M. Loutit, ‘The Tragedy of Anzac’, *Reveille*, 1 April 1934, 8.

³³ General Officer commanding, ‘Report on Operations of First Australian Division’, Headquarters, 1st Division War Diary, 7 May 1915, AWM 4/1/42.

³⁴ Roberts, *Landing*, 170.

In his *Wartime* article, ‘Machine-guns at the Landing’, Roberts questions why the Turks would have placed scarce machine guns at ‘ANZAC Cove’, as they ‘did not expect the British to land’ there.³⁵ In fact, Uyar writes that Şefik had ‘identified the Ari Burnu (Anzac) region as critical terrain’, ‘replete with valuable firing positions’. Şefik had ‘ordered the preparation of machine gun positions’ at Anzac; ‘with good potential for enfilading and crossfire ... several machine gun positions had been prepared on Ari Burnu Knoll, 400 Plateau, Agildere (near the Fisherman’s Hut) and Kabatepe’.³⁶ By coincidence, these seem to be the points that the Australians, unfamiliar with the terrain, recorded as being the sources of automatic enemy fire.



Photograph 1: Looking north from the position of the original Ottoman post on Ari Burnu, visible right foreground, showing how it enfiladed North beach. If there had been a gun at Fisherman’s Hut, it would have been able to fire along North and Ocean Beaches from the opposite direction, that is, towards Ari Burnu. Source: Author.



Photograph 2: Ari Burnu post, looking south, enfilading Anzac Cove. A gun on this knoll could have had a field of fire of at least 180 degrees. Source: Author.

‘A possible explanation for the contradictions between the Turkish and Australian accounts’, is that the troops’ inexperience resulted in ‘a tendency to exaggerate the number of enemy and the amount and type of enemy fire’.³⁷ In other words, Australians who described landing under machine gun fire, were probably mistaken, as they were confused by heavy rifle fire. Yet at the Landing, many men believed they heard or saw machine gun fire. One man described a rifle shot followed by ‘a regular crackle of fire and the nasty tat – tat – tat of a machine gun which providentially ceased after firing a dozen rounds’,³⁸ and another the ‘crack, crack’ of rifles followed by the ‘machine guns tack tack tack’.³⁹ The men thought they were hearing the difference between rifle and machine gun fire.

³⁵ Roberts, ‘Machine-guns at the Landing’, 16.

³⁶ Uyar, *Ottoman Defence*, 66-67.

³⁷ Roberts, ‘Machine-guns at the Landing’, 17.

³⁸ ‘Anzac’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1931, 7.

³⁹ 211 J.J. O’Reilly, A Company, 11th Battalion, <http://nla.au/nla.news-article81003142> (nd), courtesy M. Ewen.

I will not continue to examine every point made by the ‘no machine gun’ argument, but will move onto a more significant issue. Roberts continues that, ‘Bean’s history speaks of “hearing” machine-guns ... Neither Bean nor any first-hand account mentions actually seeing a machine-gun or its accessories on 25 April.’ This is the question at the heart of my approach to this problem – what first-hand evidence do we have that somebody actually saw a gun? In other words, with Bean’s reporting of stories from all over the battlefield, errors in primary sources, repetition in many secondary sources, assumptions and conjecture, did anyone actually see a gun?

Photograph 3: Looking down on the point and out to sea. Source: Author.



Eyewitness accounts

Clive de Mole, 11th Battalion, described the Turks opening ‘fire on us from a steep little hill’, referring to Ari Burnu, ‘in the centre of which was a machine gun’. De Mole’s collection contains a photograph taken from Plugge’s Plateau, looking down on Ari Burnu,⁴¹ which I believe to be the earliest to have yet surfaced of the Anzac Landing.⁴² In a letter, Clive describes taking this photograph, confirming its time and place.⁴³ In another letter he continues that, from this point, ‘we could look down on and see the place where they had their machine gun which did the most damage to us whilst in the boats and on the beach’.⁴⁴ Although de Mole does not say he could see the gun, it is difficult to believe he was imagining a machine gun being present. Hedley Howe, who was in de Mole’s platoon, also recorded that ‘Half a dozen’ men had been caught by ‘a machine gun burst right under the bow of the cutter’.⁴⁵

Lieutenant Arthur Selby, of de Mole’s company and quoted by Roberts, told Bean ‘that he did not see any machine-guns and did not think that there were any’.⁴⁶ Selby did not climb Ari Burnu and arrived at the crest of Plugge’s Plateau some time after Ari Burnu had been overrun. By contrast, George Medcalf was with Selby on the beach, and described the men taking ‘cover from the machine gun fire that was enfilading them’ and described being enfiladed by a machine gun as Selby led them forward.⁴⁷ Again, we have eyewitnesses at the same time and place perceiving things differently. Tom Louch,

⁴⁰ Roberts, ‘Machine-guns at the Landing’, 16.

⁴¹ ‘Reinforcements Arriving at Gallipoli on 1915-04-25’, AWM J03307.

⁴² James P. Hurst, ‘Gallipoli, The First Photo?’, *Wartime*, 58 (2012): 32-35.

⁴³ Clive M de Mole, letter to mother, Lemnos, 21 May 1915, de Mole family collection.

⁴⁴ De Mole, letter, 21 May 1915, de Mole family collection.

⁴⁵ Letter from HV Howe to CFH Churchill, 30 November 1962, AWM 3DRL/6673/477.

⁴⁶ Roberts, Landing, 170; AR Selby interview, AWM 38/3DRL/8042/7.

⁴⁷ Ferdinand G Medcalf, unpublished manuscript, MN 1265, JS Battye Library, 63.

11th Battalion, recalled watching helplessly from his boat as ‘two Turks in the machine gun nest’ on Ari Burnu ‘got their gun into action. They fired one or two short bursts, but fortunately not at us, and then the picket boat came in and silenced them. The two men were knocked over backwards, taking their gun with them’.⁴⁸

The account of a pinnace opening fire on a machine gun positioned on Ari Burnu is supported by many. Lieutenant Aubrey Darnell wrote that ‘a gun in the bows of our [pinnace] let drive and silenced a machine gun first shot’.⁴⁹ Lance Sergeant A.F. Marshall⁵⁰ watched the ‘machine gun on the hill’ pumping ‘lead into the boats on our right’ until ‘the launch next to ours ... silenced’ it – ‘it would have done you good to hear the Australian yell’.⁵¹ The latter comment suggests many witnessed the event, as is confirmed by letters and other documents. Roberts contends that the machine gun fire that the men heard was from this British naval gun rather than an Ottoman one; in some cases it may have been, though this pinnace would have been visible to most if not all troops in the first wave.



Photograph 4 & 5: De Mole's photograph (left, AWM J03307) taken from the crest of Plugge's Plateau soon after landing on 25 April 1915, looking down on Ari Burnu Knoll, apparently known at the time by some troops as 'Maxim Knoll' or 'Machine Gun Knoll'. De Mole probably took the photograph from a trench near the crest of the plateau, just forward of the white memorial visible in the photograph on the right. Source: Author.

Captain Dixon Header believed ‘At least two maxim guns’ fired on the Landing.⁵² Of significance is that Header commanded the 11th Battalion's Machine Gun Section and might be expected to have been paying special attention to the enemy's use of machine guns. Unfortunately, Header had only joined the section about two weeks earlier, and how familiar he became with the sound of Maxim guns in the days before the Landing is not known. On the other hand, he had twelve years' previous military service in Australia and Britain, and his corporal, Fred Murphy, who was an experienced machine gunner,

⁴⁸ Nigel Steel and Peter Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*, Papermac, London (1995), 61; Darnell also noted “There was” a machine gun “right in front of us”, Letter from Aubrey Darnell to Henley Darnell, 12 June 1915, AWM PR82/175.

⁴⁹ Letter from Aubrey R Darnell to FA Darnell, 27 May 1915, AWM 1DRL/233; Letter Aubrey R Darnell to Henley Darnell, 12 June 1915, AWM PR82/175.

