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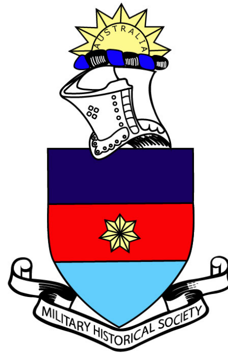

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Burying the 1st AIF*

Gail Gunn

The typical diary or autobiography of a 1st AIF soldier starts with the enthusiasm and naivety of youth, the great adventure sailing from Australia and seeing exotic lands, the training in Egypt or Etaples, the brash confidence that one would do well, but the inner doubt that when the moment of truth arrived, when "going over the top" one would not be found wanting. Then the first encounter with the enemy goes hand in glove with the first encounter with death. One's best mate, the bloke one went to school with or the bloke one palled up with at the recruiting office, inseparable through training, the mate you got into mischief with in Cairo, your mate till the end, is suddenly dead and there's no rewind button.

Suddenly the adventure turns serious; boys mature to men in one day, the day they bury their mates. From then on the war becomes an obligation to be seen through to the end and for those who do come home, their attitudes have changed for ever.

In *A Private's View of World War 1*, Bert Bishop says,

> Live men were burying dead men. More live men were digging graves for more dead men. An endless line of dead men on stretchers were being tipped off beside the open graves. A system was applying to the burying. Officers were given a grave each. NCO's and privates were buried two to a grave. And in a big excavation dead Germans were being stacked like sardines in a tin. When the level of the sardines reached a certain height the great hole was filled up with earth, and bodies were taken further along to the hard-working diggers of new graves.[1]

The loss of life was more overwhelming than ever anticipated by our enthusiastic young men, and the First World War marked a considerable change in the attitude to burying the humble soldier.

Observe the opening scenes of the French movie *Colonel Chabert,* where after the battle, bodies are stripped by military authorities of their more costly accoutrements like metal breastplates and boots and by the camp-following scavengers of any saleable items. Victor Hugo covers this subject in *Les Miserables* and has the unattractive character Thenardier robbing the corpses at Waterloo. Then the bodies are heaped unceremoniously into mass graves or burnt or both while Generals go home to write their memoirs and have statues erected to them in Whitehall or the Quay D'Orsay. Where are the great military cemeteries of Waterloo? Thackeray indignantly comments that; the ordinary soldier had been "shovelled into a hole ... and so forgotten."

The American Civil War changed attitudes to burying dead combatants. Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address in November 1863 dedicated the Arlington Cemetery to the Union soldier. In doing so he both turned the military burial ground into a sacred place and honoured the common soldier. This change of attitude could be simply an evolution of more egalitarian ideals or the need to pay homage to the sacrifices of brothers fighting brothers in their homeland. It could also have something to do with the invention of the camera and its brilliant use in the hands of Matthew Brady. His photographs of bloated and mangled corpses of the American Civil War were a shocking revelation of the realities of war. Previously painters had illustrated battles as something heroic and bloodless. Brady's photos were described as "like a funeral next door"

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* This paper was originally presented to the MHSA Biennial Conference at Canberra in October 2002.

1 Bert Bishop, *A Private's View of World War 1*, Kangaroo Press, 1991, p.120

and when an exhibition of these gruesome photos was mounted in New York, recruitment numbers hit rock bottom.[2]

The lesson was not wasted. Cameras were forbidden as part of personal equipment in the Great War. Of course, some got through, as in the case of a family in Perth who handed over grandad's photos of burials on Gallipoli, including photos of Roy Facey's burial, to an historian 60 years after the event in dread that somehow the authorities would seek the family out and punish them. Roy Facey was one of three brothers on Gallipoli, two of whom died: their brother Albert wrote *A Fortunate Life* and described being called down to the Shell Green Cemetery to see Roy's body which was in several pieces.[3]

After Matthew Brady, photos of dead bodies were carefully vetted and "official" photos released to present a sterilised picture to the home front.

The Boer War dead are scattered around South Africa in an assortment of cemeteries. They were commemorated by public subscription organised by women, not at the expense of any government instrumentality. In Adelaide the South African Graves' Fund under the patronage of Lady Tennyson was established to raise money to erect "suitable monuments for the gallant soldiers who have entered on their long sleep in the lone silence of the veldt".[4] "But there was no formal policy to preserve all the graves and those which were located away from the main centres were rarely maintained."[5] Many have since been consolidated by the South African Government.

By 1914 the idea of burying and individually naming soldiers was probably here to stay despite the enormity of the task in the years ahead. George L Mosse in his book *Fallen Soldiers*, attributes the popular 19th century romantic vision of soldiering to literacy; authors like Kipling, that great army groupy, writing inspiring tales of derring-do which encouraged more than a few adventurous spirits to enlist. This increased literacy also changed attitudes towards the average footslogger far more than the great ideals of democracy and equality.[6]

Gone were the days when ne'er do wells were press-ganged into the military and the degree of education was such that sergeants needed to march their men to the railway station to catch the train to go on leave because going alone was beyond their level of education. Now the army had men who could not only read but could write letters home to mothers who could show the letters to their members of parliament, or the local reporter, or indeed write their own memoirs.

The Australian volunteers of the Great War were largely literate and along with New Zealanders were unique in that their women had the vote. And as Billy Hughes learned to his cost, never underestimate the power of an outraged mother!

The Australian volunteer with a doting voting mother found himself training in Egypt, where the army circulates an order detailing "Procedure for funerals at Alexandria:

> Telephone to the Ven. Archdeacon Ward, No. 7 Rue Adib, and to the District Officer, Royal Engineers, Mustapa Pasha, the date of the funeral, the rank, name, number, corps, religion and denomination of each deceased.
>
> Copies of the death certificate, on official form of Alexandria Municipality, as follows:

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[2] Ken Burns, *The Civil War*, documentary film, 1990.
[3] Albert Facey, *A Fortunate Life*, Viking, 1986, p.273
[4] State Records of South Australia, GRG19/318, Records of the Committee of the South African Graves Fund.
[5] David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, Berg, Oxford, 1998, p.22/23
[6] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, Oxford University Press, 1990.

- One copy by post to the Officer Commanding Unit, or Camp "A" of Base Depot.
- One copy by post to Mustapha Pasha.
- One copy by hand of the soldier (ambulance driver, etc.) who conducts the coffin to the cemetery. This certificate becomes the official record of the Egyptian Government.
- Provide a coffin from a stock to be kept in each hospital, obtained from the Royal Engineers Contractors
- Send the body, covered by a Union jack, in a motor ambulance to be received at the gate of the Military Cemetery at 7.45 a.m. or 4.45 p.m.
- The cost of the stock coffin is £1.5 s.[7]

What a lovely, well ordered ideal. One can almost hear passing bells being rung while the colonial masters have their evening pink gin on the verandah.

Things changed on 25 April 1915. Men died in the boats before they reached the beach, their bodies thrown overboard; men died in the water and their bodies washed out to sea. The casualties were so great that the medical facilities were inadequate; men died slowly in crowded barges for want of medical attention.

> The medical facilities were, even by the standards of the day, primitive – they were in fact, little better than those provided during the Napoleonic or the Crimean Wars. A wounded man frequently waited two or three days to be carried the short distance to the beach. Once at the beach another two or three days delay was not uncommon before he was put on board a hospital ship. During this entire time he would be lucky if he received any more medical attention than having his wound dressed. The so-called 'hospital ships' were criminally understaffed, veterinarians and non-medical personnel regularly performed operations.[8]

Men advanced far inland on the first day at Gallipoli and for many, their bodies were not found until December 1918 when the Graves Registration Unit went back to Gallipoli. Charles Bean, who followed them to record the event for posterity, testifies to the courage of the Australians who were found so far inland and reports on the hundreds of bodies still lying in a row at the Nek in 1919.[9] Men were buried in shallow graves in a ravine and the rain washed the thin layer of soil away exposing the skeletons.

On 24th May 1915 there was an armistice for burial of bodies, instigated by the Turks "for reasons of humanity and necessary hygiene". Lieut Dundas negotiated in German with the Turks under the Red Cross flag. Dundas said that at the area where the meeting took place, the dead were so thick that it was difficult to find a clear place to stand.[10]

Orders were issued:-

> All bodies or wounded taken to the dividing line marked by the white flag bearers will be laid down in rows, and not in heaps, and treated with every respect due to the dead.[11]

It is interesting that this little aberration, the armistice to bury the dead, only happened at ANZAC and only happened once. General de Lisle & General Marshall were against the armistice because in their opinion "the sight of the corpses lying in the open has a bad effect on the morale of the Turks"[12] They probably didn't do a lot for Australian morale either. Particularly as a Turkish officer pointed out during the negotiations that the prevailing wind was towards the Australian troops.

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7 Australian War Memorial, AWM25 135/31
8 Nicholas Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, Allen & Unwin, Port Nicholson Press, 1989. p.50
9 C E W Bean, *Gallipoli Mission*, an ABC book, 1990, p.59
10 AWM25 45
11 AWM27 355/71
12 AWM45 2/1 2/9

After the murderous charge on The Nek in August, there was no second armistice to collect the dead. The famous comment during the withdrawal from Gallipoli "I hope they don't hear us going" probably has more to do with the men feeling ashamed of leaving their unburied mates than of leaving their buried comrades.

In *Gallipoli Mission* Bean says that

> The little cemeteries at Anzac had been carefully tended throughout the campaign, crosses being made by men's mates, mostly from biscuit boxes, with the names painted on them or punched into small plaques of tin-plate which were then nailed to the cross. In December 1915 when it became known that Anzac was to be evacuated, the little enclosures were never without individual men or parties 'tidying up' or otherwise tending the graves of their particular mates.[13]

General Birdwood had taken advantage of having a surveyor amongst the troops and the graves were carefully mapped and the general statistics of deaths at Anzac were recorded: 8,000 Australians had died; of these about 3,000 were buried in the Anzac cemeteries; 3,500 were missing and 1,000 had died on hospital ships and were buried at sea; others died in Lemnos, Egypt and Malta. So when the Anzacs left Gallipoli it is estimated that half of the 3,500 missing were unburied.[14]

Some time in 1916 the Pope was asked to send delegates to Gallipoli to ensure the graves were not being despoiled. Being forewarned the Turks sent parties ahead to do a bit of housekeeping. Some graves had lost their clarity because of human intervention or the elements, so the Turks obligingly dug around, removed the grass, replaced the stones and made them presentable for the Pope'e delegation.[15]

Unfortunately, graves that had been surveyed as, for instance, running north/south, were casually re-aligned, so when the British Graves Registration Unit arrived in November 1918 with their accurate charts it was immediately recognised that the graves had been interfered with. The original positions were then accurately located by probing a steel rod which easily penetrated the worked earth but was resisted by undisturbed earth.[16]

Charles Bean and his Historical Mission arrived in February 1919. The men who charged The Nek in August 1915 were still there. 63 bodies were found in tunnels at Lone Pine and Quinn's Post as late as July 1921.[17]

The only Australian body returned home was of course General Sir William Bridges. This in itself caused a great deal of controversy. He was initially buried in Alexandria and his exhumation contravened all the rules of the Egyptian authorities, mainly that no body will be exhumed less than a year after burial. Having overcome all bureaucratic obstacles, the body was finally exhumed and the transport to Australia was organised. Unfortunately the good General's travelling companions were Diggers with VD returning to Australia in disgrace and there was a tremendous uproar at home about the implied disrespect this represented.

The AIF moved on to France, where any good intentions of burials being well ordered were undermined by the enormity of the slaughter, and the ferocity of artillery bombardments.

Throughout the war there were reams of paper issued to every commanding officer listing in very plain language the procedures and rules of burials.

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[13] Bean, p.61
[14] Bean, *ibid*
[15] Bean. p.63
[16] Bean, *ibid*
[17] AWM25 135/39

Instructions

1. Remove nothing from dead until placed in grave.
2. Bury British, French and German dead separately.
3. Mark flanks of graves with posts if available wire.
4. Enter map reference and nearest landmark in note book.
5. Select unexposed position.
6. Bury officers with men.
7. Enter particulars as body placed in the grave.
8. Tie up all personal belongings with identity card, place in envelope, write particulars on outside.
9. Mark all graves with Peg and Disc and enter serial no. in book."[18]

Despite the plain language, the same advice was issued repeatedly. Correspondence about the removal of identity discs was so frequent, surely the advice should have been redundant.

Letter dated 26.9.17 from AIF HQ;

> It has been brought to the notice by the Graves Registration Department that owing to lack of means of identification, it has been necessary to mark the graves of 80 Australian Soldiers in one area as 'Unknown Australian Officer' or 'Unknown Australian Soldier'. The only reason for the lack of means of identification was the non-observance of Army Order 287 of 1916. It will of course in these cases not be possible to inform relatives of the place of burial, thus causing much painful disappointment, as many anxious inquiries regarding such matters are received."[19]

This appears to be a frequent complaint about Australian soldiers, that they removed the identity discs and rendered the bodies "unknown". Was this over-enthusiastic souveniring, some boys' own adventure attempt to stop the Germans discovering the identity of the unit opposite them or simply that the protocol was never adequately explained to successive burial parties.

The whole concept of identity discs seems to have caused as much trouble as it was supposed to eliminate. Identity discs appear to have been first used in the American Civil War, supplied not by the authorities, but available from the free-enterprise sutlers who followed the fighting selling metal tags onto which were impressed the name of the purchaser.[20] The employment of identity discs gained importance as technology advanced. Before the extensive use of shrapnel and quick firing artillery, casualties weren't quite so mangled.

The instructions for identification of bodies were quite blunt.

> With reference to Army Order 287 of 1916, in case of the death of an officer or soldier in the field, the lower disc, known as 'Disc, identity, No. 2, red,' will be removed and disposed of in the same manner as heretofore.
>
> The upper disc, known as 'Disc, identity, No. 1, Green' will not be removed but will be buried with the body.
>
> Consequently in cases where a body can be reached and identified but cannot be brought back for burial, the lower will be removed to ensure proper notification of death, while the upper disc will remain as a safeguard against loss of identity when it becomes possible to bury.

[18] AWM25 135/3
[19] AWM25 135/3
[20] http:www.memorialbrass.com/history.htm

> The two discs will be worn around the neck, as directed in Army Order 287 of 1916, by all officers and soldiers on active service, and neglect to wear the discs will be regarded as a breach of discipline.[21]

However,

> When men are detailed to make raids, and are relieved of identity discs, numbers should be given them to correspond with numbers attached to their personal effects left behind."[22]

Frequently both discs were removed from the body, both placed in the bag for personal effects and happily posted to the Deputy Adjutant General. And

> in many instances the green identity disc has been found to have been removed from the body and placed in the slot of the burial peg. This practice entirely frustrates the purpose for which the green disc was intended; namely the identification of the body at some future date.[23]

Officers may have been buried with the men, but there were definite social distinctions in other fields as the following source demonstrates:

Letter from HQ Second Army, 6 July 1916.

> It is noticed that several Field Hospitals are reporting deaths, admissions for wounds, etc. of Other Ranks by wire to this Office. This is unnecessary, as the instructions issued with the G.R.O. 729 dated 17th March, 1916 still holds good in this respect – vis "Officers deaths by wire as they occur", Other Ranks deaths by post at first opportunity, Wounds (all ranks) on A.36.[24]

On the Western Front the French authorities tried valiantly to designate areas for burials. "The suitability of a site depends among other things on its being at least one hundred metres distance from groups of houses whether standing or in ruins, and not near a well or water supply."[25] But frequently having set out a burial ground in a suitable spot and all the proper procedures followed, the area was then bombarded and all traces lost.

One Army Chaplain described what had once been an organised burial ground.

