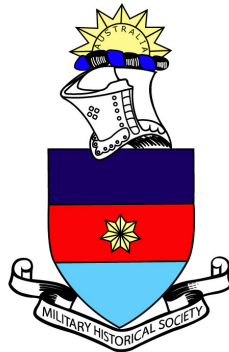


Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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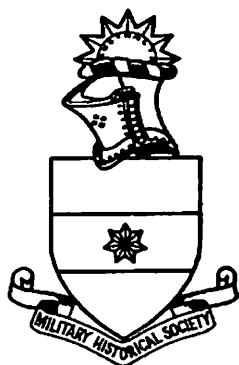
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The Military Historical Society of Australia

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

Organisation

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

MHSA Constitution and Rules

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

Sabretache

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

Members' notices

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

Queries

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

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Military Historical Society of Australia Biennial Conference 6-8 June, 1998

Keynote Address

D-day in Normandy and Suvla Bay

Sir Rupert Hamer

I am honoured by this invitation to give the keynote address to this skilled and well-informed gathering. Today is the 54th anniversary of the climax D-day landings in Normandy in World War 2, and it was my good fortune to have been posted to combined operations HQ in London, where much of the detailed planning for Overlord was carried out, and to have visited the invasion beaches shortly after D-day.

Combined Ops was an innovative combination of all three services, originally under Lord Louis Mountbatten, who worked together to develop the planning and organisation for amphibious operations. It was my job, having had responsibilities in planning such operations in New Guinea at Lae and Finschhafen, to turn their attention to the coming war against Japan which was to follow the prospective defeat of Germany—seaborne landings on jungle coastlines being radically different from those on the developed coasts of Europe.

So I thought that it might be instructive to compare the two greatest seaborne landings in the history of warfare, the one a turning-point in World War 2, and the other an abject failure.

D-day in Normandy

I turn first to the day we celebrate, D-day in Normandy. If ever a major military operation deserved success, it was Operation Overlord, designed to swing the whole tide of war decisively by creating a second front in Europe. Five vital factors worked together to give this great enterprise an edge and they were:

1. Overwhelming air power;
2. Command of the sea;
3. Time to plan and prepare;
4. Cohesion of army, navy and air force; and
5. Blindness of the German command.

I will deal with each of them in turn to show their influence on the ultimate triumph, but first let us remind ourselves of the invasion plan as it finally emerged.

Two armies, one American and one British, were to land in Normandy on open beaches, seize an adequate bridgehead within which to build up reinforcements and supplies as rapidly as possible, then break out and liberate Paris and northern France, then make for the Rhine and the heart of Germany. Two crucial elements were obviously surprise, and the ability to put forces

ashore quickly enough to beat off the powerful German thrusts designed to drive them back into the sea. It was a race against time.

The German defences involved two armies—the 15th in the Pas de Calais area, and the 7th in Normandy. They were disposed predominantly ‘up front’, that is, commanding the beaches and protected by all kinds of obstacles, including underwater, and concrete bunkers. They knew that their best hope of defeating an invasion lay in stopping it on the beaches and preventing the securing of any foothold.

Enter factor number one—air power. By this time the British and American air forces were carrying out increasingly heavy raids into Europe, damaging arms factories and disrupting communications, especially railways, supplying the German forces in France. As D-day approached, they began to concentrate heavily on the supply routes into Normandy by which the German forces there would be reinforced. The River Seine was rendered virtually a no-go zone, with the Seine bridges under continual attack and the railway lines, especially the marshalling yards, in complete confusion. After D-day the Allied air forces ranged by day widely over northern France, attacking anything moving on the roads, and effectively confining the movement of troops and supplies to the night hours.

And where was the Luftwaffe? Well, nowhere. After D-day it was hardly in evidence, and was reduced to sneak raids and minor operations.

Thus the Allied control of the air played a vital strategic role. But it went much further. The vast convoys of the invading armada were protected from the air from the time they left various British ports, some days ahead of D-day. Just as important, their movement went undetected. Incredibly enough, the time and place of the landings came as a complete surprise to the Germans, thanks largely to the inability of the German Airforce to carry out an effective surveillance of the British ports, even just across the channel. The Germans knew of course that the second front was on sometime, but firmly expected that it would occur in the Pas de Calais area—a conviction which had disastrous results which I will mention later.

So the great armada of hundreds of ships formed up and sailed undetected across the Channel to the invasion beaches but even before they arrived, the air forces had performed an important tactical service.

The flanks of the intended invasion area were obviously a vulnerable point. The Germans could be expected to fling their reserves vigorously against these flanks, perhaps within hours of the initial landings, in order to defeat the invaders literally on the beaches. On the left (eastern) flank, the river Orne was to be the boundary and the critical point was the bridge across it. On the right (western) flank at the base of the Cotentin peninsula there were large flooded areas which the Americans would eventually have to cross.

Enter the air forces again. Because of our air superiority large parachute and glider forces were able to fly in safety across the channel in the early hours of D-day, attack and capture the vital bridge over the river Orne on one flank and occupy the crucial area beyond the swamps on the other.

The second factor was the Allied command of the sea. I will not dwell on that except to note that the enormous invasion fleet was able to assemble and cross the Channel without any loss, or indeed any attack at all, even from a stray submarine, and that this naval shield continued to protect the vast shipping traffic in the days and weeks after D-day, without interruption, except from the weather. The Navy also acted as mobile artillery in the early stages, standing off-shore and shelling the German defences practically at point-blank range.

The third vital factor that I have noted was the time involved in the planning of this great enterprise. Time to gather detailed information about the German defences and dispositions; time to train the assault forces, especially in dealing with the obstacles; time to build literally two new ports, in the form of great concrete blockships which were towed across the Channel and sunk to form breakwaters, and floating piers which went up and down with the tide; time to devise swimming tanks to lead the assault and cause consternation among the defenders; and time above all to build an elaborate deception plan, which I will deal with later.

The fourth factor was the excellent co-ordination of the armed forces to form one close-knit campaign, to a degree that had not been known before. This was largely due to the creation of Combined Operations HQ in London, originally under Lord Louis Mountbatten. This was the HQ to which I was assigned and I was able to observe how it taught, and practised, the combining of the elements into one mighty force—in this case with one commander, namely Eisenhower, and a single command structure, housed together, and co-operating at every stage and on every level. We had already achieved something of this kind in amphibious operations in the Pacific, but it reached a new pitch in Normandy, with each service learning the needs and aims of the others, and uniting in a single plan. Not that there were no inter-service arguments! There were, especially between Montgomery as Army Commander and the Air Force Chiefs, but Eisenhower's great gift, as overall commander, was his ability to reconcile conflicting views and if necessary to give a firm decision.

The final factor I have designated the blindness of the German Command. This blindness was of two kinds, first, the lack of accurate information arising out of the growing weakness of the Luftwaffe and the rising power of the Allied air forces, which inhibited any proper reconnaissance of the invasion ports in southern England, still less of those further north. The second, I can only describe as a powerful illustration of the old Greek proverb: 'whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.' In this case it was the unshakeable conviction that the real invasion would take place in the Pas de Calais area. The original German commander in France was von Rundstedt, who adhered firmly to this conviction, and no doubt it had a strong tactical rationale, since the channel is only 22 miles wide at this point, so that an invasion force could move more quickly, and with greater security there than elsewhere. Above all it could be protected most easily by fighter aircraft based on airfields in southern England.

This conviction carried the corollary that any invasion anywhere else in France would only be a diversion, designed to mislead the clever Germans and draw their defence forces away from the real area of attack. Fortunately for us, Hitler, that great strategist, shared this delusion, which persisted for several vital days after D-day, and firmly rejected the anguished pleas of Rommel, who had succeeded von Rundstedt, to release armoured forces from the 15th army in the Pas de Calais to attack the Allied bridgeheads in Normandy before it was too late.

I have not been able to determine whether Allied intelligence was aware of this great German delusion, but whether by chance or not, it was dramatically fed and reinforced by the greatest deception operation in history, which involved creating a whole fictitious army in Kent, complete with camps, active transport driving about, vigorous radio traffic, indeed everything needed to create the impression that here was a great invasion force poised to drive across the Channel when the moment came.

This deception was a complete success and contributed mightily to the refusal of the German High Command to permit any withdrawal of defence forces from the threatened area, or indeed to treat the Normandy operation as more than a minor preliminary to the main effort.

The final aspect of German blindness was the strategic plan. And here I must except Erwin Rommel. When Rommel took over from von Rundstedt, he found what could be called a traditional defence plan—light forces forward on the beaches and particularly near the existing ports: the weight of the defence force, including the armoured units, held well back in a central area, ready to assault any invasion force after it came ashore.

Rommel took precisely the opposite view. He perceived that the only real chance of defeating the mighty forces assembling in England was to defeat them on the beaches and prevent them gaining a foothold. This, in turn, meant the stationing of the bulk of his forces well forward overlooking the beaches, and protecting them with a mass of obstacles and concrete bunkers. He was highly sceptical—rightly as it turned out—about the ability of any reserve forces to move quickly to the threatened area, because of the growing Allied air force. He had bitter experience of the crucial importance of air power previously in North Africa.

Here two other factors worked in favour of the Allies. Rommel had only taken charge comparatively recently and had not had time to implement all his changes. Part of his forces were not very good or well-equipped. At least one of his Divisions consisted of Russians captured on the eastern front and drafted into the German Army. Many of his units still had horse-drawn transport. Allied intelligence watched anxiously as the obstacles arose on the beaches and in the sea off Normandy. But in fact the Allied bombing of factories and railways in Germany and the conquered territories had seriously delayed the arrival of construction materials and workers, and the job was only partially completed by D-day.

