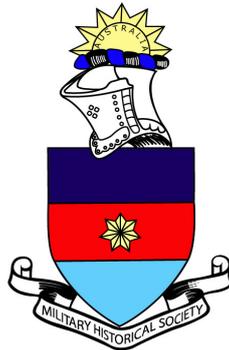


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*Sabretache*



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# **SABRETACHE**

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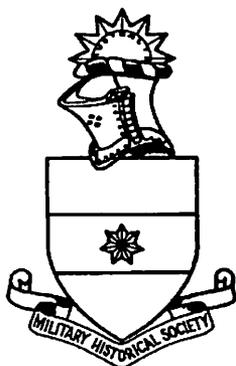
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Contributions in the form of articles, notes, queries or letters are always welcome. Authors of major articles are invited to submit a brief biographical note, and, where possible, submit the text of the article on floppy disk as well as hard copy. See the last page for further guidelines.

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# SABRETACHE

## **The Military Historical Society of Australia**

The aims of the Society are the encouragement and pursuit of study and research in military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment and kindred matters; the promotion of public interest and knowledge in these subjects, and the preservation of historical military objects with particular reference to the armed forces of Australia. The annual subscription to the Society is \$30. A membership application is on the back page.

### **Organisation**

The Federal Council of Australia is located in Canberra. The Society has branches in Brisbane, Canberra, Albury-Wodonga, Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide and Perth. Details of meetings are available from Branch Secretaries whose names appear below.

### **MHSA Constitution and Rules**

The constitution of the Society adopted 1 August 1993 appears in *Sabretache* January-March 1993. The Society's rules adopted on 14 April 1997 appear in *Sabretache* April -June 1997.

### **Sabretache**

The Federal Council is responsible for the publication of the Society Journal, *Sabretache*, which is mailed to each member of the Society quarterly.

### **Members' notices**

Society members may place, at no cost, one notice of approximately 40 words in the 'Members' notices' section of the Journal each financial year.

### **Queries**

The Society's honorary officers cannot undertake research on behalf of members. However, queries from members received by the Secretary will be published in the 'Letters' section of the Journal.

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## Anzac on Ambon, 30 years of Gull Force Pilgrimages

Major Paul Rosenzweig<sup>1</sup>

A visitor's first impression of Ambon<sup>2</sup> is generally one of altitude, and this is particularly emphasised when a three-hour entombment in an RAAF C-130 aircraft reaches its end. As the tailgate ramp is lowered the aircraft seems surrounded by lush, verdant peaks rising up through the mist into the clouds. Equally, standing before the Cross of Remembrance, beyond the spaciousness of the Ambon War Cemetery grounds the crowded residential areas sprawl up the hillsides. Long strides are required to climb the steep road to the Australian memorial at Kudamati, while a picturesque view of Ambon town and harbour is obtained after a tortuous climb up Karang Panjang Hill to the statue of local patriot Martha Khristina Tiahahu.

The lush grounds of the Ambon War Cemetery in the village of Tantai seem to have an elevated, exalted position on a plane above the surrounding mortal community. It is as if the bodies at rest there have been shrouded, not in earthly garb, but in the mist itself, granting them at last the peace they sought for us all. In the tranquillity of this place, all other fears and concerns may be left at the tall bronze gates, to be masked by the dense tropical air and temporarily forgotten. It is a place to appreciate the various Indonesian concepts of spirituality and honour as well as the more Western concept of sacrifice.

During the 1997 Anzac Service, the thick morning mist momentarily broke from the atmosphere and a light shower of rain began to softly fall on the assembled veterans, dignitaries and military guards, Australian and Indonesian. The emerging sun faded from view and an eerie light permeated through the still air, casting the slightest of shadows at the feet of the catafalque party, resting in the arms-reversed position of respect. A similar atmosphere had existed during the previous year's Service, and as the rain had started to fall, the officiating padre from Headquarters Northern Command, Captain Matthew Thompson, simply called on his congregation to, 'suffer a slight inconvenience in a place where men once suffered great inconvenience.'<sup>3</sup> Ambon War Cemetery is unique in that the site began as a barracks for Australian troops, was for nearly four years their home in captivity, and is today a cemetery maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Its grounds contain the mortal remains of nearly 700 members of a single unit - only one in four members of Gull Force returned to Australia.

### Gull Force

The fabled Spice Island of Ambon, long ago known as Amboina, is part of what was the Moluccas group, now known as Maluku Province of Indonesia. The pre-war history of Ambon

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Rosenzweig is Executive Officer of Wildlife Management International Pty Ltd in Darwin and, as an Army Reservist, is Officer Commanding Operational Support Squadron, North West Mobile Force. Author of the books, *For Service*; Awards of the Order of Australia for service to the Northern Territory 1974-1994 (1995) and *Government House Darwin; The House of Seven Gables* (1996) published by the Historical Society of the Northern Territory.

<sup>2</sup> See Rosenzweig, P A, 'The recent military history of Ambon, Indonesia.' *Sabretache*, XXXV(1): 3-13, January-March 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Captain M Thompson, Ambon, 25 April 1996.

ranges from early visits by Javanese and Arabs, to 'discovery' by the Portuguese, an influx of Middle-Eastern and European traders, wars between the Portuguese and the Dutch, the seizure of 'Java Minor' by the British, and then reversion to Dutch control early in the nineteenth century.)

The Australian military involvement with Ambon included deployments by No 13 Squadron RAAF and then 'Gull Force', the 2/21st Battalion Group AIF, which had played a key role in the 1941 Darwin Defence Plan during the 'phony war' period (later known by locals as 'BB' – 'Before the Bombing').<sup>4</sup> Placed on Ambon beside the moribund Dutch East Indies Army (KNIL), with limited resources and no naval or air assets, one Gull Force officer later wryly commented that they should have been called Shags instead of Gulls.<sup>5</sup> After putting up a brave resistance against the overwhelming numerical superiority of the invading Japanese, Gull Force capitulated on 3 February 1942.<sup>6</sup> Of much longer duration than the battle itself was the incarceration of the Australian soldiers – ironically, in the very camp they had occupied upon their arrival in Ambon. At war's end, from 1,131 original members of Gull Force, just 352 had survived.<sup>7</sup>

That their camp at Tan Toey later became a War Cemetery containing the bodies of Australian servicemen has made it a shrine of some importance. From a desire to thank the Ambonese for their assistance sprang the concept of an annual return visit to Ambon. This journey came to have much more emotional, even spiritual, significance and became referred to as the Gull Force Pilgrimage. The organisers are adamant that it is not simply a reunion, or a delegation, but truly is a Pilgrimage to both pay respect to the fallen and to thank those local Ambonese who risked their own lives to provide assistance.

## Pilgrimage

Despite a number of obstacles which prevented any form of return visit to occur during the post-war years,<sup>8</sup> the first return visit to Ambon by Gull Force veterans took place in October 1967. A number of sporadic visits then took place, and the Gull Force Pilgrimage has now been conducted annually since 1978. Responsible for the inception of the Pilgrimage was Major Bill Jinkins MBE,<sup>9</sup> Vice-President of the post-war Gull Force Association, 'who almost single-handedly got the scheme going in the first place, and led the first pilgrimages back to the island,' recalled Gull Force veteran Walter Hicks.<sup>10</sup> The Pilgrimages have for some years now been co-ordinated by Lieutenant Colonel Rod Gabriel MBE ED (ret'd), a Captain in the 2/21st Battalion during its service in Darwin and Ambon. A retired pharmacist from Victoria, Rod

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<sup>4</sup> See Rosenzweig, P A, '“In Australia Forever”, The 2/21st Battalion in Defence of Darwin, 1941.' *Journal of Northern Territory History*, No 9, 29-42, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Major J M Turner MBE (ret'd), *Mufti*, 30 April 1968, p 6.

<sup>6</sup> See Beaumont, J, *Gull Force: Survival and Leadership in captivity 1941-45*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988; Harrison, C T, *Ambon, Island of Mist*, Victoria, 1988; Leech, R, *Pacific War Odyssey*, Ron Leech, Sydney, 1995; Rolley, A, *Survival on Ambon*, Ailsa Rolley, 1994; Wigmore, L, *Australia in the War of 1939-45. Series 1 (Army)*, Volume IV: *The Japanese Thrust*. AWM Canberra, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> In Tan Toey POW Camp itself, after the transfer of a number of men to Hainan island near China, during the period 26 October 1942 to 10 September 1945, of the 528 men remaining in camp a total of 407 men died or were executed – a 77% death rate.

<sup>8</sup> See Rosenzweig, P A, 'Australia Under Threat? The Soviet presence on Ambon', *Northern Perspective*, 20(2): 114-119, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Commanded 5 Platoon on the Nona Plateau and at Eri, led a successful escape from Tan Toey Camp, and then served with Z-Special Unit (Services Reconnaissance Department); see Powell, A, *War by Stealth, Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau, 1942-1945*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Mr W D Hicks, pers comm, 16 October 1996.



across a diverse archipelago. It is also enabling the development of a greater bond, and during the 1997 visit Brigadier Roberts complimented Gull Force Association for their role in this:

The work that they have done is absolutely outstanding, and they, more than any other single group of Australians, have done more to foster the friendship between our two great nations.<sup>13</sup>

Roberts was an SAS troop commander in South Vietnam and later, as Commanding Officer, was responsible for the Regiment's counter-terrorist hostage rescue force. As an educated military officer of some repute, he could not view the saga of Gull Force and Ambon with anything but a critical eye. Before taking his place of distinction beside the Australian Foreign Minister and Ambassador to Indonesia on Anzac Day, he could almost be seen again as the battle-weary troop commander, standing back pensively with field notebook in hand and a distant gaze in his eyes, sketching out the 'Lessons Learnt' section of an After Action Report. Although he had read two books on Gull Force prior to participating in the Pilgrimage, Roberts was nevertheless struck by the sheer tragedy of what had transpired on the island. He also recognised the hopeless task the force had been given - which the first Commanding Officer had repeatedly brought to his superiors' notice until he had been relieved of his command. In the presence of the Australian Foreign Minister and Ambassador the previous night, Roberts had told the assembled veterans and guests that the story of Ambon includes a strong lesson for all politicians and military commanders:

We must never, ever send our soldiers on a hopeless mission for the simple reason of holding out for 48 hours or more. Whenever we send our young men and women overseas again in the security of our nation, we must give them a task that they are capable of achieving, and from which they have a good chance of returning. Ambon holds many lessons not only for us as members of the defence force, but [also] for our politicians. Never again will we send our men and women into a hopeless situation.<sup>14</sup>

## Laha

In the first scheduled event of the Pilgrimage each year, participants move directly from Pattimura Airport to the nearby village (desa) of Tawiri, where there are two simple stone monuments.<sup>15</sup> Although only one of these has been maintained in a public area, they were both erected by Australian occupation troops in January 1946 to symbolise the wasteful loss of life at the hands of Japanese executioners. Pilgrimage leader Rod Gabriel does not mince his words when he talks about the brutality that took place at Laha in 1942: 'There was *not* a survivor,' he says emphatically.<sup>16</sup>

These memorials are special because they do not stand for the trauma of captivity, nor the lashings and labour parties. Here, Gull Force veterans, families and friends pay homage to young Australian men at a site of horrific slaughter. Men whose fates simply remained unknown for nearly four years. 'We on the town side had no idea what had happened to the POWs there,' relates Rod Gabriel.<sup>17</sup> These memorials honour men who were not accorded an honourable burial and individual marked grave.

<sup>13</sup> Brigadier C A M Roberts AM CSC, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Brigadier C A M Roberts AM CSC, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>15</sup> For photographs of this and the other Gull Force memorials see Rosenzweig, P A, 'The recent military history of Ambon, Indonesia', *Sabretache*, XXXV(1): 3-13, January-March 1994.

<sup>16</sup> Lieutenant Colonel R C Gabriel MBE ED (ret'd), Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant Colonel R C Gabriel MBE ED (ret'd), Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.



Left to right: John Gaspersz (Curator of the Ambon War Cemetery), Barbara Gaspersz, Colonel Dicky Wattimena (former Mayor of Ambon) and Bill Gaspersz (former Raja of Nakoe), before the Cross of Sacrifice at Tantui, 25 April 1997.

One of those attending the 1997 Laha service was Wally Parker, son of Private Arthur Parker who had been executed at Laha and dumped in one of the mass graves. Arthur Parker and his mate Arthur Deakin had joined up together, served together in the same section in C Company, and had been on duty together defending the Laha airfield. Years after the war, Arthur Deakin discovered his dead mate's family and a strong bond was established. Over the course of time, Wal Parker related, Deakin explained to them how he had been spared from the tragedy at Laha:

The only reason Arthur wasn't caught up with all of this on this side was that he had to take some mail over to Ambon side, and just wasn't able to get back.<sup>18</sup>

Caught up in the battle, Deakin had been unable to rejoin his company, and marched into captivity with the remainder of the battalion. At any suggestion that Deakin had been 'lucky', Wal Parker notes that he would retort, 'I don't know whether I was at times,' as he reflected on those occasions when the Japanese had broken his arm and his elbow, and had given him a 'hiding' with a star picket. 'He's rather a remarkable fellow,' Wal Parker simply says. Deakin still maintains his connection to his mate's family, as Gull Force Association continues to care for the widows and families of all of their mates who did not return. After an emotional 'farewell' to his father at Laha, Wal Parker said of veteran Arthur Deakin, 'He's almost like a second Dad to me.'<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Mr W C Parker, pers comm (Ambon), 27 April 1997.  
<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

## Anzac Eve

Among the significant guests at the 1997 Anzac Eve dinner was the Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer. He was coincidentally in Ambon at that time to conclude negotiations and to launch the newly established Australian Indonesian Development Area (AIDA), a structure designed to supplement more locally the East Asia Growth Area (EAGA) which has for some time comprised Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. After the dinner, Mr Downer paid tribute to the role that the Ambonese themselves had played in assisting the Australian prisoners of war:

For me as a Foreign Minister, that's a good illustration of the bonds of friendship between our countries which we've been consolidating during the course of today. We do have a much longer history together than people sometimes seem to understand, and these types of incidents are an important component of that history.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr John McCarthy, also acknowledged the role of the Ambonese and the contribution they have made to Australia:

They also died, and they also died helping our men ... by helping us they added to the sorts of people that we are, and we owe them a debt.<sup>21</sup>

Significant among those attending the 1997 Anzac Day commemorative service was one particular Ambonese, to whom the Minister and Ambassador might have been referring. Bill Gaspersz, the eldest son of the traditional Raja of Nakoe, had been living in Galala village near Tan Toey Camp in 1941-42 and was responsible for the success of Bill Jinkins' escape. After the 1997 Anzac Service, Bill Gaspersz recalled not only his own fate at the hands of the Japanese, but also the execution of his brother Ferdinand:

I was already caught by the Japs, I was in the jail for several months, for giving food to the Australians ... they must pass our house but sometimes we met them in the night and gave them some food. Unfortunately, they came back here and the Japanese caught them. 'Where's the food, from where do you get this?' And they were beaten until they must confess, 'From the Gaspersz family'. That is why my father was caught, my brother, my younger sisters, my brother was beheaded.<sup>22</sup>

Bill Gaspersz and his father Daniel were the main ones targeted by the Japanese, but all of the family spent some time in captivity. Daniel's youngest son, Ferdinand Gaspersz, eventually 'confessed' to the charge of smuggling food and supplies to the Australians to save the life of his eldest brother Bill, who was newly married and was the hereditary heir to the title 'Raja of Nakoe.' 'Greater love hath no man ...' are the words which spring to mind for Walter Hicks in recalling this incident:

The Gaspersz family suffered greatly during the war as a result of their friendship for the Australians, and you can understand the depth of affection and the lasting bond of friendship that exists between the Gaspersz family and us [Gull Force].<sup>23</sup>

It is ironic, but perhaps not surprising, that so much good should result from the blackest moments of the Second World War. The bonds formed in such times have, in more recent times, been developed in such a way that the energies which might otherwise have been

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<sup>20</sup> Hon A Downer MP, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>21</sup> His Excellency Mr J McCarthy, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Mr W Gaspersz, pers comm (Tantui), 25 April 1997.