> The gruesome remains of the Somme fighting last year is still left to tell the tale. Where the men had been buried, repeated shelling had unearthed the remains. Now and then the Germans had erected a rude cross, on one of which was written 'Herr Schwartz ruhen in Gott'. Here is an indication of what war costs. Someone loved Herr Schwartz, and now they mourn him. [26]

Actually at the beginning of the war the French were known to bury combatants with the Officer named and having an impressive memorial surrounded by his minions unnamed.[27]

Advice was that in normal circumstances divisions bury their own dead, but it was acknowledged that it may occur that the burial of the dead "is so large a business as to be beyond the power of the Division, depleted by casualties." [28]

Instructions marked SECRET suggested that "burial parties should NOT be detailed from units which are going into action." [29]

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21 AWM25 135/3
22 AWM25 135/22
23 AWM27 355/72
24 AWM25 135/25
25 AWM25 135/22
26 Chaplain J J Booth M Cross, 8th Bn AIF, *Letters*, AWM PR 84/336
27 Mosse, p.81
28 AWM25 135/2
29 AWM25 135/22

Indians were not allowed to be buried in the same enclosure as Christians and that if buried in communal cemeteries a separate plot had to be reserved for them. [30] In 1914 the term "Indians" was pre-partition and it is unclear whether this means moslems or hindus. It was stressed that Christian Indians be taken to a Christian burial ground.[31] The bodies of Gurkha hindus on Gallipoli had a ritual cremation after the war.

This was at a time when back in Australia, municipal cemeteries had specific areas for the Catholics, the Church of England, the Methodists and Presbyterians, the Jews were buried to one side, but inevitably the Chinese and Afghan Moslems were down the back in the scrub, separate of course.

When one shifted from the battlefield to blighty, it seems that deaths from wounds in hospitals in the UK were required by law to be notified to the coroner as a "death from violence". This applied to British and Colonial soldiers as well as German prisoners of war.[32]

Further notice came from Tidworth hospital in the UK concerning members of the AIF who died in UK hospitals:

> Relatives are not to be permitted to select grave sites, order coffins, or otherwise participate in military funeral arrangements.
> Each soldier must be interred in a separate grave and on no account is the body to be buried in a common grave, unless at the expressed wish of relatives.
> Roman Catholics must be buried in Roman Catholic ground.[33]

Remember Mustapa Pasha back in Cairo and his stock of coffins for £1.5s each? Well, as the war wore on the idea of contacting Mustapa for a coffin and gun carriage became a quaint practice from another era.

In December 1915, Divisional Headquarters in Egypt gave notice that crosses would be erected when wood became available. Each grave was to be identified by a bottle containing a piece of paper, having the name, regimental number and unit of the deceased marked on it; as soon as possible a cross would be erected, and it was intended to have the numbers stamped in metal and nailed to each cross.[34]

November 1916, To All Companies:

> It has been reported in many cases the dead have been buried in their full equipment and that their graves have been marked by sticking the barrel of their rifles into the earth and writing the man's name on the butt. Please issue instructions to all ranks that graves are not to be marked in this way and that equipment is to be removed before burial. Considerable difficulty is experienced in maintaining the supply of arms & equipment." [35]

In October 1917, came the orders,

> With a view to economy in blankets, it has been decided to substitute canvas for burial purposes instead of blankets. Approval is therefore given for a stock of 100 yards of 'canvas packing hessian' to be maintained by each casualty Clearing Station or Field Ambulance. Blankets will not be used for burial purposes in future.[36]

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[30] AWM25 135/31
[31] AWM25 135/31
[32] AWM25 399/41
[33] AWM25 135/36
[34] AWM25 135/38
[35] AWM25 135/27
[36] AWM25 135/2

Correspondence was generated in September 1917 that a complaint had been received that three men were buried in one blanket and the cost of the blanket charged to each man's pay account. Assurances were given by the CO of the field ambulance that this complaint had no foundation in fact.[37]

So imagine the uproar in April 1918 when von Richtofen was buried in a coffin delivered to the cemetery in a motor vehicle, with the extravagance of having a firing party. This was done for an enemy who just happened to be a Baron, although his fame could have had a lot to do with it!

There were furphies around of bodies being "mined" and assurances from the authorities that no casualties to burial parties had occurred because of this. [38]

Probably the greatest furphy of the war concerned the practice of rendering dead horses down to fat to be made into glycerine to make TNT. Something like nine thousand tons of fat were reportedly produced by an English Major Ellis on the French coast [39] However the idea of the Army transporting thousands of dead horses to the knackers seems quite incredible. A dead horse is a dreadfully inconvenient weight to transport, and conditions were hardly favourable.

However a report in a German newspaper boasted that the Germans were using cadavers for this purpose and the English rubbed their hands with glee at having found another atrocity with which they could accuse the Germans. It transpired that *kadaver* is German for an animal corpse not a human corpse, [40] but this subtle error of translation didn't stop the rumours being expanded into "Germans melting down babies for soap", a comment by a New Zealand soldier being that with German efficiency, why would they waste time using 10 pound babies when there was an almost unlimited supply of adult corpses.[41]

Desecration of graves was something the enemy did, but that we didn't do. Yet Siegfreid Sassoon said in France it was so cold in the trenches and "fuel was so scarce that wooden crosses were taken from casual graves".[42] Thus a known soldier becomes either an unknown or missing. In Palestine the Anzac Provost Corps were advised "wherever possible, boots of soldiers buried on the battle field should be removed. Local inhabitants dig up the feet of the grave for the boots."[43] Chaplain J J Booth MM of the 8th Bn AIF reports in his diary, "I am sorry to have to say that our own soldiers ... defiled the great German memorial and disfigured many of the smaller German headstones."[44]

According to *Behind the Lines,* on 10th December 1918 NZ troops attacked the Palestinian village of Surafend. The New Zealanders accused the Arabs of despoiling the bodies of soldiers killed in the fighting: "It did not occur to the New Zealanders that the Arabs might have taken equal exceptions to their habit of digging up cemeteries in search of souvenirs to send back to their wives and girlfriends in New Zealand." [45]

Perhaps the most unkind furphy has often been repeated by apologists for the obscene casualty lists, that death was commonplace in those days and one less child in a family was hardly missed.

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37 AWM27 355/69
38 AWM26 523/7
39 Terry Deary, *Horrible Histories, The Frightful First World War*, Hippo, Scholastic Limited, London, 1998. P.19.
40 Terry Deary, *ibid.*
41 Nicholas Boyack, p.92
42 Siegfried Sassoon, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston*, World Books, London, 1940, reprint by the Reprint Society Ltd. P.408
43 AWM25 135/35
44 AWM PR 84/336
45 Nicholas Boyack, p.163.

Robert Graves tells of spending leave at the home of a regimental friend whose brother had been killed. The mother went around with a bright religious look on her face during the day, but at 3am Graves heard a diabolical yell and a succession of laughing, sobbing shrieks. The mother spent her nights trying to get in touch with her dead son by spiritual means.[46]

In December 1916 an Almira Brockway was bought to trial in the UK. She was a fake spiritualist and was raking in £25 per week (workers in the war factories putting in a 48 hour week earned £1).[47] Such was the desperation of grieving families. Books claiming to be "as light from beyond the grave to many bereaved persons, bringing hope and consolation to those who would otherwise have continued to dwell in the shadow on the great darkness of the valley of death" were advertised in the Australian press.[48] When women saw the priest walking down the street they hurried inside and shut the door. Twenty to thirty years after the war women would often be buried holding their son's memorial plaque.

The decision to bury all allied troops where they fell and not allow any bodies to be returned to their homes was firstly influenced by the argument that it was unfair on the poor if only the rich could afford to bring their boy's body home. But the deciding argument came from Rudyard Kipling, whose son was amongst the missing, that parents of missing boys simply didn't have a body to bring home.

Of course this policy discriminated against the soldiers of the empire. Rich people in the UK could relatively easily visit their son's memorials in France, societies like the YMCA, the Salvation Army, the Church Army and the St Barnabas society were formed to help the poor afford the trip to France and the government provided some very limited funds.[49] Even a poor person could get from England to France on a two day trip, probably less than comfortably, but considerably more conveniently than an Australian parent contemplating the enormous expense of a long sea voyage either way.

It seems that the 1st AIF was unique not only in that it was the only volunteer army of the Great War, but that some volunteered to stay on past the cessation of hostilities to tidy up before then went home. The British used German prisoners of war for this task, some of whom were not repatriated until as late as 1920. The French used their Senegalese and Indo Chinese labour corps while the Americans gave this unpleasant job to their Negro regiments as a deliberate policy of discrimination,[50] but Australians, some of whom felt they had arrived too late to "do their bit" volunteered to stay on in France or travel back to Gallipoli, thus doing their mates the honour of getting their own hands dirty.

The beauty of the expensively maintained cemeteries on Gallipoli and in France, gives rise to several thoughts. How long will these graves be maintained? In 2015 the graves on Gallipoli will be 100 years old. In Australia some local councils would like to turn cemeteries that young into parking lots. Will our sacred sites overseas be maintained in the future only if they generate sufficient tourist dollars for the host countries or don't get in the way of proposed new airport runways?

Anybody who has even been in an old Australian cemetery cannot help but notice both the number of derelict monuments and the numerous barren plots marked only by a numbered steel

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[46] Robert Graves, *Goodbye To All That,* first published 1929, published 1969 by Book Club Associates, London. P.206

[47] Terry Deary, p.35.

[48] *Stead's Review,* published by Henry Stead, Melbourne, 8th February, 1919. P.iv.

[49] David W. Lloyd, p. 38/39

[50] Arthur E. Barbequ & Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers, African-American Troops in World War I,* Da Capo Press, New York, 1996, p. 165/166

plaque. One would be forgiven for thinking that a good many of the 1st AIF probably have a better monument overseas than they would ever have had at home.

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'And the horses stay behind'

The lithograph 'And the horses stay behind' depicts the only surviving fragment of the original Desert Mounted Corps Memorial in Port Said, Egypt. The bronze memorial was erected to honour Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought and died in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria between 1916 and 1918 and was largely destroyed in the Suez conflict of 1956.

This shattered horse's head will form the centrepiece of the RSPCA's Memorial to Animals in War, to be situated in the Sculpture Garden of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The memorial has been designed by artist Steven Holland to stand as both a mark of deep respect to the animals that gave so much in times of war. Many different animals have served Australia in a variety of different roles and in a number of different conflicts. The memorial will celebrate the lives of these and all animals, now and in the future.

The total cost of the Memorial is estimated at $340,000. To help raise these funds Steven Holland, in association with master printer Theo Tremblay, has produced an exclusive limited edition lithograph poignantly titled "And the horses stay behind". The title refers to the fact that, although over 100,000 horses left Australian shores for overseas service in World War I, only one horse returned.

There will be only 100 copies of this beautiful print produced. By purchasing this lithograph you will be helping the RSPCA make the Memorial to Animals in War a reality and sharing in the belief that all animals deserve our care and our respect.

Enquiries for the framed ($1200) and unframed ($700) from:

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Error of Judgement or Outright Bigotry? The Colours Controversy of the 1950's.

Graham Wilson

As Australians, we are extremely fortunate to live in one of the most tolerant societies in the world (far more tolerant than many commentators would have us believe). This has not, of course, always been the case. One group in Australian society who have in the past suffered discrimination is Catholics. Things are certainly better today than they were when I was a small boy in the 1950's, when I and my brothers and parents experienced outright bigotry and intolerance in various places due to our religion. Days now long gone, thankfully. But, the 1950's were definitely days of sectarian bigotry (not all one-sided of course) and this paper looks back to an event, or actually a sequence of events, which saw Australian Catholic military placed in a position where they could have been faced with a choice between their Faith and their careers. This was the so-called "Colours Controversy."

"Colours" in the context of this article are a flag or flags in heraldic colours, bearing designs relevant to a particular military organisation and embroidered with battle, campaign and theatre honours if awarded. Modern Australian colours are the descendants of the banners carried into battle by the British Army right up until the last quarter of the 19th century. Currently, the Australian Army issues Queen's and Regimental Colours to infantry battalions and the Royal Military College; regimental guidons to armoured units; and various royal banners and ensigns to the different corps of the Army.[1] The Royal Australian Navy is at the opposite end of the spectrum, the RAN's colours consisting of two Queen's Colours, one in possession of the Maritime Headquarters, the other held by the Navy's main training establishment, HMAS *Cerberus* in Victoria. The colour held by MHQ is the "Fleet" colour, while that at *Cerberus* is for the use of shore establishments.[2] The RAN's battle honours are actually vested in its ships, not its colours. The Royal Australian Air Force lies somewhere between the other two services in the matter of colours. The RAAF has a single Queen's Colour, held on behalf of the entire Air Force. In addition, "Queen's Colours" are held by a number of major Air Force units and commands; squadron standards are issued to qualifying squadrons and units; and Governor-General's Banners are issued to a number of non-operational units.[3]

Colours had been issued to Australian colonial units as far back as the middle of the 19th century.[4] While the consecration of colours had apparently been the exclusive domain of Anglican clergy, there do not appear to have been any complaints from Catholics or from other denominations about this exclusivity. Complaints from Catholic military personnel that is. It was a different matter for the Catholic hierarchy. As early as 1904, Archbishop Carr[5] had voiced his concerns at this form of Anglican exclusivity to the Minister for Defence.[6] The timing of Archbishop Carr's complaints leads me to surmise that they were voiced at the time of the

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1 *Ceremonial Manual 1999 Volume 1*, Chap 5, paragraph 5.2 - 5.12.

2 *Australian Book of Reference 1834 Vol. 3 Royal Australian Navy Flag Ceremonial Procedures*, Chap. 1, p.1-4.

3 *Defence Instruction (Air Force) Administrative 10-15, Queen's Colour.*

4 Festberg, Alfred N, 1972 *Australian Army Guidons and Colours*,Allara Publishing Pty. Ltd., Melbourne, pp. 5-11.

5 Most Rev Dr T J Carr, DD (1839-1917), Archbishop of Melbourne 1886-1917 and Chaplain General (RC) to the Australian Military Forces 1913-1917.

6 Johnstone, Tom, 2000 *The Cross of Anzac Australian Catholic Service Chaplains*, Church Archivists' Press, Virginia (QLD), p.273.

presentation of "King's Banners" to Australian units for service in the Boer War.[7] If so, the Archbishop's complaints appear to have paid off. The relevant Government Order outlining the program of parade for the presentation of banners on 14 November 1904 specifically refers to the "Consecration of the King's Colours (sic) by the senior and other chaplains of the Military Forces of the Commonwealth."[8] Presumably, the term "other chaplains" included Catholic.

It would appear, however, that complaints about Anglican exclusivity had struck a raw nerve with the authorities and in the years following, no set arrangements for consecration of colours were made or specified. Indeed, when regulations for the presentation of Militia Infantry colours were promulgated in 1908, it was stated that "The ceremony of presentation is not imperative, and is regarded as a private arrangement between the unit and individual invited to make the presentation."[9]

When Lord Kitchener presented the Countess of Dudley's Banners to the Commonwealth Cadet Corps in 1910, no provision for consecration of colours was made at all, despite the fact that in all other respects the instructions for presentation were the same as those for King's and Regimental colours.[10] Later still, when the time came to present King's Colours to the battalions and regiments of the AIF for service in the Great War, Festberg records that the "Colours were not consecrated at the presentation ceremonies, all units had to make their own arrangements."[11]

Lack of guidance from higher authority unfortunately caused further trouble. In 1924, Catholic voices were again raised in protest when the Commanding Officer of the 59th Infantry Battalion ordered a compulsory parade for the presentation of colours and then invited a Methodist Minister to consecrate the colours. The Australian Catholic Federation protested this arrangement in no uncertain terms to the Minister for Defence. The Catholic Federation stated that to force Catholic soldiers to attend a compulsory parade where a religious ceremony was to be performed by a non-Catholic Minister was in direct violation of Section 123B of the *Defence Act of 1903-1915*. This section of the Act states: "No member of the Defence Force who has conscientious objection shall be compelled to answer any question as to his religion, nor shall any regulation or other order compel attendance at any religious service." Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to ascertain the outcome of this particular incident.