One last point on the deception plan. During the night before D-day this vast armada was to assemble and sail eastward up the English channel. When it reached a point opposite the Normandy beaches, code named 'Piccadilly Circus', it had to turn through 90 degrees towards the south and head for the invasion beaches.

It was therefore vital that if possible the Germans should not become aware of the turn, but should be led to assume that the fleet was continuing up the Channel towards the Calais area. A scientific deception of the German warning systems along the coast was entrusted to the Royal Navy with 34 small ships towing large barrage balloons to give blips on the enemy radars between Le Havre and Calais, and to the RAF with 105 aircraft flying round and round dropping 'window' to create a similar effect.

They had complete success. The German meteorologists had already reached a conclusion, based on the break in the good weather on June 5, that an invasion was not likely within the next fortnight, and Rommel had accordingly left for his family home at Ulm, intending to travel to Berchtesgarden on the very D-day to plead with Hitler for more troops!

Radar stations along the invasion coast between Le Havre and Cherbourg from 10 pm onwards reported that they were being jammed, there was increasing radio traffic on the BBC broadcasts to the French Resistance, and reports of increased shipping movements in the Channel. Still the German HQ refused to believe the invasion was on, and no special precautions were ordered. When a stand-by alert was finally issued, it went to the 15th Army only. The 7th German Army guarding the invasion coast received no warning whatever. Truly 'whom the gods would destroy they first make mad.'

I have dealt briefly now with the five elements which in my view gave the Allies critical advantages in this operation. Just a word about the outcome. Of course the invasion did not go according to plan. Not one of the D-day objectives was reached, and some of them not for days or even weeks. The Americans on Omaha Beach, in a great display of courage, but little common sense, elected to do without any swimming tanks, encountered firm defences, and

hardly got beyond the beach on D-day. Low cloud hampered the airborne forces and scattered some of them widely. On the other hand, the German reserves were severely hampered and delayed in moving to the invasion area and had to be committed piecemeal. They delayed the advance, but they were never able to deliver the concerted blow that would have been the only way to drive the Allies back into the sea. The Allies were able to build up their strength and eventually, though much later than planned, they broke out, and made for Paris and the Rhine.

Suvla Bay

I pass now from the greatest combined operation in history to contrast another, with equally ambitious objectives, but which figures prominently in the Guinness book of military blunders. I refer to the Suvla Bay operation at Gallipoli in World War 1.

You will remember that early in 1915 Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, formed the grandiose plan of ordering the Navy to sail up the Dardanelles and appear before Constantinople, thus forcing Turkey to surrender, and knocking it out of the war in one blow. The Navy complied—without much conviction—but having lost several ships on mines before even really engaging main Turkish forts, they wisely retired again. (Incidentally, we know now that the Turks were down to their last few rounds of shell, and had the Allied fleet pressed on, they might well have got through.)

It was then decided that the Army must do the job by landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula on April 25, and marching on Constantinople by land. The Turks had other views, and by the end of July, after heavy losses and immense courage displayed on both sides, a virtual stalemate had been reached, with the Allies hardly more than half-a-mile inland in their two beachheads and unable to progress.

In many ways the operation hardly deserved success, what with the lack of suitable landing craft, inadequate training and preparation and a total lack of security. Mail was being despatched to Australia while the troops were still in Egypt, marked "Gallipoli force", and when they assembled later on Lemnos and other islands, Greek fishing caiques were sailing freely in and out and keeping the Turks informed.

So, by the end of July 1915 a kind of inertia had descended on the whole Gallipoli Peninsula. In the two tiny bridgeheads at Cape Helles and Anzac Cove (which was only the size of Regent's Park in London) the troops were enduring the discomforts of the harsh conditions, the intense summer heat and the flies. Sickness, especially dysentery, was beginning to take a heavy toll on both sides. Turkish figures published after the war show 85,000 sick, of whom 21,000 died. After three months of close encounters and heavy casualties, neither side had any real prospect of significant advance.

The Suvla Bay operation was an amphibious 'left-hook', intended to unlock the impasse by outflanking the whole Turkish defence, and by striking across the peninsula at its narrowest point, to seal off the Turkish forces and open the way for both the Navy and Army to advance on Constantinople.

There was nothing wrong with the strategic plan. As with Normandy, it had the potential to become a decisive move and probably to knock Turkey out of the war. As with Normandy, the Allies had complete command of the sea, and also of the air, although of course only a few primitive aeroplanes were involved. They also, miraculously enough, achieved complete surprise. The Turks knew that some new operation was in the wind, but were successfully led to believe that there would be a new landing in Asia Minor, in the vicinity of ancient Troy, the comparison with the Pas de Calais is inescapable. Indeed, the whole Suvla Bay area was only

defended by three weak Turkish battalions, totalling about 1,500 men, and they were held well back, with only two small posts forward near the beach. They had no barbed wire and no machine guns. Furthermore, Turkish reinforcements could not physically reach the area for more than two days, so that the race against time to seize a beachhead was much more in the Allies' favour. So what went wrong? Why should Suvla Bay figure prominently in the Guinness book of military blunders?

To explain the squandering of a great opportunity we have to look at the execution of this excellent plan. Much of what transpired is almost beyond belief. The overall commander at Gallipoli was the British General Sir Ian Hamilton. For the purposes of the proposed operation, he had received substantial reinforcements consisting of five British divisions, not to mention scores of naval vessels, including landing craft and monitors. But the troops were of the British new army, young and untried, who had never been in battle before, let alone carried out an intricate operation like landing on an unknown enemy coast at night.

The obvious assault troops to use were the Anzac Corps. They knew the terrain, they knew the Turks, they had done it before. The new divisions could have relieved them at Anzac Cove and had an easier introduction to Gallipoli. But such a simple idea never seems to have occurred to Hamilton. Furthermore, he determined that the landings should take place at night, thus practically guaranteeing maximum confusion ashore.

And then there were the commanders. The British High Command had declined to release any senior general from France, so resort was had to the retired list. For Corps Commander of the Suvla Bay invasion force they chose Sir Frederick Stopford, retired some 6 years, aged 61 and in indifferent health, who had never actually commanded troops in battle. The division commanders were of the same mould. General Hamersley, for instance, in charge of the 11th Division, which was to lead the assault at Suvla, had also been in retirement, and had suffered a breakdown a year or two before.

One of the great Allied advantages I pointed out for Overlord, was time to plan and prepare. That included time to brief all ranks precisely on their roles and objectives. No such advantage obtained at Suvla. The assault was timed for 6 August, and Stopford only arrived from England on 11 July, with a little over three weeks to prepare for the whole operation. Virtually no proper reconnaissance was allowed, no proper briefings were done, and no effective rehearsals. When the 11th Division embarked for the landing, many of its officers had never even seen a map of Suvla Bay.

A word about timing. August 6 was apparently chosen because moonrise was at 2 am, which would allow the assault force to approach the beaches and land in utter darkness. Thus confusion was guaranteed, and a quarter-moon made the task of finding the way, once ashore, immensely more difficult. I contrast another great night attack, at Alumina, where the full moon was expressly chosen so that we could find our way most easily—and that was on land!

And now to the most critical aspect of both Overlord and Suvla—the race against time. In the case of Suvla, the objective had to be to reach and capture the high ground in the middle of the peninsula, known as the Sari Bair Range, about four miles from the landing beaches, before the Turks could get there. And here Hamilton has to be faulted. He was fixed in his own mind that this objective had to be taken by dawn on 7 August, but he completely failed to convey that sense of urgency to his commanders. They were to act on their own discretion. They were to get forward "if possible".

The landing was effected without real opposition. But by dawn the beaches were scenes of utter confusion. Units were lost, nobody could identify any features on the ground. Instead of driving inland, everyone sat down to breakfast. Many had a swim.

And where was the commander of the enterprise? Stopford had elected to stay on his HQ vessel, the sloop *Jonquil*, and remained there practically throughout the battle. He had not even visited the troops during embarkation, but was found by one of Hamilton's staff officers lying on his valise in his tent. And how's this for a confident general at the beginning of a vital operation:

'I want you to tell Sir Ian Hamilton that I am going to do my best, and that I hope to be successful. But he must realise that if the enemy proves to be holding a strong line of continuous entrenchments, I shall be unable to dislodge him until more guns are landed.'

In the early hours of the morning, *Jonquil* dropped anchor just within Suvla Bay. Stopford had his mattress brought up on deck and went to sleep. No-one was sent on shore to ascertain the position, no-one came out to *Jonquil*, and no message was sent to Hamilton at his HQ on the island of Imbros. It is almost beyond belief.

Worse was to follow. Soon after daybreak, he had a visit from Brigadier Hill, the commander of a brigade which had just arrived from Mytilene (formerly Lesbos). He and his troops had been shut up there on their ships for nearly a month. On the previous day they had orders to move, with no idea where they were going, no plans, and no map had been shown to the Brigadier. He found himself in totally strange surroundings, and wanted to know what he was supposed to do.

I have said enough. Order and counter-order, confused signals, utter chaos. Stopford remained out of touch on *Jonquil* all day on 7 August. With two vital days lost, Hamilton arrived on the beach late on 8 August to find 20,000 men ashore, no Turks in sight but the front line still only two miles inland across the plain and the heights still not even approached. He went direct to Hamersley and ordered him to send a brigade at once to occupy the heights, Tekke Tepe. They were half an hour too late. The Turks, under Mustafa Kemal, later President of Turkey, had got there first and repulsed their advance. Other Turks arrived, both sides dug in, and that was the end of the operation, and of the last chance of success on Gallipoli.