⁵⁰ 567 Lance Sergeant Alexander Fraser Marshall, C Company, 36 at embarkation, civil servant, of Kalgoorile, born Chiltern, Victoria.

⁵¹ Alexander F Marshall, letter, 9 and 15 May 1915, *Sunday Times* (Perth), 25 July 1915.

⁵² Dixon Header, unpublished manuscript, AWM 3DRL/3959.

described the ‘furious rifle and machine gun fire’ opening from ‘a range of about 100 yards’.⁵³

Staff Sergeant Alexander Steele had been senior non-commissioned officer of the 9th Battalion’s Machine Gun Section since its formation. Many members of the AIF’s 1914 machine gun sections had served with machine guns in the pre-war citizen’s forces – Steele, surely, must also have known the sound of a Maxim. While rowing ashore, ‘the rattle of’ rifle fire merged ‘into a roar and directly after this machine guns chip in ... one of the Naval pinnaces sneaks in and pastes their machine guns’, and they heard ‘no more from Mr Turk’s deadly machine guns’.⁵⁴

The pinnacle crews were under orders not to open fire unless it was ‘imperative to effect a landing’.⁵⁵ What then caused the pinnacle to open fire – a Turkish outpost of a few riflemen? There were many more riflemen on Plugges, but it seems to be Ari Burnu that was fired at, with all accounts saying it was a machine gun that provoked the fire. Captain E.T. Brennan referred to ‘Maxim Knoll’ and ‘Machine Gun knoll’, both apparently referring to Ari Burnu. Surely the troops had some reason to adopt these names?

Of note is the number of accounts similar to Steele’s – a single shot, rapidly building rifle fire, then a machine gun or guns joining in, and, by most accounts, a gun that appeared to be on Ari Burnu was silenced relatively quickly. If the Australians could not distinguish between rifle and machine gun fire, how could so many have recorded the same thing? Or were they all deceived by the same phenomenon – the merging of heavy rifle fire into a crescendo that sounded like machine gun fire, even though some referred to the ‘rat-tat-tat’, or other descriptions, of machine gun fire? Perhaps it is possible that they all fell prey to the same misconception, but how likely is it?

R.C. Cockburn, 11th Battalion, wrote that, ‘on top of the hill ... found two machine guns that had been left behind’.⁵⁶ Whether we should ascribe any credence to an account that mentions two guns, is another question, but such accounts need to be considered as part of the evidence. Sergeant A.W. Ayling, of Cockburn’s company, also wrote that ‘We captured 2 machine guns’.⁵⁷ Private Percival Young, 9th Battalion, endorses this when he described the taking of an enemy machine gun, probably on Ari Bunu ‘a machine gun on the cliff above us had been pouring a hail of bullets into the landing parties ... We rushed the gun and bayoneted ... the gun crew. Smashing the gun so that it could not again be used, we dashed forward ...’⁵⁸

⁵³ ‘Heroes of the Dardenelles’, *Sunday Times* (Perth) 6 June 1915, 28.

⁵⁴ Letter from Alexander Steele to mother, in CM Wrench, *Campaigning with the Fighting 9th: In and out of the line with the 9BN A.I.F., 1914-1919*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane (1985), 64-65.

⁵⁵ Appendix A, Special instructions, Operation Order No 1, 21 April 1915, 3rd Brigade War Diary, AWM4/23/3/1/1.

⁵⁶ Cockburn, diary, 28 April 1915, author’s collection.

⁵⁷ ‘Captain Ayling Receives the DCM’, *Sunday Times*, (Perth), 1 August 1915, 9.

⁵⁸ Percival Young, *The School Paper, Dept of Public Instruction*, Brisbane, Vol VII, (25 April 1916), 69-71.

Roberts describes this account as ‘written in the same dramatic style as Swain’s letter and there are discrepancies ... The article has the distinct tone of the heroic written for public consumption’.⁵⁹ Perhaps the tone is ‘heroic’, but this is not uncommon: putting a bright or whimsical shine on things was probably seen as a sign of stoicism, but does not mean that such accounts contain no facts or truth. Moreover, Ottoman accounts are replete with words such as ‘brave’, ‘hero’, ‘heroic’, ‘zeal’, ‘zealous’ and ‘sacrifice’.⁶⁰ If a ‘heroic’ writing style is accepted in Ottoman accounts, why should it discredit Australian ones?

‘Discrepancies’ are very common in descriptions of the Landing. I have uncovered accounts by men who saw Captain W.R. Annear, the first Australian officer killed on 25 April, shot in the water or elsewhere, or lying dead well inland; these discrepancies do not suggest he was not killed. Roberts also points out that ‘smashing the gun’ was a ‘remarkable feat given the sturdiness of a Maxim’. Murray Ewen suggests that someone could have ‘struck the sheet-metal fuse (sic) spring cover and broken the fusee spring off the receiver with the butt of a rifle ... Alternatively the ... feed block could be pulled out and tossed into the thick scrub.’⁶¹ Putting a bullet through the water jacket or separating the gun from its tripod would probably temporarily do the job as well.

To take a different tack, is there somewhere else we can look for evidence? Commander C.C. Dix, Royal Navy (RN), Senior Naval Officer of the twelve tows of the first wave and an experienced officer, recorded that ‘One of the picket boats fired a belt or so at the crest of the hill, and the flickering flame of a hostile Maxim was seen coming from a little look-out station half-way up the ridge at Ari Burnu. This gun disappeared very quickly’.⁶² Midshipman Eric Bush wrote that ‘It is just dark enough to see the flashes of the rifles and the machine guns.’⁶³ An anonymous member of the RN who commanded a covering force picket boat towing members of the first wave, wrote ‘Suddenly a single shot rang out ... Then the blue and red spurt of a maxim and a perfect hail of bullets are around one’.⁶⁴

Some of the arguments about the Australians being mistaken could perhaps also be applied to members of the Royal Navy, but at what point are we to begin accepting accounts by those who were there? Is it reasonable to dismiss the accounts of trained and disciplined naval personnel? Can an account of seeing ‘the flickering flame of a hostile Maxim’ by the Senior Naval Officer be rejected because he did not physically climb the hill and lay eyes on the gun? Certainly people can be mistaken, especially in the dark, but can the observation of muzzle flashes by any number of witnesses be dismissed as no ‘first-hand account mentions actually seeing a machine-gun’?⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Roberts, *Landing*, 171.

⁶⁰ See Sefik, paras. 46, 52, 49, 107, 113, 164; Kemal’s ‘you have your bayonets’ line, Mustapha Kemal, in Robert R. James, *Gallipoli*, Pan Books, London (1984), 113; Ibrahim Broadbent, *Turkish Defence*, 47.

⁶¹ Ewen Murray, ‘The Gallipoli Maxims’, *The Gallipolitan* (Autumn 2014), 22.

⁶² CC Dix, Private Papers of Commander CCDix CMG DSO RN, Documents, 6440 private papers Catalogue date 1996-09 Cataloguer RWAS, Imperial War Museum, London, 7-8.

⁶³ EW Bush, *Gallipoli*, Allen & Unwin, London (1975), 100.

⁶⁴ ‘Landing of the Australians a Gaba Tepe’, *Naval Review*, IV, 1915. <http://www.naval-review.com/showissue.asp?Year=1915&Iss=4>, Accessed 18 August 2015. Courtesy Ian Gill.

⁶⁵ Roberts, ‘Machine-guns at the Landing’, 14-19.