Twenty-three years after the presentation of the King's Banners for the Boer War, Archbishop Mannix[12] voiced his concerns at the time of the presentation of colours to the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1927.[13] In this instance, however, representations by the Catholic prelate were unsuccessful. The ceremony went ahead with the colours being consecrated by the Anglican Chaplain General.[14] An interesting point to note is that in 1927 Catholics represented approximately 20% of the membership of the Corps of Staff Cadets.[15] Presumably the percentage of Catholics represented in the military and civilian staff of the College were similar.

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7 Festberg, op. cit., pp.15-16.
8 *G.O. No. 258 of 8th November, 1904*, reproduced in Festberg, op. cit., pp. 17-19.
9 *MO 524., King's and Regimental Colours*, quoted in Festberg, op. cit., p.29.
10 *Presentation banners presented by Her Excellency the Countess of Dudly, to the Senior Cadetr Battalions of the Commonwealth*, quoted in Festberg, op. cit., pp. 38-40.
11 Festberg, op. cit., p.48.
12 Most Rev Dr D Mannix, DD (1864-1963), Archbishop of Melbourne 1917-1963 and Chaplain General (RC) to the AMF 1917-1963.
13 Johnstone, op. cit. See also Moore, Daniel, 2001 *Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia 1911-2001*, RMC of Australia, Canberra, p. 68.
14 Moore, op. cit., p. 99.
15 Coulthard-Clark, Chris, 1986 *Duntroon The Royal Military College of Australia 1911-1986*, Allen & Unwin Australasia Pty. Ltd., Sydney, p.274.

The matter now languished for 25 years. Very few new colours were issued after 1927 and then the Second World War and its aftermath intervened.[16] The situation finally came to a head in 1952 with the "Colours Controversy". This incident arose out of the granting of colours to the Royal Australian Air Force. In 1952, as one of her many duties as the newly crowned sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II approved the grant of colours to the RAAF. The new colours had in fact been approved by the Queen's late father King George VI in 1950, but the King had died before the colours could be presented. In memory of her late father the new Queen directed that the original colours as manufactured for the RAAF, bearing the King's cipher of "GVIR" rather than her own cipher of "EIIR", should be issued and used until they wore out and were replaced.

The colours were to be presented to the RAAF by the Governor General at a ceremony at RAAF Base Laverton in Victoria. So far so good, as all of the ceremonial, drill etc involved in the presentation of colours was and is quite straightforward. The problem arose when it came time to consecrate or bless the new colours, an integral part of the presentation. Either deliberately or out of ignorance, the RAAF hierarchy decreed that the new Queen's Colour was to be consecrated by the Anglican Chaplain General.[17] Given the importance of the occasion, all personnel serving at Laverton and Point Cook were directed to take part in the parade. Sometime before the event, however, a number of Catholic servicemen and women requested to be excused from the parade as it was against the teachings of their faith, not to mention their own consciences, to attend a non-Catholic religious service. The request was based on Canon Law, which stated, quite unequivocally, that; "It is forbidden to actively participate in the worship of non-Catholics (*communicatus in sanctis*)."[18] The Code of Canon Law went even further than this, stating: "One who cooperates communicatus in sanctis contrary to the provision of Canon 1258 is suspected of heresy."[19] It is more than likely that some readers, especially non-Catholic readers, might say that interpreting the consecration of colours as a "non-Catholic religious service" was drawing a very long bow. It doesn't matter, however, what those readers or, for that matter, the author of this article might think. The fact is that under the teachings of the time and by what they knew and believed, those Catholic personnel at Laverton and Point Cook who had been ordered to attend the colours presentation honestly felt that to attend the parade, compulsorily or otherwise, was to risk commission of the sin of heresy. It was in fact what is referred to as "an occasion of sin."

Faced with the reality of the situation, ideally, the Air Force should have either accepted the request of the Catholic personnel and excused them from the parade, or arranged for a Catholic priest (and preferably a minister of another Protestant denomination) to cooperate in the religious dedication of the Colour.

Unfortunately, neither of these was done. Not only that, but the Air Force command, with incredible tactlessness and lack of understanding, not to mention stupidity, threatened the Catholic personnel, who included several reasonably senior officers, with disciplinary action and even, in at least one case, with dismissal. Catholic cadets at the RAAF College at Point Cook were advised that if they continued with their actions they would be putting their future careers in jeopardy. Officers were threatened with courts martial and airmen and women with severe

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16 Guidons and Colours issued between January 1928 and September 1939 comprised guidons to 1st, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 18th, 21st and 23rd Light Horse Regiments, all issued in March and April 1928 and colours to 9th Battalion (Moreton Regiment) May 1928, 16th Battalion (Goldfields Regiment) October 1933, 47th Battalion (Wide Bay Regiment) October 1938 and Melbourne University Rifles, March 1928. Festberg, op. cit., pp. 60-61. This was a total of 13 units out of an entitled list of 86.

17 Rt Rev C O L Riley (1854-1929), Chaplain General (ANG) to the AMF 1916-1929.

18 *Codex iuris canonici* (Code of Canon Law) *1917*, Canon 1258.

19 Ibid, Canon 2316.

disciplinary action.[20] The crowning moment came when the Catholic chaplain at Laverton was accused of violating his Oath of Allegiance for refusing to attend the parade.[21]

Faced with orders from above that clashed with both their consciences and the laws of the Church, several of the affected personnel pointed out that such an order was contrary to Section 116 of the Australian Constitution. Section 116 is worth quoting in full, as follows:

> The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

Catholic personnel effected by the orders of their superior officers to attend the colours parade pointed to s.116 and offered the opinion that in ordering them to attend a non-Catholic religious service the Air Force and thus the Commonwealth were in contravention of the Constitution. To take it a step further, the opinion was also offered that in reserving to the Anglican Church the right to consecrate the colours, the Commonwealth, through its agent the Air Force, was in fact setting up a State Religion. Certainly it cannot be denied that by its actions the Air Force was trying to impose a religious observance on some of its members, while at the same time prohibiting the free observance of their own religion by those same members. While the motives of the Air Force were probably not in any way sinister, the stance taken and the steps taken to enforce that stance were totally unacceptable to Catholics (and probably other faiths and denominations affected as well).

Both Johnstone and Festberg record that discussions at the highest level could not solve the impasse. In the end, faced with the threats to the careers of the Catholic personnel and with great reluctance, Mannix permitted the Catholics to take part in the parade.[22] The parade went ahead and the RAAF Queen's Colour was duly presented and consecrated on 17 September 1952 by the Anglican Chaplain General.[23]

It was unfortunate that the situation had not been resolved at the time as, less than two years later, the problem was to rear its head again. In 1954, new colours were issued to the Royal Military College, Duntroon.[24] Once again, the orders for the parade specified that the new colours were to be consecrated by the Anglican Chaplain General and once again Dr. Mannix leaped to the fray. This time, Archbishop Mannix had finally had enough. In an effort to make sure that government and the armed forces once and for all understood the Catholic position and Catholic concerns, the Archbishop went so far as to ban Catholic cadets from attending the parade.[25] The ban was no light matter for the Army to consider, as Catholics represented 22.9% of the membership of the Corps of Staff Cadets at the time.[26] Negotiations to end the ban went as high as the Prime Minister, with Mr Menzies making personal representations to Archbishop

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[20] Discussion between the author and Wing Commander Johannes Steibach of 27 March 2002. Wing Commander Steinbach is the author of "Sectarianism's Last Stand? Mannix, Menzies and the 1954 Duntroon Colours Controversy," which appeared in the January/February 2001 edition of the *Australian Defence Force Journal*. The Wing Commander is extremely knowledgeable on all aspects of the controversy and gave the author much interesting background detail.

[21] Fr L T Tellefson, FT Chaplain (RC), RAAF Station Laverton 1952-54. See Davidson, Peter. A, 1990 *Skypilot A History of Chaplaincy in the RAAF 1926-1990*, Principal Chaplain's Committee – Air Force, Canberra, no page number.

[22] Discussion with Peter Davidson, 15 March 2002. Also confirmed in discussion with Wing Commander Steinbach of 27 March 2002.

[23] Rt Rev C L Riley CBE (1888-1971), Chaplain General (ANG) to the AMF, 1942-1957. Rt Rev C L Riley was the son of Rt. Rev C O L Riley.

[24] Coulthard-Clark, op. cit., p.190.

[25] Festberg, op. sit., p. 91.

[26] Coulthard-Clark, op. cit., p.274.

Mannix. The fact that the colours were to be personally presented by the Queen doubtless had some bearing on the involvement of the Prime Minister!

Steinbach records that negotiations between Menzies and Mannix dated as far back as 1952, at the time of the RAAF Queens Colour debacle. Records indicate the Menzies on several occasions promised action but never delivered. Certain references in Menzies papers indicate that while Menzies himself was prepared to be reasonable, a number of members of his cabinet took a very hard line anti-Catholic view and he was forced to follow suit. With Menzies continuing to fob him off, Mannix finally took the drastic step of providing copies of correspondence between the Archbishop and the Prime Minister to the press. This release of private correspondence was designed to both goad the Prime Minister into action and to stem a rising tide of calumny being directed at Archbishop Mannix by sections of the press who were blaming the Archbishop, rather than the government, for the problem.[27]

Menzies responded to Mannix' publication of their correspondence in aggrieved tones, attempting to shift the blame onto the Archbishop's shoulders. But Mannix stood firm and Menzies was finally forced to provide assurances that the situation would be resolved. Mannix accepted these assurances and lifted the ban on the Catholic cadets. The lifting of the ban was conditional upon a review of colour dedication procedures.[28] In a nice piece of theological hair-splitting, however, the Archbishop stated that the participation of the cadets would be only "in a physical and military sense."[29] Thus the Catholic cadets were on parade at Duntroon on 17 February 1954 when the Queen presented the new colours, which were then consecrated by the Rt Rev C L Riley, Chaplain General (ANG) of the AMF.[30]

An interesting footnote on the matter of the RMC colours is the fact that in 1954 new colours were issued to the RAN as well. In his coverage of the issue of these new colours in his excellent book on RAN heraldry, Festberg includes the bald statement: "No presentation ceremonies were held."[31] While no details on the reason for this decision have come to light, the author considers it highly likely that the colours were issued without ceremony in order to avoid another bruising round of the seemingly interminable "Colours Controversy." If this supposition is correct, it is a sad indictment on just how far the problem had been allowed to go.

Despite assurances by the Prime Minister, however, the Chaplains-General's Committee failed to resolve the key issue, that is, the canonically based restriction on Catholics not to attend non-Catholic religious services. The interim solution applied was that for presentation of colours, the battalion or regiment's chaplain, or his Chaplain General, would perform the ceremony.[32] This was really no solution at all since, unless the chaplain happened to be Catholic, then the battalion or regiment's Catholics were left in the same untenable position.

Although always intensely interested in the spiritual needs of the Australian military and naval Catholics entrusted to him in his role as Chaplain General, Archbishop Mannix had always

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[27] Steinbach, "Sectarianism's Last Stand?", op cit. Also discussions between Steinbach and the author, 27 March 2002.

[28] Johnstone, op. cit., p.274.

[29] Festberg, op. cit., p.92.

[30] Coulthard-Clark, op. cit., p.192. All other things aside, it is a matter of some interest to the author of this article that the Royal Military College's colours were consecrated in 1927 by Bishop C O L Riley while the colours presented in 1954 were consecrated by his son.

[31] Festberg, Alfred N, 1981 *Heraldry in the Royal Australian Navy*, Silverleaf Publishing, Melbourne, p. 12.

[32] Johnstone, op. cit., p.274. When colours are presented, a guard or picquet is detailed to mount security around the perimeter of the parade ground. This practice dates back to the time when armed guards actually were needed to fight off intruders if necessary during colour or religious services. This is referred to in military ceremonial terminology as "holding ground." Although largely ceremonial today, holding ground is still a very real security procedure.

delegated the actually running of the position to a deputy. In 1955, the Deputy Chaplain General (RC), Fr Tim McCarthy, resigned his position.[33] His position was taken by Fr John Aloysius Morgan who took up his appointment on 8 September 1955.[34] The choice of Fr Morgan as Deputy Chaplain General was nothing short of inspired. A priest of wide experience, Fr Morgan was also a very experienced military chaplain, having served full time with the AIF during World War Two, including operational service in the South West Pacific, and then continued his involvement as a part time CMF chaplain after the war. So he was no stranger to the peculiar world of the military ecclesiastic and his flock. Beyond that, however, "Alo" Morgan was (and still is) a man of great intelligence and intellect, wide learning and deep compassion, tact and understanding. All of these attributes were to be of enormous use to him in the first months of his service as Deputy Chaplain General.

No sooner had Fr Morgan taken up his position than he was faced with the delicate problem of the presentation of colours to the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, scheduled to be presented to the battalion by the Governor General Field Marshal Sir William Slim on 28 September 1955.[35] The problem from the point of view of the Catholic Church was that the Regimental Chaplain of 2RAR was a minister of a Protestant Denomination. Fr Morgan entered into urgent discussions with the Commanding Officer of 2RAR who was himself fully aware of the delicate nature of the situation. Between the two of them they worked out a compromise whereby the Catholics in the battalion were posted as picquets "holding ground" for the presentation ceremony.[36] Thus the Catholics were on the parade but technically not part of it.

While this compromise had worked well, it was still just that, a compromise. No sooner had Fr Morgan got over the presentation of colours to the Regular Army 2RAR, than he was faced with the same problem for the CMF 2nd Battalion, City of Newcastle Regiment, whose colours were scheduled to be presented in April 1956.[37] Because the chaplain of this battalion was Catholic, Fr Morgan was to officiate. But, while this would have suited the Catholics in the unit, Fr Morgan foresaw problems with the non-Catholic members of the battalion. For various reasons, he was keen to avoid this. He was also keen to solve the problem once and for all. At this point, the problem appeared so intractable that there was talk of having no religious element to the Newcastle parade at all and, by inference, any further parades. In an interview with the author, Bishop Morgan recalled that he had privately decided that he would not abide by the compromise solution then in place but would in fact refuse to officiate unless the other two major denominations were represented. Fr Morgan firmly believed that all members of the Chaplains General's Conference were as desperate for a solution as he was and only needed a small push to guide them onto the correct path.[38]

Fortunately for all concerned, the Adjutant General of the Army, Major General Mervyn Brogan, the officer responsible for religious matters in the Army, took a hand. After discussion with Fr Morgan he called a conference of Chaplains General in Canberra to thrash out a solution. At the conference Fr Morgan stated openly that he did not want to go to Newcastle alone. His preference was for all three Chaplains General to jointly officiate at a consecration, dedication and blessing of the colours. The other Chaplains General and the Adjutant General, just as keen

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33 Fr T McCarthy, CBE, Deputy Chaplain General (RC) of the AMF, 1942-1955.

34 Most Rev J A Morgan, DD AO ED (b. 1909), Bishop Emeritus, Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Deputy Chaplain General (RC) 1955-1963, Chaplain General 1963-1981, Australian Military Vicar 1981-1985.

35 Festberg, *Colours*, op. cit., p.94.

36 Johnstone, op. cit., p. 274.

37 Ibid. Also Festberg, op. cit., p.93.

38 Interview with Bishop Morgan, 19 March 2002.

as Fr Morgan to solve the problem, readily agreed, conditional upon an acceptable form of service, compatible with military ceremonial, being produced.