It is tempting to speculate on what might have happened if a more vigorous, more experienced, and more optimistic commander than Stopford had been chosen. Stopford is usually faulted by military historians, but in my opinion the War Office in London, and particularly Kitchener, were to blame for not appointing for such a vital and complex operation the kind of commander it clearly required. And Hamilton must share that blame for not assembling the higher officers at least down to colonel, and driving home the vital importance of seizing the high ground in the middle of the peninsula. That was the key to the operation and it lay ready for the taking for two whole fateful days.

Hamilton's other great fault lay in using raw, inexperienced and unprepared troops on such a complex night landing, instead of the Anzac Corps. The Anzacs might well have returned triumphant from Gallipoli, instead of being honoured and respected for a glorious assault and a beautifully planned and executed withdrawal. But, as the French say, *C'est la Guerre*.

General Sir Ian Hamilton, GCB, GCMG, DSO A Reassessment of the 'Romantic Warrior'

Ronald J Austin, RFD, ED

The name of General Sir Ian Hamilton is inextricably intertwined with the Gallipoli campaign, and the Australian troops of the AIF who served under his command. Although Hamilton's critics have been legion, what do we really know of this man? Wayne Kruger in his book *Good-Bye Dolly Gray* provides a vivid picture of Hamilton, describing him as 'a slender Scot with a thin pale rather pinched face, a thick moustache and a lofty brow, his light hair parted a little off centre ... with a romantic attachment to war.'

Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton was born in Scotland in 1853, and graduated from Sandhurst in December 1873. Although he had requested a posting to the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, which was his father's old regiment, in true army fashion, Hamilton was posted as a sub-lieutenant to the 12th Suffolk Regiment, stationed in Ireland. Few of his fellow officers would have realised that the fresh young subaltern was embarking on an outstanding military career which would continue until he was dismissed in 1915.

One way to gain some insight into Hamilton the man is to read some of the 15 or more books he wrote during his long life, many of which dealt with military matters. It is Hamilton's literary craftsmanship that places him above most of his contemporaries. Here was a man who regarded the written word with as much affection as the sword, yet, while some have scorned him as being effete, his record of unparalleled bravery swiftly sweeps aside such unworthy suggestions.

It is useful to consider the following comments about death and soldiering made while Hamilton was serving with the 92nd Gordon Highlanders in Northern India and Afghanistan during the period 1874 to 1879, as they help to explain his philosophy as a soldier:

'A soldier, a true soldier, it seemed to me, was the exception to this general rule of struggle against death. To him the call of danger was the call of duty—he must behave as if he wanted to lose his life, even seeking danger, putting himself in the hands of God and if he was to get through, get through he would.'

Another young subaltern (Winston Churchill) over two decades later, likewise dwelt on the philosophy which motivated the British soldier in India:

'The uncertainty and importance of the present, reduce the past and the future, to comparative insignificance, and clear the mind of minor worries. And when all is over, memories remain, which few men do not hold precious. Beside all this, the chances of learning about the next world are infinitely greater.'

Life as a subaltern in the 92nd Gordon Highlanders was at times difficult for Hamilton, and his willingness to study was often frowned upon by his fellow junior officers. Nonetheless, he passed his proficiency examinations in Hindustani, and as a result of his shooting a record bag of game in Kashmir during his leave, he was appointed as musketry instructor for the regiment. The secluded and exclusive world of the Gordons, provided an immense challenge to the enthusiastic Hamilton. He recalled that:

'Professionally speaking, the Colonel, Adjutant and Sergeant-Major held the bullet to be a fool, and the bayonet to be still the last argument of Kings; the reigning Queens of battles.'

Hamilton realised that the widespread antipathy toward musketry training represented 'a mountain of inertia.' Yet by his own enthusiasm, which at times required him to buy ammunition out of his own pocket, within a year, Hamilton achieved the impossible! The Gordons had become the best shooting battalion in all of India. The Gordons were about to return to England, when news of the conflict in South Africa reached the regiment. As Senior Subaltern of the battalion, Hamilton, with the agreement of the other subalterns, sent the following presumptuous cable to Sir Evelyn Wood, who was in command in South Africa:



General Sir Ian Hamilton, GCB, GCMG, DSO

'Personal. From Subalterns 92nd Highlanders. Splendid battalion eager service much nearer Natal than England do send.'

Due to Hamilton's impetuous intervention, on 6 January 1881, the battalion received orders to sail from Cawnpore to South Africa, rather than return to England. Little did Hamilton realise, that by late February he would be close to death. On the night of 27th February, Hamilton was called off picquet duty and ordered to fall in his company. Within 30 minutes, Hamilton and his men moved off in the black African night, still totally unaware of their intended destination. By 4 am, the Gordons, together with the rest of Major General George Colley's force were atop the dominating plateau of Majuba. What transpired over the next few hours is well documented. Colley was mortally wounded, and by early afternoon, victory had gone to the Boers who had swept the British positions with rifle fire from the surrounding high points. Some of the British troops managed to flee from the fiery inferno, many were either killed, wounded or captured.

Lieutenant Hamilton distinguished himself in this action by rallying his men, to the extent that he was later recommended for the Victoria Cross. But, by a perverse twist, was denied the honour, due to his youthful age, and told that he was young enough to have more chances. During the battle, his right wrist was shattered by a bullet. Although it appeared likely that his arm would require amputation, this procedure was avoided, but Hamilton was left with a withered and useless right arm for the rest of his career, an injury which later prompted his great friend Winston Churchill to describe as 'a glorious deformity.'

Having recovered from his wounds, young Hamilton was invited to dine with Queen Victoria in August 1881. In the following year, he was promoted to captain, and due to his recent gallantry with the Gordon Highlanders in South Africa, and being personally known to Sir Frederick Roberts, Hamilton was appointed to the post of ADC to Roberts who was then the Commander in Chief, Madras. Perhaps in fairness to Hamilton, it should also be explained that he had come to Roberts' attention in several ways. First, by being the son of a former CO of the 92nd; second, by his performance at Majuba, and finally, by having been involved in a foolhardy foray against a group of marauding Afghans at the Peiwar Kotal pass in July 1879. It was this action which led to his immediate appointment by Roberts as ADC to General Redan Massy, who commanded the Cavalry Brigade. Roberts, who had been in command during the Afghan campaign, recalled the Peiwar Kotal incident when he made this appointment which, was to have a far reaching impact on Hamilton's career.

Hamilton returned to the 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders, in time to participate in the Nile expedition of 1884-85. By the time he went to Burma as a staff officer in 1886-87, Hamilton had received his promotion to lieutenant colonel. It was obvious that Hamilton had been marked for grander things, and by 1891, he had been promoted to colonel. In 1893, he was appointed as Military Secretary to Sir George White, who had succeeded Roberts as Commander in Chief in India. In 1895, Hamilton served with the Chitral Relief Force, and two years later, he commanded the 3rd Brigade of the Tirah Expeditionary Force.

The true measure of the man can be judged by his rejection of the offer of the post of Quartermaster General in India at a salary of £3,000, in favour of the post of commander of the School of Musketry at Hythe, a post carrying an annual salary of a mere £800. By 1898, Hamilton was relishing the challenge of his new appointment, fully convinced that in any modern war his infantry would not only need to be trained shots, but also be trained in open deployment in order to avoid the impact of modern rifles and artillery.

When the Second Anglo-Boer war commenced in October 1899, Colonel Hamilton was immediately despatched to South Africa as General Sir George White's chief of staff. With the rank of local major general, he was soon to be involved in heavy fighting around Ladysmith. On 21 October, he successfully commanded a brigade at the Battle of Elandslaagte, and when the battle appeared to be swinging in favour of the Boers, Hamilton rode up to the firing line and ordered his troops to fix bayonets and charge. When the battle later took another turn for the worse, Hamilton encouraged his beloved Gordons to again attack. As a result of his gallant intervention, Hamilton was recommended for the Victoria Cross. However, for the second time in his career he was denied the honour, this time on the basis that it was not desirable to set a precedent by awarding the Victoria Cross to an officer of general rank!

After the relief of Ladysmith, Hamilton's next major battle was at Wagon Hill on 6 January 1900. It was here that the Boers, in one of their few large-scale attacks upon a British position, attacked Wagon Hill and the adjoining Caesar's Camp. Once again Hamilton was in the thick of the fighting, and was lucky to escape with his life during the fierce hand-to-hand fighting atop Wagon Hill. Following this battle, Hamilton commanded the column that captured the waterworks outside of Bloemfontein, from where he pressed on to Thaba N'chu, which he entered on 26 April 1900. By this time Hamilton held the rank of local lieutenant general and, when Lord Roberts commenced his push from Bloemfontein to Pretoria, Hamilton was given

command of what was called the Army of the Right. By mid May, Hamilton's force had crossed the Rhenoster River, and by the end of the month had pushed aside the Boer screen at Klipriviersberg. On 30 May, the Boers abandoned Johannesburg, thus leaving the way open to Pretoria. On 4 June 1900, Hamilton's column attacked Diamond Hill, in what he regarded as 'the turning point of the war' as it demonstrated that Pretoria could never be recaptured by the Boers. It was here at Diamond Hill, that the New South Wales Mounted Rifles successfully stormed the Rhenosterfontein kopje, thus enabling Hamilton to bombard Diamond Hill, causing Botha to withdraw.