<sup>23</sup> Mr W D Hicks, pers comm, 29 May 1997.

expended on frustration, regret and anger have been redirected into compassion and humanitarian projects. And while the Medical Aid Programme, scholarship scheme and other worthwhile projects have blossomed, no-one would ever want those black days to return. The Australian Ambassador to Indonesia acknowledged that time has moved on and thoughts of those days are generally not prominent today:

One thing strikes me very forcibly when I come here, and look at how Australia is being remembered here on Ambon. I reflect immediately that I am of a generation that really did not know the devastation of war ... I did not at first hand see those particular horrors. So it is very humbling to listen to what was experienced by those of a generation in front of us. And I think it makes me all the more wish to be sure that they are given appropriate honour.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, Alexander Downer observed, in recalling the heroic stand made by Gull Force in which some 1,100 men held up 27,000 Japanese for three days:

For those of us who are of subsequent generations, who were born since the war, as I was, these types of incidents do make us profoundly proud.<sup>25</sup>

Although not himself involved in any of the various conflicts around the globe, the Australian Foreign Minister spoke with some authority and insight - his father was an 8th Division man imprisoned at Changi. To the assembled guests of the 1997 Anzac Eve dinner in Ambon, Mr Downer related that the horrendous experience of his father, as for Gull Force, was something which cannot but have an impact on subsequent generations:

Certainly my father's experience has had a very deep impact on me. I suppose it's led me to develop as somebody who has never taken peace and security for granted.<sup>26</sup>

## Anzac Day

Another in attendance on Anzac Day 1997 was a man who had played a significant part in formalising some of these bonds with Australia. Johannes Dicky Wattimena had been Walikotaamadya (Lord Mayor) of the Municipality of Ambon from 1985 to early 1991, most notably in 1988 when a Sister-Cities Agreement was ratified through a Letter of Intent signed in Ambon on 28 October 1988 by Wattimena and his counterpart in Darwin, Mr Alec Fong Lim AM.<sup>27</sup> Wattimena had been an officer of the Indonesian Army, Angkatan Darat, a member of the Military Police Corps, and served as Mayor of Ambon whilst an Army Colonel. A decade later, Dicky Wattimena attended the 1997 Anzac Day Service at Tantui as a private citizen, having retired from the Army earlier in the year - his final posting had been at the Palace in Jakarta, as the personal bodyguard to President Suharto.<sup>28</sup>

The veterans and Defence Force participants in the 1997 Pilgrimage attended a fine luncheon hosted by John Gaspersz, Bill Gaspersz's son and today Curator of the Ambon War Cemetery. Among the guests, representing No 13 (City of Darwin) Squadron, were Flight Sergeant Jim

<sup>24</sup> His Excellency Mr J McCarthy, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Hon A Downer MP, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Darwin's third Lord Mayor, from 1984 until his death in 1990, and the first Australian-born Chinese to become Lord Mayor of a capital city in Australia; See Rosenzweig, P A, *For Service. Awards of the Order of Australia for service to the Northern Territory, 1975-1995*, Historical Society of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 1995, pp.60-61.

<sup>28</sup> Bachtiar, H W, *Siapa Dia? Perwira Tinggi Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Darat (TNI-AD)*. Djambatan, Jakarta, 1988; Kolonel (Purn) J D Wattimena, pers comm (Tantui), 25 April 1997.

Wilson (aircraft technician) and Sergeant Peter 'Wags' Wagener (Orderly Room Sergeant).<sup>29</sup> This squadron today perpetuates the service of the wartime 13 Squadron, which had been recalled to Australia from Ambon before the Japanese invasion.<sup>30</sup> A number of airmen could not escape the island in time and were executed. Accordingly, there are no living members who had been prisoners-of-war on Ambon, so the rapport with the Ambonese people has not developed to the same extent as with Gull Force, and it was not until 1984 that a national association was established.<sup>31</sup> While the annual pilgrimage has generally been a purely Gull Force affair, those 13 Squadron veterans able to attend are keen participants, representing the pre-invasion service of the airmen who called themselves the 'Devil's Brothers'.



Wendy Doolan, at the grave of her father Driver Bill Doolan who was killed on 1 February 1942 (Tantui, 25 April 1998).

### Australian Memorial Kudamati

During the 1997 Pilgrimage, the Head of the Maluku Regional Tourism Office, Dr Tahapary, invited the Gull Force veterans and guests to a Makan Patita, a traditional Moluccan celebratory lunch at the picturesque Namalatu Beach at Latuhalat, on the southern coast of Ambon. Here, in early 1942, Major George Westley had sent a rifle section supported by engineers and bren carriers as an early-warning post for A Company at Eri, which comprised the Australian left (western) flank. By stark contrast, in early 1997, this beach was the venue for young Ambonese maidens in stunning costumes to perform traditional dances while coconut palms swayed in the gentle sea breeze. And while the audience sat transfixed by the idyllic atmosphere, slightly

<sup>29</sup> 'Ambon Pilgrimage Anzac Day 1997', 13 Squadron Newsletter, No.52 (May 1997): pp.4-5.

<sup>30</sup> See Grantham, S R, *The 13 Squadron Story*, privately published, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> A memorial plaque was dedicated at the gates of the Darwin RAAF Base in 1985, and nine 13 Squadron veterans made the first return visit to Laha. The 1989 party comprised four veterans and the nephew of Flight Lieutenant Bill White DFC who had been executed at Laha, while twenty members participated in the 1992 pilgrimage.

distanced from the main party a dark-skinned, unassuming old man related tales of his friendship with an Australian soldier.

Paul Kastanja had been a member of a KNIL battalion based in the villages of Wainitu and Hurnala in the early days when the Australian troops had been integrated within the Dutch defensive positions. Later, when the Australians moved to defend their own sectors, several of the Dutch units were redeployed and Paul Kastanja returned to Kudamati south of Ambon town – where the Gull Force transport, LAD and other detachments were located. As the singers' gentle voices carried old Ambonese tunes to the gathered Australians and whitecaps rolled in behind them and crashed on the shore, Paul Kastanja recalled that he had met Bill Doolan in the early days of 1942, when they were both in their early twenties. He used an old Indonesian saying to describe his friendship with Doolan – 'Makan sepiring, Minum segelas,'<sup>32</sup> meaning they were close friends – they 'ate from the same plate, drank from the same glass'.

In its most simplistic version, on February 1st 1942, following a patrol through enemy lines, Driver Bill Doolan<sup>33</sup> allegedly single-handedly held up a significant Japanese force while covering the withdrawal of his mates, until he was eventually overwhelmed and killed. In the first two days of fighting, Doolan had been used as a runner, carrying messages from headquarters and between different defensive positions, but he had complained about the lack of action. On Sunday February 1st at 4 o'clock in the morning, a small reconnaissance patrol was sent towards the enemy positions to gather vital information about strengths and dispositions, with Driver Doolan among the volunteers that made up the party. The patrol returned at about 7 am, their withdrawal under fire having been successfully covered by Driver Doolan who had remained behind. Small arms and machine-gun fire was heard in Doolan's vicinity but nothing was seen. According to whichever report is read or heard,<sup>34</sup> he either fired from behind a Gandaria tree, or from a machine-gun nest he established in the tree's branches, destroyed a number of trucks carrying Japanese troops, and shot a number of Japanese as they assaulted towards him. Most credible reports claim he accounted for as many as 80 dead. His actions were indelibly recorded in an official history of Maluku region produced by the Department of Education and Culture in 1977/78.<sup>35</sup>

From the monument which stands at Kudamati today can be seen the knoll where Doolan made his stand, while his body was buried by some Ambonese under the Gandaria tree where he had fallen. Later, the Australian prisoners in Tan Toey Camp carved an elaborate wooden cross which they were permitted to erect over his grave at Kudamati.<sup>36</sup> When the Australian 33rd Infantry Brigade arrived on Ambon as an occupation force (Ambon Force, or 'Amforce'), one of the first things the Australians heard from the local residents was of the stand by Doolan. They discovered that the grave beside the road, with white-painted stones around its edge, had become something of a

<sup>32</sup> Mr P Kastanja, pers comm, 26 April 1997. Paul Kastanja had served with the KNIL, and then with the Peoples' Security Body (*Badan Keamanan Rakyat – BKR*), the Peoples' Security Army (*Tentara Keamanan Rakyat - TKR*), and then the Indonesian National Army (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia – TNI*). He retired in 1959 as a Sergeant, and had acquired the Long Service ('Loyalty') Medal, *Satya Lencana Kesetiaan VIII*.

<sup>33</sup> VX35406 Private (Driver) William Thomas Doolan, killed-in-action on Ambon, 1 February 1942.

<sup>34</sup> See for example, *Ambon News*, 7 November 1945; *People*, 6 April 1955; *Post*, 7 November 1963; *Post*, 21 May 1964; Dennis Warner, 'Ambon Remembered', *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 17 November 1974; *The Mirror*, Daily Magazine, 16 February 1977; Hepburn, A, *True Australian Tales*, Rigby, 1983, p.127; *Melbourne Herald Sun*, 23 April 1998. Also 'Morotai Moon', Jim Baker (1990); Mr W Gaspersz, pers comm (Ambon), 1 May 1998; Mrs B Gaspersz, pers comm (Ambon), 1 May 1998; Mr P Papi lay a, pers comm (Batugadjah, Ambon), 21 August 1997; Mr L J Penny, pers comm (Latuhalat), 26 April 1997.

<sup>35</sup> *Sejarah Kebangkitan Nasional Daerah Maluku*, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Maluku, 1977/78, pp.149-150.

<sup>36</sup> This cross is now in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

'shrine' for the Ambonese.<sup>37</sup> Doolan's body was eventually recovered by the Australian War Graves Commission and was re-interred in the War Cemetery at Tan Toey.

Based on the accounts of 'witnesses', the local Ambonese have at least two ballads honouring the actions of Bill Doolan. In the early part of the war, the Ambonese had heard the Australian soldiers singing the music hall ballad, 'Rose in her Hair', and they themselves had started whistling the tune. At that time, they had simply called it, 'the Australian song'. When the occupation forces arrived, they heard the locals singing the song in Malay, and soon recognised the word Doolan in the lyrics. On Ambon even today, Pete Papilaya still sings an abbreviated version of the song:<sup>38</sup>

Australi mati,  
 bernama si Doolan.  
 Mati ditembak  
 oleh tentara Jepang.  
 Mayatnya dikubur  
 dibawah pohon gandaria.  
 Sayanglah sadiki  
 kepada anak dan istrinya,  
 tak dapat melihat.

An Australian has died  
 Whose name is Doolan.  
 He died by being shot  
 By the Japanese troops.  
 His corpse was buried  
 under a gandaria tree.  
 Please sympathise a little  
 with his child and wife,  
 unable to see (his corpse).

In addition, over the decades several Ambonese children have been given the name 'Doolan' in his honour, such as in the Lekatompessy family originally from Latuhalat, and others, particularly in the Kudamati and Batugadjah districts where Doolan was particularly well known before the invasion.<sup>39</sup> Despite the conflicting versions of the story and often blatant exaggerations, all of the basic elements in the story are true. Bill Doolan was an ordinary Australian, courageous perhaps or simply unlucky, but he was one of just five killed-in-action by the Japanese on Laitimor Peninsula during the fighting on February 1st and 2nd.

In the many re-tellings of Bill Doolan's story, there has often been a criticism that he was not honoured in any way – because there were no witnesses to the action, and certainly no officer witnesses. These accounts have often concluded with a call to have Doolan awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.<sup>40</sup> Soon after the war, one Gull Force veteran had mistakenly claimed that Doolan *had* actually been awarded the VC, and was therefore 'one of the few, if not the only, Australians to be awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously upon the uncorroborated testimony of natives.'<sup>41</sup> He may have been misled by an earlier remark by Captain D E Stockwell, Officer Commanding the Australian War Graves Unit stationed at Ambon, who reported that the Netherlands Government had awarded Doolan a posthumous decoration, the Dutch equivalent of the Victoria Cross<sup>42</sup> – most likely referring to the Military Order of William (De Militaire Willems-Orde). This was not so however, and the family never received any official notification of this.

<sup>37</sup> Mrs B Gaspersz, pers comm (Ambon), 1 May 1998; Mr W Gaspersz, pers comm (Ambon), 1 May 1998; Mr J Gaspersz, pers comm (Tantui, Ambon), 22 August 1997; Mr E Jones, pers comm, 17 July 1997; Mr P Papilaya, pers comm (Batugadjah, Ambon), 21 August 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Mr P Papilaya, pers comm (Batugadjah, Ambon), 21 August 1997.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> For example: People, 6 April 1955; *Australasian Post*, 6 December 1956; *Australasian Post*, 7 November 1963; *The Mirror*, Daily Magazine, 16 February 1977; *Canberra Times*, 29 December 1996; *Melbourne Herald Sun*, 23 April 1998.

<sup>41</sup> Letter (unattributed) dated 29 October 1956, provided by Ms W Doolan.

<sup>42</sup> Undated newspaper clippings, circa 1946, provided by Ms W Doolan.

In her first visits to the Australian War Memorial, after discovering that her natural father had died during the war, Wendy Doolan recalls that initially she didn't even know which battalion he had belonged to. She and her mother (Doolan's widow) Kathleen O'Connell met Paul Kastanja during a visit to Ambon in 1981, but were unable to quite understand exactly what had transpired in 1942. Wendy herself made a return visit in 1998 to try and rationalise her father's death, and met with both Paul Kastanja and Bill Gaspersz, who had been the Australians' Ambonese Liaison Officer when they had arrived on the island, to whom Doolan had been allocated as a driver.

From a friendship which began between a Ambonese soldier in the Dutch East Indies Army and a young Australian driver, Paul Kastanja kept the bond alive after the war and in early 1958 named his new-born son 'Doolan' in memory of his Australian friend. Doolan Kastanja turned 40 in 1998 and now has five children: following the 1981 visit by Kathleen O'Connell and her daughter Wendy and a few years of correspondence, Doolan Kastanja's daughter (born in 1990) was named Wendy Kastanja. And in a final touch of coincidence, Wendy Doolan observed that this had been a special time for her because her pregnant daughter, Susan Hall, had been due when she had left for Ambon. Nothing could have been more fitting than for Bill Doolan's great-grandson Benjamin to be born on Anzac Day.<sup>43</sup>

During the first return visit to Ambon (24 to 31 October 1967), the Gull Force Association members who participated had laid various wreaths at existing memorials and cemeteries (the Ambon War Cemetery had not yet been officially dedicated). They also presented the Governor of Maluku Province, Colonel Latumahina, with a large RSL badge and a memorial plaque bearing a message of thanks and friendship from the Gull Force survivors and the RSL. The Governor promised that they would be installed in a prominent position, 'adjacent to the Government offices in a manner befitting the plaque and the objects of the Pilgrimage.'<sup>44</sup> Instead however, the Australian Memorial at Kudamati was unveiled by Colonel Latumahina on 2 April 1968. The people of the village had donated the land, Colonel Latumahina himself had arranged the design of the memorial at the Bandung Technical Institute, and the erection of the monument and its surrounding fences and gates was carried out by local Ambonese at the express direction of the Governor himself. Bill Gaspersz was at that time Assistant to the Governor (Economy, Finance and Development), and Governor Latumahina relied heavily on him to manage the project and make the necessary arrangements.

This is not an officially recognised War Memorial however – the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has quite correctly refused to confer 'War Memorial' status on it. Quite simply, it was erected by the Governor of Maluku Province to commemorate the first return visit by members of Gull Force Association in October 1967, to display to the people of Ambon the message of thanks and friendship from the Gull Force survivors and the RSL (who paid the cost of making the plaque and badge). Coincidentally, it stands near the site of Doolan's stand and the location of his first wartime grave, and has accordingly been long known by the Ambonese and in tourism and official publications as the 'Doolan (or Dolan) Memorial' (*Tugu Dolan*), making it a somewhat contentious monument. Gull Force Association members are adamant that it is not a monument to Driver Doolan in particular, but that it honours the bravery of *all* members of Gull Force and of the Australian Services during the war as well as recognising the loyalty of the Ambonese, and for this reason the Pilgrimage party has always proceeded to Kudamati immediately after the main service at the Ambon War Cemetery.