A minor but still significant procedural point that was ironed out at the conference was the Catholic objection to the use of the word "consecration." As Fr Morgan pointed out to the conference, Catholics do not consecrate non-sacred objects. While, for example, a church altar or a chalice may be consecrated, a set of colours could not. Thus it was agreed that the Anglican Chaplain General or his representative would "consecrate" the colours, the Catholic Chaplain General or his representative would "bless" the colours and the OPD Chaplain General or his representative would "dedicate" the colours to God and the country. From the strict theological point of view, blessing of colours was and is quite acceptable to the Catholic Church.[39]

The Secretary of the Chaplains General Committee, Major Dimpsey, drafted a form of service that was accepted by the Committee and then referred to their respective denominational hierarchies. All denominations accepted the new form without demur. Mgr. Fox on behalf of Archbishop Mannix outlined the new procedure in a letter to the Australian Catholic Bishops, who apparently accepted the procedure with pleasure and probably not a little relief.

At the Colour Parade in Newcastle on 15 April 1956, the new colours of 2nd Battalion, City of Newcastle Regiment were consecrated by Bishop Riley, Chaplain General (ANG), blessed by Fr Morgan, Deputy Chaplain General (RC), and dedicated by Rev Brooke, Chaplain General (OPD). The ceremony was a great success and in a newspaper interview the next day the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle acknowledged the immense difficulties experienced in the past by Catholic servicemen and women and praised the new procedure. Just over one week later, on 24 April 1956, the fifth anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong, the 3rd Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment was presented with its colours in a splendid ceremony incorporating the new procedure.[40]

Moreover, when the new Hall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra was dedicated in 1959, an Anglican chaplain (representing the RAN), a Catholic chaplain (representing the Army) and a Protestant chaplain (representing the RAAF), blessed, consecrated and dedicated the Hall. This ceremony, carried out at the invitation of the Governor General, Field Marshal Slim, was in stark contrast to the opening of the War Memorial on 11 November 1941, which Catholics had been forbidden to attend for exactly the same reasons as the "Colours Controversy."

Although the matter of denominational exclusivity had finally been laid to rest, its memory lived on, generally not happily. As an example of how deeply the "Colours Controversy" had effected the psyche of the ADF, one needs only to turn to Neville Lindsay's 1994 history of the Officer Cadet School, Portsea. When reading Lindsay's account of the presentation of the first (and in the end only) set of colours to OCS in 1968, one can quite palpably feel the sense of relief as the author writes:

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[39] Ibid.

[40] On 24 April 1951, near the village of Kapyong in South Korea the 3rd Battalion the Royal Australian Regiment made an epic and bloody stand against the better part of a Chinese Division. The battalion's action (along with the just as epic stand by the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry) blunted the Chinese drive and gave the retreating UN forces precious time to consolidate and dig in on a new defensive line. For its heroic actions 3RAR was awarded the US Presidential Unit Citation (for group bravery). The battalion celebrates Kapyong Day every year on 24 April and at a ceremonial parade the streamer of the Presidential Unit Citation is fixed to the staff of the Regimental Colour and paraded with full honours. The Royal Australian Regiment shares the battle honour "Kapyong" with the PPCLI, (2 PPCLI also received a PUC) who also celebrate Kapyong Day annually. Each year on Kapyong Day the RAR exchanges greetings with the PPCLI.

> Fortunately, at this stage it was possible to have an ecumenical blessing of the colours, in stark contrast to the religious problems of the 1954 presentations at the Royal Military College.[41]

So the "Colours Controversy" was finally resolved. It is a great pity, but perhaps a reflection of the times, that it ever occurred in the first place. That it was eventually resolved with minimum fuss and rancour is a tribute to the strength and stability of Australia's institutions, both political and military. It is also a tribute to the tact and diplomacy of a great Australian Catholic cleric, John Aloysius Morgan.

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Amendment To Federal Council Box Number.

From August 2003 the Federal Council PO Box Number has been amended from PO Box 30 GARRAN ACT 2605 to PO Box 5030 GARRAN ACT 2605. New mail sorting equipment needs to be able to distinguish between post office boxes at different Australian post outlets within the same post code region.

[41] Lindsay, Neville 1994, *Loyalty and Service The Officer Cadet School Portsea*, Historia Productions, Kenmore (SA), p. 201.

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200310810

The Swastika of Bali

Paul A Rosenzweig[1]

"Om Swasti Astu". With this mystical greeting, guests are welcomed to the island of Bali, a Hindu enclave in the Indonesian archipelago, home to volcanoes, reefs and pristine beaches, gamelan orchestras and temples protected by troops of monkeys. The visitor is offered everything from surf, nightlife, markets and Bintang beer.

Until recently Bali was nothing short of paradise, an island of grandeur and mysticism, and it would be a great shame if one act of barbarism was to deny the island that status again in the future. Beyond the pure tourist attractions however, the traveller with an interest in military history and militaria could not but be struck by the abundance of swastikas throughout the island. To the unknowing, the immediate reaction is to somehow try to relate the island's symbology with the Third Reich, or some resurgent neo-nazism movement, but unfortunately Hitler's adoption of the symbol has perhaps forever tarnished the swastika's ancient significance.

> A Chinese scholar reported visiting a Buddhist island now known as Bali in 670 AD, while other Chinese who visited the island during the 7th century called it *Paoli* ('rice island'). Amongst its inhabitants, the name *Balidwipa* has been identified in inscriptions and the earliest written records – in the 5th century, Indian script was being used in carved Hindu inscriptions and Sanskrit words still used in the Indonesian language today reflect the region's Indian heritage. From around the 10th century, Bali existed as one mighty kingdom which extended from eastern Java and included the modern islands of Bali, Lombok and Sumbawa, a glorious Hindu kingdom built upon a four caste ideology. Despite the overall spiritual leadership of the hereditary King of Bali, a number of separate princedoms existed at various times – based largely upon the physical properties of the island. One interesting aspect of Bali's geography is that its coastline possesses very few sea ports, one of the prime reasons it remained largely immune from Islamic or Christian dominance, and it is recognised as one of very few countries where Islam could not supplant the existing religion by military conquest.

Hotels, restaurants and businesses on Bali bear the name 'Swastika', while almost everywhere else on the island the swastika appears on statues, tiles, banners and temple friezes. The actual word 'swastika' is derived from Sanskrit, the language of ancient India, meaning 'well-being', partly reiterated in the Balinese greeting "Om Swasti Astu". The swastika itself, in various forms, has been a Hindu symbol for thousands of years - a sunwheel representing the continuous progression of life, death and reincarnation, optimistically interpreted as prosperity and good fortune. Not surprisingly then, the swastika has been used in Nepal during election ballots in hope of re-election - political regeneration.

It appears as a symbol of the Sun in old Japanese documents, and some references on heraldry refer to it as the 'sun charm'. In Buddhist theology, it carries a meaning of 'prosperity'. In Tibet, farmers place a swastika on their home doors to repel evil. The swastika signifies perpetuity, and is a reminder that mortal life, like the sun, will progress until it is extinguished,

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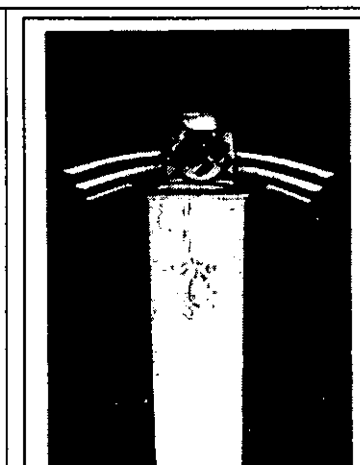
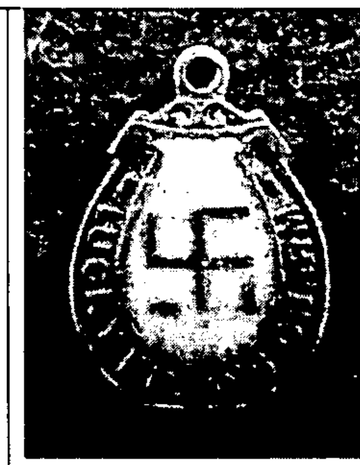
[1] Paul Rosenzweig is a collector and non professional military historian, and has contributed to Sabretache and other publications regularly over the last twenty years. He is a member of the Military Historical Society of Australia, the Naval Historical Society of Australia, and the Historical Society of the Northern Territory. He has had three books published, most recently the regimental history of the North West Mobile Force, *Ever Vigilant* (http://www.booksandcollectibles.com.au/authors/norforce.htm).



Top left - Bali swastikas Business card from one of several Balinese facilities bearing the image and/or name of the Hindu swastika

Top right DLV *Fliegermesser*, 1934-35. The *Fliegermesser* (flyer's knife) of the *Deutscher Luftsport-Verband* (German Air Sports Formation), 1934-35, made by Paul Weyersberg & Co of Solingen: it has a wooden grip covered in fine-grained dark blue Morocco leather, and a solid nickel-silver crossguard (*parierstange*) with downward-turned quillon (*parierstangen-haken*), recalling the form of the ancient swords of the Teutonic Knights. The crossguard bears a square central block, with a black enamel swastika on a medallion insert in the centre on both sides.



Bottom left - Korean swastika, 1999. Swastika symbol attached to the 'dog tags'of a member of the Korean contingent to INTERFET, the International Force in East Timor, December 1999.

Bottom right Talisman. "Lucky Fred's Charm" bearing the swastika, unknown origin.

only to rise again in a never-ending cycle. It could not better represent the turbulent heritage of Bali, a paradoxical Hindu paradise nestled within the Indonesian archipelago *Nusantara*.

The swastika is not a symbol of evil, nor is it actually a Germanic symbol. It has been suggested that the swastika actually originated in the most primitive of cultures, where in the dawning days of agriculture people recognised that the Big Dipper constellation rotated around the North Star, forming the swastika pattern when charted every thirteen weeks (four times a year). Under this

interpretation, the swastika's very first manifestation was to represent one 'cycle' (a year), with obvious links to fertility and regeneration.

The swastika was used widely in the earliest civilisations: artefacts found in the ancient ruins of Troy were adorned with swastikas. On another continent, it became a well-established icon of the American Plains Indians as well as the Pueblo Indians, a 'sun-wheel' with agricultural significance. From here it became incorporated into late 19th and early 20th century American culture as a symbol of harmony, health and luck – on poker chips, Scout insignia, sporting team uniforms, fruit crates from California, postcards and even Coca-Cola promotional items – drawing on the Buddhist theme of 'prosperity' and a variation on the Sanskrit 'well-being'. Talismans and good-luck charms bearing the swastika seem to have peaked in their popularity during the depression of the 1930s, and a significant number of American tokens and cards from this era bear a swastika. It can even be seen on the Capitol building in Washington DC.

Some element of the Hindu symbolism was incorporated into the swastika by Hitler for his resurgent ambitions, the rebirth/regeneration of the Reich and his own 'reincarnation' after political exile. The SS (*Schutzstaffel*) had already been in existence for eight years when a distinctive dagger was introduced, based on a 16th century German hunting dagger. Candidates for the SS were selected for their mental and physical adeptness and were constantly assessed during an eighteen month probationary period to observe how well they lived up to the standards of faith, honour and unconditional obedience. The SS dagger was given a special status and was considered a symbol of office. During this early period of the 1930s, successful candidates were awarded their daggers during the *SS Anwärter*, or 'Candidate Ceremony' at the *Feldherrnhalle* Memorial in Munich, as each member qualified to become an *SS Mann*. The annual ritual was charged with mysticism, intended to reflect the traditions of the Teutonic Knights, who many claim used the swastika themselves. These new 'knights' where to be the reincarnation of their predecessors. Similarly, the design of other daggers drew on the form of the sword of the Teutonic Knights, and in all cases the swastika was included.

But the swastika had already been in use throughout Europe well before Hitler selected the design of Starnberg dentist Dr Friedrich Krohn for use as the NSDAP emblem. Known to the Germans as the *Hakenkreuz* ('hooked cross'), it certainly was used by the various right-wing *Freikorps* units which arose after the end of WW1 as well as other racially-oriented organisations, which most likely contributed to its use as a unifying symbol by Hitler. But this symbol was itself drawn from a ancient pagan sign for the German Thunder God *Donner* (Thor), representing his returning hammer.

The swastika was used in Finland from 1918 in relation to the Finnish War of Liberation from Russia. The swastika appears within the arms of the Order of the Cross of Liberty, instituted in 1918, and behind the white rose in the central disc of the Star of the Order. It also featured on the chain collar of the Commander Grand Cross of the Order of the White Rose when it was instituted in 1919; it was not until 1963 that these swastikas on the Order of the White Rose neck chain were replaced by stylised spruce branches.

Similarly in Latvia, the swastika was a symbol of thunder, fire and fertility, and was adopted as a symbol of nationalistic revolution and the ambition of rebirth free from oppression. The prime military honour of Latvia is the Order of Lāčplēsis, established in November 1919 to reward bravery in the face of the enemy. Lāčplēsis, the legendary bearslayer hero, is the traditional representation of strength and bravery, and the heroic spirit of the nation. The insignia of the order is a cross enamelled in the national colours of white and red, with the arms shaped in the distinctive form of a swastika. The Latvian War of National Liberation Medal was awarded for service in the war against the Russian Bolshevik Army and the German *Landeswehr* and mercenaries, 1918-20. It features the motto *Par Tevzemi* ('For the Fatherland') and the three stars

of Latvia, prominent in all Latvian heraldry (representing the three ancient territories of Letgale, Zemgale and Kurzeme), and is suspended from a maroon ribbon with a central white stripe, the national colours of Latvia (this flag is recorded as early as 1280). Of interest, the central symbol of the medal is a warrior's arm, bearing a sword with a swastika central on the crossguard.

In Bali, the swastika which freely adorns religious icons and commercial enterprises alike, continues as a representation of the never-ending cycle of life, and the continual struggle of good and evil. This is an aspect experienced in all facets of life, from the spread of disease to seasons unfavourable for rice-growing, to the devastation caused by volcanic activity. On Bali since the days of antiquity, it has also been reflected in the military arena.

The earliest recorded Balinese history tells of a succession of royal dynasties, culminating in the invasion of Bali in 1343 by General Gadjah Mada from the powerful east Javanese empire Majapahit. Commodore Cornelis de Houtman is recognised as the first westerner to discover Bali - whilst leading a Dutch military expedition in February 1597. The leaders of the individual princedoms continued to rule independently, although recognising the Dewa Agung of the princedom of Klungkung as King of Bali. But the Dewa Agung himself was himself at war with the Sultan of Mataram in East Java and launched 20,000 Balinese troops from Coutean (Kuta) to liberate eastern Java, historically part of the Balinese Empire. European traders visited during the late 16th century, attempting to access the lucrative spice trade, until the Dutch established the East Indies Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie,* VOC) in 1602. By the mid-17th century, internecine fighting amongst the individual princedoms had become the norm. For a brief period following the collapse of the VOC and the Napoleonic Wars, the British took over all Dutch holdings in the East Indies, but an attempted invasion of Bulèlèng in the north of Bali by General Nightingale was easily repelled as the various princedoms stood united.

Following the defeat of Napoleon and the return of all Dutch colonial possessions, Dutch envoys visited Bali in 1818 and a trading post was again established at Kuta Beach. The Royal Netherlands Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger,* KNIL) commenced recruiting Balinese soldiers from December 1826. In 1906, the Dutch launched their fifth military expedition to Bali as the individual princedoms continued to resist Dutch domination, landing a KNIL infantry brigade on Sanur Beach on the east coast on 14 September 1906. Only after the King succumbed did the last princedom capitulate to Dutch control, in January 1909, and for the first time all of Bali came under the authority of the Netherlands Indies Government, though this had taken a century to achieve. And even then, the former princedoms were granted self-rule, under the rule of 'native authorities', survivors of the royal dynasties who were once again styled '*Raja*'. On 18 February 1942, the vanguard of the Japanese 48th Division landed at the very same beach at Sanur at which the Dutch had landed in 1906, quickly seizing Dénpasar airfield and taking control of the island. Sanur Beach was again the scene of invasion on 2 March 1946, as over 2,000 KNIL troops landed to reclaim their pre-war territory. The struggle between good and evil, and the continuation of life after devastation, is something the Balinese are well used to.