Researcher Ian Gill has uncovered a number of 10th Battalion accounts by men who describe seeing a gun in the area. One man, apparently an officer in the battleship tows, described how: ‘one shot rang out ... One machine gun was [shorthand] in front, one on left, and one a good bit away on the right on slopes of hill’. The men ‘flopped down on inshore side of beach to loosen packs and fix [shorthand] – presumably bayonets]. We should have got the machine gun if we had had no packs’.⁶⁶

Many accounts describe Lt Eric Wilkes Talbot Smith leading his 10th Battalion scouts upwards from the beach and towards a machine gun. Fortunately, for purposes of corroboration, accounts have emerged by a number of men who were with him. One of them told Bean ‘That was how we cd see machine gun on our left. We were about 30 yds away on top when it ceased’.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, this excerpt begins and ends with shorthand, but appears to represent the first moments ashore as it is preceded by a description of Talbot Smith telling his scouts to leave their packs in the boat to speed their advance.⁶⁸ Alfred Archibald Barber, 10th Battalion, wrote that ‘as we climbed the cliff’, ‘machine guns popped at each end’ of the beach. He continues that ‘Reaching the cliff top we found a Turkish trench ... the enemy had gone, driven out by our comrades just ahead’.⁶⁹

Gill has also uncovered a significant account which appears to tie together these disparate pieces of the puzzle and provides answers to many of the questions raised thus far. Corporal J.C. Weatherill, who was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his actions this day, served under Talbot Smith.⁷⁰ Weatherill told Bean that a ‘machine gun was on top of MacLagan’s – it was on tripod ... We pulled it off tripod and threw it over cliff at back abt 20 ft ... we had seen flashes [shorthand] machine gun in the knoll close down to [shorthand - beach?].’⁷¹ Here, one account draws together a great many threads and pieces of evidence. Weatherill not only saw the gun flashes, but also the gun and witnessed its fate. Throwing the gun over the cliff may clarify what was meant by ‘smashing’ the gun, and why de Mole mentioned looking down on the site of the gun, rather than the gun itself. This also appears to tie in with the account of the scout quoted earlier, who could see a gun to his left, but it ceased fire soon after, and of the men on the beach who would ‘have got the machine gun’ if not for the halt to drop packs. Darnell, whose boat was further offshore at the first shot, landed soon after and climbed ‘Straight over the knocked out maxim’.⁷² Talbot Smith was mortally wounded later in the day, but was commended for driving ‘the enemy from machine gun, subsequently capturing three guns’.⁷³ The three guns were mountain guns on 400 Plateau. As these were captured ‘subsequently’, but before Şefik and his machine gun company reached the battlefield,

⁶⁶ 10th Battalion account, Courtesy Ian Gill, AWM 38/3DRL/606-10-1, June to September 1915.

⁶⁷ AWM 3DRL/606/18, 1 October 1915.

⁶⁸ Weatherill to Bean, AWM 38/3DRL/606/18.

⁶⁹ Alfred A Barber, manuscript, ‘The Landing As I Saw it’, AWM 3DRL/5035.

⁷⁰ ‘On 25th April, 1915, during operations near Kaba Tepe, for exceptionally good work in scouting and in an attack resulting in the capture of two of the enemy’s guns,’ *London Gazette*, No. 6545, 3 July 1915.

⁷¹ Weatherill to Bean, AWM 38/3DRL/606/18, October 1915.

⁷² Darnell, AWM PR82/175.

⁷³ Website of the Australian War Memorial, <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/pdf/RCDIG1067980--16-.pdf>. Accessed 7 October 2015.

there is a direct contradiction between the ‘no machine gun’ argument and Talbot Smith’s commendation.

The variety of experience observed by Roberts is not surprising and does not of itself discredit these accounts. The covering force landed on a front of roughly 1500 yards. Relatively few men are likely to have climbed Ari Burnu, and of those who did, the likelihood of men seeing the gun is further reduced by the fact that it was apparently thrown out of the position very early. The number of eyewitnesses who saw this gun may therefore represent a significant sample of those who were in a position to see it.

As it happens, not all Turkish sources refute that there were no guns present at the Anzac Landing. A brief, jumbled but intriguing statement by A. Ozgen, then a 27th Regiment Second Lieutenant ‘in the machine guns’, states that his position was ‘In front of’ MacLagan’s Ridge, and that he ‘remembers the first landing’. He describes ‘a little forest in which we had our guns’.⁷⁴ This is very vague, and Şefik does not mention Ozgen. How much credibility should be given to such a brief description, possibly relayed through an interpreter, is the tantalising question.

Harvey Broadbent, in *Gallipoli: The Fatal Shore*, quotes from the memoir of 27th Regiment’s Major Halis Bey, which states that before the landing ‘half a machine gun company’, presumably meaning two guns, was assigned to positions ‘on the ridge behind Ari Burnu ... to bring the northern shore of the Ariburnu[sic]-Kaba Tepe sector under fire’.⁷⁵ Where these machine guns came from is not stated. Peter Williams, ‘citing Turkish sources, also notes deployment of a Turkish machine gun company to the area’.⁷⁶ If Şefik’s guns were with him and not on the battlefield at the time, what gun or guns could possibly have been present? Or, as Roberts put it, ‘given the significant shortage of machine guns ‘in the Ottoman Army, where did this plethora of machine-guns come from? Certainly not from the 27th or 57th regiments’.⁷⁷ Ewen, however, suggests a possible answer.

Possible origin of the Ottoman gun[s]

In 1910 the Turkish navy had acquired two German battleships, renamed *Barbaros Hayreddin* (formerly *Kurfürst Friedrich Wilhelm*) and *Torgud Reis* (SMS *Weissenburg*). Each ‘was equipped with twelve machine-guns’, which were ‘issued with tri-pods instead of’ four-legged ‘army-style sleds’.⁷⁸ Ewen states that the Turkish navy contributed some of these Maxims to the coastal defences of the Dardanelles,⁷⁹ and that these may have

⁷⁴ A Ozgen, transcript of interview with Peter Liddle, July 1972, Tape 69, TU01, Liddle Collection, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

⁷⁵ Hurst, *Landing in the Dawn*, 99; Major Halis Bey, *Canakkale Raporu*, Arma Publications, Istanbul (1975), 91; Harvey Broadbent, *Gallipoli: The Fatal Shore*, Viking, London (2005), 43; According to Şefik, Halis was actually a captain at the time.

⁷⁶ Hurst, ‘Dissecting a Legend’, 99, quoting PD Williams, ‘The Battle of Anzac Ridge’, 64-65, citing Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, *Birinci Dünya Harbinde inci Cilt Canakkale Cephesi*, 2nci Kitap, Genelkurmay Basimevi, Ankara (1973), vol 2, 90-94, and maps 14, 16, 28.

⁷⁷ Roberts, *Landing*, (1 ed.), 171.

⁷⁸ Ewen, ‘Gallipoli Maxims’, 26.

⁷⁹ Ewen, ‘Gallipoli Maxims’, 26.

been distributed to various positions along the coast, including Z Beach (Anzac). This idea had been put forward as early as 1985, in *Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships*, which noted that some of these guns were 'removed and employed' as coastal defence guns for the Dardanelles.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, this reference does not specify the type of guns nor dates, though Ewen continues that an allied intelligence report noted that 'the Barbaros Hayreddin's machine-guns were removed before 22 April 1915'.⁸¹

Ewen adds that Liman von Sanders wrote: 'The Turko-German Navy furnished the Fifth Army with two machine-gun detachments with about twenty-four machine-guns which were of great benefit'; and that a retired colonel, Harun-el-Raschid Bey, stated that 'the machine-guns of the death-defying Turkish garrison ... held a rich harvest ... All available machine-guns of the fortifications of the Dardanelles and of the fleet were disposed of'.⁸²

Rashid's statement appears to describe machine guns being ashore, apparently at Helles, at the time of the Landings. According to Uyar⁸³ and Broadbent,⁸⁴ the regiment manning the beach defences at Helles, the 26th Regiment, possessed no machine guns.⁸⁵ Broadbent continues that the 27th Regiment deployed a section of guns to Helles. As Şefik's four guns remained with him, this could not be; unless, of course, extra guns had been deployed to the area.⁸⁶ British historian Cecil Aspinall-Oglander wrote in Volume 1 of the British *Official History*, that at the Helles landings, the 3rd/26th Battalion was equipped with 'four "old-pattern" Maxim guns'.⁸⁷ E.J. Erickson also wrote that in early April the 'Ottoman high command sent several machine gun companies ... to reinforce the Fifth Army'.⁸⁸ As noted earlier, Halis referred to half a machine gun company being deployed to the Ari Burnu area. There is consequently a deal of evidence, though vague, that extra guns had been sent to bolster Fifth Army's Dardanelles defences, yet none of these guns appear in Uyar's, Roberts's or Şefik's accounts.⁸⁹

Had naval guns been available, is it probable the Turks would have deployed these older, more expendable guns to defensive posts along the coast? This would preserve the combat effectiveness of the counter-attacking force by keeping the existing regiments and their machine gun companies intact and ready to fight, as is repeatedly stressed in Turkish

⁸⁰ R Gardiner, R. Gray, (eds.), *Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships, 1906–1921*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis (1985), 390.