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<sup>43</sup> Ms W Doolan, pers comm (Ambon), 28 April & 2 December 1998.

<sup>44</sup> Major W T Jinkins MBE, Gull Force (2/21 Bn) Association, Pilgrimage to Ambon (unpublished), October 1967.

## Regional Security

At the Anzac Eve Dinner, the Ambassador recognised that the wartime activities of Gull Force ensured that Ambon should rate in the annals of Australian history:

On Ambon, they enacted history. Ambon became part of our history, and became part of our history in a land other than Australia, so drawing us in to the region of which we are so very much a part.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, this was one of many experiences since Gallipoli which had promoted Australia's emergence as a nation:

In the First World War, we tended to forge our identity, we found ourselves as a people. In the Second World War, I think it is arguable that we redefined and emphasised again the sorts of people that we were. But by the same token, in that Second World War, we had to realise that our interests lay in our own reach, and it was Australia as part of South East Asia, as part of the Pacific, that would carry us forward.<sup>46</sup>

Since Gull Force's deployment to Ambon in search of regional security in 1941-42, and particularly since the first return visit in 1967, there have grown many important co-operative ventures between Australia and Indonesia, and between Darwin and Ambon in particular. As Brigadier Roberts indicated, the greatest security for Australia and Indonesia today lies in a stable region, with that stability based on friendship, trade and defence co-operation:

Throughout the last fifty years we've seen a tremendous friendship grow between our two countries, Indonesia and Australia, and the Australian Defence Force, I am very proud to say, contributes to developing that friendship.<sup>47</sup>

Later, on the tranquil tropical beach of Namalatu, Brigadier Roberts reiterated:

It's our great privilege in the Australian Defence Force to be able to bring these veterans, of both sides, back together again, and meet each other, and renew old friendships ... Today I had the great honour to be at the opening ceremony of Exercise Cassowary '97, where our own Navy and the Navy of the Republic of Indonesia are holding an exercise between Ambon and Darwin, which goes to show the great friendship between our two countries, and which goes to show that our two forces work together to ensure that this region remains secure and at peace.<sup>48</sup>

Within this framework, a delegation from Ambon, including the Maluku Region Tourist Office, has since 1993 participated in the Northern Territory's Trade Expo held in Darwin. At the time of Expo '93, which was attended by the largest Indonesian delegation to ever leave its shores, the Northern Territory Chief Minister said, 'I am convinced that history will show that we will become much stronger trading partners and closer friends.'<sup>49</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, it was not a politician but a survivor of the battles and captivity on Ambon, Major John Turner MBE, who as long ago as 1968 foretold: 'In the peace and prosperity of Asia lies Australia's ultimate destiny.'<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> His Excellency Mr J McCarthy, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Brigadier C A M Roberts AM CSC, Address to the Gull Force Anzac Eve dinner, Ambon, 24 April 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Brigadier C A M Roberts AM CSC, Address at Makan Patita, Lathuhalat, 26 April 1997.

<sup>49</sup> The Hon M Perron MLA, Media Release dated 23 June 1993.

<sup>50</sup> Major J M Turner MBE (retd), *Mufii*, 30 April 1968, p 7.



Walter Hicks, a member of the 2/21st Battalion's Intelligence Cell and Temporary Sergeant in 9 Platoon, A Company: wounded and Mentioned-in-Despatches for his conduct at Amahoesoe and Eri, and employed at Galala Hakentai Hombu ('Galala Guard Detachment Headquarters') during captivity in Tan Toey Camp.

### **Acknowledgements**

For assistance on Ambon I am thankful to the following people: Mrs Diana Clifford (de Lima), Mr Bill Gaspersz, Mr John Gaspersz, Mr Paul Kastanja, Mr Ot Latupeirissa (Department of Information), Mr Herry Lerebulan (Office of the Lord Mayor of Ambon), Ny Henny Siahaienya (Office of the Lord Mayor of Ambon), Miss Susan Silooy, Kolonel (TNI) Johannes Sudyono (Lord Mayor of Ambon) and Kolonel (Purn) Dicky Wattimena.

I am indebted to several Gull Force veterans and relatives, notably Lieutenant Colonel Rod Gabriel MBE ED (retd), Mr Walter Hicks, Major Ian Macrae OBE, Mr Bill Page, Mr Wally Parker and Mr Lionel Penny. Travel to Ambon for Anzac Day 1997 was kindly made possible by Brigadier Chris Roberts AM CSC ADC, Commander Northern Command; the return from Ambon was supported by the kind assistance of Garuda Indonesia (NT).

This paper comprises part of a larger study of the Gull Force Pilgrimages to Darwin and Ambon which has been supported by an NT History Award, and I am appreciative of this assistance provided by the NT Government through the Honourable Barry Coulter MLA, Minister for Transport and Works.

## The British Garrison in Australia 1788 – 1841

Clem Sargent

This is the first of a series of articles on the British garrison in Australia from 1788 to 1841, from the arrival of the Marines with the First Fleet in 1788 to the arrival of the 96th Regiment in 1841. The articles will not be detailed accounts of the service of each regiment but are designed as outlines upon which further research can be undertaken. The articles will be published in succeeding issues of *Sabretache* and will appear in the order of arrival of the regiments in the country. The regimental articles will be supported by further articles on various aspects pertinent to service in the colony.

The series will not cover the following minor garrison units: <sup>1</sup>

- NSW Invalid Company 1810-1823 (see R H Montague's *Macquarie's Veterans*, Rutherford, 1995 for details of this unit);
- Royal NSW Veteran Companies, 1826-1832;
- Mounted Police, 1825-1850;
- Royal Staff Corps, 1826-1829;
- Royal Engineers, 1835-1870;
- Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners, 1837-1870.

The Marine detachment and the first four regiments arrived in NSW in large detachments. The remaining regiments arrived in smaller detachments usually of one or two officers, one or two Senior NCOs and 30 to 50 Rank and File as guards on convict transports.

The normal convention to date the service of a regiment in the colony is to accept the dates on which the Headquarters (HQ) arrived and departed. Detachments of the regiments which came out as guards on convict transports were in this country, in some cases, twelve months before the arrival of the HQ and some detachments remained for a year or more after the departure of the HQ, usually for India. For instance the first detachment of the 40th Regiment arrived in November 1823, the HQ did not arrive until October 1824. Similarly the HQ left Hobart in September 1828 while the last detachment departed in 1829.

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<sup>1</sup> Some general notes on the Mounted Police and the Royal Staff Corps will, however, be included as supporting articles to the regimental series.

Regiment	Arrival and departure of HQ	Arrival and departure of first and last detachments
Marines (Created Royal Marines in 1802)		1788-91, 1803-12, 1824-29, 1837-45. (See notes)
New South Wales Corps (Changed to 102nd Regiment in 1809)	1790-1810	
73rd Highland Regiment	1810-1814	
46th, South Devonshire Regiment	1814-1817	1814-1818
48th, Northamptonshire Regiment	1817-1824	1817-1824
3rd, East Kent Regiment (The Buffs)	1823-1827	1823-1827
40th, 2nd Somersetshire Regiment	1824-1828	1823-1829
57th, West Middlesex Regiment	1825-1831	1825-1832
39th, Dorsetshire Regiment	1826-1832	1826-1832
63rd, West Suffolk Regiment	1830-1833	1829-1834
17th, Leicestershire Regiment	1831-1836	1830-1836
4th, King's Own Regiment	1831-1837	1831-1838
50th, The Queen's Own	1834-1841	1833-1841
21st, Royal North British Fusiliers	1833-1839	1831-1840
28th, North Gloucestershire Regiment	1835-1842	1835-1842
80th, Staffordshire Volunteers	1837-1844	1836-1844
51st, 2nd Yorkshire North Riding Light Infantry	1838-1846	1838-1847
96th Regiment	1841-1848	1839-1849

A further ten Regiments, including second tours by the 40th and 50th Regiments, and a detachment of Royal Artillery served in Australia up to 1870 when the service of British regiments in Australia ended.

### General references

These references apply to the service of each regiment.

**British Army Lists:** Give the latest movement in officers' rank at date of publication. Available in most State Libraries.

**War Office Series of Records:** The Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP) has micro-filmed some of the WO Series of records relating to the service of British Regiments in Australia (see AJCP Handbook Part 4 – War Office). These are available for all regiments in the National

Library of Australia, the NSW and Victorian State Libraries; broken series are held in other State Libraries and by some genealogical organisations. The major series copied are:

- WO 12 – Muster Books and Pay Lists – These list every soldier in the regiment by surname, given name(abbreviated), and sometimes with regimental number. They do not include officers. The returns, prepared quarterly, show the soldiers present each month and are the pay records for the period. They include promotions/demotions, hospitalisations, deaths ,desertions, discharges, sometimes locations, and detachments to extra-regimental duties such as the Mounted Police.
- As the Muster Books and Pay Lists were prepared by the regimental HQ the AJCP micro-films cover only the periods during which the HQ was in Australia but in odd cases cover short periods of service before and after leaving Australia. Usually where detachments have arrived before or left after the HQ the details mentioned above are not available in the Muster Rolls.
- WO 17 – Monthly Returns – these were prepared in Australia by the staff of the Command HQ. They record the arrival and departure of bodies of troops, the over-all military strength in the colony, composition of regiments by nationality, ie, English (including Welsh), Scottish, Irish and foreign, lists of officers present (sometimes with location) and absent on leave. They also list, by title, correspondence to and from the Horse Guards (British Army HQ) in London.
- WO 25 – Regimental Description and Succession Books – only the description Books for the NSW Corps and the NSW Veteran Companies have been copied. The NSW Corps record is in poor condition. The Description Books for the remaining regiments are held by the Public Record Office (PRO), UK, but the series is not complete. The Description Book entry provides a soldier's name, date and place of birth, civil occupation, a physical description and details of service.
- WO 97 – Soldiers' Documents – available only at PRO; these are attestation and discharge documents for soldiers who remained with the regiment to discharge; documents are not necessarily available for soldiers discharged in Australia.

Other miscellaneous documents have also been copied in the AJCP. These include:

- WO 55 – Ordnance Department;
- WO 58 – Commissariat;
- WO 82, 86, 89 – Judge Advocate General's Office.

### **Published general reference sources:**

Peter Stanley, *The Remote Garrison, The British Army in Australia*, Kenthurst, 1986.

M Austin, *The Army in Australia 1840-1850*, Canberra, 1979.

James Hugh Donoghue, *the British Army in Australia 1788 – 1870, Index of Personnel*, Mosman, 1996. This has been published in hard copy, microfiche and on computer disc. The introductory pages to this index should be treated with caution.

The titles of the regimental histories considered the most detailed and applicable to the periods of the regiments' service in Australia are given in the notes on each regiment. There are, in addition, articles in various historical and genealogical journals. Contemporary local newspaper reports give many details of regimental activity.

## Marines 1788 – 1791 (Royal Marines from 1802)

### Background

8 October 1786 Call for volunteers for detachment for duty in Botany Bay. Role of the detachment was to preserve order and to protect the settlement. Brevet Major Ross appointed Officer Commanding (OC).

13 May 1787 First Fleet sailed from Spithead. Before their departure the officers agreed that it was not the detachment's role to supervise convict labour.

18 January 1788 First Fleet reaches Botany Bay with 21 officers, 191 Marines, 28 wives, 17 children.

### In NSW

Marines constructed their own barracks using tradesmen particularly recruited for the detachment.

February 1788 Two Marines with Lt P G King to form settlement at Norfolk Island.

May 1788 Lt Dawes, appointed Artillery and Engineer Officer; began construction of redoubt at Benelong Point, superseded by fort at Dawes Point in 1791. Dawes also constructed Observatory on Dawes Point from which he carried out astronomical observations.

March 1789 Six Marines hanged for robbing public stores.

### Exploration

March/April 1788 Marines accompanied Governor Phillip to Prospect, Broken Bay and mouth of the Hawkesbury.

June 1789 Captain Watkin Tench to Nepean River.

Aug/Sep 1790 Captain Watkin Tench to Razorback Range (later Cowpastures)  
Captain Watkin Tench to South Creek

May 1791 Captain Watkin Tench to Kurrajong

**Major Ross and Governor Phillip** Tension developed between Ross and Phillip, mostly caused by the actions of the former. He tried to incite this feeling amongst his subordinate officers and also directed it towards the Deputy-Judge Advocate David Collins, who held a Marine commission as a captain.

November 1789 Objected to the raising of a "Night Watch" of convicts and their control over Marines.

February 1790 Ross sent to Norfolk Island as Commandant (Comdt), replacing Lt King. Ross achieved significant developments at Norfolk with a larger convict population and larger Marine detachment.

**Relief by the New South Wales Corps** Members of the NSW Corps arrived in Sydney on the Second Fleet June 1790, followed by reinforcements arriving as guard detachments on later convict transports.

Marines were encouraged to join the Corps with a £3 bounty, a double grant of land on discharge, the grant to be free of rents and taxes for 15 years then to pay a nominal rent of 1 shilling per 50 acres. Eight marines in

Sydney received immediate grants, 28 at Norfolk Island.

Capt George Johnston and 50 Marines transferred. Most of those who transferred were discharged by 1797. The names of the Marines electing transfer are shown on Appx I. The list has been compiled from Table 11, *The First Fleet Marines*, which shows 37 transfers, and an examination of entries in Chapter 7, The Register, p 245 et sequi, *A Colonial Regiment*, Pamela Statham (ed), Canberra, 1992.

First detachment of Marines embarked at Sydney 18 December 1791, the remainder in December 1792.

- 1803-1812** Attempted settlement by Lt Col Collins and party of Marines at Port Phillip Bay. This was aborted and party moved to the Derwent (Van Diemens Land) to join settlement at Risdon Cove; moved then to begin settlement at Hobart Town.
- 1824-1829** Detachment of Marines at Fort Dundas, Melville Island, Northern Territory (NT), in establishment of new settlement with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment. Settlement abandoned.
- 1827-1829** Nine (?) Marines from Fort Dundas at Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay, NT; settlement abandoned.
- 1837-1844** Detachment of 1 Officer, 1 Sgt, 1 Dmr, 21 Ptes to Port Essington; joined by more Marines from Sth Australia in 1838; settlement abandoned.

#### References

- Watkin Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years*, Sydney, 1961.  
 John Moore, *The First Fleet Marines, 1786-1792*, St Lucia, 1987.  
 Col Cyril Field, *Britain's Sea Soldiers*, Liverpool, 1924, 2 vols.  
 Peter G Spillett, *Forsaken Settlement*, Melbourne, 1972.

#### Marines transferred to the NSW Corps

Pte Abbott, Joseph	Pte Hayes, John	Sgt Radford, Joseph
Pte Angell, James	Pte Jones, John	Pte Redman, James
Pte Baxter, William	Pte Jones, William Segar	Pte Rice, John
Pte Bramwell, Thomas	Pte King, William	Pte Richards, Laurence
Pte Brough, Ralph	Pte Knight, Thomas	Pte Richardson, Richard
Pte Chesley, George	Pte Lee, James	Pte Roberts, John
Pte Clements, Henry	Cpl Lucas, Thomas	Pte Rosser, Henry
Sgt Clinch, Richard	Pte Manning, James	Pte Rowden, Thomas
Pte Cusley, William	Pte McArthur, John	Pte Stevens, Robert
Pte Dargin, Peter	Pte McCalder, Joseph	Pte Syms, William (Snr)
Pte Fishbourn, Andrew	Pte Mitchell, William	Pte Watts, John (1)
Pte Gilbert, Stephen (Gilgert)	Pte Nash, William	Pte West, John
Cpl Goodall, William	Pte Nation, Gabriel	Pte White, James
Pte Gore, George	Pte Nicholls, Richard	Pte Wigfall, Samuel
Pte Grant, James	Pte Parsons, Henry	Pte Williams, James.
Pte Green, Charles	Sgt Plowman, James	Cpl Wixstead, John
Pte Hailey, James	Pte Pugh, John	

## German Australians in von Lettow's Army, 1915-1918 ... or, the Governor's Wife was an Australian Actress

Geoff Blackburn<sup>1</sup>

In November 1914, a British task force, known as Indian Expeditionary Force 'B' attempted to invade German East Africa by landing at a place called Tanga on the northern coast of German East Africa. The resulting battle was a disastrous defeat for the British, and coming so soon after the reverses on the Somme the event was hushed up at the time.