To perpetrate an act of terrorism on Bali was a strategic mistake. Perhaps anywhere else, such an act of barbarism would represent death in its most brutal form. On Hindu Bali, with a cleansing ceremony to disperse the evil, the Sunwheel will ensure that the progression of life, death and rebirth will continue. The history of Bali is one of warring States, centuries of ebb and flow in prestige and power, but never with one princedom attaining dominance over all others. Equally, despite their successes elsewhere in the Netherlands East Indies, Bali was never truly subjugated by the Dutch. Christendom uses the Cross to represent the resurrection. The black and white chequered cloth so prominently seen throughout Bali, as with Balinese/Hindu art, literature and drama, represents the continual struggle between good and evil. The Swastika sunwheel is the

guarantee that life will go on beyond periods of adversity and death. The Cross and the Sunwheel are both symbols of hope and perpetuity, and the eventual triumph over evil.[2]

Latvian swastika, 1920. The swastika symbol appears on these medals and insignia of a Latvian veteran of the 1914-20 conflicts. The Latvian War of National Liberation Medal, 1918-20 features a warrior's arm holding a sword, bearing a swastika on the crossguard. A similar sword with swastika appears on a silver award badge, and the arms of this regimental breast badge from the 1914-19 War also form a stylised reverse-swastika.

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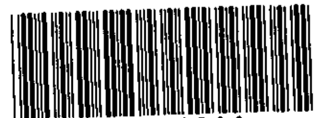

The Ascanius *being farewelled at Port Melbourne.*

1410 Pte Robert Patrick James Lomasney

Home at Last

1410 Pte Robert Patrick James Lomasney
29th Battalion, 1st AIF

Ivan Lomasney

Although I had in my possession the page from the family bible listing all my father's uncles, aunties and his siblings, it was only my immediate uncles and aunties that held any interest for me. My father never spoke about his uncles and aunties and the surname first caused some interest when I saw the name, LOMASNEY RPJ listed with the soldiers of the 29th Battalion, 1st AIF on the Wall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial. Who was he? Years later, and then only through my son Stephen's research into the family history, was I made aware of Robert Patrick James.

He was born at Langley, Victoria, on 5 December 1884, the ninth child, and sixth son, of Patrick and Ellen (nee Barry) Lomasney who had both migrated from Ireland in the early 1860s, had met and subsequently married at Malmsbury, Victoria. Robert, although he was known as Bob but for reverence we refer to him as Robert, never married and at one stage moved from Victoria to the West Coast of Tasmania to join his brother Lawrence who was with a *mining* company at Zeehan. The call to arms was heard by Robert in 1915 and on 2 August 1915 he enlisted in the 1st AIF at Melbourne. After a brief training period he was allocated to the 1st Reinforcements of the 29th Battalion. He departed from Australia on the troopship "Ascanius" and arrived at Suez on 7 December 1915. Five weeks later he was taken on the strength of the 29th Battalion from the Reinforcements. On 16 June 1916 he sailed from Alexandria, with the Battalion, and arrived at Marseilles one week later.

Robert was wounded in action on 21 July 1916 and was evacuated to England for hospitalisation and treatment. He subsequently rejoined his Battalion on 9 February 1917. Sadly, Robert was killed in action on 28 September, 1917, and has been interred in Plot 1, Row F, Grave 5, Birr Cross Roads Cemetery, Villebeke, Belgium. In perusing his army records, it was noted that Robert had nominated his sister Bridget, who lived at Melbourne, as his next-of-kin. Items that had been recovered were eventually despatched to Australia and forwarded on to Bridget. However, the *Deceased Soldiers Act 1918* stipulated that medals, etc. were to be forwarded to, in descending order, the surviving widow, eldest son, eldest daughter, father, mother, eldest brother, eldest sister, eldest half-brother, eldest half-sister. Nominated next-of-kin were not considered, despite this being the wish, no doubt, of the deceased soldier. Being single and with both of his parents dead, the Army considered Robert's eldest bother, Edward, to be the rightful recipient of Robert's three medals, Memorial Plaque, Scroll and King's message.

It seems a bit inhuman for the government to take this action, completely ignoring the wishes of the deceased. The case of Robert is an example. His elder brother, Edward, left Victoria in 1893 and joined the gold rush to Kalgoorlie. Robert would only have been eight years of age. Edward remained in Kalgoorlie and died there sometime in the early 1950s. It is doubtful if they had ever met or communicated after Edward left for the west. The Lomasney family have never been great communicators with one another, so, that is a reasonable assumption. Records from Central Army Records Office and Australian Archives show that Edward received the medals and plaque as he had signed receipt of them. Edward never married. Although having closer ties with his siblings in the eastern area of Australia, all of Robert's memorabilia of his service in World War One were in Western Australia. And there it would appear the story comes to an ends, but, not so.

Stephen's comprehensive family research unearthed a photograph of Robert in his uniform prior to leaving Australia. This was in the possession of his sister Bridget's family in Melbourne. I have a print

of the photo which has been framed and placed on the wall in the passage-way at my home, along with other family photos. A Remembrance Day poppy sits in the top right hand corner of the frame. Stephen has posted the family history on the Internet and over the years it has brought response from Lomasneys in Ireland and America. It is not a big family group and we estimate there is probably less than 200 people by the name worldwide. I suppose it could be said that, symbolically, everything culminated on ANZAC Day 2002, eighty four and a half years after Robert's death.

On opening his e-mail on that day, Stephen found a letter from Mark Collar, a school teacher at Great Yarmouth, England, informing that he had recently acquired the memorial plaque of Robert Patrick James Lomasney. Mark is an avid user of the Internet and is also a collector of military memorabilia. The plaque had been posted on the Internet by a dealer in Perth, Western Australia, and Mark had put in a bid and secured it. The dealer had reported that he had recently acquired the plaque at a swap-meet in Perth. On receipt of the plaque, Mark surfed the Internet to see if Robert appeared anywhere and, sure enough, he did. Hence the communication to Stephen for more information. The receipt of Mark's e-mail was somewhat indescribable. Being a collector myself, and Stephen having produced such a comprehensive history of the family, it was like a lottery win. Mark Collar turned out to be a true collector and with a great humanitarian nature. In communications with Stephen, he considered that the plaque should come back to the family and promptly forwarded it to Stephen. My wife, Angela, was en-route to England at the same time and I got a message to her requesting her to draw a cheque on her London bank account immediately on arrival to reimburse Mark all his costs. I have estimated that the plaque arrived in Australia about the same time that Mark received his cheque. A true deal of trust on his part. And there it would appear the story comes to an end, but not so.

Of course, the big task facing us is to try and locate the other associated bits and pieces and we are planning our attack on this challenge. On receipt of the plaque, I telephoned Mark Collar to thank him for his most kind gesture and tell him how elated we were. Mark's response was unusual to say the least. Having obtained the plaque and successfully located Robert's family, he considered the importance of it being with the family surpassed its need to be in his possession. After despatching the plaque to Australia, he sought for a replacement through the Internet. Such a plaque surfaced in a town about 40 kilometres from where he lived. In contacting the person who had advertised the plaque he agreed to purchase it. The vendor then asked if Mark was interested in a scroll which seemed to go with it. Of course, the reply was, "Yes". "And would you be interested in the King's Message that seems to go with it?" "Yes." "There are also some letters advising which medals the soldier was awarded for his World War I service. Are they of any interest?" "Yes." "I also have the medals if your are interested." "Yes." Everything was in mint condition. The medals had not been mounted nor even unwrapped. Mark's reward for his kindness to the Lomasney Family surpassed expectation. We are as pleased as he is.

It is quite amazing the things that occur in the collecting world. We are most grateful to Mark and I think it is summed up beautifully with the brief note enclosed with the plaque,

> Here is Robert's plaque -
> home at last! God bless you
> Mark."

The Lomasney family in Canberra would love to be contacted by anybody who might know the whereabouts of Private Lomasney's medals and other memorabilia, and in particular any surviving family that might be WA who would like to get in touch.

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200310812

WILMANSRUST THE BATTLEFIELD TRIALS OF THE 5TH VICTORIAN MOUNTED RIFLES

Max Chamberlain*

The action at Wilmansrust, Transvaal on 12 June 1901 led to accusations of cowardly and mutinous conduct by the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles. They were said to have damaged the reputation of the Australian soldier, but evidence at the Court of Inquiry indicates extenuating circumstances that have been overlooked for 100 years.

The 12th of June 2001 marked the 100th anniversary of the action at Wilmansrust, Transvaal, in the Boer war, where the left half of the 5th VMR and British artillerymen were defeated by the commando led by Vecht-General C H Muller. The action and its consequences attracted some attention in 1901-1902, but strangely, in light of the exposure given to the 'Breaker' Morant case, was virtually forgotten until comparatively recently. The action became the subject of official despatches, calls for investigation, a Court of Inquiry, reports by the field commanders and comments by Lord Kitchener, Lord Roberts, and the Secretary of State for War. It led directly to the issuing of instructions on the defence of camps at night. It was discussed in the Australian Parliament in its first year of existence, and was referred to in correspondence and cables by the Prime Minister and the Governor-General. In England it led to involvement of the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, and King Edward VII himself. Its comparative obscurity is therefore difficult to understand.

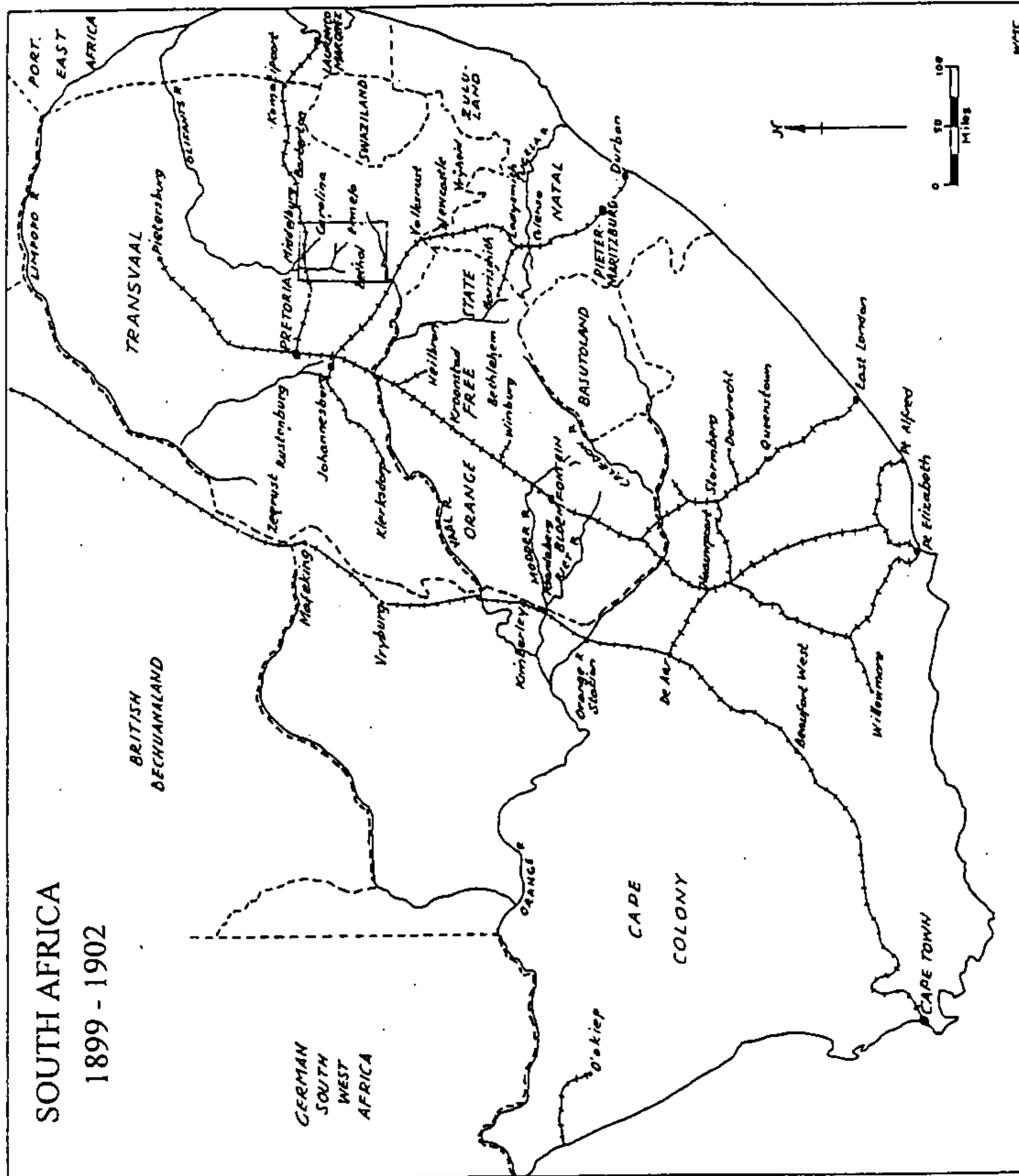
The story of the action is briefly told. About 7.30pm on the night of 12 June, 1901, a force of 350 men under Major C J Morris, RFA, was attacked by Muller's commando when operating detached from Major-General S B Beatson's column south of Middelburg. The force comprised E, F, G and H companies 5th VMR and two RFA pom-poms. The camp had been surprised because of Beatson's insistence, being a Bengal Lancer, on widely spaced cavalry pickets instead of the close pickets appropriate for the campaign against the Boers. After a few minutes fighting the camp was rushed and the Boers secured the guns and captured rifles and stores. Of the Victorians one officer and 17 men were killed or died and four officers and 38 men were wounded. The officer killed was the medical officer. One British officer was killed. A few men managed to escape and made their way to Beatson's camp, 12 miles away. Because the Boers now had no facilities to accommodate prisoners, the rest were marched out into the night and dismissed. The sad news was gradually pieced together in the Victorian press, the state shocked by the long casualty list at this stage of the war.[3]

When he learned of the disaster General Beatson had accused the Victorians of cowardice, calling them 'a fat-arsed, pot-bellied, lazy lot of wasters' and 'a white livered lot of curs', and added injury to insult with charges of 'incitement to mutiny' when some men were overheard expressing apprehensions about leadership that had cost their comrades' lives and threatened their own.[4]

* This paper was originally presented on 9 June 2001 at the Orders and Medals Research Society Convention held at Blackburn, Melbourne, 9-11 June 2001

3 *The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, Vol V, pp294-296 Max Chamberlain, 'The Wilmansrust Affair', *Jnl of the Australian War Memorial*, No6, April 1985 Melbourne *Argus*, 29 June, 1901

4 Major W McKnight, Report on Wilmansrust, National Archives of Australia (NAA), 1901/3859


SOUTH AFRICA
1899 - 1902
GERMAN SOUTH WEST AFRICA
BRITISH BECHUANALAND
CAPE COLONY
TRANSVAAL
ORANGE FREE STATE
BASUTOLAND
NATAL
SWAZILAND
ZULU-LAND
PORT. EAST AFRICA
PRETORIA
Johannesburg
Mafeking
Kimberley
Vryburg
Klerksdorp
Bloemfontein
De Aar
Beaufort West
Willowmore
Cape Town
Pt Elizabeth
East London
Queenstown
Stormberg
Durban
Pietermaritzburg
Pietersburg
Middelburg
Carolina
Ermelo
Volksrust
Newcastle
Ladysmith
Colenso
Harrismith
Bethlehem
Heilbron
Kroonstad
Winburg
Rustenburg
Zeerust
Orange R. Station
O'okiep
Miles

There were two sequels to the action: a Court of Inquiry, and the courts martial of three men of the 5th. The formal Court of Inquiry, held at bivouacs as the battered unit fought its way to safety in the days following the fight, took evidence from 16 witnesses, and in essence told of how the pickets had been placed far apart with no means of intercommunication on a pitch dark night. At the height of the fighting a sergeant had relayed to a bugler an order to blow 'Cease Fire' actually given in the dark confusion by a Boer, because the sergeant did not know that some Boers spoke excellent English.