In June, Hamilton suffered a broken collar bone from a riding fall, but by July had recovered and was leading his army in the eastern advance on Middleburg and beyond. When Roberts returned to England at the end of 1900, he took the faithful Hamilton with him to act as his Military Secretary. Hamilton impressed Lord Roberts so much that he suggested that Hamilton be appointed as Commander in Chief in South Africa, but the British Government overlooked Hamilton in favour of the imposing saviour of Khartoum. Around that time, Roberts wrote a confidential report on Hamilton, which any officer would envy:

'Hamilton is quite the most brilliant commander I have serving under me. He is most careful to assure himself exactly what he is required to do. He is very intelligent, untiring in the performance of his duty and has that military instinct which would enable him to appreciate when a risk should be run in order to achieve some given object. I would select him before all others to carry out any difficult operation.'

However, after the war became bogged down in the guerrilla phase, and it became painfully apparent that the war would not end quickly, Hamilton was recalled to South Africa in December 1901, to act as Chief of Staff to Lord Kitchener. Although the guerrilla war was gradually wearing down the Boers, all of their senior leaders continued to evade capture. The strain of the campaign was now beginning to tell on Kitchener, which prompted Lord Roberts to offer the services of Hamilton to Kitchener. On 5 November 1901, Kitchener responded to Roberts, 'I am extremely grateful; there is nothing I should like better. He is just the man I want. Hamilton will be a great help to me.'

Hamilton's intense sense of loyalty and responsibility, which were so much part of his existence both as a soldier and a person, help to explain why he took certain actions regarding his subordinates, even when he must have had doubts about their decisions or ability. How frustrating it must have been to have found as Kitchener's Secretary, that almost every submission he made, was blue pencilled, often beyond recognition. This situation was fuelled by Kitchener's own fears of failing, as Buller had done, and Hamilton was paradoxically seen as both a valued second-in-command, and a potential rival who had to be kept in his place. Yet Hamilton was delighted to play a role similar to that played by Ludendorff to Hindenburg during the latter part of the Great War. Few men would have survived the relationship that existed between Hamilton and Kitchener, as described by Hamilton:

'Since K. demanded that he should see everything of importance first, should make every decision of importance, should work out the execution of every plan himself, I was but a high-ranking confidential secretary; a purely personal appendage—I job with which I was enchanted.'

When Kitchener appointed Hamilton to lead the final drive through the western Transvaal in early April 1902, following the mauling given to Colonel Cookson's column on 31 March, Kitchener transgressed from his usual role of refusing to delegate any authority and making every minute decision himself. It was because of his absolute confidence in his deputy, that Kitchener gave Hamilton a free hand as commander of all the columns in the western Transvaal. The precise instructions given to Hamilton by Kitchener were merely, 'You had better go out to the Western Transvaal.' A directive that illustrated the tremendous trust that existed between the two men. The British Government had, however, requested Hamilton to cable his despatches directly to London. Hamilton, with characteristic loyalty to his chief, felt obliged to also show these cables to Kitchener, so that he could not be thought of as disloyal. In what was a typical reaction, Kitchener thanked Hamilton for his loyalty, but refused to read the proffered cables.

It may strike you as strange that this incongruous pair, should have developed such admiration and loyalty to each other, but it is obvious that Kitchener needed the support of Hamilton, hence his urgent recall to South Africa. Kitchener confided to Lord Roberts that the return of Hamilton now permitted him to make field visits, knowing that the administration of the war was safely in Hamilton's hands.

Hamilton's reputation had been enhanced during the recently concluded war, with the only criticism being that he failed to act swiftly at Olifant's Nek in August 1900, thus permitting De Wet to again elude his pursuers. At the conclusion of the Boer War, Hamilton returned to the War Office as a Lieutenant General, and from 1903 to 1904 served as Quarter Master General. Upon the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, Hamilton was appointed as Chief of the Military Mission to the Japanese Army. His observations were subsequently published in 1906 as *A Staff Officer's Scrap Book*. In 1905, he returned to England as GOC Southern Command, and in 1909 was appointed Adjutant General.

In 1910 he was appointed Commander in Chief – Mediterranean and Inspector General of Overseas Forces. It was in that capacity that Hamilton visited Australia during February to April 1914, where he carried out an inspection of the country's newly reorganised Citizen Forces, little realising that in less than a year, he would be commanding these very same troops in battle. The reorganisation of the Citizen Forces in 1912, and the introduction of Universal Training, commencing with junior cadets followed by senior cadets, still suffered from teething troubles. A patient and understanding Hamilton noted that 'these difficulties will grow less with each succeeding year', and predicted success if the cadet and Citizen Forces system were given 'a general heave upwards each year'. The Melbourne *Argus* reported Hamilton's visit to the troops attending their brigade Annual Camp at Bundoora in April 1914, and noted his debriefing of the officers and NCO's:

'[Hamilton] was very much pleased with the keenness of the men—he then went on to criticism of the work of the afternoon. He had seen scouts sent out and remain in front of the firing line even when the shooting became very heavy, he also saw supports 80 yards in the rear of the main body open fire. Not in conformity with common sense, however, as it meant that they would have shot there own men. He urged all ranks to be real and only do what they would do on service.'

At the very onset of the Great War in August 1914, General Sir John French was approached by Lord Kitchener, the Secretary for State, with a view to having Hamilton, who was at that time

GOC Central Force Command, appointed to the command of the 1st Army Corps in France. This suggestion did not please French, who rejected the idea with the dubious argument that Hamilton was 'too senior to command an army Corps, and is also engaged in an important command at home.'

When the British War Council decided to embark on the Gallipoli adventure so enthusiastically supported by Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, it did so despite Lord Kitchener's misgivings. The original plan was for a naval attack on the Dardanelles, with the army merely taking part in minor operations such as the silencing of enemy shore batteries. Events were soon to change that concept dramatically. On 12 March 1915, Hamilton was appointed by Lord Kitchener to command of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. Six days later, Hamilton, from his vantage point on the deck of HMS *Phaeton* was able to witness the destruction of the British and French fleets in the Dardanelles. He then cabled Kitchener with the news that the Navy had failed and that it would now be 'a case of a deliberate and progressive military operation.'

Lacking a complete staff, Hamilton proceeded to plan for a landing upon the shores of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Knowing that strategic surprise was lost following the abject withdrawal of the Royal Navy from any future attack on the Narrows, Hamilton had at least to try and obtain tactical surprise. He planned to achieve this by landing his army at five beaches at Cape Helles, his French troops at Kum Kale, the Anzacs at Gabe Tepe, as well as making diversions at Besika Bay and Bulair. An alternate approach would have risked all with one major landing, perhaps at Bulair, with the hope of sweeping the Turks aside. However, given the state of the Turkish defences, the probability of fearsome losses without a guarantee of success, such an alternative lacked credibility. On 25 April 1915, Hamilton's army landed, and achieved the tactical surprise sought by their commander. Unfortunately, progress was slow, the 29th British Division had taken fearful losses at V Beach, and the Anzacs by that night were contemplating withdrawal from their tenuous toehold on the heights above Ari Burnu. It was then that Hamilton, realising that withdrawal was impossible, sent the famous message:

'You have got to get through the difficult business, now you only have to dig, dig, dig, until you are safe.'

Hamilton's reluctance to interfere with the conduct of the operations undertaken by Major General Hunter-Weston, reveal a weakness on Hamilton's part. He reluctantly conceded he was obliged to leave the ground operations to the commander on the ground, despite his own reservations.

'My inclination was to take a hand myself in this affair but the Staff are clear against interference when I have no knowledge of the facts—and I suppose they are right. To see part of my scheme from which I had hoped so much, go wrong before my eyes is maddening.'

In some ways, it is remarkable that Hamilton's force was able to achieve as much as it did. The arrival of the Expeditionary Force was anticipated by the Turks, the only doubt was where would it land? The landing date, which had been delayed through the loading of the ships with guns and their artillery in different vessels, combined with the poor weather, had given Von Sanders even more time to prepare his defences. However, the objectives set by Hamilton for the Anzac landing were over-optimistic, and failed to take into account, the rugged nature of the ground. Similarly, the objectives of capturing Krithia and Achi Baba, could only have been achievable with more dynamic leadership at all levels. The opportunities at Y Beach were lost because of the leadership on the ground, and exacerbated by Hamilton not retaining a mobile reserve under his own command that could have been landed wherever an opportunity presented itself. The subsequent Dardanelles Commission agreed that Hamilton was never given sufficient troops, guns and ammunition to achieve victory in April 1915. Yet despite this,

there were lost chances, particularly on the first day of the landings, and a more aggressive commander-in-chief may have interfered in the handling of the operations at Cape Helles, and over-ridden the pugnacious, but blinkered Hunter-Weston. But, this was not Hamilton's style. Nonetheless, he must be held responsible for the failure of his army, as must Kitchener and the War Council for their prior prevarication.

The Australian 2nd Brigade along with the New Zealand Brigade was to come under Hamilton's direct command for the Second Battle of Krithia, fought from 6-8 May 1915. It was here that the Anzacs participated for the first time in a set piece battle with an advance over open ground under enemy fire. Despite the brave advance by the Australians, the village of Krithia and the looming Achi Baba ridge remained in Turkish hands, and were to remain so for the duration of the Gallipoli campaign.