This short article is not a dissertation or analysis of the Battle of Tanga that took place on 3-4 November 1914 and is generally well known. What is not so well known is the reason that the British General in charge of the invading force gave for his defeat. According to General A E Aitken, who had overall command of the operation, in comments he made in the war diary written immediately after the failed British invasion, the reason for his defeat was 'the presence of German Reservists from Australia and China.'<sup>2</sup> The British intelligence officer attached to the invading force, Richard Meinertzhagen, who appears to have disliked Aitken, dismissed this out of hand and laid the blame squarely on Aitken's gross incompetence.<sup>3</sup>

Dealing with the Chinese part of Aitken's claim, it is probably reasonable to consider that Aitken was referring here to the German Colony of Tsing Tau (Kio-chau), located on the south side of the Shantung Peninsula on the mainland of China approximately 500kms south east of Peking. Germany at this time held the port under a '99 year lease' from China. On 15 August 1914, Japan sent Germany an ultimatum demanding it surrender the colony at Tsing-Tau. Germany declined and Japan holding the view that the possession of this place by Germany was a source of irritation and possible mischief commenced naval and military operations against it. The initial Japanese invasion took place on 2 September 1914. The British military were involved in the invasion that saw the capitulation of Tsing-Tau on 7 November 1914 following a stubborn German resistance. British casualties were 12 killed and 61 wounded, Japanese casualties were 236 killed and 1,282 wounded. The Germans surrendered 201 officers with 3,841 non-commissioned officers and men. It is difficult to see how Germans from China would have been interested in going to fight in GEA when they were under threat themselves. In fact the German garrison at Tsing-Tau held out and did not surrender until two days after the British defeat at Tanga.<sup>4</sup> However, we know that some Australians made their way independently to BEA to fight on the British side, so it is presumed equally possible for German Australians to have done a similar thing and made their way to GEA to fight for the German side. At that time there was quite a German population in South Australia that had settled there from the 1850s onwards. Many of these became somewhat dissatisfied and a lot of these people migrated to the SW of Western Australia between 1895-1910.

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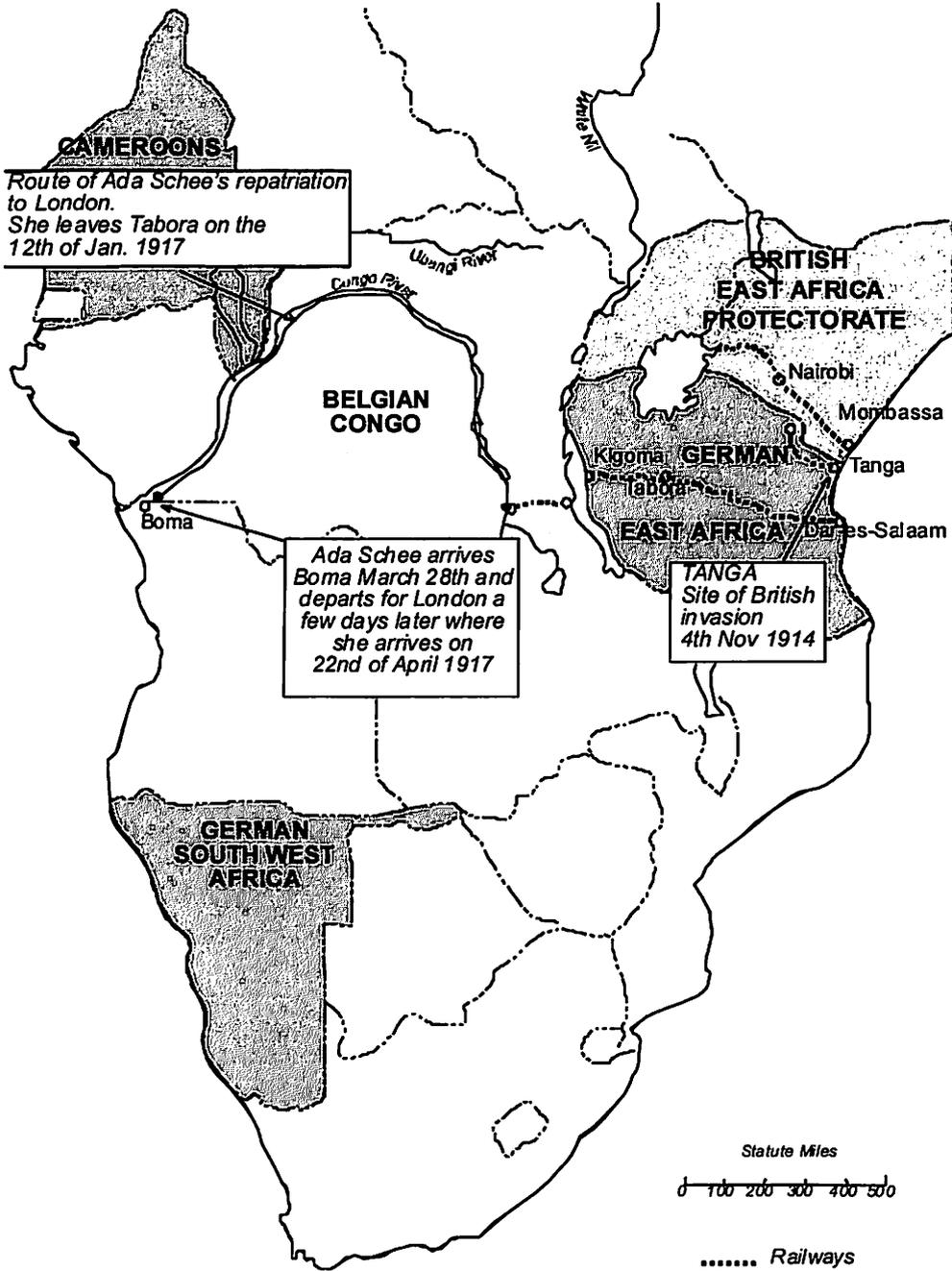
<sup>1</sup> Geoff Blackburn was born in Albany, WA, in 1948. Educated at Christ Church Grammar School he graduated with a degree in geology and pursued a career in mineral exploration. A part time historical author, he has had three books published. His latest book being *Conquest and Settlement—the 21st Regiment of Foot in Western Australia 1833-1840*, (Hesperian Press 1999). This article derives from research that Geoff is carrying out for his forthcoming book, provisionally titled, *Adventurers at War*, which is a discourse on the role that various Australians played in the conflict throughout Equatorial Africa during World War I.

<sup>2</sup> War Diary IEF 'B' vol 4 page 17 also quoted by Pradhan, S D (1991) p 67 and endnotes 105-6.

<sup>3</sup> See Meinertzhagen, R (1960) p 102 (under the date 7 November 1914) and p 104 for his discussions on the matter.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times History of the War*, vol 2 pp 407-436.

Location plan of German East Africa showing the site of the British landing at Tanga and the route of Ada Schee's repatriation through the Belgian Congo.



According to the memoirs of the British General Fendall who was in Dar-es-Salaam during the East African campaign, the wife of Dr Heinrich Schnee, the Governor of GEA, was 'a native of Australia or New Zealand.'<sup>5</sup> In her memoirs, originally published in German in 1918, but recently translated and republished in English, Frau Ada Schnee while at Tabora, following her capture by the Belgians states that 'I made a petition meanwhile to General Tambeur to permit me to go to my father in Australia.'<sup>6</sup> This petition was eventually refused by General Smuts who considered that she would use the trip through Dar-es-Salaam to obtain information and that "I should not be set free since I might be very dangerous." However, she was eventually permitted to send a telegram to her father and received a reply that he was alive and well. The Belgians then arranged to exchange her for some Belgian POWs held in Germany. To accommodate this they shipped her from Tabora west across Lake Tanganyika and then by a series of land and river trips down the Congo River to Boma where she was put on a boat to England and then Germany.<sup>7</sup>

This is a curious coincidence given Aitken's claim and there may be nothing at all in it, but why would Aitken's invent such a curious



Frau Ada Schnee with von Lettow-vorbeck circa 1941.

<sup>5</sup> Fendall, C P *The East African Force 1915-1919*. (1921) Battery Press Reprint, Nashville, p 227.

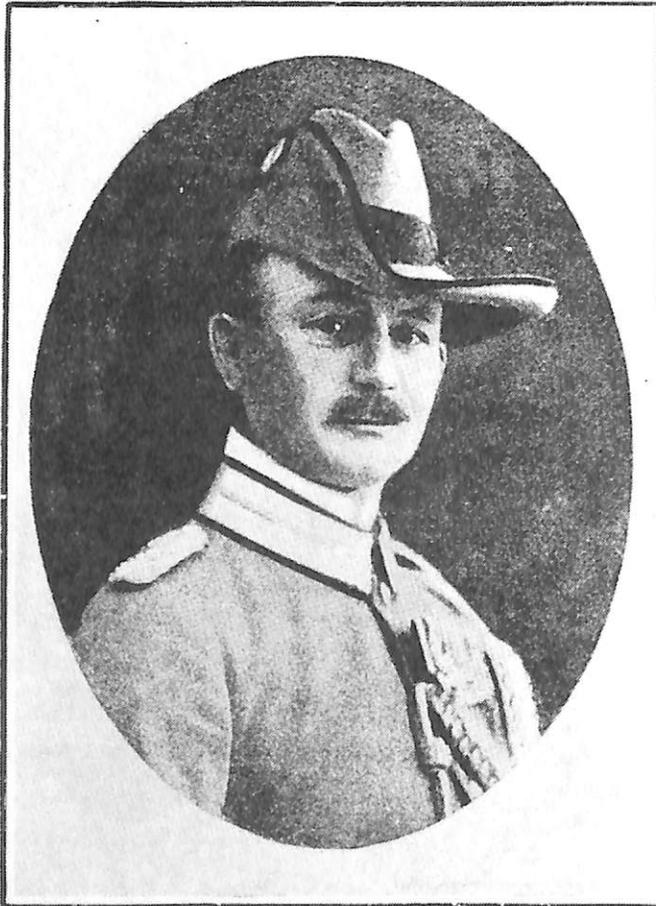
<sup>6</sup> It seems that while Ada was born in New Zealand in 1872, the family moved to Australia in about 1879 when Ada was 7 years old and remained there. Her parents were married in Melbourne on the 29th September 1861 before they joined the Otago gold rush in ca 1863.

<sup>7</sup> Schnee, Ada (1995) *Bibi Mkuba – My Experiences in German East Africa during World War I* The Borgo Press, California pp 15, 67. For a detailed description of this remarkable journey, see Bibi Mkuba pp 67-86. An interesting rebuttal of Frau Schnee's allegations as to the deprivations suffered during the journey are contained in a footnote to page 47 of volume 14 of *The Times History of the War* published in 1919, the year after her own volume was originally published in German.

excuse for his defeat without any support for it? It is worthwhile noting that any sympathies that Ada Schnee might have had with the British war effort disappeared when the British navy shelled her home on the 30th November 1914. As the British General C P Fendall noted in his memoir:

The Governor's palace is in an enclosure of several acres, containing some very fine trees. It looks out to the east over the open sea, beyond the harbour, and must have been quite a fine building before the navy shelled it, and knocked the upper story down so wrecking the lower story in the fall.

The Governor's wife, a native of Australia or New Zealand, was indignant at the destruction of her home, and as General Wahle, in his diary, says that she was so angry that she said she would never have anything more to do with the English. She kept her word, for when taken prisoner by the Belgians on their occupation of Tabora, she was sent, at her own request to Germany, in exchange for some Belgian women then in German hands.<sup>8</sup>



Colonel von Lettlow-Vorbeck circa 1915.

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<sup>8</sup> Fendall, 1992 p 227.

Ada Schnee in her memoirs records following the declaration of war the confusing position in which she found herself: 'I was reminded that I am of English Irish descent, my father being from Birmingham in England.'<sup>9</sup> Her maiden name was in fact Ada Adeline Woodhill.<sup>10</sup> Her father was from Birmingham, and her mother was Irish.<sup>11</sup> Ada Woodhill was a Sydney based actress who in 1901, at the age of 28 left by ship to travel to America. It was on board ship that she met Dr Schnee and travelled with him to New York where they married on the 7th November 1901. At this time he occupied the position of Deputy Governor of German Samoa to which position he had been appointed in 1900 and which he seems to have held until about 1904. In 1905 he was appointed the Colonial Councillor to the German Embassy in London. He became the Governor of German East Africa in 1912. He was noted for the social reforms instituted during his tenancy and the civil works constructed.<sup>12</sup>

The recent finding of Governor and Frau Ada Schnee's personal papers in an archive in Germany where they occupy some 4 metres of shelf space may throw some light on this interesting matter. Any comments or information that readers might wish to make can be directed to the author.

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<sup>9</sup> Schnee, Ada (1995) p 15

<sup>10</sup> Ada Schnee nee Woodhill was born at Naseby, situated on the South Island of New Zealand on the 17th October 1873 (birth number 427 from folio 1222/1872). Her father was Joseph Henry Woodhill, a miner of Naseby. Her mother was Bridget Woodhill, formerly Morrisey. Naseby was an alluvial goldmining town located to the north west of Dunedin. Gold was worked there from its discovery in 1863 to 1959. Joseph Henry Woodhill, a man of independent means, died in Sydney on the 13th November 1926 at the age of 88 years. In his obituary published in the Sydney Morning Herald 15th November 1926 p12b, Joseph Henry Woodhill was described as "a very old colonist", "one of the first business men to set up in Carlton" and "had been in Australia for 77 years." His daughter, Ada Woodhill is described in the obituary as "a leading actress who went to America where she married." At least two of Ada Schnee's brothers Daniel W and John also died in Sydney in 1925 and 1929 respectively. Another brother, trooper Herbert Stanley Woodhill 2911 served in South Africa during the Boer War with the 3rd NSW Mounted Rifles (Murray, P L 1912 p 142).

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Ute Dietsch of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin dated 22nd July 1998, file number 4175/98-3.1.1. This information is contained on the index sheet.

<sup>12</sup> After the war, Dr Schnee went on to have a distinguished parliamentary career, being elected to the Reichstag in 1924 as a representative of the German Peoples' Party, a position he held until 1934. In 1925 he was elected Senator of the German Academy in Munich. He wrote and published extensively on the fate of the German colonies that had been annexed by the Allied powers. Unfortunately most of these works are in German. Heinrich Schnee died in Berlin on the 23rd June 1949.

## A Story of Coincidence — Norman Huon, Imperial Camel Corps, AIF

Trevor Turner

**I**t happened some years ago. While driving to Melbourne, my wife and I paused for lunch in the beautiful botanic gardens in the NSW border city of Albury. Having finished our lunch we were strolling back to our car when my wife drew my attention to a bronze plaque under a shady Queensland Brush Box tree, not far from the gardens entrance. The plaque read:

This tree was planted in the memory of SGT Norman F B Huon, 8th Regiment Australian Light Horse, killed in action December 23, 1916 Bir El Maghaba, Egypt. Nephew of Hamilton Hume.

I could scarcely believe my eyes. Several months earlier when travelling through the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney, I had purchased from a small roadside antique shop a worn and scratched postcard photograph of a young corporal of the First AIF. The hand written inscription on the reverse of the Photograph read:

With best wishes from Sergeant N B Huon, No 2592, 18th Reinforcements, 8th Light Horse, Abroad

This photograph post card had been produced by the Swiss Studios, Bourke Street, Melbourne. It unfortunately bears no date. Very pleased with this chance discovery of Norman Huon's plaque I took the obligatory photograph and drove on. As we travelled across the causeway to Wodonga and into Victoria we decided to stop and see if Huon's name appeared on that town's war memorial. As I scanned the names on the grey granite obelisk, there, in the centre of this column, was his name simply inscribed: N.B.HUON. A quick perusal of the local road map also revealed such names as Huon's Creek Road, Huon's Hill Road and Huon Street. It seemed obvious to this outsider that the Huon family had a good deal to do with the history and development of the Albury-Wodonga area. Unfortunately we had to continue our journey, with these interesting coincidences aside we continued on to Melbourne.