The court completed its inquiries, Beatson appended a report attacking the Victorians and submitted the court's deliberations to General Sir Bindon Blood, with whom Beatson had served for 20 years in India. Blood added his report which assigned the following causes:

1 Pickets B and C had not done their duty through want of vigilance or cowardice, and

2 Arrangements for defence were not sufficient - pickets were too weak, fires were burning, the guns were too close to the perimeter. Morris was responsible for these errors of judgement.

Blood did not criticise Beatson's wide cavalry pickets, or the unwisdom of detaching a vulnerable force into an area known to be infested with the enemy.[5]

Lord Kitchener received the report, added that Major Morris had been censured and sent it to StJ Brodrick, Secretary of State for War, who asked had pickets B and C been disciplined, to which Kitchener replied that he felt the lesson they had received from the Boers sufficiently severe. Lord Roberts thought Lord Kitchener had taken all necessary action.[6] The 5th was not, therefore, censured, but the furore in the Australian press condemned the unit, although its record before Wilmansrust was excellent, as Beatson had acknowledged. Beatson had, in fact, apologised to Major T F Umphelby, CO of 5th VMR who was off duty in hospital, and to Major S Harris for additional derogatory comments he had made, namely that the Victorians had another colony (*sic*) to keep them company in running away from the Boers, referring to the action at Brakpan, where 5th-6th Western Australian Mounted Infantry had suffered severe casualties when retiring from an ambush.

Major W McKnight, commanding the left half of 5th VMR, considered that Beatson should have apologised to the unit and sought leave to go to Pretoria and seek an inquiry, but was ordered to Balmoral, 50 miles away, with no reason given. He returned to Australia and on 21 October provided the Victorian Commandant with a report on Wilmansrust, explaining how the Boers in khaki uniforms with hats turned up exactly like the Australians had infiltrated the camp. This was circulated in the Commonwealth Parliament and an edited version was published in the press, parts omitted including the fact that 14 men had reached the main column 12 miles away during the night and had succeeded in getting into camp without being challenged.[7]

The Prime Minister's objection to releasing the whole report was because he claimed it was based on hearsay evidence. McKnight wrote a second report on 9 November, denying this, naming his informants and stating that he had been careful to omit information about other harsh punishments inflicted on the men, which he had obtained second-hand. This report was not made public.[8] Further information had been sought officially by the government from the British authorities.

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5 Court of Inquiry, 'Boer Attack on a detachment of Major General Beatson's force at Wilmansrust', WO 32/8007, Public Record Office, Kew, UK

6 ibid

7 McKnight, op cit

8 Major W McKnight, [Second] Report on Wilmansrust, NAA, 1901/4389

Meanwhile, the unit lost faith in the General and he was equally contemptuous of it. At Middelburg, some days after uttering his insulting words, and with disaffection spreading, half a dozen men were talking, when Private J Steele said 'It will be better for the men to be shot than to go out with a man who would call them white livered curs'. The words were overheard and this led to the courts martial of Steele and two others, Private A Richards and Private H Parry, although the comments were described as just talk that meant nothing.

The field courts martial had been held on 11 July, the men charged with 'incitement to mutiny'. They were found guilty and sentenced to death, but this was commuted to ten years' gaol for Steele and one year each with hard labour for the others. They were held in custody for a month, then sent to England where they were placed in Gosport Military Prison for a fortnight. Steele was then sent to a civil prison and Richards and Parry to Wakefield.[9]

On 28 September, *The Age* published a facsimile of the schedule setting out the sentence of death on Steele and referred to two others, whose names had not yet been made public.[10] Now, critical commentators in the Australian press gave reasons for the tragedy, suggesting variously that because they were the 5th the standard must be lower, or the supply of trained NCOs had dried up, or the men were in need of more training, and that because no other Australians had thrown down their arms they had damaged the reputation of the Australian soldier.[11] In Britain a petition was presented to King Edward VII by some Australians living in London, praying that the three prisoners might be released.[12]

Parry's father had received a letter to his son returned unclaimed with a note from the Sergeant-Major of E Company to say that his son had left the unit and his whereabouts were unknown. Mr Parry had cabled to the British authorities for information and had received a curt reply, 'Shipped England, Message ends'. On 9 October in the Commonwealth Parliament, Mr Crouch (Corio) voiced Mr Parry's complaint and wanted an inquiry into Private Parry's whereabouts, and said the whole history of the 5th should be inquired into.[13]

By coincidence, on the same day, a telegram was received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Joseph Chamberlain, explaining that the three men had been tried by court martial for inciting mutiny and sentenced to death, but the Judge-Advocate General declared that they had been tried under the wrong section of the Army Act and instructions had been issued for their release.[14] The men returned to Australia in December.[15]

In Africa, in August General Beatson had been transferred to Cape Colony, and in September General Blood returned to India. The 5th VMR had been railed to Newcastle, Natal, for operations in the column under command of Colonel W Pulteney, helping prevent the second invasion of Natal by the Boer Commander-in-Chief Louis Botha by sweeping the rugged mountain terrain in the south-east corner of the Transvaal. Here they continued to give loyal service under General H C O Plumer and others who understood how to command Australians. When they received newspapers from home the men were justifiably aggrieved to read the criticisms of them, when each day they were subjected to heavy fighting and severe casualties. They knew they had to wipe something off the slate.

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9 *Argus*, 17 December 1901
10 Melbourne *Age*, 28 September 1901
11 *Argus*, 30 September 1901
12 *Argus*, 3 October 1901
13 Commonwealth Hansard, 1901, p.7077
14 *Argus*, 9 November 1901
15 *Argus*, 17 and 19 December 1901

It is difficult to accept that the unit was not up to standard as recruitment of one in four of the 4000 offering ensured selection of the best. Medical, riding and shooting tests were carried out by experienced organisers. Training, equipping and transporting were undertaken more efficiently than for earlier Victorian units.[16]

Beatson was one of several officers with Indian experience but he was new to South Africa and was believed to be learning to fight the Boers at the expense of the Victorians. His behaviour was erratic and his language inflammatory. He was much influenced by the antagonistic Brigade Major Waterfield, also a Bengal Lancer, favoured promotion for the officers from India, and had the support of the area commander, Sir Bindon Blood.

At Wilmansrust the Victorians were silhouetted by a veldt fire to the west. The men had actually warned of the dangerous camp-site. The Boers' spies had observed the pickets placed in broad daylight and changed at dusk, but even so General Muller told Major Morris he could not find the pickets, which supports the view that in the dark the pickets could probably not see the Boers, who were adept at infiltration. The suggestion that the pickets could have given support by firing on the camp is not valid given the distance, and the fact that the Boers wore khaki with hats turned up like Australians.[17]

One of the Boers, Schikkerling, recorded his side of the encounter - how 120 Boers advanced at ten yard intervals because of the breadth of the camp, fired 15 cartridges and rushed the pom-poms. They knew that the British always fired high at night and he states that the enemy was taken by surprise and was panicky. His credibility suffers because of exaggeration. Veterinary Lieutenant Sherlock, present at Wilmansrust, described the camp as about 125 yards square and Schikkerling admits '...perhaps my hot imagination or excitement had magnified it'. Had all fired as rapidly as he the camp would have been saturated with some 1800 bullets and it would have been miraculous had anyone escaped being hit, unless the Boers also fired high at night. The Boer also detested night raids and dawn attacks. *The Times History* states '...pounced on while still in laager, he was liable to panic'. Perhaps no-one is immune from fear when confronted with such tactics.[18]

Later in the war General Muller's report on Wilmansrust to General Ben Viljoen was discovered, in which he admitted to six Boers killed and four wounded, and stated '... we ... routed the enemy'.[19] The word 'rout' is still used to describe Wilmansrust, although the 5th had fought as well as any unit placed in so disadvantageous a position, accounting for more of the enemy than Major Gough's attacking force annihilated at Blood River Poort in September. Given the errors by the Imperial commanders the best force would have had little chance of forcing a retreat at Wilmansrust, but discovery of the evidence of the Boer order to blow 'Cease Fire' when the 5th were inflicting casualties indicates that they were not routed, nor did they throw down their arms without a fight, but had to obey the order of the bugle.

Beatson's lack of consideration in his abuse of men who had just lost 18 comrades killed and 42 wounded casts doubt on his ability to be unprejudiced in the report he attached to the court's deliberations. He vilified the Victorians but gave high praise to the British artillerymen, which is hard to justify, given that there was no picket placed in front of the exposed guns, and that among the men who escaped to Beatson's camp, was a British officer. The fact that they were

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[16] Max Chamberlain, op cit, and *The Australians in the South African War 1899-1902 - A Map History*, Army History Unit, Department of Defence, 1999, pp.36, 89-90

[17] Court of Inquiry, op cit C Coulthard-Clark, *Where Australians fought*, Allen & Unwin, 1998, p.92

[18] R W Schikkerling, *Commando Courageous*, Hugh Keartland, Johannesburg, 1964 *Argus*, 3 August, 1901 *Times History*, Vol V, pp329-330

[19] *Argus*, 1 February 1902

able to get right into Beatson's camp without being challenged indicates that his camp was as vulnerable as Morris's. This combination of factors reflecting on Beatson's ability possibly made him over-react towards the Victorians to deflect attention from his own errors.

Blood's summing up seems also to be far from impartial in supporting his colleague from India. His subsequent issuing of 'Notes on the defence of camps and bivouacs of small forces at night' was a case of being wise after the event, suggesting that he also was still learning to fight the Boers. He was critical of pickets B and C, but even so, it was Morris who was censured. Had Lord Kitchener felt the fault lay entirely with the unit he would have been merciless. Instead, the Victorians were not removed from the field of battle when transferred to Natal, as the Intelligence Department knew of Botha's intended invasion plans.

Kitchener had also commuted the death sentences imposed at the courts martial. Lord Roberts had previously decreed that overseas Colonials be subject only to punishments of the second class, to be disarmed and made to march with the baggage wagons. It was not until after agitation from Australia that the authorities decided that the courts martial proceedings had been flawed, which was either an admission of ineptness or a bowing to pressure. The result was not a mere reprieve, nor a pardon, but a quashing of the charges, although the unit still felt stigmatised by the condemnation in the press.

The war had become more desperate according to men who had served in both the regular and the guerilla phases. Yeomanry and other newly arrived units had suffered at the hands of the Boers who were now all veterans. The 5th had many successful actions after Wilmansrust, culminating in riding to the relief of the Queenslanders at Onverwacht in January 1902, and their letters indicate that they finally felt that they had redeemed themselves, although some recent writers remember only their humiliation.

The 5th VMR were well regarded by their British leaders, Major Daly and Major Vallentin, and the Australian Major Vialls. General Plumer and Colonel Pulteney gave them praise for their later service. Pulteney said that he had felt trepidation when he learned that the 5th were to be posted to him, but within two days his fears had been dispelled, and it was the finest irregular regiment in the field.[20]

Far from damaging the reputation of the Australian soldier, they had enhanced it. The accusations of cowardly and mutinous conduct had been shown to be unwarranted. The 5th VMR was one of only four Australian units in this war that could claim a Victoria Cross. Ironically, another was the 6th Western Australian Mounted Infantry, also accused by Beatson of running away from the Boers.

The men of the 5th VMR returned home and said little. A memorial was erected and unveiled in 1904. It stands in St Kilda Road, near Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance - not the gesture of a grateful nation but contributed for solely by the officers and men of the unit. Possibly the only Boer war unit memorial in Australia, it is their tribute to comrades still on the veldt. Their major battles are engraved around the crests of its buttresses. It is hoped that after a century the stigma is removed and the 5th VMR will in future be remembered by Australians for their many gallant achievements.

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[20] Lieutenant J H Patterson, 5th VMR, Diary, 2 March, 1902

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200310813

British Army fatal casualties - Ulster Troubles, 1969-1998

Ron Austin RFD ED

Introduction

With the easing of tensions in Northern Ireland in recent years, it is timely to examine the cost borne by the British Army during the Ulster troubles from 1969-1998.

The Troubles in Northern Ireland can be traced back to the 16th Century, but Cromwell's invasion of Ireland in 1649, and his ruthless suppression of Roman Catholics, and the creation of a strong Protestant enclave in what became Ulster, led to much political agitation over the coming centuries. The 1801 Act of Union (Ireland) united the Parliaments of Ireland and Great Britain, an unpopular move with the southern counties. The formation of the Sinn Fein in 1907, and its complementary paramilitary wing - the Irish Republican Army (IRA), aimed to break ties with Great Britain and declare Ireland a republic. The Easter Rebellion of 1916, and the subsequent terror campaign against the Royal Irish Constabulary and its `Black and Tan' reservists, led to the Anglo--Irish Treaty of December 1921, which saw the formation of the Irish Free State, a self governing Irish Dominion still tied to the British Crown. A bloody civil war erupted in 1922 over the provision that six, mainly Protestant, counties of Ulster remained part of Britain.

In 1948, the Irish Free State declared itself a republic, and a year later, Westminster passed the *Ireland Act* which confirmed the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. In 1956, the IRA launched a bombing campaign which lasted until 1962. Nor was the violence one sided. Protestants formed Loyalist volunteer units to combat what they saw as fresh attempts by the IRA and Sinn Fein to drag Ulster into the Irish Republic. By mid-1968, the street violence had increased to such a level, that Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister, reluctantly committed regular British troops to Ulster.

In August 1969, the British Army deployed units to northern Ireland or Ulster as it is often known, in response to widespread rioting which was beyond the capacity of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC, which was formed in 1922) to contain. The first British Army units sent to Ulster included the 1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales and the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Regiment. On October 1969, the local B Special Constabulary which had been formed years earlier as a part-time reserve of Protestants capable of assisting the RUC when needed, was disbanded, and replaced by a new regular/part-time force - the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) which would be part of the British Army. Over the next thirty years, the British Army maintained a presence in Ulster, and although a fragile peace agreement was reached in 1998, the refusal of the IRA to destroy its many weapons dumps leaves open the option to revert to violence at some future date. With this threat in mind, the British Army, albeit diminished in numbers, remains in Ulster, but leaves policing of the streets to the local Ulster security forces.

A Long And Costly Campaign

An analysis of the 719 British Army deaths resulting from the so-called Troubles in Northern Ireland during the period from 1969-1998, provides a powerful insight into how a terrorist enemy operates, and the enormous difficulties that face any army charged with enforcing the peace within a civilian community suffering from divided political loyalties as is stiff the case in Ulster.

Casualties by units

Units of the British Army which suffered fatal casualties, are listed along with the number of Officers and Other Ranks killed, and the average age of the casualties. The average age of fatalities in cavalry units was 26.4 years, and in infantry units (including the Parachute Regt) - 23.8, as against only 22.5 years in the Guards Brigade. The average age in corps units was as expected, somewhat higher at 26.6 years, whilst the Ulster Defence Regiment had an average age of 35.6 years, due to the fact that the unit included many part-time soldiers who were usually older than their counterparts in a Regular Army battalion.