Hamilton's repeated requests for additional troops and artillery were ignored for many weeks, until such time as it became obvious to the War Council in London that if any further progress were to be achieved at Gallipoli, large scale reinforcements would have to be sent. When it was at last decided to launch a fresh offensive, this time at Suvla Bay, Hamilton's repeated requests for corps and divisional generals with experience of the Western Front were ignored. Hamilton was saddled with the doddering Stopford as his corps commander, who Cruttwell described as 'elderly and decaying' and the impetuous Sir Bryan Mahon. One writer suggests that Kitchener had given Hamilton 'the most abject collection of generals ever gathered on one spot.' Stopford's abysmal efforts led the normally calm Hamilton, to dismiss him, but the damage had been done. Again the opportunity for success that existed during the initial day of the landing at Suvla soon dissipated, as did the chance for the Anzacs to hold Chunuk Bair. The heavy losses incurred during the Australian operations at Lone Pine and its associated diversionary attacks were, unfortunately, to colour forever Australians' view of Hamilton. The Suvla campaign, was described by Ashmead-Bartlett as the 'probably the greatest reverse ever suffered by a British Army in the field.'

Following the fiasco at Suvla, Hamilton was dismissed in October, and in an ironic twist, was replaced by a general (Sir Charles Munro) from the Western Front, who was an opponent of the Gallipoli campaign. At long last, an experienced senior general had been despatched to Gallipoli. But, by this time, it was far too late to retrieve the situation, and by December 1915, the Anzacs were evacuated from the Peninsula, followed by the British from Cape Helles in the following month. For Hamilton, it was the end of his long and illustrious military career. The Western Front clique ensured that he was denied another command. The Dardanelles Commission, although exonerating him, was the unfortunate finale to his outstanding career. Even before that august body, Hamilton maintained his loyalty to Kitchener, his now dead chief, and refused to attack him. In 1918, Hamilton was appointed as Lieutenant of the Tower of London, a ceremonial post he held until 1920. His remaining years were spent in writing and studying the art of war, but he took particular pleasure in serving for many years as the Honorary Colonel of his beloved Gordon Highlanders. He maintained his close interest in Australian military matters, and served as Honorary Colonel of the 5th Battalion, Victorian Scottish Regiment, from 1930 until his death in 1947.

Hamilton always regarded the ordinary British soldiers as the finest fighting men in the world, but looked upon pacifists with disdain and suggested that their consciences may have been influenced by cowardice. His strongly held views on the character building aspects of war are well illustrated by these observations:

'War then is an ordeal and the man who has been through it adds to his self esteem. In all respects, war and peace are really two opposing states or conditions. If then there is any

education forces in experience, the man who has stood for King and Country under fire is a more complete being than one who has avoided doing so.'

It has been fashionable to criticise Hamilton, but many critics have a jaundiced view, possibly because they will never achieve what Hamilton achieved in his lifetime. General Buller regarded Hamilton as a 'dangerous adviser', while others have described his performance at Gallipoli as passive, and displaying 'limited imagination and excessive optimism.' The very fact that he was both 'lucid and literate' led to his unpopularity among some of his fellow officers. Hamilton's performance at Gallipoli led Moorehead to blame him for the weakness of British leadership shown during the campaign. Certainly, there is some justification to this criticism, as Hamilton believed (often incorrectly) that once he had given his generals a task to perform, they would carry it out, and that it was inappropriate for him to interfere in their conduct of the operation. Hickey suggests that the 'shrill judgements' made on Hamilton's generalship at Gallipoli, come 'from the pens of writers who have never experienced battle or the fearsome stress and loneliness of high command.' John Laffin, in his book *British Butchers and Bunglers*, ranks Hamilton as Number 5 on his list of infamous British generals. Unfortunately, Laffin offers little to justify his ranking, but does acknowledge that Hamilton was 'too personally charming, too balanced and too lacking in ruthlessness. These same qualities made him unsuitable for a high and independent command abroad.'

The war correspondent Ashmead-Bartlett, quite rightly characterised the operations at Suvla as 'appalling muddles and inertia', and holds Hamilton responsible, and in the same manner holds Birdwood responsible for the failure at Sari Bair. Major General Fuller observed that Hamilton was an unlucky general, but he also poses the question 'could not a bolder generalship have mitigated the disaster [at Suvla], even if it could not have annulled it?' One participant in the tumultuous events at Gallipoli, and well qualified to comment on Hamilton, was Lieutenant Colonel Aspinall, who served on his staff, and later wrote the two Gallipoli volumes of the Official History:

'No British general has ever been given a more difficult task than that which confronted Sir Ian Hamilton from the outset of the operations. It may indeed be claimed that Sir Ian Hamilton temperament was admirably suited to the hazardous task entrusted to him in April 1915. Resolution and dash, enthusiasm and self-confidence, imagination and great personal courage—these were the qualities demanded from the leader of such an enterprise and Sir Ian Hamilton possessed them all. [But at Suvla the failure to some extent was due to] the too implicit confidence which, on the morning after the landing, he placed in an untried leader. Some of Sir Ian Hamilton's troubles, indeed were undoubtedly due to the defects of his own qualities, But he lacked the iron will and dominating personality of a truly great commander.'

Robert Rhodes James, in his book *Gallipoli*, provided an insightful analysis of Hamilton:

'He was a finished professional, at a time when amateurism was too prevalent in the British Army. His experience of war perhaps longer and wider than that of any other contemporary. He had devoted his life to the study of arms. To depict him as a dilettante or intellectual is an absurd distortion of the man's capacities. The difficulties with which he had to contend which were enormous [but] at no stage of the entire campaign did he act like a commander-in-chief.'

In summary, General Sir Ian Hamilton, is assured of a special place in history as one of Britain's finest soldiers. His career, which spanned many decades and included minor and major wars, is of particular interest to us as he commanded Australians in the Second Anglo-Boer War and the Great War. He was undoubtedly brave, having been recommended for the award of the Victoria Cross in both Boer Wars. He was probably the most literate of any British general. Yet, he was an enigmatic figure, a true romantic who revelled in the art of war. It is

unfortunate that the Gallipoli campaign, despite its initial promise, foundered through a lack of resources, and competent generals. Hamilton has perhaps been treated too harshly in the past, but nonetheless, we cannot ignore his performance as Commander-in-Chief of the MEF, which ranged from super-optimism to diffidence. His reluctance to demand from Kitchener the resources he desperately needed, is merely a reflection of a 19th Century ethos, which was inappropriate in a modern war.

Hamilton's many books are a perpetual reminder of his literary genius. Yet, like all great men, he possessed faults. His blind loyalty to his superiors, and his honesty, while appropriate 19th Century traits, failed to serve him well during the political machinations of the Great War. Perhaps his most endearing fault was that he was the perfect 'officer and a gentleman.' Yet despite these faults, Hamilton, by his outstanding and gallant service has earned his place in military history as one of Britain's finest generals! Finally, if one posed the hypothetical question, 'Would you be prepared to serve under General Sir Ian Hamilton?', my response to that question would be, 'I would be honoured to serve under that 'Romantic Warrior'!'

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War: Memories: History: a personal view

Ivan Southall

I've not regarded myself as a serious historian despite a clutch of works of historical content. My background isn't right. Life made clear from an early age that I had to attend to other matters. Further, I can't recall attending lectures on writing or history—unless there to give them. Indeed haven't learned how to pronounce half the in-house words, yet life has gone on producing situations requiring me to write my way or talk my way out of them.

Definitions relative to the subject on the table: I've thought of '**History**' as a reflection of down-to-earth human life. We're told that fiction is a mirror held up to life, but history demands a mirror of some complexity and should not be held in front of the subject, to one side or another, above or below. The reflection of any subject from a single mirror leaves too much open for discussion.

History might be best served by six mirrors; a cube, cage or enclosure of six inward facing mirrors; the subject surrounded by reflections that challenge the mind and eye, for every move the observer makes to consolidate his images, more come into line.

'**Memory**' is the magic that enables us to share in the extraordinary events of humankind. It has a capacity to distort or change the truth by intent, by instruction, or from ignorance. Through long ages, memory had the field to itself and adorned its images with morals, miracles and marvels.

It's said that the past is ours. We might own it but can't change it and the future is out of reach. Suggesting that in the middle power is at a premium; yet no matter how or when applied, skilful distortion by intent is an appalling power.

'**War**' is that peculiar preoccupation of humankind that overwhelms life as if it were a reason for living rather than a monstrosity in its own cage of mirrors, rattling at the bars, with a ravenous appetite for glass.



At around the cusp of 1937/38, lunchtime, I stood among a crowd on my employer's roof in Flinders Street, Melbourne. At sixteen I had no head for heights; not that the roof worried me; it was flat. Through childhood I was never brave enough to climb a tree fit to be called a tree; and still haven't; but my heroes were the explorers of the skies. Yet with or without a head for heights, the likelihood of achieving flight was scarcely for boys who assumed the bread-winning role during Grade Nine. Becoming visible on that long ago day, breaking the skyline, a sight as enchanting as any material thing that has touched my life, a dimension that prepared me for another intensely moving experience.

Several hundred feet up, about to pass over, was an early version of the greatest flying-boat built on Earth to that date, perhaps to this date, a sight immense and marvellous. From sheer magnitude and weight, surely it'd fracture the atmosphere and fall among the rooftops.

But round and round it went, three times, like a fairy tale, presenting different profiles; the great Empire Boat, *Centaurus*, built twelve thousand miles away by Short Brothers, inspired.