Some weeks later, having returned from Melbourne, I was perusing several books in my local library searching for some information on an unrelated topic. I was flicking through the index pages of *The Desert Hath Pearls* by Colonel J R 'Rex' Hall when I suddenly noticed in the index on page 216: Huon, Corporal N F B, Killed 65-66.

I turned to page 65 and found the following dealing with the battle of Maghaba, 23 December 1916:

The attack by the Light Horse moving around the flanks at 10 am. My company was allowed to the central frontal position, following the telegraph line on our left. The ground was flat with turfs of grass just high enough to conceal a man lying down. By 4 pm we had just advanced 1200 yards under rifle and machine gun fire until within 150 yards of the enemy redoubt. We had kept up continuous fire, covering our troops in short bounds. As the section leader I had about thirty men and two Lewis machine guns. After directing fire from one Lewis gun I moved on a few yards to another tusk of grass when I heard behind me the feared dull thud, my gunner, whom I had left seconds before, Private P Butcher, got

a bullet in the head. Another of my men, Corporal N F B Huon, of Melbourne, was also killed: three others were wounded.

and on page 66 under a diary entry dated 'Xmas Day'

We deeply regret the two of our section killed, Corporal Huon and Private Butcher ... As is customary I wrote to the Next of Kin of the two boys, and although my section came from all over Australia, Corporal Huon's Next of Kin was his sister, Mrs Egerton Hill, who lived a quarter of a mile from my house in Glen Iris. We later became good friends...

and still on page 74:

Corporal Huon's tragic end should never have occurred. He was detailed for duty with the 'LED' Camels, that is behind the firing line. He pleaded with me to let him go into the firing line, claiming that as a reinforcement he had not had the opportunity the others had. Against my better judgment I consented. Never Again!

Rex Hall had at that time, during the Great War, been a lieutenant with 2 Section, 14 Coy, 3 Bn, Imperial Camel Corps. He had enlisted in the AIF in August 1914 and after service at Gallipoli was commissioned in July 1916 into the 2 Light Horse Regiment. Thereafter he was eventually seconded to the Imperial Camel Corps. He later became a Staff Captain on the Imperial Camel Brigade and, after the disbandment of the Camel Corps, was Acting Brigade Major of the newly formed 5 Australian Light Horse Brigade. In 1919 he became ADC to General Sir Harry Chauvel with whom he maintained a long association. On return to Australia, and civilian life, Rex Hall founded the company Farm and Pastoral Supplies Pty Ltd. Between the wars he continued his soldiering in the CMF and ended his military service as Director of Rehabilitation to the Australian Army.

Norman Farquhar Bruce Huon enlisted in the AIF on 17 November 1915 in Melbourne. He was then twenty-five years of age and stated his occupation as a postal clerk of 28 Coleridge Street in East Kew. (Though other references state his occupation as Bank Clerk and Grants Official with the National Australia Bank). His father, William Huon, was deceased and Norman lived at this address with his widowed mother, Florence Huon. Described as being five feet, five and three quarters tall with a fresh complexion, grey eyes and dark hair, he was single and stated that he had been born at Wodonga in Victoria in 1890 and had attended school at Albury Grammar.

Norman's mother had formerly been Florence Hume and was indeed a descendent of noted Australian explorer, Hamilton Hume. Though closely related, Norman was not his nephew as stated on the plaque. The Huon family had been very prominent in the early development of the rural Victorian border city of Wodonga. Norman's ancestors, Charles and Paul Huon, originally gave the name 'Wodonga' to the stock run they took up in 1836. Norman was the grandson of Paul. In this small rural community at this time marriages between the local pioneering families of the Huon, Mitchell, Hume, Furlong, Kennedy, Brown, Dight, Heriot, Barbour and Reid families were well entwined and soon became very complicated indeed. However, Norman's father maintained the family prominence, being a local identity and magistrate for almost forty years until 1904. Norman's father also built the fine old Homestead 'De Kerilleau' at the foot of Huon's Hill in Wodonga in the early 1870s. It survives to this day. Norman's early ancestors were also reputed to have served in the Crusades'

A military tradition, of sorts, was established when Norman's elder brother, Walter, was among the first local men to volunteer for service in South Africa during the Boer War. He served as 233 Sergeant Walter Huon, B Squadron, NSW Citizens Bushman's Corps. He returned safely from that conflict but, unlike his younger brother, did not serve in the AIF during the Great War.



On 7 December 1915, Norman was posted to Seymour in rural Victoria to 3 Depot Squadron for Light Horse training. It was here, on 16 December, that he was promoted corporal and in the new year, on 26 January, to sergeant. This was followed by attendance at the 7th Officers Training School at Broadmeadows from 1 February to 1 March. Norman passed this course and received his certificate. After completing his officer training course Norman was posted to the 18th reinforcements to the 8th Light Horse Regiment, again at Seymour, on 14 April 1916. It would seem that there were no vacancies for sergeants or officers with these reinforcements and Norman was required to revert to trooper. However, at embarkation he was soon an acting corporal. Diligent and conscientious his future seemed

bright indeed. The 18th Reinforcements, under the command of Major William Day, embarked at Melbourne aboard the HMAT *Mongolia* on 11 July 1916.

Upon arrival in Egypt, and in keeping with AIF policy in regard to reinforcement NCOs, he was again reverted to trooper and posted to the details of the 8th Light Horse Regiment at Moascar on 12 August, 1916. Less than a month later he was transferred to the Imperial Camel Corps at Abbassia and then posted to 3 Battalion, 14 Company, 2 Section, on 11 September. In fact many of Norman's 18th Reinforcements were posted to the 3 Bn, Imperial Camel Corps. Still at Abbassia he was promoted Temporary Lance Corporal on 1 October 1916.

The first real test in battle for the Camel Corps came during the Battle for Magdhaba on 23 December 1916. Magdhaba was a Turkish Post some 23 miles inland from El Arish. All reports indicated that the post was strongly held. The Magdhaba position was encircled by the First and Third Australian Light Horse Brigade with eight companies of the imperial Camel Corps, including Norman's 14 Company, and the Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery. The attack was commenced by the Light Horse moving around the flanks at 10 am. The ensuing battle was intense and lasted for some eight hours and included the attack of entrenched Turkish positions. Turkish fire was very heavy and progress was slow. This was true of the Camel Corps, who on flat ground devoid of cover were making little headway. Ultimately the battle was successful but as usual too many paid the price for that success. In his first major engagement 2592 Lance Corporal Norman Huon was reported Killed In Action at Magdhaba on 23 December 1916 in the action previously described by Rex Hall. He was later reported by Hall as being buried some 1400 yards North East of the well at El Magdhaba. In late February 1917, Hall despatched, with a patrol going out to Magdhaba, two wooden crosses he had specially made for the graves of Corporal Huon and Private Butcher. Unfortunately both graves have since been lost.

Norman's distressed mother eventually received his personal effects in mid 1917. This small parcel consisted of an identity disc, a wallet containing a certificate, cards, and a photo, a small wallet containing photos, a clasp knife, a cigarette case, spectacles in case, a camera, a watch in

its case, a comb, letter and a New Testament. In 1927 his mother, then living at 30 Grosvenor Street Middle Brighton in Melbourne, received a letter from the Army stating that:

With further reference to the report of burial of your son, the late No. 2592 Lance Corporal N F B Huon, Imperial Camel Corps, I am now in receipt of advice that despite the most exhaustive enquiry and investigation the Imperial War Grave Commission has not been successful in recovering the remains of this soldier and with a view to fittingly perpetuating his memory in common with that of other members of the Imperial and Dominion forces who fell in Palestine and Syria and have no known graves his name has been inscribed on the Memorial to the Missing; erected in Jerusalem Cemetery.

Mrs Huon had continued to receive a number of mementoes from the authorities commemorating her late son. The most prominent being his British War Medal (1922) and Victory Medal (1923). She also received a Memorial Scroll (1921) and Memorial Plaque (1922).

Norman's rank displayed in the photograph is that of corporal and was probably taken sometime before Christmas 1915 and New Year, though Norman refers to himself as sergeant on the reverse of his photograph, as does the plaque in the Albury Botanical Gardens. However, further research revealed a copy of the same photograph of Norman held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. This photograph has a third chevron drawn or painted upon his right arm. The caption accompanying the Australian War Memorial photograph states:

Portrait of 2592 Sergeant Norman F B Huon, 8th Light Horse Regiment, killed in action.  
1916-12-23.

Interestingly, this caption also states his unit as the 8th Light Horse, as does his memorial Plaque in the Albury Botanical Gardens, rather than the Camel Corps. Having been allotted to the 18th Reinforcements he may not have yet reverted to trooper. It seems probable that Norman distributed the photograph far and wide to many friends and family members, and was still doing so after his promotion to sergeant. I suspect that human vanity being what it is Norman was referred to, and commemorated, by his family and friends, in his highest achieved rank, albeit very temporary. The Botanical Gardens plaque also incorrectly states that he was killed at Maghaba, Egypt. Maghaba of course, being in the Sinai.

As the Huon family featured prominently in the settlement and development of the Wodonga area it is perhaps, not unexpected that his passing should have been commemorated with the plaque in Albury's Botanical Garden not far from the memorial to his famous ancestor, Hamilton Hume.

These series of coincidences have brought to life the young soldier whose pleasant, smiling face still looks out from an old and stained photograph, unaware of the tragic fate that awaits him only months away. I would be very interested to hear if any member knows the whereabouts of Norman's medals or that of his brother Walter, for the Boer War.

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## The Legion d'Honneur and the 1998 Australian-French Commemorations of the End of WW1

Major Richard Murison

France has awarded the chevalier grade of the Legion of Honour to surviving Allied veterans who served in France in World War I. July 4 was designated by the French Government as Australia's day during the year of the 80th anniversary of the 1918 Armistice. Ted Smout and Eric Abraham of Brisbane, Howard Pope of Adelaide, all aged 100, and Charlie Mance, 97, of Sydney were the first to be presented with the medal of the Legion of Honour, during the joint Australia-French commemoration at Villers Bretonneux on 4 July 1998.

The Order of the Legion d'Honneur is the highest of France's honours and awards. The Legion of Honour was instituted in 1802, and bestowed for the first time on 15 July 1804 by Napoleon Bonaparte. Among the first to be honoured were eighteen marshals, five cardinals and a number of scholars, scientists, writers and composers. As well as the order being maintained to the present day, the organisation of the Legion of Honour has remained the same since the organic decree of 16 March, 1852.

The old de Salm mansion on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris houses the central offices and the museum of the Legion d'Honneur. The museum possesses the Orders, and their various insignia, of the former French Regimes: the Napoleonic, the restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy, the July Kingdom of King Louis Philippe of Orleans, the reign of Napoleon III and the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Republics.

Since 1802 the medal has changed little, and the five-sided double-pointed star and the red moire ribbon, from which it is suspended, have never varied. The medal of the chevalier grade is made of white enamel on silver, and is encircled by a green wreath of oak and laurel leaves, and in the Republican period surmounted by a smaller, similar wreath. In earlier times the medal was surmounted by various crowns according to the Regime. After the fall of Napoleon in 1814, the badge was altered by replacing the head of the Emperor Napoleon with that of King Henry the Fourth. The Second Republic in 1848 returned to the 1802 portrait of the Consul Bonaparte. Since the Third Republic in 1870, the obverse of the medal depicts the head of 'Marianne', the symbolic French Republic head, and on the reverse are two tricolour flags. The inscription on the obverse reads 'Republique Francaise' and on the reverse 'Honneur et Patrie'. The illustration shows the reverse of one of the types of the Legion of Honour, additionally inscribed '29 floreal an X' (19 May 1802 – the date of the Order's institution). The Legion of Honour has five grades: Knights (Chevaliers), Officers, Commanders, Grand Officers and Grand Crosses. The President of France automatically becomes the Grand Master of the Order upon taking office. Foreigners may be nominated for membership in the Order by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The second group of Australian World War I veterans was presented with Legion of Honour medals on 14 July, at separate Bastille Day celebrations in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. They were Ernest Peddell, 99, Fred Kelly, 101, and Herbert Perry, 103.

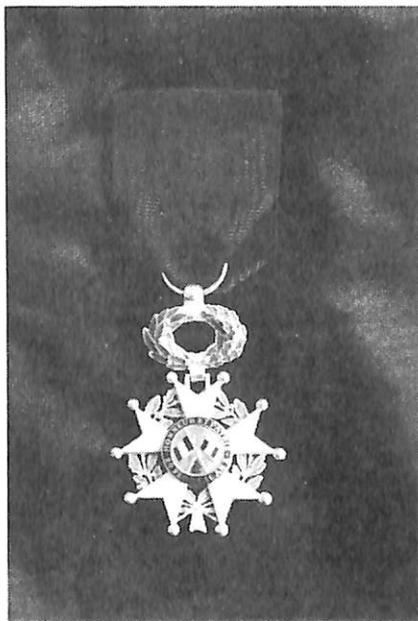
On 8 August at Government House, Adelaide on the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Amiens, the French ambassador, Mr Dominique Girard, presented more medals to Tom Robinson, 101 and Bert Burnard, 100, in the presence of Howard Pope, 100, who had received his award earlier in France. Missing was Frank Haines, 101, of Mt Gambier who was too frail to travel. Digger Bert said, 'this has been a wonderful performance, but we were only doing our job'.

Nevertheless with regard to honouring our veterans, Prime Minister Howard has said France had not forgotten the sacrifice of the hundreds of thousands of Australians, who fought and died for the freedom of France and her allies, and this is a singular honour to them all.

Howard Pope was one of the four Diggers, who after the commemoration at Villers Bretonneux wore their medal at the ceremonies in July for the dedication of two new World War I memorials at Le Hamel and Fromelles. The four Diggers wore their medal too, before leaving France for the burial of Private Russell Bosisto, 27th Battalion, at Courcellette War Cemetery. Howard Pope took part in 27th Battalion's actions, including Amiens on 8 August 1918 and another three battles that year. Private Bosisto was posted missing, believed killed, at the battle of Pozieres in August 1916. A French farmer found his body in the last year. Consequently, the Guard of Honour for all the ceremonies in France in July was provided by the 10th/27th Battalion Royal South Australia Regiment (10/27 RSAR). The 57-man guard, commanded by Major Steve Larkins, included 12 of the Royal Australian Regiment. Also, present in France and at Government House on 8 August were Brigadier Neil Wilson, AM RFD, Commander 9 Brigade, Lt Col Doug Strain, CO 10/27 RSAR and RSM Roger Lambert 10/27 RSAR.

Interestingly, from Napoleonic times, the honour has been awarded even to French cities during wartime. Thirty-one cities were decorated between 1914 and 1917, including Bapaume and Verdun. The practice of conferring the Legion of Honour upon the colours of regiments was introduced by Napoleon III, when he bestowed it upon regiments, which had distinguished themselves during the Italian campaign of 1859. The first of these was 2e Regiment de zouaves. Only one flag was so honoured in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the colours of the 57th Regiment d'infanterie, authorised 13 July 1880. From 1859 to 1947, fifty-seven regimental colours were decorated.

The award of the Legion of Honour to surviving veterans speaks volumes for the gratitude that the French people still feel for them after 80 years. Further presentations have been made in Australia to veterans, as approvals for their Legion of Honour have been received from Paris.