⁸¹ Ewen, 'Gallipoli Maxims', 26.

⁸² Lecture 'presented on 12 May 1932 by retired Colonel Harun-el-Raschid Bey, formerly of the Osman Imperial Army', Ewen, 'Gallipoli Maxims', 26.

⁸³ Uyar, *Ottoman Defence*, 97.

⁸⁴ Broadbent, *Turkish Defence*, 128.

⁸⁵ Nor does the Turkish General Staff's *A Brief History of the Canakkale Campaign in the First World War* mention any. The Turkish General Staff, Ankara, *A Brief History of the Canakkale Campaign in the First World War (June 1914 – January 1916)*, Turkish General Staff Printing House, Ankara, 2004, 99-106.

⁸⁶ Hill 141 overlooks Mordo Bay, Broadbent, *Turkish Defence*, 128.

⁸⁷ Ewen, 'Gallipoli Maxims', 27.

⁸⁸ Edward J Erickson, *Gallipoli: The Ottoman Campaign*, Pen and Sword Books, Barnsley, 2015, 45.

⁸⁹ There is a range of other evidence, including that after the landings 'machine-guns from Barbarossa were sent to' the 9th Division (to which belonged the 25th, 26th and 27th Regiments) to make up losses in the early fighting, Ewen, 'Gallipoli Maxims', 26.

sources they did. Uyar confirms that previously Ottoman Fortified Zone Command had assigned ‘permanent fire support units from its reserve personnel to fortified points ... a motley collection of antiquated weapons discarded by active army and navy units and others purloined from surplus stocks were given to these new units’.⁹⁰ Uyar does not mention machine guns, though Ewen continues that in May ‘another eight machine-guns and thirty-two German Kaiserliche-Marines from the Goeben and Breslau were sent to Krithia’.⁹¹

There is some evidence and some conjecture here, but both suggest a possible answer to the question of the source of the guns. I am not aware of any historian doubting that Şefik kept his machine gun company with him, but it also seems apparent that Fortified Zone Command was doing what it could, both before and after the landings, to increase the fire power of the coastal defences.

The Missing Evidence

It is difficult to refute Weatherill’s and others’ accounts, which describe seeing and/or handling an enemy machine gun, and when combined with other testimony by those who saw muzzle flashes or saw the gun, it presents a pretty convincing case. The problem is that Ottoman sources do not mention a gun or guns being present. Perhaps the most authoritative evidence for the negative comes from Uyar, who ‘examined all the war diaries ... numerous reports and returns ... available personal war narratives and checked all the military maps, overlays and sketches’, yet found no ‘mention of machine-guns at Ariburnu and Kabatepe’.⁹² This absence of evidence is also extremely convincing, until placed alongside the vast number of Australian and British participants’ accounts which contradict it. This polarisation of evidence begs the question, ‘why?’ Are omissions in the Turkish sources a possibility?

Is it possible that the guns arrived so late in the piece that they simply slipped through the administrative cracks and were not recorded, at least in the surviving records? Could these guns have been deployed in the last days before the landings, when the garrisons along the coast were toiling to prepare and perfect defences, roads and plans in response to the expected invasion? The 26th Regiment, for example, was only deployed to Helles three days before the landings. Could these guns perhaps have fallen outside the normal reporting mechanisms of units to which they were temporarily attached, perhaps because they were crewed by reserve or naval personnel instead of the garrison units, or by Germans instead of Ottomans?

Turkish records also appear to not reveal evidence of Hotchkiss guns being present at Anzac on 25 April, yet once again, some eye-witnesses believed they were there. Bean described a deserted ‘Turkish battery position’ at the junction of Pine Ridge and 400

⁹⁰ Uyar, *Ottoman Defence*, 60.

⁹¹ Ewen, ‘Gallipoli Maxims’, 27.

⁹² Uyar, *Ottoman Defence*, 97.

Plateau, with ‘several small guns ... still in place’.⁹³ This was based on the evidence of a 5th Battalion officer, Captain R.M.F. Hooper,⁹⁴ who described one of the guns as ‘a Hotchkiss with a drop breech ... There was ammunition – red and yellow shells – we buried 2 boxes of them’⁹⁵ and ‘We got a machine gun going with parts of 2 machine guns. One our own and the other Turkish I believe’.⁹⁶ This post was occupied throughout the afternoon and early evening of 25 April, being abandoned at about 11.30 pm.⁹⁷

Lieutenant A.P. Derham’s, 6th Battalion, account is similar to Hooper’s. Derham told Bean that his party was:

well dug in in some gun pits ... there was a Turkish machine gun with ammunition but no one could work it ... some reinforcements ... got the guns going ... orders came from the rear to retire ... Every unwounded man carried a wounded man ... Derham and another carried the machine gun.

They came on a man who had a broken leg – carried him in and left the machine gun in a bush.⁹⁸

A range of other evidence reinforces the existence of this position. The 9th Battalion’s Frank Loud appears to have fought here, but was not interviewed by Bean. His account was written in a diary soon after the Landing, and was donated to the Australian War Memorial in 1989. It is therefore independent of Derham’s, Hooper’s and Bean’s accounts. Loud’s description of the gun position and the events there match Derham’s, Hooper’s and Bean’s with a sufficient accuracy to suggest they represent the same location. According to Loud’s account, ‘There were two field guns one in the shelter ... there was a plentiful supply of shells in each funk-pit ... also a machine gun which was doing excellent work until put out of action by a shell’.⁹⁹ They got the ‘Turkish machine-gun’ into action and ‘when the enemy advanced it must have played havoc ... with as many of the wounded as we could find retired back onto the main position’. The three accounts, though not quoted in full, correlate extremely well in descriptions of the position and common incidents.¹⁰¹

What is the point of this digression from events at Ari Burnu to Pine Ridge? The close correlation of the three eye-witness accounts, and Bean’s supplementary research, make

⁹³ Bean, *Official History*, 389.

⁹⁴ In the *Official History* Bean identifies him as Captain R.M.F. Hooper, though in his notes ascribes the conversation to another officer while Hooper slept. For simplicity I will refer to him as Hooper, as does Bean, see AWM 3DRL/606/1/13.

⁹⁵ Bean, AWM 3DRL/606/1/15.

⁹⁶ Bean AWM 3DRL/606/1/15.

⁹⁷ As 27th Regiment had re-captured their mountain guns on 400 Plateau late in the afternoon, according to Sefik by 1600 hours, (para. 141), this and a deal of other evidence makes it unlikely the two positions are being confused.

⁹⁸ In *Gallipoli Mission*, Bean described a 1915 map which showed the presence of a battery position at this spot on Pine Ridge, CEW Bean, *Gallipoli Mission*, ABC and the Australian War Memorial, Canberra (1990), 149-150.

⁹⁹ Bill Gammage, ‘A New Gallipoli Diary’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, (April 1990), 68.

¹⁰⁰ Gammage, ‘A New Gallipoli Diary’, 68-69.

¹⁰¹ Such as all three describing two Turks running into the position, one being shot and the other bayoneted. Loud describes one Turk, who was bayoneted, Hooper, one who was shot, and Derham describes both. Their descriptions of the event match in other respects. Gammage, ‘A New Gallipoli Diary’, 69; AWM 3DRL/606/1; AWM 3DRL/606/28A.

it difficult to believe that the events in the gun pits on Pine Ridge did not take place. The point is that, according to Turkish sources, these guns – Hotchkiss and machine gun – were not present.¹⁰² Perhaps this could even have been the machine gun post so vaguely described by Second Lieutenant Ozgen.