Fairy tales, unlike kids, don't get put to bed. A few years on, a very young pilot of twenty-two, conditioned from thirty-four months of service, hardened to a degree from six months of operational flying and of late promoted to captain his crew, was based at Milford Haven in Wales, Biscay to the south, the Atlantic immensity in the West, the bitter sub-Arctic in wait far north.

One Spring day, this mere lad, for that's really what he was, took delivery of one brand new Mark III development of the military successor to *Centaurus*; still to be trimmed for balanced flight; engines still to be fine-tuned. Close to a dream state, at the edge of his CO's desk, this young airman found himself signing on the line in the presence of witnesses, for Sunderland Z/Zebra, No 461 Squadron, RAAF; its cost in pounds sterling out there somewhere among the fairy tales.

For a moment of magnitude, it ranked high. For all I know, the practice might not have been unique to the Royal Air Force and its Dominion counterparts, but it was inspired. That Sunderland was mine. It still is: whether or not any component survives, or, more or less intact, it lies in the depths of the sea.



On the night of August 11/12, 1944, we flew above dense fog banks that extended out to sea and had closed most of the harbours and airfields of southern Britain. One only appropriate base was open. Ours.

Every serviceable aircraft and available crew ended up in the air. We were roused from our beds, though still sleeping off a thirteen hour sortie from a nineteen hour day, the day before. Z had been made ready, urgently, for another crew and was airborne. P/Peter, a beautiful machine, lighter at the wheel than Z, was made ready, though in flight we had problems with important components.

At 0225 hours, not far from the French coast, down into the Bay of Biscay, the radar operator reported an unidentified surface contact at ten miles on the port bow. A new crescent moon cast a well-defined, narrow beam on the water. Elsewhere, everywhere, darkness.

Shortly, that moonbeam illuminated a vessel heading south. It looked rather like a U-boat in a hurry. Moonbeams had long interested me and I manoeuvred to hold it on this vessel. This called for convoluted computations along with instinctive alterations to course.

In two or three tense minutes, we had it back in the moonbeam at around six miles and began a gradually steepening dive, with constant adjustments to course to hold the vessel centrally visible.

Rather than releasing electrically fused flares at intervals from a steady height of three hundred feet, in association with a bombsight, I went for pilot release by eye from a hundred feet or less, using the moonbeam as illuminant, expecting to confuse the target. Seeing down moon over black ocean is a different proposition entirely. I never expected to surprise the target.

It was on a course of around 220 degrees and we came in out of the west. Its commander later reported that we came out of the east and that our depth charges largely overshot to starboard. His evidence was 180 degrees out. We were looking into his conning tower and he was looking back up. We straddled him, but his speed helped him in the short term, centring damage towards the stern. This we didn't know, for immediately the target was behind us our visibility

was no better than his. When his sporadic gunfire ceased, we thought he'd sunk. He hadn't. He'd submerged.

A Royal Navy escort group was close enough to be homed by us to the scene, but our fuel didn't quite see the distance. The greatly troubled U-boat apparently surfaced as soon as we left, believing that one ship was near. There were five. They opened fire, and the submariners went over the side with the loss of one man.

The issue of evidence: the U-boat commander greatly confused his and my memory of the night of 11/12 August is also confused. On its anniversaries, frequently a restless time for especially remembering my crew. Two killed a few months later. Others having taken their leave since. And a time for recalling our crew drill—creative and effective—though dealing with complex problems. It was not the night of August 11/12, though many times I have remembered it as such. It was the night of August 10/11. Perhaps by telling this tale I'll not confuse it again.

Turning back a page. Off-duty hours in Wales. I made quiet places and quiet times to document my world. It was an exotic situation for a lad from a polite suburban street, from good schools until aged fourteen and three services on available Sundays until war intervened.



Far from a loner as a kid; I'd become much committed to the joy of writing in solitude. Through the years of maturation I felt human separations severely, but rarely was to be found in the Mess. Usually in the tent lines or dormitory, or the bookish room shared with my first navigator, the poet Paul Pfeiffer, who sharpened my awareness to the principle that writing was more than a joyous overflowing: it had to be a discipline as well.

As boy and youth, I wrote fiction, non-fiction, and one clumsy attempt at history. Four books before I turned nineteen. As a soldier, eventually as one of a coastal gun crew in '41/'42, I documented the situation as I saw it. As a pilot I documented the world within.

In Britain, within days of my arrival, I was aboard a train heading for Wales to join 461 Squadron in the company of NCO's returning from leave. During that long journey, I heard rather too many chilling tales. And in the back of the truck that met the train, we were joined by a considerable man, cold, tired, rugged up in the dark like the rest of us. The new mate at my elbow whispered: 'DSO. DFC. Dudley Marrows.'

Inevitably, I started recording these events and when possible tracked down crewmen involved. There were legends walking about the place. The treasures were there, in wait, living their day. Sometimes fading away. My mate on the train was soon gone. The moral is obvious.

I became a regular in the Intelligence Library. Its sources were excellent, but served the moment. I wasn't to realise this for years. Much of the available material belonged to the impact of event. It could scarcely belong, realistically, to consideration of the event.

As for earlier happenings, from a year or more before I joined the squadron, I spoke with survivors if still around, or searched files, when allowed, for statements and reports. Though close in and time; one must begin somewhere; notably when one is young and anxious. Reliable contemporary documents are of a retiring nature. They conceal themselves. I didn't know that. I'm reminded of an historical figure who once asked the accused in the course of an inquiry: What is truth? He received no answer and was left to consider his own question.



I emerged from the roughhouse of day-by-day war much less damaged than anticipated, but at 57 sorties the wear and tear was catching up. I greeted the unexpected end to my tour with a wild run into the nearby small town and from the Post Office there cabled home. How my poor mother dealt with the telegram boy, she never told, though she lived almost a hundred years.

In the same week I presented a proposal to the CO. Did they really need another instructor at the OTU up in Scotland? Why not have me stick around to write a history of the squadron? I'd got it started. He said, not unkindly, 'There's a War History Unit in London now. Everything goes to them.' It was not an encouraging moment. Then he said, 'I'll chat around.'



New Year's Day, 1945. RAAF HQ, London. My state of mind? Galloping anxiety. All but convinced it couldn't happen. They'd say, 'Man, you can't stay here.'

Public Relations, RAAF Welfare and Historical Records were on the Fourth Floor. Corridors of filing cabinets in a central offices opening off the admin staff, RAAF and civilian; welfare officers; RAAF editors and journalists; and several former aircrew of academic background representing their commands, Bomber, Fighter, Transport, Coastal. These were the war history narrators. And among them, suddenly, swallowing hard, guess who?

I had my corner, desk, chair, handsome typewriter and access to the stationery cupboard. I'd got along for fifteen months on yellowing Comforts Fund paper and a tiny Corona that folded and fitted in a lunch bag. I stayed a couple of years. Those corridors of files were stacked with relevant material and offered direct routes to the Admiralty, the RAF, and more.

Virtually every media mention of RAAF personnel in Britain; written, spoken or photographic; was already on file, dating back years, alphabetically maintained on a daily basis and almost too accessible.

A caution. Historical Records and Public Relations files were neighbours in the same block. They gossiped over the same fence. On one hand the views were relatively accurate. On the other the sky was the limit. Take a glance through any Squadron Line Book.

The Line Book, of course, was the repository for foolish, boastful or vain utterances and among other material contained Press cuttings suggesting that some reporters might scarcely have picked a wingtip float from a bicycle. Their inaccuracies have crept into historical references and may have contaminated history in a wider sense.

Example: the conning tower of a surrendered U-boat towed up the Thames. There, I was interviewed by the London Evening News. From the handout supplied by RAAF PR the reporter knew I'd attacked a U-boat in an off-beat style. Had I bombed enemy shipping?

I said Sunderlands with depth-charges were not equipped for anti-shipping, but generously related a tale of July, 1942, the Squadron's first working month, when Bruce Bulls dive-bombed enemy shipping off the French coast at a reported airspeed of 300 knots, pulling out at funnel height. That evening in the Evening News. Page 1. Southall and crew credited with having sunk a U-boat—at night—in a 300 knot power dive. I attained instant star status in the Squadron Line Book. I'm not surprised.

Years on, I wondered more about Bruce Buls and that attack. Sadly, I was never able to interview him. Had 300 knots been grafted onto the records from press reports after he and his crew went missing? Maximum permissible speed was 200 knots.

A cautionary tale for historians.



In London I researched, collected, collated and shaped the Squadron records. Took a year. Then researched, collated and gave shape to all Australian participation in the European air war at sea for 1943, which took about another year. These narratives were later used as resource material by John Herington in his official works. And, by permission of the AOC, by me, subsequently, in other books.

A wonderful two years; and from an encouraging run I'd had in the London magazine market at the time, I'd decided to have a crack at surviving as a self-employed writer. I'm still at and still footing my own wages bill.

Conclusions relative to War, Memory, History

Whether just or unjust, war so deeply damages the young mind and body that it's not only the fallen who pay. But the fallen are lost and God alone knows what the human race has thrown away. No one wins: the victors might think they do. Even if some good comes of it, the good is separately made. War must be the ultimate stupidity.

Memory: the maimed, the wounded, and the physically unmarked survivors of conflict, alike are disturbed by ghosts and walk with them for the rest of their lives. They're not necessarily the most reliable witnesses. Each witness has seen with one pair of eyes; absorbed with one mind; mourned with one heart; and is a reflection from one mirror. Memory, vivid, haunting or haunted, forgiving or inflexibly unforgiving, is by nature the soft end of truth. History can be researched at this soft end of truth; but not reliably written there. Neither should it be written in the confused chill and heat of the aftermath. Wisely, the historian regards the passing of time as his qualification; not his handicap.