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## The Story of Leonard Kentish

R G Clarke

Some time in September 1942, the Islands of Aru were occupied by the Empire of Japan. They then established a naval base at the small fishing port of Dobo. The Aru Islands are located in the Arafura Sea off the south coast of Dutch New Guinea. The Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) also established a seaplane base at Dobo, using the local Dutch East Indies population as forced labour. The base was manned by a base staff and was home to the 734th Kotatai Squadron of the IJN Naval Air Arm, whose object was to keep an eye on the port of Darwin and allied shipping north of Australia for any build up of allied forces. Lieutenant Sagejima Mangan was in command of the base. A lifetime of service in the IJN had imbued him with a cruel ruthless disposition, not lessened by his posting, which he disliked. He resented the perceived superiority of the seaplane aircrews who did not mix with him and treated him as 'the man about the place'. He hated the heat, rain, humidity and mosquitoes at Dobo. Bouts of malaria sapped his strength and enthusiasm. His assistant or aide was Hoyama Kenzo, a permanent service IJN Petty Officer. He was a stolid mechanical type, trained to carry out orders no matter how cruel or outrageous. The Civilian Administrator of Dobo was Kohama Shousuka, a bombastic little man who suffered delusions of grandeur. He ape'd the military and strutted around wearing a semi-military style uniform and a razor-sharp imitation Samurai sword. As he spoke some English, his ego was further inflated when he was used as an interpreter. By virtue of their duties, these three men drifted into a loose living and working arrangement.

Darwin in 1942, although a major base, resembled a frontier town. Roads were virtually non-existent, and transport to isolated communities, missions and lighthouses was either by ship lugger, canoe, or via long treks on foot or horseback. An American Air Force officer arriving in Darwin in early 1942 remarked, 'the town resembled a wild west town of America at the turn of the century'. During 1942-43, Rev Leonard Kentish, the head of the Northern Territory Methodist Mission, spent many weeks evacuating aboriginal women and children from missions along the Northern Territory coast to safer areas to the south. In January 1943, he was at the Methodist Mission on Goulburn Island awaiting the arrival of a navy supply ship, HMAS *Patrician Cam*. Classed by the navy as an auxiliary mine sweeper, 'Pat Cam' was one of the busiest ships based at Darwin. Her main task was to resupply isolated missions and communities as far east as Groote Island with occasional trips further east to Thursday Island. Kentish joined the ship at Goulburn Island for onward passage to an isolated mainland community called 'Yirrkala' in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

On Friday, 22 January 1943, 'Pat Cam' was sailing east in brilliant sunshine on a smooth sea. It was late afternoon and the tropical sun was low in the western sky. Most of the crew was on the cargo hold hatch top. The normal course for IJN floatplanes carrying out reconnaissance flights from Dobo was to fly roughly south-west, pick up Melville Island, then turn east as far as roughly Cape Wessel, then return north-west to their base. Flights were usually mid to late afternoon, so as the planes flew with the sun behind them it made them hard to spot. Such was the scene as 'Pat Cam' plodded east to Cape Wessel.

'Float plane Joe' (as nicknamed by the sailors) switched off his engine, dived out of the sun and dropped a bomb squarely on the ship. The bomb wet through the open hatch and blew out the ship's bottom. The ship broke in half and sank. The floatplane circled around, machine-gunning survivors struggling in the sea, then dropped its second bomb among the largest group of

survivors, causing severe concussion to the men in the vicinity. It then circled around and landed on the calm ocean. One of the crew climbed down from the cockpit and directed the pilot to a group of survivors where he beckoned and called for someone to swim over. No one accepted. By this time, Kentish had drifted about 50 yards out from the main group. The aircraft taxied over and stopped near him. He was covered by a revolver and ordered to swim over. After a brief conversation, the crewman on the float hauled him up onto the float. He was given a drink from a flask and bundled into the plane, which took off and disappeared north-west.

The daily reconnaissance plane returned to Dobo and taxied to its moorings. Instead of the normal three men on the duty motor boat, there were four. The stranger was a big man covered in oil and bleeding from the nose and mouth, clad in a dirty pair of khaki shorts. At the base, Kentish was hustled into a small office. Kohama was sent for and a preliminary interrogation began. However, Kentish was profoundly deaf and by pointing to his ears, tried to convince the Japanese that he was unable to hear them, let alone understand Kohama's questions. This annoyed his captors intensely. The Squadron CO told Sagejima that he would have to find accommodation for the prisoner. He accepted this with bad grace, indicating that he was not a gaoler and felt it was beneath his dignity, Kentish being the flyboys' prisoner, not the base staff's. Kohama, always anxious to ingratiate himself with the military, pointed out that the civilian gaol was empty. Kentish was bundled out, kicked and cuffed into a small concrete structure, where he was ill fed, ill treated, interrogated by Sagejima and Kohama, and beaten up by Homa Kenzo on Sagejima's orders. During the next few weeks, several of the locals from Dobo smuggled water and food wrapped in bana leaves to him. Somehow, Kentisk obtained a piece of charcoal with which he wrote on the cell wall 'Leonard Missionary', which in the end helped to indict Sagejima.

Around this time, American and Australian aircraft were intensifying air attacks on the base at Dobo, causing damage and heavy casualties in an effort to destroy the Reconnaissance Squadron. Sagejima became enraged over these attacks and conceived of the idea of taking vengeance on his prisoner. Seeking out Kohama, he suggested that Kentish be executed. Kohama readily agreed and strapped on his sword. Sagejima called on his aide Hoyama Kenzo and the three of them, led by Sagejima, went to the gaol. Kentish was dragged, kicked and made to march to a nearby bomb crater, where he was made to kneel. Hoyama blindfolded the prisoner, and Kohama, drawing his sword, passed it to the Petty Officer, asking that it be used in the execution. On Sagejima's orders, Hoyama decapitated the prisoner.

The three perpetrators of this crime slipped through the allied net and were demobilised and returned to Japan where, by 1947, all three were respectable industrious citizens enjoying a quiet comfortable life. Much to everyone's surprise, they were arrested by the Occupation Forces in the Spring of 1947, and on 21 May 1948 came before an Allied War Crimes Court in Hong Kong charged with murder. All three were represented by counsel from Japan. The evidence was overwhelming. Under cross-examination, Sagejima was shown to be an unconvincing witness, changing his testimony four times and trying to shift the blame onto the others. On 27 May 1948, he was sentenced to death by hanging. Kohama's and Hoyama's death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. Sagejima was hanged in Stanley Prison, Hong Kong, on 24 August 1948. His final remarks were, 'I thank you, long life the British Empire'. Kohama and Hoyama were sent to the PoW camp and prison on Manus Island. After serving five years, they were returned to Japan, on humane grounds, to serve out the remainder of the sentences. Shortly after arrival in Japan, they were released by the Japanese Government. No protest was made as, by then, Japan was needed as a base to pursue the conflict in Korea and as a bastion against Russia and China.

Leonard Kentish's remains were recovered from Dobo and now rest in the Ambon War Cemetery.

## Book Reviews

*The Battle of Hamel, The Australians' Finest Victory*, John Laffin, Kangaroo Press, 1999, softback, 176pp, 17 illustrations, 2 maps, index, \$19.95.

John Laffin has, since the 1960s, been the primemover in promoting the establishment of a memorial in France to the memory of the First AIF and its brilliant success at Le Hamel on 4 July 1918. Last year, on the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Hamel, the Australian Corps Memorial Park at Le Hamel in France was dedicated.

In May 1918, Monash was given command of the Australian Corps. This was the first time the five Australian divisions had come together under an Australian commander. He proceeded to demonstrate what meticulous planning and execution of a battle strategy could achieve. Although small in scale (it lasted only 93 minutes and involved the 4th Australian Division with the addition of the machine gun battalions of the 2nd, 3rd and 5th Divisions, 60 Mark V tanks, 600 artillery pieces, units of the Australian Flying Corps and Royal Air Force, and eight companies of American forces who were training in the Australian sector), the Hamel offensive on 4 July 1918 was one of the most important undertaken by the Australians on the Western Front. It provided a blueprint for other Allied action that led to the 'Black Day of the German Army' on 8 August 1918 and its defeat three months later.

John Laffin's latest book is written as a popular history of this significant battle. It is very readable and provides sufficient detail to grasp the background to the battle, understand the plan and gain an appreciation of its course.

Being a popular history rather than an academic study, it does not contain any footnotes. Nevertheless, the author has indicated the books he consulted and notes that he 'also consulted numerous personal diaries, letters, unit histories, war diaries, and other contemporary documents held in the Research Department of the Australian War Memorial'.

As Laffin notes, the Battle of Hamel has been somewhat neglected and deserves to be better recognised among the Australian community. This book should contribute to a better understanding of its significance and the role of the AIF in France.

*Not Bad Coves, Alfred Leahy with the Tenth Field Company, Australian Engineers, 1st AIF*, Margaret Neate, Peacock Publications, 1999, hardback, 145pp, 28 illustrations, 3 maps, index.

Margaret Neate has based this book about her father's service with the 10th Field Company, Australian Engineers, on letters written by him to family members from immediately prior to enlistment in Melbourne in 1915 until his departure from France in 1919, as well as on other soldiers' personal diaries and unit records.

Like a number of personal accounts that have been published in recent times, it provides valuable insights into the personal life of an ordinary soldier during the Great War. But it is not merely an account of one soldier's war service, it places that service in its context by outlining the main events in which Australians were involved on the Western Front from the end of 1916. The illustrations range from a photograph of a handwritten requisition for gum boots to a photograph showing engineers from Leahy's unit constructing a bridge. The text is very readable, and strikes an appropriate balance between the personal detail and the wider historical

and military context, providing an interesting description of life in the AIF and the role of the Engineers during the First World War.

*The Second World War and its Australian Army Battle Honours*, Maj Gen Gordon L Maitland, Kangaroo Press, 1999, hardback, 160pp, 31 illustrations, 38 maps, \$39.95.

Major General Maitland's book is the result of a very ambitious project, providing an overview and brief description of every battle in which battle honours were won by Australian units during the Second World War. But the book is more than that, it is also a brief history of the War. As such, it is a very readable overview of the entire war, with particular reference to the important battles in which Australians were involved.

This makes the book a very handy reference that should be part of every Australian military historian's collection. It contains sufficient detail to get a quick understanding of each action, indicating in overview narrative form the background, objectives, course of the battle, results, dates and units involved. From this starting point one can go to the unit histories and other resources that are usefully listed in the bibliography.

There are many ways in which a book on this subject could have been written. The vast scope of the subject could have meant that the book could have been ten times its size, but the way in which Maitland has managed to be concise, informative and readable means that it is a book that readers with only a peripheral interest in the Australian Army and its involvement in the Second World War will want to read, as well as being a quick reference for the historian.

## Books Available

*The Last Call of the Bugle, The Long Road to Kapyong*, Jack Gallaway, second edition, University of Queensland Press, 1999, softback, 312pp, 30 illustrations, 30 maps, index, list of 3 RAR casualties, \$19.95.

The University of Queensland Press has recently published a second edition of Jack Gallaway's account of the operations of the Third Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, during the Korean War from September 1950 until April 1951, which culminated in the Battle of Kapyong, for which the unit earned the United States Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation.

*Weekend Warriors, The Militiamen of South Gippsland's Infantry Regiments*, Allan Box, Box Military Books, 1999, softback, 56 glossy pages (A4), 60 illustrations, 2 maps, \$25. Available from Box Military Books, 20 Brumley St, Leongatha Vic 3953.

Allan Box has produced a detailed account of the militia regiments of the South Gippsland area of Victoria from the colonial period until 1946. It contains numerous illustrations of individuals and badges as well as some lists of members of units at particular points in time. It is very well produced and is an invaluable source of information on the 29th/22nd battalion during the Second World War.

This is a companion volume to Allan Box's *Victoria's Diggers*, a history of each Victorian military unit that served overseas from 1860 to 1945, of which there is a new edition out (\$23).

## Around the Water Cart

by 'Joe Furphy'

Ever had bugs in your water cart? I did, in last issue. Apart from a number of unfortunate spelling errors, the French lady who suggested 'Poppy Day' came out as Madame Gherkin!!, Her correct name is Guerin.

Each year after Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, there is always a controversy over whether the word 'condemn' or 'contemn' should have been used in the line: 'Age shall not weary them, nor the years ...' of The Ode which is read at services on those days. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines 'contemn' as 'to despise, treat with disregard', so the word could fit the line. Department of Veterans' Affairs Commemoration Branch has researched the poem and its background. Laurence Binyon was Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum and wrote the poem 'For the Fallen', of which The Ode is the fourth stanza, only six weeks after the outbreak of World War One when long lists of dead and wounded were appearing in British newspapers. It was first published in *The Times* on 21 September 1914 using the word 'condemn'. Some people have suggested that the use of 'condemn' was a typographical error by *The Times*. Binyon's book *The Winnowing Fan* containing the poem was published a month or two later and Binyon would have had an opportunity to correct any error at the proof stage but 'condemn' was again used. The British Society of Authors, executors of the Binyon literary estate, says the word is definitely 'condemn'. The debate over the right word seems to be a distinctly Australian phenomenon. Inquiries with the British, Canadian and American Legions reveal that none have heard of the debate. The RSL and the Australian War Memorial both say they have always used 'condemn' in their ceremonies. (*Vetaffairs*; Feb/March 1999)

For details of the graves of 1.7 million members of the Commonwealth forces, including Australians, who have died during the two world wars, see the 'Debt of Honour Register' at <http://www.cwgc.org>. Also linked to this Commonwealth War Graves Commission site is a French one opened to help relatives of British and Allied troops buried in France: <http://www.anzac.org>.

There is an item elsewhere in this issue about commemoration of merchant seamen and the memorial to the Merchant Navy in the Australian War Memorial's Sculpture Garden. Also in the garden is a memorial to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF). Unveiled on 12 December 1998, the memorial commemorates Australian troops who served in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan following WWII. A third memorial, the Australian Defence Force Servicewomen's Memorial was dedicated on 12 March 1999. Each of these three memorials was built with funding raised by veterans and others and with assistance from the Government. Planning is under way for a memorial to Bomber Command. (*Vetaffairs*, Feb/March 1999).

Interested in signals gear? The Royal Australian Corps of Signals now has a museum in Simpson Barracks, Macleod, Victoria with signals equipment from the Boer War to the present day. It is open every Tuesday from 10am to 3.30pm; admission \$2. It would welcome donations of memorabilia and interested volunteers for manning the display. Contact (03) 94781478. (*Vetaffairs*, Feb/March 1999).

A 6-inch breech loading Woolwich Armstrong gun originally mounted in South Australia's colonial warship HMCS *Protector* is to be returned to public view as part of a memorial garden close to Protector's old mooring at Birkenhead, South Australia. (SA Branch Newsletter, December 1998 and March 1999).

The Gallantry Medallists' League, which usually meets biennially in the United Kingdom, will hold a muster at Surfer's Paradise from 29 October to 2 November 1999. This is the first time the muster has been held in Australia. Organizers are keen to make contact with as many as possible of Australian recipients of the DCM, CGM, DSO, GM and Conspicuous Gallantry Cross (CGC) (which has replaced the DCM in the Imperial system) If you can help or are interested contact Chairman, The Gallantry Medallists' League Muster, PO Box 33, Surfers Paradise, QED, 4217 (*Vetaffairs*, Feb/March 1999).

Do you have photographs or memorabilia of soldiers from the Victorian towns of Chiltern, Chiltern Valley, Barnawatha, Middle Indigo, Cornish Town, Christmas Town, Brown's Plains or Springhurst? The Chiltern Athenaeum Trust is gathering material on servicemen listed on the town's honour roll for display around the roll. Contact Reg Fuge, RMB 1360 Chiltern Vic 3683, telephone (03) 5726 1467.

Jim Oliver of the National Servicemen's Association of Victoria has sent Joe a complimentary copy of his book *The National Serviceman – The 90 Day Wonder – Puckapunyal 1951 to 1959*. It records his own (April 1955 intake 20 NS Trg Bn) and other Nashos' experiences of Puckapunyal and the National Service scheme. As Premier Jeff Kennett says in his foreword to this well-researched and illustrated A4 publication: 'this is one man's story of a neglected episode in Australia's military history and captures the ethos of a generation whose story risks being overlooked'. If you were a Nasho at Pucka or anywhere else, this will interest you. It includes many details of official documents connected with National Service, training programs, kit lists, even menus! Contact Jim at PO Box 240 Kyneton Vic 3444 for a copy at \$24 including postage. Jim is also working on the erection of a memorial at Puckapunyal to all National Servicemen who served in Victoria; his Association already has 1300 members in Victoria. Incidentally, Jim would love to have a copy of the 'Welcome to Your Army' booklet issued to all National Service entrants. If anyone has a copy they can bear to part with, contact Jim, please (03) 5422 6392.