This action reveals a number of significant points. Firstly, it shows that there appear to be gaps in the Ottoman records – as far as I can see, these guns are not mentioned in Ottoman sources. Secondly, where did the Turkish Maxim come from – does this support other evidence that there were guns on the battlefield not listed in the Ottoman order of battle? Thirdly, this story suggests that at least some parts of the AIF's and Ottoman Maxims were interchangeable, reinforcing the possibility that the Ari Burnu gun, had it existed, might not have been 'trophied' but re-used or cannibalised.



Photograph 6: Ari Burnu knoll is the peak on the left. It can be seen that it enfildes the beach on this side – note the line of troops in the centre of photograph. It is right on the beach and not very high. Troops landing on the point could rapidly have taken the Turkish post on the knoll, NAA A1861/1/3791.

Conclusion

Having worked with Sefik's account of the Landing for many years, I presumed omission of machine guns from his account implied they were not there. I was also aware that due to paucity of Turkish accounts, I could not subject his account to the same scrutiny as Australian ones, and that Sefik's account in many places contrasted with Australian secondary sources.

¹⁰² Broadbent (*Turkish Defence*, 27) states that Gaba Tepe was reinforced by guns and machine guns.

The conflicting evidence and arguments presented above, led this paper in four main directions. Firstly, a consideration of the existing ‘no’ argument in the context of other research on the Landing, primarily my doctoral thesis. Secondly, examination of eye-witnesses accounts by those who believe they saw a machine gun on Ari Burnu. In this the evidence uncovered by Gill and Ewen on the 10th Battalion is crucial; the piece that draws together and ‘centres’ the otherwise disconnected threads of the story is that of Weatherill. Thirdly, identifying a possible source of the guns; and finally, the possibility that there may be gaps in the Ottoman records.

I am not claiming that this paper proves that Ottoman machine guns fired on the 3rd Brigade before dawn on 25 April. The evidence is too polarised to link the opposing sides of the argument. But I believe the evidence presented here establishes that the ‘no machine guns’ argument cannot stand as currently presented. The Australian eye-witness accounts, compiled and distilled to extract evidence and establish commonality, leans heavily towards the positive – that there was a machine gun firing from Ari Burnu early in the morning of 25 April 1915, and a great many accounts describe more than one gun being present. It is difficult to believe that all the accounts by the battle’s Australian and British participants are wrong.

That German doctrine makes it unlikely regimental guns would have been deployed to the coast does not prove that guns were not there. Bert Facey’s service record does not prove his account was fabricated. The possible inability of the inexperienced Australians to differentiate between rifle and machine gun fire does not prove they were all wrong. The as yet inconclusive evidence of guns coming from other sources tantalisingly provides an alternative to the current thinking, but the mystery still remains of why they would be absent from Ottoman accounts.

There is a great deal of eyewitness testimony that ‘triangulates’ a machine gun on Ari Burnu. People in boats saw it, people on the beach saw it, those climbing saw it and their comrades overran it. Men climbed to knock it out or were relieved when its fire ceased. The Navy saw and fired at it.

The main reason for scepticism of my own arguments is the thoroughness of Uyar’s research. I have to remind myself that there are contradictions and omissions in Australian sources – why should I be surprised to find them in Turkish ones? We cannot ignore the Turkish evidence, but neither can we turn a blind eye to the Australian.

Perhaps further research will provide the missing clues. Discovery or confirmation of the source for the missing guns, if they exist, or of gaps in Ottoman records, might one day provide a bridge between the polarised arguments.

Another question: if the gun on Ari Burnu was knocked out so soon after it opened fire, as documented by many, why did so many men describe the effects of machine gun fire? Perhaps Roberts has already answered this – perhaps in accordance with German doctrine, the Ottoman guns were not deployed alone.

REVIEWS

Margaret Hutchison, *Painting War: A History of Australia's First World War Art Scheme*, Australian Army History Series, Cambridge University Press, 2019. ISBN 9781108471503. Hardcover, xvii + 268 pages, 64 plates. RRP \$59.95 AUD.



War and conflict have been represented pictorially since humanity's earliest eras, but the practice of officially appointing artists to accompany troops into battle is a more recent phenomenon, and one that can involve complex processes and controversial decisions. As we stroll through the galleries of the Australian War Memorial we tend, quite understandably, to concentrate on the subject matter of the paintings, sculptures and drawings on display, and perhaps even on their aesthetic merit. Rarely do we ponder the circumstances in which they were created, let alone the stories behind their eventual placement in those galleries.

Margaret Hutchison's *Painting War* addresses those processes and decisions in relation to Australia's resolve to have its participation in the First World War memorialised by its own artists. It is therefore not an attempt to critique the works of George Lambert, Will Dyson, Arthur Streeton and others whose names loom large in the Australian art scene, and who participated in one or other of the schemes set up to represent the war for posterity. Instead, it draws upon the 'memory studies' school of history – notably as promulgated by WW1 scholar Jay Winter – to focus on the 'agents of memory' responsible for the ways in which Australia's war was commemorated. Hutchison's approach involves – rather unfortunately for the non-academically inclined reader – an Introduction which reads like the methodology chapter in a postgraduate dissertation. This could have been omitted without adversely affecting the rest of the book, because what follows is actually a very thoroughly researched, tightly constructed and readable account of Australia's official war art program.

It will probably come as no surprise that one of the chief 'agents' in the story is official historian Charles Bean who, spurred on by his production of *The Anzac Book* in 1916, a collection of writings and illustrations by soldiers who had served at Gallipoli, became a fervent believer that 'the Australian war experience should be differentiated from others within the empire' (p.24). His desire to assemble artefacts and documents to commemorate that experience would become the germ of the idea of the AWM itself. Others were at work on parallel projects, however. Andrew Fisher, former Australian prime minister and during the war his nation's High Commissioner in London, had similar ideas; he soon set up the National War Records Office, which included collecting relevant photographs and film footage. The efforts of Bean and Fisher led in turn to the Australian government establishing two separate, but ultimately interrelated, official art schemes: one run by the Australian War Records Section and managed by Bean protégé and future AWM director, John Treloar; the other the art section of the National War Records Office, managed by

Fisher's appointee Henry Smart. The former section was responsible for garnering work from serving soldiers, whether professional artists in their own right or gifted amateurs. The latter contracted civilian artists – mainly Australians already living in the UK – to visit the Western Front (although Lambert also went to the Middle East), and create paintings based on their observations.

All of this is interesting enough in itself, but Hutchison adds another dimension to the tale by comparing Australia's scheme with that of the Canadian government, which was also keen to leave a record of war service distinct from that of Britain. Canada's scheme was very much the brainchild of newspaper magnate and entrepreneur Lord Beaverbrook, and being well funded and resourced, attracted a considerable stable of established artists, British as well as Canadian. In fact it was the establishment of the Canadian War Records Office by Beaverbrook in January 1916 that both inspired and formed the model for Australian efforts in that regard. But whereas neither Australian art section placed any real pressure on its artists to produce specific works, preferring them to come up with their own ideas for subject matter, the Canadian scheme actively commissioned items from its artists, which included a number of home-front and behind-the-lines scenes missing from the Australian output. Indeed, a constant chorus in Hutchison's account is the way the Australian scheme privileged the Western Front and army front-line topics above all else. It was only after the war that attempts were made to fill the gaps, and she devotes space to this in her analysis of the immediate, and very important, postwar developments, which included displaying the artefacts and setting in train the AWM. Paradoxically, it was Australia that led the way in this aspect; both Canada and Britain had to compromise considerably on how, when and where its large output of official war art would eventually be exhibited.

All this and much more is dealt with in *Painting War* which, despite its somewhat unwelcoming Introduction, offers both the general reader and the specialist researcher a fascinating insight into a highly significant period in the history of the ways we memorialise our past. The book contains 64 attractive plates in colour and black and white, illustrating the key people and works discussed in the text. There are also six appendices consisting of clearly set out tables listing actual and proposed works and their creators, along with notes and a copious bibliography. This is an important study which adds a further, hitherto neglected, dimension to our appreciation and understanding of the AWM's First World War art collection.