What issues from a personal war experience is a human document. However valuable, one is obliged to think of it a report, a viewpoint, a memory, and at its best a legitimate *component* of history. But if this component falls short on integrity, by design, mishap or mischief, it becomes a distortion an excuse an illusion a fable a fiction a curiosity, or common propaganda. If it survives, it's a myth though we may not be aware of it or prepared to consider that it could be. Human documents may acquire greatness, but they should be approached as soft ends to truth.

History is the hard end of truth, a product of continuing investigation and integrity, of cautious acceptance or of rejection with regret. **History** may thus become a reflection of hard truth marked by wisdom and elegance. The *history* of **History** may be another matter.

Rear Admiral Frederick Tickell, RAN, CMG

Wendy Rankine

Frederick Tickell was the third son of Captain George Tickell of the Royal Naval Reserve.¹ He was born on board his father's ship, a tea frigate named the *Coldstream* on 7 March 1857 while off the coast of Amoy in China. He spent his early years in England and began his school days as a boarder at the Marlborough School.² In 1869, the family migrated to Melbourne.³ They took up residence at Williamstown where Frederick attended Williamstown Grammar School.

Captain George Tickell went into business initially as a shipping agent, then assistant Harbour Master before taking a position as the Pier Master at Port Melbourne in 1871. The family had already moved to Port Melbourne and Frederick attended Scotch College from July 1870 to December 1875. Frederick desperately wished to follow in his father's footsteps and go to sea, but it was only after a stint at working in the city that his father relented and finally allowed his son to go to sea—still very much against his wishes. As an apprentice with the Melbourne firm of Grice Sumner and Company, young Frederick Tickell served his time on the company's guano ships sailing between Melbourne and the Maldon Island until he got his Master's Certificate.⁴

Tickell then joined the Jardine Matheson Company of Hong Kong as a Chief Officer on their steamers trading along the coast of China. In 1879, he was wrecked on the coast of China, and was highly commended for safely landing his boat full of passengers after tossing on the sea for 18 hours with a blanket rigged as a sail.⁵

Tickell remained with "Jardine Matheson" for a few years during which time he had command of a 1,000 ton steamer. He returned to Melbourne and joined the Union Steamship Company. He eventually became the Chief Officer of the *Rotongahana*—a favourite passenger ship on the run between Australia and New Zealand—one of its novel features being the 'Bridal Cabin'.

Although it is not clear exactly when Tickell joined the Naval Brigade at Williamstown, the Williamstown *Chronicle* reported that he was second in command of the mock battle held to celebrate the Prince of Wales birthday off Picnic Point early in November 1884. During the Easter Manoeuvres the following year, it was reported that Tickell was left in charge of the old sailing ship the *Nelson* when it became obvious the old ship was not even seaworthy enough to

¹ Captain George Tickell was a ship's Captain who sailed to Melbourne with migrants to the goldfields, returning to England via China for the tea trade. He also sailed in the *Windsor Castle* and the *Oriental*. His first wife, Charlotte, died in 1877 at Emerald Hill, and George remarried in 1879. He died in Port Melbourne on 29 December 1890.

² Tickell's memory of this school was that the food was very poor, they drank ale for breakfast and that for a treat on Sundays they had a rasher of bacon as well.

³ George and Charlotte Tickell had four sons, George Edmond (born 30 April 1852, London, died 3 June 1918, Footscray); Windsor (born, 1855, India, died 19 May 1925, Fremantle, WA); Frederick (born, 7 March 1857, China, died, 19 September 1919, Kew, Vic); James (born, 1866, Wandsworth, died, 15 March 1921, Narrogin, WA).

⁴ Maldon Island is a Pacific Island south-east of Christmas Island about 155°W and 2°S.

⁵ Ingram W F, ed., *Let us now praise famous men*, The History Editorial Committee of Scotch College, Melbourne, 1926. p.495.

engage in the annual exercises.⁶ One can only assume this was a great disappointment for an active seaman.

When in Melbourne and not required for Brigade duties on Saturdays, Tickell played cricket in the summer and football in the winter at Williamstown. One day, so the family story goes, while playing football at Williamstown in 1885, Tickell fell and broke his ankle. He was taken to the home of the famous Williamstown doctor, Dr Edward Garland Figg, the Medical Officer of the Ports and Harbours Authority.⁷ Here Tickell was nursed by Dr Figg's daughter Mary and on the 10 December 1886 at Williamstown, Frederick Tickell married Mary Elizabeth Figg. Dr Figg was an interesting man who believed that women could, and should be, the equal of men and so all his daughters had been brought up well educated and independent. Mary not only helped her father in the surgery, but had been his assistant in his pioneering efforts with anaesthesia. By all accounts she was also very articulate, had a good singing voice, played the piano well and was a very good seamstress. In other words, Mary had the makings for a good Naval Officer's wife. And she was. The Tickells set up home in Perry St. Williamstown.

Early in 1887 in response to an advertisement in the *Argus* asking for men with certain credentials to apply to join the Victorian Navy, three officers of the *Kotomahana* applied. They were the captain, Captain William J Colquhoun and Chief Officers Frederick Tickell and John Richardson. All three had served in the Merchant Marine and held Master's Certificates. All three were accepted and, on 8 May 1888, some 5 weeks after his son, Alan, was born, Tickell along with Colquhoun and Richardson began their new careers as Sub-Lieutenants in the revamped Victorian Navy. They were all initially on probation for 6 months—with a salary of £200 per year with a £10 increment per annum. On the 30 January 1889 the three were all appointed to the Active List of the Permanent Force.

The three Officers, Colquhoun, Richardson and Tickell, were sent off to Portsmouth in 1890 to take the Long Gunnery Course—which at the time was the highest gunnery examination in the Royal Navy—and various torpedo and artillery courses at Woolich Arsenal. In England they all gained first class certificates and a lot of practical experience at sea before they returned to Melbourne almost four years later. Colquhoun was appointed the Gunnery Officer and Tickell as Torpedo Lieutenant—replacing an Imperial Naval Officer who had previously held the position.

At their appointment as Lieutenants in the Victorian Naval Forces, Lt Colquhoun had been ranked higher in seniority to Tickell due to the fact he had been the Captain of the *Kotomahana*. However, as a result of the required entrance examinations in 1888 when Tickell had gained a total of 685 points—some 30 marks higher than Colquhoun and considerably higher than Richardson—and as of the results of the examinations in England, Tickell was placed higher in seniority than Colquhoun. Thus began a ten-year battle by Colquhoun for his reinstatement in seniority to Tickell.

Colquhoun used the arguments that the requirements for appointment stated that a first class pass only was required—no mention of an order of pass rate was to be taken into account—indicating that had he known he would have tried harder. As the Royal Navy always recognised Gunnery Officers as being senior to Torpedo Officers and that as he had more certificates of qualification than Tickell, Colquhoun felt he should be ranked higher. Colquhoun's pleas over

⁶ It was said that the only good thing about the old ship was that she was made of splendid British oak! She was finally sold in Sydney for her timber alone.

⁷ Henderson, Dr M A *Williamstown Doctor—Edward Garland Figg 1815-1902*, A paper presented to the Medical Historical Society 1997.

the next ten or so years for an inquiry into the matter were ignored by all—including the Commandant of the Naval Forces and the Minister of Defence.⁸

On their return from England Tickell, Colquhoun and Richardson found that the depression had effected the Victorian Navy as well as the general public. Some 40% of the officers and men had been discharged by 1895 and those remaining were employed on reduced salaries—theirs included. The gunboats had been withdrawn from service and all the best vessels were disposed of in an effort to reduce the Government's allocation to the Navy to a total of £27,000 per annum. It was thought that Victoria's dependence on the great network of submarine mines which had been already installed at the heads was sufficient defence for the country.

However, the lack of funds did not stop the Victorian Government sending Tickell back to England in 1897 to requalify at the gunnery and torpedo schools at Portsmouth, leaving Mary, now with three children: Alan, Charlotte and Lucy, and living in Walpole Street, Kew, to cope alone. 'Coping alone' for Mary meant having the aid of two unmarried sisters and a maid or two. Tickell, while in England was promoted to Commander and was called upon to become the Victorian Navy's representative at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee for which he was presented with a 'Jubilee Medal' as a memento of his participation in this event. On his return to Melbourne in November 1897 he was promoted to Commandant of the Victorian Naval Forces.

In 1898, when the idea of forming a Royal Naval Reserve from crews available working on the coastal steamers and fishermen operating in Victorian waters was mooted, Tickell firmly opposed the idea. He argued that the comparatively small number of seamen in the Coastal Service was not viable and that the suggested rates of pay to be offered were far too low for the six months service required. Not only did the merchant seamen have higher rates of pay and very liberal shore leave opportunities, but their rations were far superior, and there was the expense of the uniforms. He pointed out in his paper—written on Christmas Day 1898—that the fishing population of Victoria was too small and extremely scattered, and was made up of mainly middle aged men using small boats and there was no tradition of training young boys as in Newfoundland and Great Britain. Tickell claimed he had also observed that Australian seamen, on the whole, were not amenable to the strict discipline required by the Royal Navy.⁹ His long and thoughtful argument was heeded at the conference of senior Naval Officers held in Melbourne on the 5 August 1899. Tickell was the only non ex-Royal Naval man present.