Do you have an interest in or knowledge of units stationed during WWII in Queensland in the South Burnett – Kingaroy, Wondai, Murgon, Goomeri, Nanango, Yarraman area? The Burnett War Memorial Committee would like to know. Contact Russell Cook (07) 4162 4632.

Any information on relatives of Leonard Clarence Israel, who served with 20 Bn 1st AIF? Pamela Hempel of 1 Millstream Road, Werrington Downs, NSW 2747; [whempel@ozemail.com.au](mailto:whempel@ozemail.com.au) wishes to return to them one of his medals. (*Vetaffairs*, Feb/March 1999)

A dodger has come in advertising Volume 6 of 'The Pioneer Register' which contains genealogical details of 500 pioneers who arrived in the colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemens Land between 1788 and 1820, plus their children and grandchildren. Compiled and edited by C J Smees, this document retails at \$45 plus postage. It may not be of sufficient interest to most members to warrant acquisition, but the dodger does say, 'an attempt has been made to list all the civil and military officials in their respective positions from 1788 to 1820. A particularly useful inclusion is a complete shipping list of vessels arriving from the United Kingdom from the First Fleet to 31st December 1820'. If this sounds of interest to you, why not look for 'The Pioneer Register' at your library and check it out?

For more information on Australian VCs, check out The Australian Victoria Cross & George Cross Reference at <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~jcantwel>, a site developed by Lt Col John Cantwell, currently serving as an instructor in the UK. (Thanks to Cpl Jason Logue of *Army*, April 1999).

Major changes are being made to the UK Territorial Army, with one in five TA centres closing, 33 infantry battalions being cut to 15 and major changes in other corps. The total number of TA soldiers will be reduced from 54,000 to 41,200 (*Army*, 4 March 1999)

Australian Vietnam Veterans can now formally accept and wear South Vietnamese and Cambodian Government awards earned during service in that conflict. Applications can be made for retrospective approval from the Governor-General to accept and wear such awards but suitable documentary evidence and a statutory declaration to substantiate that the former governments of South Vietnam and/or Cambodia did make or offer such an award to the veteran concerned are required. Application forms are available from the RSL, the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia and the Departments of The Prime Minister and Cabinet and Defence. There is a helpline maintained by the Awards and National Symbols Branch of the Department of The Prime Minister and Cabinet on 02-6271 5609. (*Camaraderie*, Journal of the RDFWA, 1999)

A memorial has been erected to the WWII Australian Army members who volunteered their services as 'guinea pigs' for malaria control experiments conducted in Cairns and on the Atherton Tablelands. It is

at the Rocky Creek War Memorial Park, Atherton Tableland, where the 2/2nd AGH, the 47th Camp Hospital and the 2/1st Convalescent Depot were located during WW2.

Some new books from K R White Books, tel 02-6292 6600:

- *The Grim Reaper. Machine-Guns and Machine Gunners in Action.* R.Ford. S&J London 1996. 314pp, illustrated. \$35.
- *From Alamein to Scarlet Beach.* F West, The History of 2/4 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. 160pp A5 size. Honour Roll and battle casualties, nominal roll. The original 1989 edition. \$25.
- *The Long Carry. A History of 2/1 Australian Machine Gun Battalion 1939-46,* P Hocking, published by Bn 1997, 366pp, illustrations & maps; honour roll, honours & awards, casualties, \$45.

The Society recently received a complimentary copy of *Profiles from Our Past – Obituaries from the Pyramid Hill Advertiser 1910-1919*. This is the third volume (October 1998) of a publication by the Pyramid Hill & District Historical Society listing bereavements suffered by families in the Pyramid Hill District of Victoria as recorded by the local newspaper in the decade to 1919. This particular volume contains many obituaries and sometimes photographs of soldiers of the First AIF. For example, the death of Lcpl D L Townsend 38th Battalion, KIA 28 August 1918 is covered in detail, with his mates' and his chaplain's letters to the family. While primarily of interest to family history researchers, such painstakingly researched and produced publications may provide you with valuable details not otherwise readily available if you are interested in particular units, districts or individuals. This volume \$12 from Pyramid Hill and District Historical Society c/- Post Office Pyramid Hill Victoria 3575. Check with your local historical societies to see if similar work is going on in your areas of interest?

In 1993, Central Army Records Office (now Soldier Career Management Agency) transferred to National Archives of Australia some 420,000 dossiers for members of the First AIF. As many members know, copies of the loose folios in these dossiers are available from National Archives for \$15. National Archives has instituted a project to work through the collection and place the material in new acid-free folders and boxes which are then returned to the repository in alphabetical order. At the same time, information from each dossier is entered in the Archives database: full name and given names, rank, service number, place of birth and enlistment and details of next-of-kin. Archives approach has been to deal with common surnames first, since these are the most difficult to accurately retrieve and identify in response to inquiries. Those names included Smith, Jones, White, Green, Williams, Hall and Hill, Johnson and Johnston, Davies and Davis, Wood and surnames beginning with Wood, all the Macs and Mcs, Millar and Miller, Phillip and Phillips, Stephens and Stevens, Thomas, Thompson and Thomson and all the surnames beginning with Ed. Then the team went back to the first name in the records, Aagaard, and has worked through to Cram. About 135,000 of the 420,000 dossiers have been examined. These dossiers can be searched on the Archives database, ANGAM, at all Archives Reading Rooms, and also on the Internet at: [angam.naa.gov.au/](http://angam.naa.gov.au/) (*Descent*, Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists, March 1999)

*Nothing Short of War*, a history of the Australian Army in Borneo during Indonesian Confrontation 1962-1966, has been written and published by member Neil C Smith. It takes the unusual step of listing alphabetically all Australian Army members who served in Borneo between 1992 and 1996, with cross-references to their other active service such as Vietnam or Korea, honours and awards, fatal casualties etc. Release is planned for June 1999. Retail price will be \$40 plus postage \$5. (Mostly Unsung Publications, Box 7020, Gardenvale 3186, Victoria. Tel/Fax: 03-9555 5401.)

New Zealand now has its own Victoria Cross of New Zealand, similar in make and design to the original but awarded under a New Zealand Warrant rather than the Royal Warrant. Another significant change is the replacement of the George Cross with the New Zealand Cross, first instituted in 1869 and awarded twenty-three times for service in the New Zealand wars of last century. (*The Volunteers*, journal of the New Zealand Military Historical Society, March 1999).

## Letters

### The Elusive Waterloo Veteran

Readers may well recall a short article entitled '*A Capital Furphy*' in the Oct/Dec 1997 issue of Sabretache drawing attention to a furphy which has persisted in Canberra for many years - that Mount Ainslie, behind the Australian War Memorial, took its title from James Ainslie 'an ex-trooper of the Scots Greys, wounded at Waterloo'. The furphy was challenged on the basis of the absence of Ainslie's name from the Waterloo Medal Roll of the 2nd Royal North British Dragoons (Scots Greys). With the 184th anniversary of Waterloo upon us, it seems an appropriate time to look at some further investigation into the elusive veteran.

Researching for material on another subject, I came across mention of a Sgt Ainslie in the vicinity of Ciudad Rodrigo in the Peninsular War in 1812. This was in A E Clark-Kennedy's *Attack the Colour—The Royal Dragoons in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo* (p51). Now we know that medal rolls can sometimes be misleading with addenda, lists of applications from the colonies, as well as unintentional errors and omissions. So here was a straw to rescue Ainslie's reputation; could there have been an error in the identification of his regiment, as the Royals were in the Union Brigade at Waterloo along with the Scots Greys and the Inniskillings. So I asked my UK researcher, John Sly, who some members will know as a one-time editor of the Journal of the OMRS, to check the Muster Rolls at the relevant periods. Alas, he was unable to find a Sgt Ainslie in the Royals in 1812 (WO 12/465), nor was there a soldier of that name in the regiment at Waterloo (WO.12/467). Further he searched the Musters of the Scots Greys at Waterloo (WO 12/522) equally without success. As a last straw he searched the Musters for the 1st King's Dragoon Guards for January 1812 (WO 12/95) and June 1815 (WO 12/96) in case there had been confusion between Dragoons and Dragoon Guards. Unfortunately, all was in vain.

In the meantime I had examined the file on Ainslie held by the Canberra and District Historical Society. From 1924 onwards there are many references to works and articles by journalists, academic and local historians all of whom repeated the story that Ainslie had been a trooper in the Scots Greys severely wounded in the head at Waterloo. It was repeated in the Department of Interior 1996 publication *Canberra Names and Their Origin*. A Group Captain G T Dick also repeated the story on the 'Saturday Page' of *The Canberra Times* on 22 November 1975 in spite of an unaddressed holograph letter of 29 October 1975, by Dick, which stated 'There are some references to him having been a trooper in the Royal Scots Greys and having been wounded at Waterloo. But the Adjutant [presumably of the Scots Greys] recently informed me that no one of that name appears in the Regimental Muster Roll for 18 June 1815. So his military connections appear doubtful'.

The evidence that James Ainslie did not serve in the 2nd Royal North British Dragoons (Scots Greys) at Waterloo is conclusive. That does not mean that he did not serve at Waterloo, where over 30 000 British troops, not including the King's German Legion, did serve, all of whom received the Waterloo Medal. Perhaps there is an enthusiast who would be prepared to work through the 30 000 names to determine once and for all whether James Ainslie did serve at Waterloo. He may, like many other veterans of the Peninsular War who came to Australia, have had his service unofficially extended to cover what was then seen as the most significant battle, for it was not until 1847 that the service of the survivors of the Peninsular campaigns was recognised by the award of the Military General Service Medal 1793-1814.

Clem Sargent  
Canberra

## Nominal Roll

As Jean Main wrote in her article on research, 'Beyond the barbed wire', *Sabretache*, December 1998, there are further sources which may be helpful in researching matters relating to individual soldiers. One of these I have found to be of great assistance is *The Australian Dictionary of Biography*, of which 14 volumes plus an index to the first 12 have been published in hard copy. Volumes 1 to 12 have also been published on CD-ROM, which is to be updated to include the other two volumes later this year. The annotated indices as compiled by our member George Franki (*Sabretache* Jan-Mar 1991 and Oct-Dec 1994) further enhance its value.

Jean states that the Nominal Roll of the First AIF may be the best place to start research. I agree. For almost half a century I have found this resource tool (AWM 133) to be invaluable. Many years ago I purchased a microfiche copy of the Roll, which I understand was compiled by AIF Base Headquarters London during 1918-1919. While taking nothing away from the Roll, it is fair to state that having been produced on typewriters of that era, the typeface and readability is generally 'less than good' and at times nigh impossible. Some pages are missing and the Roll is far from strictly alphabetical. The Roll could become more readily and more widely accessed by the use of modern technology. An initiative to publish the Roll on CD-ROM would be welcomed with enthusiasm by many institutions, societies and individual researchers.

Jim Moore  
Mollymook

**Ed:** The Government has just announced that over the next four years, \$4.4 million will be used to compile rolls and complete databases of those who have served in Australia's defence forces this century. This will be available electronically as Jim has suggested.

## Members' Notices

### Medals and medallions

Could anyone please help with information on the following:

- Australian YMCA / Service Medal 1918-1919
- Australian YMCA / Aldwych Theatre Service Medal 1918
- Ingleburn Star / NX141421 Lt W A Woodger
- Narratives of Operations in France Medal 1916-17-18

I am also seeking a photograph of the following:

- Frognall Star
- QANTAS Long Range Operations Star
- AVM Tony Dietz Memorial Medallion

John O'Connor  
PO Box 454  
Kingsgrove NSW 1480  
Ph (02) 9502-4708

## MHSA Biennial Conference 2000

**The 2000 Seminar  
Queen's Birthday Weekend  
13 to 15 June 2000  
Canberra**

The next Society Biennial Conference entitled *The 2000 Seminar* will be hosted by the ACT Branch, and in the Centenary year will have a primary focus on the centenary of the war in South Africa, and the 100 year history of the Australian Army.

**The primary themes for the 2000 Seminar will be:**

- Colonial Period
- South Africa War 1899-1902
- 100 years of the Australian Army

Planning is well underway and besides a stimulating program of presented papers at the Seminar venue in the RSL Club, Moore Street, other activities will include:

- a welcoming session on the Friday evening;
- observance of the Queens Birthday Trooping of the Colour Ceremony at the RMC Duntroon on Saturday;
- a conference dinner; and
- a visit to the recently renovated Australian War Memorial Research Centre.

Members suggestions or comments to allow us to make the 200 Seminar a particularly memorable event are most welcome

### **Call for papers**

MHSA Members who are interested in presenting a paper at the 2000 Seminar on the listed themes, or any other aspect of Australian military history, are invited to submit details of their proposed title to the Conference Coordinator.

Further details will be published in forthcoming issues of *Sabretache*.

Please address all enquiries to the Conference Coordinator:

S H Pyne  
9/27 Jinka Street  
Hawker ACT 2614  
Tel: 02-62545319

## President's Report to September 1998<sup>1</sup>

As the Annual General Meeting of the Society was not held this year until 29 September 1998, I am extending the period of this report to cover the year ending with the AGM, although the Financial Statements published in this issue of *Sabretache* cover the financial year ended 30 June 1998. No more need be said about the Society's finances, I think, than is contained in the notes to the Statements, but if Branches or individual members have questions not covered in these, Federal Council would be pleased to deal with them either formally or by individual queries directly to the Federal Treasurer.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Biennial Conference so ably mounted and hosted by the Victorian Branch. Special thanks to the Branch Committee and to all those co-opted helpers, including the ladies, who contributed to the success of the Conference. The September 1998 issue of the journal was devoted to Conference Papers and, we hope, proves a useful reference to those who were there and of interest to all members of the Society. The 'Open Forum' session was particularly useful in providing feedback to Federal Council on matters of concern and interest to Branches and to those attending and we thank all who contributed to it. A transcript of the discussions has been prepared as a basis for Federal Council's formal consideration of the major points raised and these will be dealt with at the December 1998 meeting of Council.

Membership of the Society as at 30 June 1998 was 312, approximately the same as in June 1997. Branches now receive with each set of Federal Council minutes a Membership Report showing the situation in each Branch according to Federal records. As noted in the financial statements and in last year's President's Report, we now count 'subscribers' separately to members; we had 47 subscribers as at 30 June. The result as at 12 August 1998 was heartening in terms of renewed subscriptions, which as members and Branches know, has been a source of some problems in the past. This year, nearly 45% of last year's members were again financial within six weeks of subscriptions falling due and this trend has continued. Particular thanks are due to our Membership Officer, Peter Sinfield, for his efforts in processing memberships and producing informative and accurate membership reports. Thanks are also due for increased renewals to Anthony Staunton and his innovative ideas for 'chase up' inserts in *Sabretache* regarding subscriptions due as well as the reminder details on *Sabretache* labels. There is some heartening increase in new members also, though it is a sign of the times that subscriptions, particularly from libraries, are less frequently being renewed these days – members can help here by asking their local State or Defence library for access to *Sabretache* whenever they visit so that those holding the purse strings at least know that customers are asking for the journal.

We have tried to meet the demand for more short items by commencing Joe Furphy's 'Around the Water Cart' feature; this seems to be popular and is increasingly able to draw upon items from Branch Newsletters, which themselves are improving communication between Branches and members and Branches and Federal Council. We have examined the idea mentioned in last year's report of republishing some early articles which were of interest to collectors and others but have found it impracticable. However, Federal Council is working on a project to produce in 2000 a professional-standard index to all issues of *Sabretache* to that year, which we hope will be welcomed (and bought!) by members and subscribing institutions.

Among the initiatives discussed with Branch Presidents and representatives attending the June Conference was the appointment by all Branches of a Committee Member as a Federal Councillor,

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<sup>1</sup> This report had been held over from previous issues of *Sabretache* due to production and space constraints.

with whom Federal Council officers could establish direct contact as appropriate and who would be provided with his or her own copy of Council Agenda and Minutes. ACT Branch has had a representative on Federal Council for some years and Albury-Wodonga Branch has now appointed Major Robert Morrison as their Councillor. We welcome Robert and I urge other Branches who have not yet done so to appoint a Councillor and advise the Federal Secretary of his or her appointment.