Paul Skrebels

Bojan Pajic, Our Forgotten Volunteers: Australians and New Zealanders with Serbs in World War One, Arcadia (Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd), 2018. ISBN 9781925801446. Softcover, 491 pages. RRP \$65.00 AUD.



Australians and New Zealanders tend to focus on Gallipoli and the Western Front when addressing land battles of the Great War. This phenomenon has been reinforced by the centenary events that have just ended. Far less is known of other campaigns involving our troops and other volunteers (collectively called Anzacs in this review for convenience and not to be confused with ANZAC) who served in other theatres. The collective efforts of all such campaigns saw the Allies prevail in November 1918, and it is a brave person who might posit the relative value of each with a view to risk leaving any one of them out. Every such 'sideshow' from the main effort drew resources and prolonged the war by preventing either side to easily amass its assets for a decisive blow to end the war in less time.

The Serbian campaign's principle purpose was the defence of Serbian sovereign territory against an enemy determined to over-run it, primarily to secure a land passage from Germany to Turkey. Initial successful defensive efforts were followed by a withdrawal of the Serbian Army from Serbia until the eventual liberation of Serbia and the defeat of the Central Powers in that theatre.

This publication, in part motivated by the author's ethnic and Australian Service background, represents a remarkable effort in telling us the story of such a campaign, and the roles played in it by the Anzacs. Through a prolific effort by a team of researchers, the involvement of over 1,500 Anzacs are used, many with individual life profiles to underscore that effort. Pajic and his research team deliver a remarkable story that until now, has not existed in any comparable work. This book is a most important addition therefore, to the many treatises that already exist on Gallipoli, the Middle East or the Western Front and their battles.

Pajic succeeds with a most effective design and presentation of a slice of our military history that up to now has been a gap in the Australian and New Zealand Great War literature. The book outlines the chronology of the Serbian (aka Balkan) campaign in the context of the global war in an eminently readable format through chronological chapters supported by detailed annexes. The first chapter outlines the key causes of the Great War and Serbia's part in it, noting that Serbia was already engaged in a string of 'local' wars over several years leading into 1914, and had already suffered large numbers of casualties and damage. Subsequent chapters take the reader through the Serbian campaign in logical periods, weaving individual stories of the Anzacs as a clever and gripping means of telling the story of what they did, what it was like and how the campaign unfurled. He succeeds in a manner rarely achieved through this narrative method. Extensive diary extracts,

letters, rich and varied photography, most never seen by this reviewer, present the reader with a dialogue that makes the book compelling and richly informative reading.

Anzacs served in Serbia in a variety of different categories of military and civilian support. Many as members of non-military voluntary hospitals under the auspices of charitable organisations, comprising mainly women, a considerable number of which were doctors and nurses. Australian nationals also enlisted in the British and Serbian armies, and members of two AIF units – a transport unit and a remount (horse) unit – and crews of six RAN torpedo boat destroyers in the Adriatic Sea participated in the campaign.

One of many difficulties faced by the average reader and military historian alike is the collective paucity of knowledge of this campaign. It does not feature in either of Australia's or New Zealand's Official Histories of World War One, and the cultural differences of language and changed geographical naming pose a dilemma for most readers. Pajic's book neatly addresses the changing name dilemma as the story unfolds. This reviewer is most grateful for the successful manner in which this was done; I was able to follow the name and border change narrative. This feature, together with sufficient maps of a generalised nature, allows the reader to readily follow the course of the war through the eyes of the Anzacs.

The Serbian people are repeatedly referred to by the informants in this story as gentle and appreciative, suffering silently in the face of enormous adversity. They were extremely gracious, pleasant and thankful to our volunteers, especially the women ambulance drivers and allied health care staff. A striking feature of the book is the large number of women who served, primarily in medical roles due to the fact that women doctors were not permitted to serve in the Australian and New Zealand armies. The Serbians, suffering dire shortages, had no compunction in employing women who wanted to contribute to the war effort: they had little capacity to provide their own medical support on the scale needed and gender mattered little. When armed conflict, including this one, are said to feature atrocities and offences such as rape and murder of civilians, there is no evidence presented of any such behaviour by the Serbian troops regarding our volunteers, many of whom were women and sometimes, entire hospitals so staffed, or in isolated locations where such a temptation must have been possible.

And so, under dreadful conditions and having to deal with the volume and array of horrendous wounds, rampant disease, shortage of supplies and under great risk of casualties themselves from enemy action, these women served in roles at least as valuable as the male combat participants. An interesting story is about two women who enlisted in the Serbian Army infantry, one of whose gender was only revealed when she was wounded. No other European army is known to have had women combatants in their infantry in this war (aside from Russia). The book contains numerous such revelations especially regarding the role played by women. Few Australians or New Zealanders, even descendants of the featured Anzacs, would know of these until they read the book.

Equally compelling in the narrative is the distinction made between the perception of the campaign as seen by the top-level adversaries (senior command) and the reality on the ground. Conditions were appalling, casualty and death rates very high and even basic war supplies so lacking as to be sometimes non-existent; eg transport, artillery, rationing and medical care. A phenomenon is the dilemma that many Serbian troops faced as they advanced or retreated: to obey orders and stay as formed units, or to leave and try to help their families/non-combatants survive in areas over which the battles raged with high enemy atrocity rates evident.

Use of Australian, New Zealand and Serbian sources during the research for this book results in excellent coverage of what was, for the Serbian people, total war with tragically high losses. Serbian war losses were sickening. Page 270 lists these data, revealing the biggest loss of life in proportion to the country's population of any nation to wage war on either side. 28% (or 1.2 million) of all Serbians died. 55% of the national infrastructure was destroyed. Yet they fought on, with their allies including the Anzacs, among them. And eventually to victory.

There are also many facts brought out in this book from which military planners have possibly learnt. One of the more obvious ones was the willing acceptance of women in medical support roles, especially doctors and drivers, roles considered in wartime to be 'men's work'. Another is the ruthless prioritisation by the allied high command in the allocation of forces. The Balkan Front received far less support from the British and French until well into the war during what most British military historians call the 1916 Salonika campaign, when the first AIF and NZ army units were deployed there alongside Serbian, French, Italian, and British forces to oppose Austrian-Hungarian, German and, from October 1915, Bulgarian forces. Sometimes, tough priority calls had to be made in the face of finite resources.

The research effort is simply staggering. 1,500 Anzac soldiers, airmen, medical volunteers and humanitarian workers are identified, and many of their backgrounds and involvement presented. Of these, over 150 were decorated by the Serbian Government. Doubtless, this book will prompt the identification of more Anzac veterans as readers note the significance of this line of research and the manner in which it has been carried out and presented. The text is rich in the Anzacs' dialogue. The reader can feel as well as read the experience of those who deployed. It is a most successful technique, especially when interspersed liberally with Balkan battle scenes and individual photographs of the Anzacs themselves, some in-country, others back in Australia.

Perhaps understandable in a colossal work such as this, there are some issues that the author and his team will want to correct in any revision. Proof reading detracts from parts of the book; it is not just the usual admissible error rate of upper and lower case or spacing and minor matters that plague the sharpest of eyes, especially at the final stages of compiling the manuscript. One of the casualties is the extensive annex system where there is a mismatch between the contents and the actual annexes, with some of the latter out of order and/or mis-named; a problem I understand is being rectified.

A most applaudable use of two bibliographies – in English and Serbian – would benefit from a consistent format. An annex on medals is well presented, a minor distraction being the wrong name assigned to the MBE (correct name is Member of the British Empire, not Medal of the British Empire). It is again assumed that the Serbian awards data are correct; images are certainly striking, as are photographs of medal groups. This annex is probably unique in the annals of Australian history, and one again expects that more data will be forthcoming as the reading public procure this book.

Photograph crediting is inconsistent; some have only ‘AWM’ instead of featuring the conventional AWM number added. Others have no credit at all, with some accompanied by generalised captions which, while descriptive, could lead to a questioning of their authenticity. Fortunately, the number and freshness of the imagery far outweighs such potential criticism.