	Officers	ORs	Average age
Cavalry Regiments			
The Life Guards		1	26
The Blues and Royals	1	6	24.2
1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards		1	35
The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards		1	19
4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards		1	24
5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards		1	25
16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers	1	1	21.5
The 9th/12th Royal Lancers		3	26
The Royal Hussars		1	35
14th/20th King's Hussars	1	3	30.7
15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars		1	22
17th/21st Lancers		2	28.5
Royal Armoured Corps		3	23.3
Royal Regiment of Artillery	3	53	23.4
Corps of Royal Engineers	2	9	28.5
Royal Corps of Signals		15	24.1
Regiments of Foot Guards			
Grenadier Guards	2	4	23.1
Coldstream Guards	1	6	23
Guards		14	22.2
Irish Guards		1	21
Welsh Guards		3	23.3
Line Regiments of Infantry			
The Royal Scots		4	23.5
The Queen's Regiment		9	22.3
The King's Own Royal Border Regiment		5	23.4
The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	1	22	25.3
The King's Regiment		15	21.6
The Royal Anglian Regiment	2	16	23.1
The Devonshire & Dorset Regiment		6	24.1
The Light Infantry		25	20.7
The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire		2	23.5
The Green Howards	1	8	25.3
The Royal Highland Fusiliers		5	21.4
The Cheshire Regiment		9	22.3
The Royal Welsh Fusiliers	1	5	23
The Royal Regiment of Wales		7	23.2
The King's Own Scottish Borderers		5	25.4
The Gloucestershire Regiment		5	21.2
The Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire & Wiltshire Regiment		1	29
The Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters		4	23.2
The Queen's Lancashire Regiment		7	20.8

The Duke of Wellington's Regiment	1	5	22.3
The Royal Hampshire Regiment		3	21
The Staffordshire Regiment	1	3	24.2
The Black Watch		2	20
The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment		6	25.3
Queen's Own Highlanders	1	3	28
The Gordon Highlanders		5	30.4
The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders	2	4	29.8
The Parachute Regiment	3	39	23.8
The Royal Green Jackets	2	30	24.2
Royal Army Chaplains Department	1		38
Royal Logistic Corps		1	25
Royal Corps of Transport		12	23.5
Royal Army Medical Corps		1	33
Royal Army Ordnance Corps	6	16	28.9
Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers		7	27
Corps of Royal Military Police		4	28.7
Royal Army Pay Corps		1	18
Royal Army Veterinary Corps		1	34
Royal Army Dental Corps		1	25
Royal Pioneer Corps		3	22
Intelligence Corps		1	27
Army Physical Training Corps		1	31
Army Catering Corps		3	19.3
Women's Royal Army Corps		2	18.5
Territorial Army	2	7	32.6
Ulster Defence Regiment[1]	18	180	35.6
Royal Irish Rangers	1	2	32
Royal Irish Regiment		7	32.7
Royal Navy	1		45
Royal Marines		23	25.2
Royal Air Force		4	24.2

Casualties by rank:

A total of 55 officers were killed: Colonels - 2; lieutenant-colonels - 3; majors - 15; captains - 18; chaplain - 1 ; lieutenants 7; 2nd lieutenants - 9.

Other ranks killed were: Warrant officers - 17; staff sergeants - 13; colour sergeants 7; sergeants - 52; corporate 93; lance corporals - 97; privates - 375.

Approximately 2000 civilians and 296 members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary were killed. There were 7,000 wounded or injured. Five female soldiers were killed (0.6%), two from the Women's Royal Army Corps and three from the Ulster Defence Regiment.

How Casualties Occurred

The long drawn out conflict in Ulster lent itself to terrorist activity by the IRA, and on occasions by the Protestant Loyalist groups. many of the casualties occurred in the built-up areas of Belfast and other Ulster towns, but also on country roads. Being able to choose targets and operate with impunity in some localities due to the level of local support, meant that the IRA had an advantage over the British Army, which could only be diminished by sound tactics, good

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1 The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Royal Irish Rangers were on 1 July 1992, merged into a new unit - The Royal Irish Regiment.

training, military intelligence and co-operation with the RUC. As the terror campaign continued, the IRA through a series of bombings which inflicted heavy casualties an the civilian population, found that the level of public support had significantly diminished, and found itself marginalised and forced to seek a political rather than a violent solution. Having resisted the terror campaign without resorting to massive reprisal attacks, the British Army made a valuable contribution to the reduced level of violence that prevailed in Ulster to the late 1990s, and enabled discussions to be held which led to a form of peace not seen in Ulster for generations. The following list shows the various methods used by a terrorist body such as the IRA, and highlights the enormous difficulties faced by the British Army in dealing with such an enemy. Some 176 members of the British Army were murdered by the IRA (24.4% of all fatalities), many of whom were part-time members of the UDR who were killed on their way to and from work. Casualties which resulted from a direct operational contact with the enemy only accounted for 26.2% of the total, as most casualties were caused by bombs, land-mines and booby-trap devices operated from a safe distance. These figures do not include the many soldiers who were wounded in the course of their duties.

Fatal casualties

murder	157	bomb attacks	140
booby-trap devices	97	mobile patrol was shot at	63
gun-fire and attack on foot patrol	51	land-mines	49
sniper fire	40	sniper engaging a foot patrol	28
abduction and murder	19	detonation of explosive device	15
ambush of foot patrol	14	'friendly fire' (includes 2 shot by RUC).	8
foot patrol under machine-gun fire	7	soldiers on guard duty shot by snipers	6
attack on a border post	5	para-military Loyalist attacks	5
undercover intelligence operations	5	rocket attack	3
mortar attack	3	civilian attack on foot patrol	2
helicopter under fire	1	APC crushed soldier	1

TOTAL - 719 Fatal Casualties.

Conclusion

In his book of *The British Army in Ulster*, Colonel Dewar[2] observed that the British Army 'has maintained a remarkable degree of restraint, often despite extreme provocation'. The above statistics illustrate the tragic cost sustained by the British Army in attempting to maintain order during its long campaign in Ulster, and should provide a salutary lesson to any future Government wishing to commit its Regular Army to deal with a terrorist enemy operating in a mainly urban environment.

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[2] M Dewar, *The British Army in Northern Ireland*, Arms & Armour, London 1996
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- N Curtis, *Faith and duty*, Andre Deutsch, London 1998.
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Military Supervision of Convict Work Gangs. Part III

The British Garrison in Australia 1788-1841
THE GREAT ROADS

Clem Sargent

The Great Western Road

Of Governor Darling's three 'Great Roads' only the Great Western Road has retained its character, albeit that in 1927 it became the Great Western Highway. Minor deviations from its start at the obelisk in Macquarie Place, from which all New South Wales roads emanating from Sydney were measured, had occurred until the construction of the M4, Western Motorway, brought significant new alignment changes from Concord, (originally Longbottom), to Blaxland, the site of the Pilgrim Inn at the top of Lapstone Hill. From there to Mount Victoria the road follows the same ridge line travelled by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth in 1813 and first developed as a road by William Cox in 1814.

Small detachments of the garrison were located at several stations along the road, Longbottom, Parramatta, Emu (Emu Plains), the Weatherboard Hut (Wentworth Falls), Cox's River and Bathurst. Their tasks were to check the passes of travellers on the road and to apprehend escaping convicts. At Bathurst a small garrison had initially been established under a commandant to provide guards for an experimental agricultural settlement but the garrison was augmented later as protection from bushrangers and from members of the Wiradjuri tribe when they began to react to the usurpation of their traditional hunting grounds by a growing number of settlers. Beyond Bathurst another experimental agricultural station had been established at Wellington in 1823 and a post set up at Molong in 1827; guard detachments at the latter location were drawn from the Bathurst garrison and consequently do not appear in Monthly Returns. Neither of these detachments became involved with any convict road parties.

Few improvements to the Great Western Road beyond Emu Plains occurred until 1830 when Governor Darling tasked Surveyor General Mitchell to seek a better line of road than existed on Cox's Pass down Mount York, which, in places, had gradients of one in four. Mitchell found a suitable line, around Mt Victoria, with the steepest gradient only one in fifteen, and work commenced immediately on the new line of road. Mitchell had named Mount Victoria 'after the young princess' [1] but the Sydney Herald announced the new pass as Vittoria, the great Peninsular battle obviously of more immediate note than 'the young princess. Unfortunately, the error was repeated in Monthly Returns and other military documents and even by Assistant Surveyor Govett in his *Sketches from New South Wales.*

The first, or No 1, stockade for road parties was built at the bottom of Victoria Pass. Govett described it:

> It was situated about half a mile from the Pass, upon a gentle rising ground above the swamp at the bottom. Near the stockade were the barracks for the soldiers, constables' huts, and a small cottage, etc., for the officers; on the opposite side of the swamp was the residence of the commissariat officer, a neat thatched cottage, and a store house built of logs.' [2]

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1 Sir T L Mitchell, 1838, *Three expeditions into the interior of Eastern Australia,* Vol 1, T & W Boone, P. 155.

2 WO17/ 2316; William Romaine Govett, *Sketches of New South Wales,* Gaston Renard, Melbourne, 1977, p. 47.

The Monthly Return for March 1831 shows only small detachments at various posts on the road from Emu Plains but in June of that year a detachment of the 39th, the Dorsetshire Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant John Fitzgerald, with one sergeant and 24 Rank and File, is shown at 'Vittoria'; they were relieved by Ensign Owen, 17th Regiment, with a detachment of similar strength, reaching its greatest strength in June 1832 when Captain Church, with one subaltern, three sergeants and 61 Rank and File of the 17th Regiment were there. The Pass was opened by Governor Bourke on 23 October 1832. By December 1832 the detachment had been reduced to one sergeant and 10 Rank and File, disappearing from the Monthly Returns the following month. There was a road party located in huts, probably of bark, about three miles east of Mount Victoria, in April 1831. Surveyor General Mitchell mentioned it in a letter taking Govett to task for carrying out surveys in areas other than 'as directed'.[3] There is no record of any guard detachment at that site. If it continued after the opening of No 1 Stockade at the base of the pass, it most likely would have been manned as an outpost of the main camp.

In the meantime a new stockade was being constructed twelve miles (19.3 km) to the west at Cox's River on the slopes of Mount Walker. The site has been largely inundated by the damming of Cox's River to create Lake Lyell which provides cooling water for Wallerawang and Mt Piper power stations near Lithgow. Govett, in his '*Sketches of New South Wales*', recorded that the No 2 Stockade, Cox's River, 'contained generally between seven and eight hundred inhabitants'. It was the largest formal stockade to have been built and Govett recorded its complexity:

> The Stockade was built, as that at Vittoria [sic], in the form of a square, the huts for the prisoners being erected of bark, facing inwards, and joined together, except at the entrance. The inner square is divided into several compartments for the different companies of prisoners, by rail fencing, on which they hang and dry their clothes, &., after washing; and, about four yards from the back of these huts, on the outside, was erected a strong fence of split timber all round, about fourteen or fifteen feet in height, having two great gates at the entrance. Fronting this gateway, on either side, were erected the soldiers' barracks, in two rows. These were also built of bark and split wood, with mud chimneys, and some of them were plastered and whitewashed inside; and at the head of these barracks stood the officers' quarters, forming a kind of parallelogram with the Stockade. These quarters consisted of a shingled cottage, with two tolerably-sized room, back kitchens, &c., having a verandah in front. The guard consisted of a captain's company. On one side were the hospital and storehouse, and the tents of the commissary; on the other were the cooking-shed and butchers' and bakers' houses, the overseers' and constables' huts, &c. these buildings, all erected in a hurry and in very little time, being of course temporary, formed, as it were, a little town ...[4]

In June/July 1831 the detachment at Cox's River is shown in the returns with a strength of one sergeant and five Rank and File so it is assumed that this refers to the old post on the Cox's road crossing of the river, established in Macquarie's time. The first substantial garrison at the No2 Stockade appears in December 1832 – Lieutenant Lonsdale, 4th Regiment, with another subaltern, two sergeants and 62 Rank and File. This detachment remained there until relieved by Captain Chetwode, of the same regiment in February 1833. Lonsdale was to go on to a place in Australian colonial history; in September 1836 he was appointed by Governor Bourke as the first police magistrate at Port Phillip. Lonsdale resigned from the Army in 1837 and enjoyed a distinguished career in Victorian colonial administration. Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, was named after him.

Chetwode's detachment was 73 strong, and was replaced by a detachment of the 17th Regiment, of 78 all ranks, including an Assistant Surgeon, commanded by Lieutenant, later Captain, George Deedes in July 1833.

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3 Mitchell to Govett, 7 May 1831, 4/6909, SRNSW.
4 Govett, op cit, p.48.

The movement of company strength detachments over the distances involved, with the limited resources outside the main settlements, created logistic and morale problems. The British military historian Phillip Haythornthwaite claims that during the Peninsular War 'on campaign a good daily march might be fifteen miles'. (24 kms)[5] There is no reason to assume that the marching rate would have improved substantially in New South Wales. Troops marching from Parramatta or Windsor to Cox's River, a distance of about 130 kilometres, would have been on the road for six days. Married soldiers were accompanied by their wives and children who shared the same hardships as the troops – these hardships were graphically described in a letter to Colburn's United Service Journal from an officer serving in New South Wales in 1838:

> The detachments were made up from different companies and off they start, carrying their bedding with them. Happy are those who journey by sea! I went by land, and far into the interior, and oh! The sufferings of my men for those few days! Drays were sent with our bedding, but an order was at the same time put into my hand that on no account was I to interfere with the time bullock-drivers might take in conveying their charge. The consequence was, that the poor soldiers were without beds every night on the road; and for five nights afterwards not only was the detachment without beds, but, with one exception, when we doubled up with party in barracks, we had not even a roof to sleep under.
>
> The Government will *not* build military stations, they will *not* give billets, they will *not* give marching money; so that, had there been populous towns on the road, the soldiers could neither have paid for a bed or for dinner. But they carried their rations with them; and pretty rations they were! After the first day that horrible nuisance the blow-fly had made them one mass of corruption, and into the bush they were cast. It rained frequently all night, which is not, however, common in this country.[6]

F V G's complaints raise some questions on the conditions of service of the troops on the march to out-stations in New South Wales. Firstly, what part did the Commissariat play in providing rations and quarters? In a march across the Blue Mountains it is unlikely that there would have been stock for the commissaries to purchase for slaughter and minimum accommodation in the few inns. The lack of marching money refers to the allowance paid to troops on the march between stations in England, to enable them to purchase meals and/or accommodation. Secondly, as for bedding, soldiers (but not the women and children) could adopt the technique used in Spain by their Peninsular predecessors

> The great coat was inverted, and our legs were thrust into the sleeves; one half was put under us, and the other half above. The knapsacks formed our pillow.[7]

The conditions for convicts gangs moving to new locations, particularly those in chains, such as those being redeployed from Wisemans to Mount Victoria, (see Pt II p. 56) would have been wretched.