During the year under report, Federal Council has improved its liaison with the RSL at Federal level and offered assistance through Branches where appropriate, particularly with the 'Their Service, Our Heritage' program. We are also investigating whether it would be appropriate for the Society to become a member of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies, and the benefits to the Society and members of our operating in this wider forum.

May I thank our Patron, Air Marshal Gratton for his counsel and support both to Federal Council and to the ACT Branch whose meetings he attends regularly. Sincere thanks also to Branch Committees, Federal Councillors and all members of the Society for their support and their contribution to the aims, organization and continued health of their Society.

It would be remiss not to mention particularly the very great contribution to Federal Council and to the Society in general of Clem Sargent, who retired from Federal Council at his own request at the September 1998 AGM after 20 years of service as a Federal Councillor and office-bearer. Federal Council, on the recommendation of the ACT Branch, was very pleased to be able to award Life Membership of the Society to Clem at the AGM. In accepting Life Membership, Clem noted that he joined the-then Military Research and Collectors' Society in 1959 in Melbourne, was a foundation member of the ACT Branch in 1963 and its inaugural President; a foundation member of the WA Branch in 1968: and will, of course, continue as a member of the ACT Branch. It would, I think, be appropriately 'historical' at the end of this report to mention some remarks of Barry Videon, our longest continuously-serving member, at the 40th Anniversary Dinner held by the Victorian Branch in September 1997. Barry noted that the Society was formed on the initiative of a small group of model-soldier collectors, and he personally ran off early issues of *Sabretache* on a Fordigraph and later a Gestetner duplicator during his lunch break and carried them home to be collated and stapled. *Sabretache* – and the Society – have come a long way since then; thanks to stalwarts like Barry and Clem and to all those who have joined since those early days.

Replacing Clem on Federal Council for the next two years is Roger Lee, a recently-joined member of the ACT Branch. Roger is currently Head of the Army History Unit at Department of Defence with responsibilities for policy advice and development of all aspects of Army history and heritage as well as Army museums. Roger has BA(Hons) and Litt.B(Hons) in Military History, a Master of Defence Studies from ADFA and is currently undertaking a PhD program at ADFA. His interests include all aspects of military history, war gaming (especially the renaissance period), and for good measure, classical music. Welcome, Roger.

Having been re-elected to Council for a further two years at the September AGM, I have indicated that I wish to resign the Federal President's position not later than the 1999 AGM. I believe it is time (some may say more than time) that we had a new President with, I hope, new and better ideas for the Society. To replace Clem as Federal Vice-President, Council has elected Richard Murison, who has another year to serve on his present Federal Council appointment. Richard's particular interests include the Australian and Scottish experiences in the Boer War 1899-1902, strategy for containing and winning the Malayan Emergency and Borneo Confrontation 1948-1966; and the Roman Army and its experience of Empire 400BC-400AD.

Renewed thanks to all members of the Society and best wishes. —Tan Roberts

# The Military Historical Society of Australia

## Federal Council

### Notice of 1999 Annual General Meeting

Monday 23 August 1998

at RSL Club Civic ACT

at 7.30 PM

### Agenda

- 1 Confirmation of the Minutes of 1997 Annual General Meeting
- 2 Election of three Federal Councillors.
- 3 Receive and consider the audited Statement of Accounts.
- 4 Appoint the Society Auditor.

### STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1998

	1998		1997	
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Subscriptions	7739		8370	
less Capitation	<u>188</u>	7551	<u>268</u>	8102
Interest				
Bank	32		90	
Investment	<u>508</u>	540	<u>647</u>	737
Advertising				40
Sales				
Sudan Book	160		74	
Sabretache	<u>1573</u>	1733	68	142
Sundry Income		<u>62</u>		<u>34</u>
		<u>9886</u>		<u>9055</u>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Publication of Sabretache		5200		5200
Postage of Sabretache		862		928
ADFA Prize		200		
Meeting of Branch Presidents			175	
Victoria Branch Anniversary	177			
Federal Council Expenses				
Postage	159		60	
Stationery	809		78	
PO Box	44		44	
Audit Fee	75		75	
Medallions	—		160	
Melb Conference	1050			
Sundry Expenses	<u>20</u>	<u>2157</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>438</u>
		<u>8596</u>		<u>6741</u>
Surplus of Receipts over Payments	1290		2314	

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES  
AS AT 30 JUNE 1998**

	1998 \$	1997 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Bank	9875	9092
Investment	<u>10348</u>	<u>9841</u>
Total Assets	20223	18933
Net Assets	<u>20223</u>	<u>18933</u>
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>		
Balance 1 July	18933	16619
Surplus for period	<u>1290</u>	<u>2314</u>
	<u>20223</u>	<u>18933</u>

N S Foldi, Hon Treasurer  
9 July 1998

**Auditor's Report**

I have examined the records of the Military Historical Society of Australia – Federal Council and in my opinion the attached accounts comprising the Statement of Assets and Liabilities and the Statement of Receipts and Payments represent a true and fair view of the Council's operations for the year ended 30 June 1998.

L G Carder FCPA, Auditor  
17 July 1998

**Notes To And Forming Part Of Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 June 1998**

1. The apparent reduction in subscriptions and increase in sales of *Sabretache* is a result of the revision of Society Rules, effective 14 April 1997 and notified in *Sabretache* Vol XXXVIII No 2 April/June 1997. Rule 3 provides that membership of the Society is open to any natural person. Institutions and bodies corporate are now recorded as purchasers of *Sabretache*.
2. Investment interest continues to reflect rates available and Council believes that these are in the best interests of members. This is kept under review.
3. The increase in Federal Council Expenses is the result of:
  - additional postage resulting from research requests and other enquiries
  - communication between members of Council. Procedures have been adopted to minimise cost and improve efficiency.
  - part funding for the Federal President and Secretary to attend the 1998 Society Conference at Melbourne which marked the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Society in Melbourne This expenditure will probably not be repeated.
4. The value of stock on hand of the Sudan Book (at cost) as at 30 June was:
 

1996/97	\$373
1997/98	\$187

 a further advertisement will appear in *Sabretache*.

N S Foldi  
Hon Treasurer  
9 Jul 1998

## Society Notes

At our Society Conference in Melbourne last June, Gus Guthrie of the Victorian Branch raised the matter of merchant seamen who were 'killed in action' during WW2 not being commemorated on the Honour Roll at the Australian War Memorial. Federal Council agreed to find out about War Memorial policy and practice. Members other than Gus may not be aware of the long and sometimes bitter battle waged by the late Captain Sam Benson, Labor MHR for Batman, Victoria 1962-1966, to achieve commemoration of merchant seamen at the War Memorial. This culminated in 1975 in the passing of an amendment of the War Memorial Act to permit 'the commemoration of Australians whose deaths are attributable to any war or war-like operation in which Australian forces have participated'.

The Society has received the following information from the War Memorial:

- The Roll of Honour records the names of people who died as a direct result of active service with Australian forces or while on transfer within specified periods in each conflict in which Australians were involved.
- The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour. It includes those Australians who died while members of other allied forces, the Merchant Navy, and philanthropic organizations such as the Australian Red Cross, the Australian Comforts Fund, and the YMCA; or as war correspondents, photographers, artists or munitions or other workers.
- The following eligibility criteria apply to inclusion of names on the Commemorative Roll:
  - Death was war-caused and suffered during continuous, full-time service;
  - The person was born in Australia or the last place of domicile was Australia;
  - The date range in which death occurred must be the same as that for the Roll of Honour (for the Second World War, this is 3 September 1939 - 30 June 1947).
- The Commemorative Roll can be accessed and searched on the Memorial's Website (<http://www.awm.gov.au>) or on terminals in the Research Centre itself.

On 17 October 1998, the Governor-General dedicated The Merchant Navy Roll of Honour Memorial in the Sculpture Garden of the War Memorial. This memorial recognizes the service of Australian merchant seamen who manned ships in all parts of the world during the First and Second World Wars and the support they provided, which was vital to the success of the war effort.

## MHSA Branch Office Bearers

### ACT

President	Col Simpson	4th Monday of the month
Vice-President	Brad Manera	Feb to Nov at 7.30 pm
Secretary/Treasurer	Graham Wilson	Upstairs
	234 Beasley St	Canberra City RSL
	Farrer ACT 2617	Moore St Civic
	02 6286 7702 (h)	
	02 6265 4560 (w)	

### ALBURY-WODONGA

President	Nigel Horne	1st Monday at 8 pm
Secretary/Treasurer	Doug Hunter	every 2nd month (Jan/Nov)
	575 Poole St	VMR Museum
	Albury NSW 2640	Buna Barracks
	02 6021 2835	Victoria St Albury

### GEELONG

President	Robin Mawson	1st Friday of the month. 7.30 pm
Vice-President	Ian Barnes	Osborne Naval Museum
Secretary	Steve Chilvers	North Geelong
	110 Beacon Point Road	
	Clifton Springs Vic 3222	
	03 5253 1176 (h)	
	03 5249 3222 (w)	
Treasurer	Rob Rytir	

### QUEENSLAND

President	Don Wright	7.30 pm, 4th Monday of the
Vice-President	Dave Radford	month except December
Secretary/Treasurer	Syd Wigzell	Yeronga Service Club
	17 Royal St	Fairfield Road
	Alexandra Hills Qld 4161	Yeronga Brisbane
	07 3824 2006	
	07 3395 1843	

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

President	Tony Rudd	8 pm, 2nd Friday each month
Vice-President Secretary	Tony Harris	except Good Friday
	PO Box 550	Army Museum of SA
	Mitcham SA 5062	Keswick Barracks
	08 82718619 (h)	Anzac Highway, Keswick
	08 8226 4779 (w)	
Treasurer	John Lawrence	

### VICTORIA

President	Steve Gray	4th Thurs of month except Dec
Vice-President	Robbie Dalton	Toorak Bowling Club
Secretary	George Ward	Mandeville Cres
	7 McKenzie Crt	Toorak
	Croydon Vic 3136	8.15 pm
	03 9725 2916	
Treasurer	Bill Black	

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

President	Peter Epps	3rd Wednesday of the month
Vice-President	Ian Macfarlan	cnr Scarborough Beach Road
Secretary	John Sweetman	and Oswald Street
	3 Altone Rd	Innaloo
	Lockridge WA 6054	7.30 pm
	08 9279 5572	
Treasurer	Gary Hayes	

## Notes from the Editor on contributions to *Sabretache*

While the following are merely guidelines, it certainly helps the Editor in preparing copy for publication if these guidelines are followed. Nevertheless, potential contributors should not be deterred by them if, for example, you do not have access to computers or typewriters. Handwritten articles are always welcome, although, if publication deadlines are tight, they might not be published until the next issue.

Typewritten submissions are preferred. Material should be double spaced with a margin. If your article is prepared on a computer please send a copy on a 3.5" disk (together with a paper copy).

Please write dates in the form 11 June 1993, without punctuation. Ranks, initials and decorations should be without full-stops, eg, Capt B J R Brown MC MM.

Please feel free to use footnotes, which should be grouped at the end of the article (however, when published in *Sabretache* they will appear at the foot of the relevant page). As well as references cited, footnotes should be used for asides that are not central to the article.

Photos to illustrate the article are welcomed and encouraged. However, if you can, forward copies of photos rather than originals.

Articles, preferably, should be in the range of 2,000-2,500 words (approx 4 typeset pages) or 5,000-7,000 words (approx 10 typeset pages) for major feature articles. Articles should be submitted in accordance with the time limits indicated on page 2. Recently, lateness in receiving articles has meant that the Journal has been delayed in publication. Nevertheless, where an article is of particular importance, but is received late, the Editor will endeavour to publish the article if possible and space permitting.

Authors of published articles retain copyright of their articles, but once an article is published in *Sabretache*, the Society, as well as the author, each have the independent right to republish (electronically or in print), or licence the use of the article.

Elizabeth Topperwien  
Editor

✂ .....

## Application for Membership

I/\*We .....  
(Name/Rank etc.)

of (Address) .....

.....

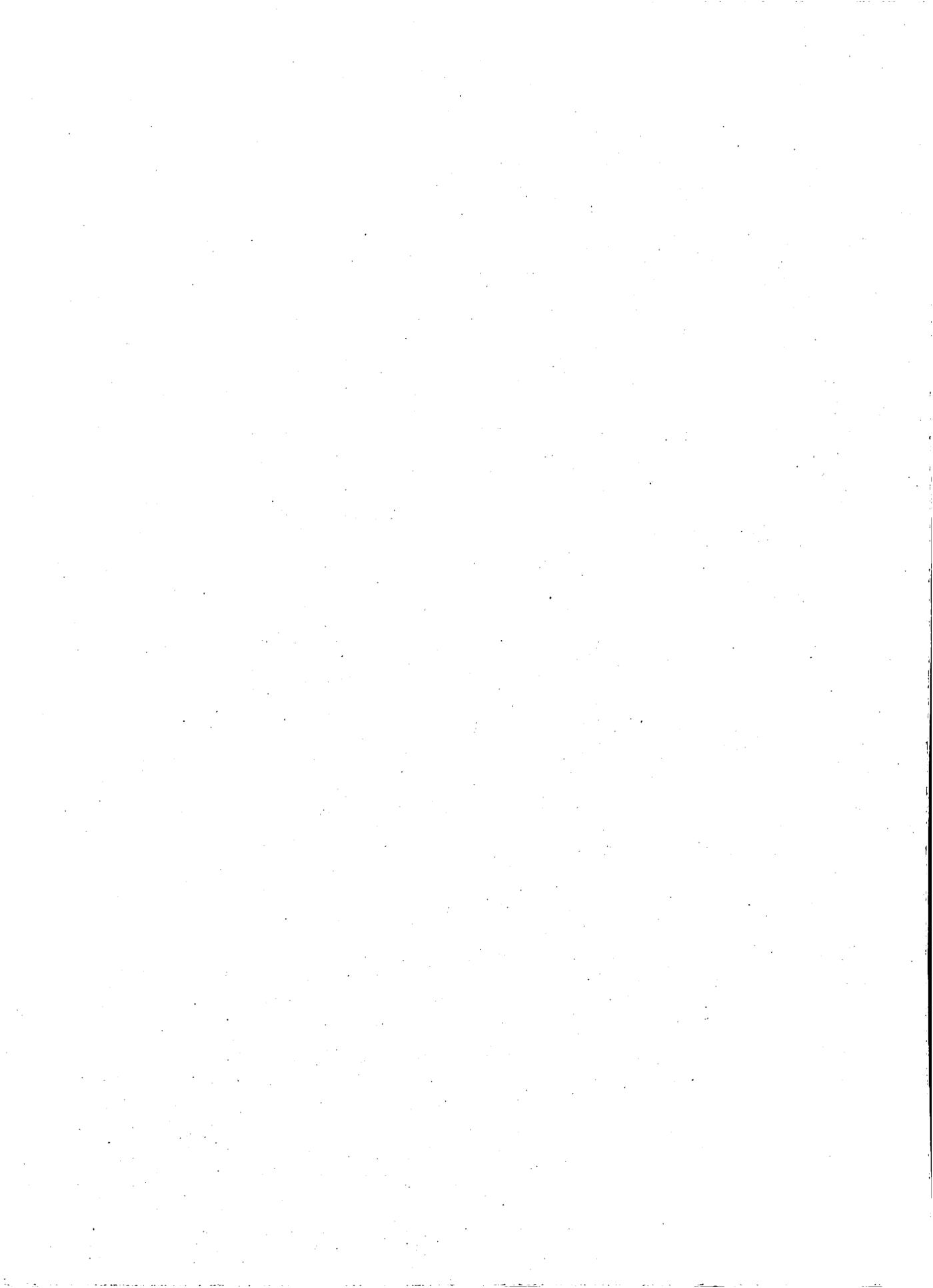
hereby apply for membership of the MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA and wish to be admitted as a \*Corresponding Member/\*Subscriber to *Sabretache* /\*Branch Member of the

..... Branch

My main interests are .....

I/\*We enclose remittance of A\$30.00 being annual subscription, due 1 July each year.

Send to: Federal Secretary, PO Box 30, Garran, ACT 2605, Australia



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