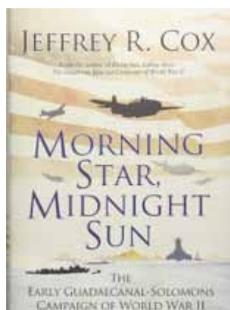
Pajic and team are to be congratulated on a Herculean effort in producing this most handsome volume. In an increasingly multi-cultural country, it may well be that this book will also inspire others to investigate and report on other ethnic groupings who have served. We would be a better nation for it, having such additions to the more widely understood histories of our mainstream, and prized, all-volunteer military contributions to world peace.

Perhaps the last word is embodied in this statement about the deployment of troops in Europe on the day the guns fell silent:

Germany was still on French and Belgian soil and no allied soldier was on German soil. However, Serbian troops were now on Austro-Hungarian territory. And supporting them were ‘Our Forgotten Volunteers’.

Lieutenant Colonel Russell Linwood, ASM (Retd)

Jeffrey R Cox, Morning Star, Midnight Sun, Osprey, 2018. ISBN 9781472826381. Softcover, 448 pages + photos and maps. RRP \$19.99 AUD.



There remains a common misperception that, following their defeat at Midway, that the tide of war had turned definitively against the Japanese and that their ultimate defeat was now inevitable. Jeffrey Cox's work proves this to be categorically false. That they had suffered a major setback was indeed the case and recognized but the Japanese still viewed the war as winnable.

This was a particularly enjoyable book to read; not only for its detailed content and analysis, but also for the humour and style

of the author. Interspersed with his discussion of the events of the period covered by the book, are ‘sidebar’ interpretations of reactions of commanders and participants. These cynical interjections add levity and, indeed, a more human element to the narrative. The traditional stoic demeanour of the Japanese are given a more realistic feel. The Allies, a more truthful reflection of the strains of multinational as well as inter-service operations.

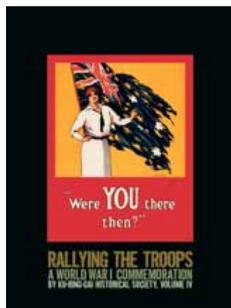
Cox balances his narrative extremely well between the protagonists. The reader is provided with fascinating insights into the effects of the fog of war, opinions and expectations of individual commanders and a deep understanding of the pressures of command and the cumulative effects of decisions. During this period, both the Allies and the Japanese commanders were under great pressure to achieve clear victories. While the Americans had defeated the Japanese at Midway, they had lost a carrier in the process resulting in an operational draw. The American public demanded greater success. Conversely, the Japanese commanders felt compelled to avenge the stain of their Midway losses. Compounding this pressure was the fact that neither side, at this time, had the depth of resources to compensate for any additional losses of capital ships.

The author effectively captures the complex interplay between the adversaries as they struggled to control the seas and skies over the centre of gravity during this period: Guadalcanal Island. The Japanese proved conclusively that they remained more than a match for the American forces facing them. In fact, they held a majority of the cards in terms of surface vessels, command quality, operational options and control of the seas. Having trained exhaustively for night operations, the Japanese continued to rule the night with the Americans maintaining an advantage during the day. Two things had changed however that are not widely appreciated but are glaringly obvious in Cox’s analysis: the Americans had finally found an Admiral in Halsey that had the aggressiveness and presence to take the fight to the Japanese and the vaunted “Sea Eagles”, the Japanese carrier aviators that had ruled the skies up to now, had been decimated and were a fraction of their former numbers. The replacement pool was unable to replace the losses with similar quality aviators.

Cox has drafted an outstanding book of exceptional quality and content. His narrative style is engaging and keeps the reader hooked. His comprehensive knowledge of this period is reflected in his deep analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the American and Japanese forces. Regardless of whether one is interested in naval operations in the Pacific Theatre, this book remains not only an excellent reference but also read.

Major Chris Buckham

Were YOU there then?: Rallying The Troops: a World War I Commemoration (vol. 4), Ku-ring-gai Historical Society, 2018. ISBN 9780959867367. Softcover, 680 pages. RRP \$40.00 AUD.



Were YOU there then? is the fourth and final volume in an exhaustive research project which addresses service personnel and other citizens' experiences from the municipality of Ku-ring-gai, Sydney, during World War I. Its format and design mirror the first three volumes with chapters covering the Australian involvement in the 1918 battles on the Western Front and the Middle East and the ensuing 'peace' followed by biographical details of the men and women who enlisted from Ku-ring-gai. In physical design and logical presentation this four-volume series is a remarkable high-quality addition to the literature on World War I, both from a

military history perspective but perhaps even more so, a sociological one.

Part of an ambitious design to cover an entire community's experience in a war that took over four years to be concluded, this book takes us much further than just the fighting. It also investigates what happened during the long transition to peace, the eventual return of the troops and the impact on the home front for both them and those back in Australia. It is indeed a poignant story. The warfighting section comprises a series of chapters grouped under the headings covering all aspects of the war, its conclusion and the repatriation of servicemen.

Following the heaviest casualties of the war in 1917 (Volume 3) the Australians were still in the Messines sector of Belgium, numbers severely depleted through high casualty rates and insufficient reinforcements. In France, all five divisions were used from March 1918 on, initially piecemeal, to block the Germans and then to attack. From 31 May, the Australian Corps came under the command of Lieutenant General Monash, with four of the five divisions operating together before being joined on 8 August by the 1st Division. During April-June, the Corps' divisions played a major role in the defence of Amiens, Hazebrouck and Villers-Bretonneux. From July, the offensive included fighting advances to attack on a series of objectives that are now the stuff of legend including Hamel, Mont St Quentin, Péronne, St Quentin Canal, the Hindenburg Line and Montbrehain. The Corps fought almost continually from March to October when, depleted and exhausted, it went into reserve following the breach of the Hindenburg Line and mercifully remained so until the Armistice. This section presents a complex series of battles and many major achievements in a simple and easily understandable way, something not easy to do. Like the rest of *Rallying The Troops*, the story is interwoven with reference to the Ku-ring-gai veterans' experiences and deeds, bringing a real-life dimension to the story.

The remaining sections address events during the Armistice and repatriation periods. The firing might have stopped but the need to keep troops in-theatre until the formal

peace signing on 28 June 1919 is not usually covered elsewhere. Leave in Britain and the preparations for peace including education retraining and other issues of demobilisation receive the same treatment via letters and diary entries to support the illuminating story of what needed to happen - repatriating 165,000 Australians, something never before attempted on such a scale and which, in some cases, took up to a year.

Sections include the effects on the mothers and wives of the dead and wounded, and those unscathed physically but suffering psychologically. The role and fate of animals in war, internments of 'aliens' in Australia, soldier settlement efforts, local war effort fund raising and other support, and how Australia sought to cope with the many unemployed veterans now home, and worst of all, the large numbers of dreadfully wounded. Most of the information in these sections will be new to the reader. It illustrates the enormity of the war's effect on a total society, focussing on Ku-ring-gai citizen experiences in the telling of this story. The section on Lady Davidson Home, used as a repatriation facility from 1920 until privatised in 1997, reminded the reviewer of a harrowing experience he had in 1975 when as a young officer visiting injured soldiers from a modern unit, he met two World War I veterans in Concord Hospital, Sydney. These veterans, still suffering phosgene burns sustained in 1917, needed twice-daily immersion in soothing oil baths. Such was the suffering of so many, and for some for so long.

The biographical segment of the book contains 372 pages of all enlistments with the surnames starting with S to Y (no one with surnames X or Z enlisted). These rich data are supplemented with an Addendum of new personnel with surnames featuring the letters A to R identified after the publication of Volume 3 and added in this final volume.

The Appendices, as for the earlier volumes, provide excellent support material. Easily followed information is provided on military organisations, awards, references and an index.