George Deedes, commandant at Cox's River from July 1833 took an unusual step to ensure his comfort at the remote station; he purchased 20 acres (8 hectares) of land on the western side of Cox's River, opposite the stockade and between the stockade and the commissaries quarters. On the block he built a cottage and developed a vegetable and flower garden. It is probable that Deedes was married and may have had children to have motivated him to erect a cottage away from the main stockade area, to keep his family separated as far as possible from the convict population; however no evidence of Deedes marital status has been found. His successor to the

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5 Phillip J Haythornthwaite, 1996, '*The Armies of Wellington*', Arms and Armour Press, London, p. 197.
6 F V G. 1 May 1838, Military Service In Australia, *The United Service Journal*, London, December Part 3, pp. 520-523. A table showing the 'Distribution Of The ---- Regiment' accompanied the article. The distribution shown agrees almost exactly with the locations of the 80th Regt detachments shown in the Monthly Return for May 1838 but it has not been possible from the 1838 Army List to identify an officer with the initials F V G.
7 John Spencer Cooper, 1869, *Rough Notes Of Seven Campaigns etc*, London, John Russell Smith, p. 29.

command there, the lately married Captain R H J Beaumont McCummings, 4th Regiment, took over the cottage as well as the command in June 1834. The Austrian ex-major of Hussars, von Hugel, a keen naturalist, during his visit to Bathurst in June/July 1834 stayed with McCummings and remarked 'The house which is a cottage built by the last Commandant, is prettily situated and a big vegetable and flower garden make it attractive in this wilderness.' Conditions were different for McCummings' two subordinate officers; Lieutenant Tom Faunce and Assistant Surgeon William Parry, according to the Regimental History, lived in a 'wretched hovel'.[8]

The convicts marched out of the stockades each morning in groups of 24 men, each group guarded by two soldiers and a constable. They were issued with tools at the stockade gates, then marched to work. The soldiers were not allowed to interfere with the work or to speak to the convicts although the latter exerted themselves as little as possible under their overseers. On 18 December 1834 Captain McCummings wrote advising that the Ironed Gangs had progressed so far towards Sydney in their work that he could not allow them to proceed any further without instructions to that end as it now took them an hour to reach the work site. This appears to confirm Major Barney's statement to the 1839 Legislative Council estimates hearing that gangs could only move a couple of miles each side of the stockade.[9]

A reply to McCummings request for instructions has not been found. In May 1835 he found a greater problem on his hands. On 27th of that month, on return from a visit to Bathurst, McCumming was presented with a report from Ensign John Snodgrass that four privates of the 4th Regiment had been absent from Tattoo on the night of 25 May and no trace had been found by parties sent out in search of them. The four soldiers were accompanied by four escaping convicts and Richard Howell, a free clerk and constable, who was found to have altered warrants relating to the terms of sentence to work in irons of two convicts at Cox's River. One of the escaped convicts was believed to be a midshipman or clerk in the East India Company and their supposed objective was to make for Twofold Bay where they planned to steal a whale-boat.[10]

An examination of a map would show that a route from Cox's River to Twofold Bay would pass through rough and unsettled country. They nevertheless got as far as Goulburn where the Police Magistrate, Captain Francis Allman, on half-pay of the 48th Regiment, reported on 19 June that eight of the escapees and deserters had been apprehended by the Mounted Police, who had been alerted by 'the outrages' committed by the gang; 'one of the convicts had been 'taken up by the soldiers in pursuit of him'.[11]

In July 1835 Captain McCummings was replaced by Captain Alured Tasker Faunce, elder brother of Lieutenant Thomas Faunce and son of Major General Alured Dodsworth Faunce, the previous commanding officer of the regiment. Captain Faunce had been in command of the guard detachment at Emu Plains. At Cox's River he assumed the responsibilities of Superintendent of Convicts in addition to his duties as detachment commander. He had, in January that year married the daughter of the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel J K McKenzie, and it seems that Faunce and his new wife may not have taken up residence in the cottage built by Deedes. Lieutenant Colonel Breton, the Commanding Officer of the 40th, from Parramatta informed the Brigade Major that 'Captain Faunce's dwelling at Cox's River was almost untenable and needs rebuilding in a more suitable position'[12]. It is unlikely that rebuilding of the

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[8] Department of Lands and Surveys, NSW, Portion Plan 101.691; Carl Freeheer von Hugel, *New Holland Journal*, Melbourne, MUP, p.341; Col L I Cowper OBE DL (Ed), *The King's Own, 1939*, Oxford, OUP, p.61.

[9] Govett, op cit, pp. 48-49; Capt McCumming to Bde Maj, 18 Dec 1834, SRNSW 4/2238.1, f 34/9285; PT I, *Sabretache*, Vol I, p. 42.

[10] SRNSW 4/2287.2.

[11] F Allman to Col Sec, 19 June 1835, SRNSW CSIL 4/2290.6, f35/4648.

[12] Lt Col Breton to Brigade Major 11 July 1835, SRNSW 4/2287.2, f 35/3282.

Deedes' cottage would have undertaken at public expense. Indeed it seems possible that Mrs Faunce may not have accompanied her husband to this remote station as The Sydney Morning Herald of 5 May 1836, in its Birth Notices, announced the birth 'at Glenfield on Saturday 30th Ultimo the Lady of Captain Faunce (4th or the King's Own Regiment) a daughter.'

Glenfield Park was the residence of the late Dr Charles Throsby, in 1836 occupied by his nephew, also Charles. He had two sisters who had married Colonial Surgeons. If Mrs Faunce had accompanied her husband to Cox's River she had returned to the Sydney region for her confinement rather than leaving herself to the attention of Assistant Surgeon Parry at Cox's. Parry, from Carmarthen, had joined the Army Medical Service in December 1813 and within days found himself in the south of France, he was appointed Assistant Surgeon in the 4th in March 1822 and served in the West Indies and in Portugal, where units of the British Army had been sent to support the Portuguese from 1826 t0 1828. It seems unlikely that Parry's service had developed his skills as an obstetrician although he would, as did most surgeons of his era have had some training in obstetrics. William Dent, who joined the Army as an Assistant Surgeon in1810, recorded in one of his letters to his mother from St Thomas's Hospital, London, where he was undergoing his training in medicine that he:

> had almost forgotten to mention to you that I am attending Midwifery and that I have had one Labour. I managed all tolerably well, and the woman is doing famously now, I expect to have another shortly, but the worst of it is, we have to give them 5 shillings and find them with medicines until they are quite well.

In addition to his responsibilities for the troops at Cox's River, Parry was also providing medical support for the convicts. It is likely that the wives of the soldiers would not have turned to the regimental surgeons for their accouchement. They, most probably, would seek the help of one of the other detachment wives or, in the worst case of their own husbands.[13]

That month a Bathurst correspondent informed the *Sydney Morning Herald* that:

> A material change has recently taken place in the system of discipline at "the Cox's River Stockade, No 2". Until lately, the management was vested in a Civil Superintendent, aided by a number of free Constables, the Officers and detachment having only charge as regarded the safe custody of the Convicts confined there. By the new regulation, the civil servants have been discontinued, and upon the relief of Captain McCumming and his company of the 4th Regiment doing duty under him, the sole direction, economy, and detail of duties, are committed to the Officer commanding, and the non-commissioned Officers of the party. Captain Faunce, with the civil rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police, has been appointed to this charge, and we are informed, exercises the most rigid personal superintendence over every branch of the establishment....... The increased rigour of the punishment is unquestionably a great improvement, and its present regulation cannot fail of producing the most salutary results.[14]

Thomas Cook who had been transported for 14 years in 1831, and in 1835 serving an additional sentence of 12 months in the iron gang at Cox's River, later recorded his memories of the rigours of punishment. According to Cook, Faunce immediately introduced a harsh regime; doing away with the few 'interior comforts of the stockade' – a fire in each yard, spare clothing, even needles and thread, and introduced a system of running the gangs to work at bayonet point, at five miles an hour. Cook claimed that the greatest part of the guard had previously been at Norfolk Island where they had become inured to inflicting harsh treatment on the convicts. Some of the guards had certainly been at Norfolk Island at the time of the convict mutiny there (15 January 1834)

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[13] Leonard W. Woodford, BA.(Comp), *A Young Surgeon In Wellington's Army*, Unwin Brothers Limited, 1976, p. 7; Peter Stanley, *For Fear Of Pain British Surgery 1790-1850*, Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2003, p.173; Bde Maj to Col Sec, 19 Oct 1835, SRNSW 4/2287.2 f 35/8431.

[14] *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 May 1835.

but it was one of those, Private Boyd Calderwood, serving on the Island from 1831 until the relief of the detachment of the 4th Regiment by one of the 50th in 1835, who put an end to the practice of running the gangs to work. Cook saw 'this good meaning man at extra drill for some days afterwards' but could not recollect whether Calderwood was being punished 'for possessing a spark of humanity'.

Cook also recorded the shooting of a prisoner being escorted with others on a chain to Bathurst. Two of the party being escorted were free men, to face trial for sly grogging, but who were still in possession of spirits. At a stop the drink was shared amongst the party, escort and prisoners alike, seated on the ground, when Private John Hagan, undoubtedly affected by the grog, shot and killed one of the prisoners. It was a classic case where uninhibited familiarity between soldiers and prisoners, combined with access to spirits, led to death. Assistant Surgeon Parry was called to the scene of the incident as the victim was still manacled to the chain. Parry vowed that the perpetrator of the crime would be punished. The Sydney Morning Herald of 5 October 1835 reported that a Coroner's Inquest had been held on the deceased and a verdict of Wilful Murder returned. There were two Privates John Hagan in the regiment, No568 from County Louth, and the culprit, No 944 from Downpatrick in County Down. He was duly charged, sentenced to transportation to Moreton Bay for 14 years, and struck off the strength of the regiment on 5 December 1835. Cook claimed Hagan did not serve out the full sentence.[15]

Faunce and the detachment of the 4th Regiment were relieved in July 1836 by Captain Moore with a detachment of one subaltern, an Assistant Surgeon, two sergeants and 87 Rank and File. Moore, married, with three children, would have been accompanied by his family.

Shortly after his replacement, Faunce was appointed Police Magistrate at Brisbane Waters. There he became involved in a case concerning the theft of a cow named 'Blindberry' and earned himself the nickname of the 'Man of Iron' and a reprimand by the Supreme Court for his handling of the case. By November he was appointed Police Magistrate at Queanbeyan, where he took up land grants, becoming a respected settler before his death in 1856. Apparently his history of treatment of convicts and the cow 'Blindberry' had been forgotten. Members of the Faunce family still reside in the Canberra region.[16]

As the Monthly Returns (WO 17) show much smaller detachments at the two new locations, Hassan's Walls and Bowen's Hollow, it can be assumed that these stations, still passing by the title of 'stockade' were established to the plan authorised in 1834, using 20 man huts or the 'moveable houses'. In these stockades the surrounding high stake fence had been dispensed with as it was found that convicts 'were more securely guarded by placing sentries at the angles of the wooden houses and leaving a space around open to their fire.'[17]

Hassan's Walls, approximately 8 kms east of Cox's River and 12 kms west of Victoria Pass, was at the southern end of a rugged stony ridge below Padleys Pedestal. Bowen's Hollow, 1.5 kms west of Hassan'sWalls was the site of a quarry for bridge building stone. It as garrisoned initially from Cox's River and later from Hassan's Walls, with the detachment commanders at those stations responsible for supervising the small detachment at Bowen's Hollow. In August 1836 Hassan's Walls was garrisoned by Lieutenant McDonald 28th Regiment (also spelt McDonell in the Monthly Returns) with 22 all ranks. Captain Moore was still at Cox's River, with a reduced

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15 Thomas Cook, *The Exiles Lamentations*, 1978, North Sydney, Library of Australian History, p.31-33; WO 12/2213-15; Muster Roll for 1 Oct to 31 Dec, 1835.

16 ADB Vol I, entry for Alured Tasker Faunce.

17 Bourke to Glenelg, 4 December 1837, *Instructions for Assistant engineers, Part B*, tabled in*Report From The Select Committee On Transportation*, 3 Aug 1838, British Parliamentary Papers 1837-38, Vol 22, p. 251.

number of privates under his command, but by March 1837 Lieutenant Scully, 80th Regiment, with an Assistant Surgeon and only two privates, and a sergeant and 19 privates at Bowen's Hollow, had taken over from Moore.

Captain Kane, 80th, replaced McDonald at Hassan's Walls along with one sergeant and 23 privates, in October, taking over responsibility for Bowen's Hollow. Detachments of the 80th at all three stations fluctuated in strength in the ensuing year; by August 1838 there was only a solitary Assistant Surgeon at Cox's River and by December only Captain Morris with two sergeants and 43 privates at Hassan's Walls. This station reverted to a responsibility for the 28th Regiment and it too disappeared from the Monthly Returns in May 1840 leaving no troops on the section of the road from Victoria Pass to the Bathurst garrison.[18]

As the construction of Victoria Pass had been nearing completion Surveyor General Mitchell had turned his attention to the eastern end of the mountain road, starting at Emu Plains, earlier simply called Emu. A prison farm had been established there in 1819 with a guard detachment of a corporal and seven privates of the NSW Veteran Company. Although by 1830 the farm was being run down the guard had been maintained and in that year it consisted of three sergeants and 24 Rank and File of the 39th Regiment, under the command of Captain Horatio Walpole. His detachment was deployed in three groups of a sergeant and a proportion of privates at each of Emu Plains, Weatherboard and Springwood. Although the disposition of these bodies is not shown in the Muster Roll of the 39th, it is evident from a letter from Walpole to the Colonial Secretary in January 1830, requesting an extra horse, as he had to visit detachments at Weatherboard and Springwood. This deployment is confirmed in the Monthly Return of 1 March 1831 where Walpole's successor at Emu Plains, Captain Thomas Wright, of the same regiment, is shown with only one sergeant and 14 Rank and File at Emu, one sergeant and 10 privates at Springwood, and one sergeant and nine men at Weatherboard, bringing Wright's detachment to a total to three sergeants and 33 men.

The prison farm was finally wound up in August 1832 but by that time convict gangs were being redeployed to Emu Plains to undertake the upgrade of that section of the road. It will be recalled that gangs from Wisemans had been marched there in 1832 on completion of work on the great North Road. (see PT II p. 56.). To accommodate the increased convict population a formal stockade complete with '12-foot-high palisades' had been constructed.[19] By 1833 the guard detachment had been increased to 59 soldiers, and one subaltern, commanded by Capt McCumming, 4th Regiment. The convict road gangs worked on a new alignment of the road surveyed by Mitchell to ease the climb of the eastern escarpment to Lapstone Hill. The new ascent was made possible by the construction of the first bridge built in New South Wales by the Scots bridge-builder David Lennox, from stone quarried near the bridge site.

Emu Plains was garrisoned by succeeding regiments until 1843 when only one private of the 96th Regiment was stationed there. From 1835 other so-called stockades, consisting of static huts or 'moveable houses', were progressively established further along the western road. [20] The 1 June 1835 Monthly Return shows Lieutenant Campbell, with two sergeants, and 22 Rank and File stationed at 17 Mile Pinch (later 17 Mile Hollow) situated between the present day locations of Springwood and Woodford, perhaps in the vicinity of Linden, and with responsibility for one sergeant and 22 at Springwood and two privates at Weatherboard. This guard was maintained until 1839 with a new station established at 20 Mile Hollow (Woodford) in August 1840. This

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[18] WO 17/2321-2325, on microfilm NLA.
[19] Von Hugel, op cit, p. 256.
[20] James Backhouse, *A Narrative Of A Visit To The Australian Colonies*, 1843, Hamilton, Adams And Co, p. 305.

station was garrisoned by Lieutenant Russell, 28th Regiment, one sergeant and 41 Rank and File. Russell was replaced by Captain Bull, and a detachment of the 99th Regiment in January 1844. Bull and his detachment were redeployed to Blackheath in 1845 and a detachment remained at that station until April 1849 when Lieutenant Scott, one sergeant and 16 men of the 11th, the Devonshire Regiment were withdrawn and the involvement of the garrison regiments with the Great Western Road ended.

The site of the four stockades between Mt Victoria and Cox's River have all been identified and extensive research has carried out at the No 2 Stockade at Cox's. There, Ms Sue Rosen and Dr Michael Pearson undertook a detailed historical and archaeological investigation on behalf of Pacific Power, the company which operates the two power stations drawing cooling water from Lake Lyell. I am indebted to Ms Rosen for making a copy of the investigation report to assist with the preparation of this article.[21]

In addition the four sites have been scanned, using a metal detector, by Mr Ollie Leckbrandt and the details of the numerous military relics found have been listed and illustrated in two publications. The findings have included coins, buttons and pieces of badges and accoutrements. A few of the military items present interesting grounds for speculation; at the Mt Victoria stockade site a button of the 48th Regiment, the last elements of which left the colony in 1828, was found. At the Cox's River stockade site a button of the NSW Royal Veterans was picked up. There is no record of the Veterans having served at Cox's River.[22]

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[21] Ms Sue Rosen and Dr Michael Pearson, *The No 2 Stockade Cox's River – its Life and Times, An Historical and Archaeological Investigation*, Sydney, 1997.

[22] Ollie Leckbandt, *Convict Stockades From Mount Walker To Mount Victoria*, and *The Mount Walker Stockade Cox's River*, Lithgow 1998.