Volume 4 completes a marvellous sociological achievement, blending rich personal stories into the historical narrative. The motivation of the team to produce this entire series of Rallying The Troops is remarkable and can in part be understood by a terrible legacy of World War I. A tragic consequence of the death of British Commonwealth service personnel was the receipt by the next of kin of a Memorial Plaque and Scroll. The former is a large bronze medallion bearing the words: 'Let those who come after me see to it that his name not be forgotten'. Britain's initial order for these in 1914, expecting a short war, was 50,000. A tragic consequence was the eventual manufacturing of millions, many of which were issued to Ku-ring-gai next of kin. That this philosophy became the key driver for the concerted effort in writing these volumes, is eminently understandable.

Throughout the project, additional veterans were identified as a result of ongoing research and from public feedback as each volume was published. Starting with 1,300 names the project culminated in 1,800 identified eligible veterans who joined the AIF, with more known to have enlisted in the British and French forces. Given that Ku-ring-gai had a

population of 12,000 at the start of the war, this represents 15% enlistment. Of these, over 300 perished. 170 were decorated, including one Victoria Cross. Little wonder that the team to produce *Rallying The Troops* felt it necessary for the people of Ku-ring-gai in particular, and the rest of Australia, to be the beneficiaries of their devoted work a hundred years later.

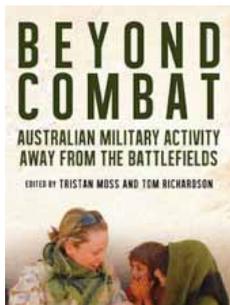
There are many individual sub-stories. One is the tragedy of Private George Legge, believed to be the last Ku-ring-gai soldier to die in action on 4 October 1918, serving in 22 Battalion. Another is the courage leading to the award of the Victoria Cross to Major Blair Anderson Wark VC, DSO, MID. The biographies alert us to numerous social consequences aside from the many acts of bravery and suffering: the large number of brothers, father-son, cousin connections; Spencer Brown (re-)enlisting at almost 59 years of age to resume a military career, was one of the oldest men to enlist in the AIF; the Windeyer family's extensive family service, itself already the subject of an entire publication; the five Woods brothers, two of whom had already served in the Boer War, with four serving in the AIF, all now commemorated in the one place.

And the dead, identified in the biography section, mostly as 'Killed in Action'. Some still have no known grave, although most bodies were eventually located. None was brought home, and many were to never be visited by anguished relatives. One was located and identified only recently at Fromelles over a hundred years later and re-interred at nearby Pheasant Wood. These, and many other stories, abound with personal photos. It is truly compelling reading, remembering that all of these people lived in the one municipality prior to enlistment. Descendants of Ku-ring-gai's 1914-18 population today should be proud of their ancestry, and any of them reading these volumes should be proud of the team who brought *Rallying The Troops* to reality.

There are many pleasing technical positives to observe with Volume 4 which contribute to the success that this final volume and its precedents enjoy. Again, the high-quality paper, binding and layout makes reading a pleasure. Large numbers of photographs from a wide range of private and official sources help convey the human drama. Crediting of photographs is consistently achieved and maps crystal clear. Notable is the exacting effort to 'get things right' in all technical aspects of this masterpiece. The volume of specific information on individuals and what they had to say (write) in both the history and biographical sections is staggering; anyone who has researched one individual will understand that only too well. Here, we have the blending of military records with diary and letter extracts along with other personal data of personal lives. To do this for hundreds of subjects is simply remarkable, and to then present it in a common format that still results in unique stories is a great credit to the team responsible. Volume 4 concludes *Rallying The Troops* in the manner this colossal work started. All four volumes deserve a place on the shelf of every good library. I doubt that *Rallying The Troops* will be matched.

Lieutenant Colonel Russell Linwood, ASM (Retd)

Tristan Moss & Tom Richardson (eds.), *Beyond Combat: Australian Military Activity away from the Battlefield*, NewSouth Publishing, Sydney, 2018. ISBN 9781742235905, Softcover, 250 pages, endnotes, index. RRP \$39.95 AUD.



This eclectic collection of papers gives the reader various perspectives on roles played by the ADF, often overseas, separated from the front line. The range of articles, by a balance of male and female writers, includes some related specifically to the Army, RAAF or Navy. The papers were originally presented at a university conference in 2017 and the conference organizers have edited these for publication – no time was wasted in the publishing, but perhaps it should have been.

Papers are grouped under four broad themes: Managing Soldiers and their Families; Military Education; Caring for the Soldiers; Remembrance and the Dead. The time period covered by the papers range from pre-First World War (officer education) to the present (managing LGBTI personnel). The locations covered in the text will be familiar to readers of military history, but descriptions of the front line are absent. Consistent with the purpose of the conference, the emphasis is on military activity ‘away from the battlefield’ – but the battlefield intrudes regardless.

Professor Twomey researches the effects on some Army and RAAF families, during the Cold War, of the government objectives, racial policies and colonial living conditions at RAAF Base Butterworth, the Terendak cantonment and Singapore. Her case study extends the work of other writers, such as Lachlan Grant, who examined similar impacts on Australian servicemen, away from the front line, during the Second World War.

As a former colony of Australia, and an ongoing military partner, it is not surprising to find in the book two articles focused on Papua New Guinea. In the first article, Dr Tristan Moss summarises the Army’s educational campaign, spear-headed by the RAAEC, to prepare the PNG defence personnel for national self-government during the second half of the Viet Nam War. This extraordinary and far-sighted scheme, which harnessed the prior professional skills of National Servicemen, is now the subject of several publications elsewhere so it was understandably difficult to condense the campaign into twelve pages for this book. Within this restraint, Moss provides a very valuable summary and insight even if, incidentally, it appears that he has summarised too briefly an earlier opinion of Dr Riseman about the performance of the 1942 PNG defence force on the Kokoda Track.

In the second article on PNG, Lt Col Claire O’Neill reports on the lessons she and others learned during an international engagement exercise during 2014-15, and on her professional reflections since that time in PNG. Commanding the Engineer activities for this annual ADF-PNGDF exercise, Colonel O’Neill was also responsible for a multi-national team from the United States (Marine Corps and Navy personnel), Great Britain

(Engineers) and PNG (Engineers and Infantry). The article is written in a diplomatic yet direct and self-deprecating style. O'Neill's wide-ranging military, and personal, reflections on her war-like learning from such an exercise makes this one of the most thought-provoking articles in the book.

If the editors had taken more time, they might have removed the typos and inserted some illustrations in the book. Within the text, the typos are distracting and within the endnotes the typos can be misleading. Of course, the matter of typos and illustrations might have been the responsibility of the publisher rather than the editors. The editors' introduction to the book has been listed as one of the 14 papers while it more logically could have been titled the Preface. More substantially, the reader might wonder why some articles, however interesting, sit uneasily within their designated theme. Perhaps more time could have been given to creating more suitable theme headings. Nonetheless, *Beyond Combat* enables those conference papers to be more widely appreciated and become springboards for further thought and research – for these and other reasons, I can recommend this book.

Gregory J Ivey

AS YOU WERE ...

Newly-joined member of the ACT Branch, **Norman Lee**, writes:

- I'm ex-Fleet Air Arm, and a Korean War veteran. I read the Korean War article [William Westerman, 'The Royal Australian Navy during the Korean War 1950-53: An Overview', vol.59, no.4 (December 2018)] with interest, having flown from HMAS Sydney during the operational deployment. I'm about to raise a point which I fought the AWM to have corrected, namely calling the Air Group the 20th. A little history: when established back some seventy years ago, the FAA had two Air Groups, the 20th and the 21st. Each group had two squadrons, 805 and 816 in the 20th, and 808 and 817 in the 21st; happy days! When it was decided to take three squadrons to Korea the Air Group was an amalgam of the 20th and the 21st, and could not be identified as either. The Air Group Commander Lt Cdr Mike Fell RN, (Vice Admiral KBE, DSO, DSC and bar), decided that the Air Group would be called 'The Sydney Carrier Air Group' and that is what appears in my log book, stamped as such under his signature, not the 20th. My raising the error might seem trivial to those who weren't there, but it rankles with those who were, particularly in my case as I was a sub in 817 of the 21st. As you are well aware, history is full of errors and it is up to us to correct them when discovered. Thanks for your forbearance.

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