In 1900 neither the lack of funds, nor the fact that the Victorian Navy had no ships that could make it safely outside the heads, let alone the depleted numbers of the actual Naval Force, stopped the Victorian Government offering to assist Britain in putting down the Boxer Rebellion in China. Commander Tickell jumped at the idea of active service for his men and, as Commandant of the Forces, he insisted on leading the party himself. After attending the Naval and Military Ball with his wife on the 28 June in the Melbourne Town Hall, he got down to the serious business of organising the tour of duty.

First, Tickell gave a great deal of thought to their uniform—it was to be basically the same as the permanent forces uniform with the exception of two major items. Tickell decided against straw helmets and instead issued his men with a comfortable soft drab coloured slouch hat with a wide brim to keep the sun off, and which could be easily stowed away. If helmets were needed they could be procured in China. Tickell apparently did not realize it could actually

⁸ CA B3756/0 — 1897/2510.

⁹ CA B3756/0 — 1898/3895.

freeze in China. The greatcoats, which he supplied as part of the men's uniforms had to be supplemented in China by Canadian winter coats, additional clothing and blankets.

However he did give a lot of attention to the men's footwear. He insisted his men all have hand-sewn boots with no nails or pegs in the construction. He did not want his men to have sore feet nor did he want them having to stop in the middle of a march to hammer in nails and pegs—and smash their boots up in the process. Their kit was to be carried in a canvas duffle bag on their back and their metal water bottles were to have spigots in the back so that the man behind could drink from them while marching. Having arranged for his men, in case of their death, to receive the same pension rates for their widows and orphans as those for the men fighting in the Boer War, he finally decided on the adoption of the motto of the Royal Marines, *Per Mare, Per Terrain*, By Sea, By Land. He also arranged for all the men to have leave from the Saturday to the Monday prior to leaving.¹⁰

With the tour organised, on Saturday, 7 July, Tickell paraded all the permanent Victorian Naval Forces on board the *Cerberus*. He explained the conditions of overseas service and called for volunteers: 77 men, 4 officers and 6 gunners stepped forward. The rest of the two hundred volunteers came from the ranks of the volunteers from the Naval Brigade. The Tickells then attended the first Ball of the season at Government House on 13 July where, again 3 days later, they were guests of honour at a dinner just prior to Captain Tickell leaving for China.

Parliamentarians and officials gathered at the Williamstown Mechanics Institute to farewell the Victorian Naval Contingent at what was reported to be the biggest smoke night ever held in the town—about 60% of the Contingent were from the Williamstown Naval Brigade. Patriotic speeches referred to the fact that Victorian Navy had:

'Instead of wooden ships with hearts of oak
We now have iron ships and men of steel!'

That might well have been, but the Victorian Government had to second a British ship, SS *Salamis*, to transport the men to China.¹¹

On 31 July 1900, Tickell officially handed over command of the Victorian Naval Forces to Lt Richardson, who in the role of Acting Commander, received higher duty allowances of £100 per annum thanks to an arrangement made by Tickell. This in turn set off another log of claims, this time from the Victorian Army's Lt E Parnell who had been the acting CO of the Victorian Rangers while Colonel Hoad had been in South Africa. Lt Parnell cited the example set by Tickell in paying higher duty allowances to naval officers to argue his case for a similar allowance for himself.¹²

On the day of embarkation, the Victorian Naval Contingent assembled at Spencer Street. Led by the band of the Naval Brigade and Captain Tickell, the men, including Tickell's boy servant, A. A. Gibbs (who died and was buried at sea on 19 October), formed into lines and swung into Bourke Street to Parliament House where they had to endure the inevitable speeches in the rain before marching back down Collins Street all the way through South Melbourne and onto the pier at Port Melbourne. Quite a route march especially for the Captain who, his wife recorded, had a sprained ankle at the time. Captain Tickell allowed relatives onto the pier for their final farewells only to find the crush of weeping women so great he had to expel them all in order to get the men safely on board the tug boats to be ferried out to the *Salamis* anchored in the bay.

¹⁰ *The Herald*, 6 July 1900.

¹¹ Nicholls, B, *Blue Jackets and Boxers*, Sydney, 1986.

¹² CA B168/0 — 1902/519.

Without elaborating on the events in China, it is sufficient to note that Tickell was officially promoted to Captain on 28 December 1900. As a guest at a dinner at the Astor Hotel in Tientsin on New Years Eve held to celebrate the occasion of Australia's Federation, the newly promoted Captain Tickell assured the assembled British Officers that Australia was ready and willing to do her duty and face the responsibilities as the past fifteen months had already shown and he could only express the pride that the Naval Contingent was in China to represent their colony.¹³

While there, Tickell managed to get several interesting souvenirs of his visit to Peking. One is a rather large bronze Temple Bell which he presented to his old school—Scotch College—on his return to Melbourne. The bell was hung in the boarders dining hall—and to this day still calls the boarders to meals from its position high above the patio outside the dining hall.¹⁴

On his return from China, on May 20 1901 (seven weeks after his third daughter, Kathleen, was born), Tickell was awarded—for a job well done and having been mentioned in despatches—the Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George. He was then promoted to the Victorian Commandant of the recently created Commonwealth Naval Force inheriting ships that were, by this time, in very poor condition and without even a basic crew to operate them.

This did not deter the annual Easter Manoeuvres in 1904, which were still the highlight of the year as far as naval exercises went. Tickell, as Commandant of the Victorian Naval Forces, captained the *Cerberus* and with the all the members of the Naval Brigades on board the *Cerberus*, the *Countess of Hopetoun* and the *Childers*, they proceeded down the bay, completing various routine exercises on the way during the weekend. Monday was given over to target practice on the way back to Williamstown. This was no mean feat—the guns of the *Cerberus* were so old that the gunners had to point them to the sky and calculate where and when they wanted to drop the shell on the target, and they still got a 70% hit rate.¹⁵

At the end of the exercises, Tickell paraded all the men and congratulated them on their splendid behaviour, perfect discipline and remarkably good shooting. He explained he did not usually make such an address after the Easter Exercises because he believed each man should do his duty without praise, but he did not think it out of place to say a few words on this occasion as he had just accepted the appointment as Naval Commandant of Queensland, replacing Captain Cresswell, and handing over to Commander Colquhoun.

Tickell was frequently described in the press as 'This most popular of Naval Commanders' or 'The well liked Commander', which was indicative of his esteem among his fellow officers and men. As an indication of the esteem in which he was held, 'The Cerberus Waltz', composed by G Cooke-Adams, was dedicated to him. It may well be a reflection of his Australian upbringing and schooling—he was at the time the only senior member of the Australian Naval Forces who had no Royal Naval experience. His consideration of the lower ranks at all times earned him true respect by all who served under him, as demonstrated by his concern for his men's physical and monetary welfare during their tour of duty in China. The men were very sorry to see him go to Queensland, as was his wife—it was an unaccompanied posting. Tickell did get back to Melbourne occasionally on official business and to sit on the Committee of Naval Officers in September 1906.

¹³ *Peking and Tientsin Times*, 5 January 1901.

¹⁴ The Scotch College *Collegian*, April 1905, p. 12, and July 1907, p. 78. Another memento was the Naval Ensign that accompanied the Captain to China. The family presented this flag to the Victorian Parliament in 1981 and it is now on loan at HMAS *Cerberus* in Melbourne.

¹⁵ *The Herald*, Melbourne, 29 March 1904.



Captain Tickell as Naval Commandant of Victoria, about 1908 (M.Henderson).

It is from a personal letter to his wife at this time which brings out another aspect of Tickell's nature. He wrote:¹⁶

'[T]hose Japs come in on Sunday. I am glad to say they don't come up the river and only stay four days. As far as I can see there is nothing going to be done in the shape of a welcome. Perhaps they expect us to start the ball—if they do they suffer under a great mistake. I have not forgotten having to pay up for the Italians when in Melbourne.¹⁷ My welcome will be the official one only. I can spend my money on my own people.'

Tickell's austere welcome in Brisbane apparently didn't stop the Japanese crew members enjoying themselves ashore. The Brisbane *Courier* reported that they:

'displayed a lively interest in all things connected with this country. They called at several of the public offices including the Mines Departments and the Post Office where they inquired for information relating to our mining industries and plans etc. of the harbours.'¹⁸

During his stay in Brisbane, Tickell managed to make his mark both socially and professionally—he was a good bridge player.¹⁹ He made many changes of a practical nature, reorganised the whole of the Queensland Naval Force, and was highly respected for his very strict, but just, decisions. He was again decidedly missed by all Naval personnel in Queensland when he returned to Melbourne in 1907 to take up the position as Naval Commandant of Victoria.

On his return, he found that the state of the Naval Forces had not improved at all. The *Cerberus* was described in the press as a rusty heap of grey painted iron. The *Lonsdale* and *Nepean* were both very old second class torpedo boats and the *Childers* was still going—just. The Australian Navy's true state was especially emphasised by the visit to Sydney and Melbourne in 1908 of America's 'Great White Fleet' of 16 ships.

Tickell, as Commandant, was responsible for most of the program for the Americans when they arrived in Melbourne on Saturday 29 August.²⁰ Only days before, Tickell had attended the funeral of his old Naval adversary, Captain Colquhoun. The 'Great White Fleet' was greeted as it sailed through the heads with a 21 gun salute to the port followed by a 13 gun salute to the US Admiral's flag. They then sailed up the bay and had a very busy schedule until 5 September. There were festivities every day and each night, apparently with no expense to be spared. For their part, the Americans demonstrated all the latest American technology, which included the first ship-to-ship communications by wireless in Australia when Captain Tickell sent a greeting from one of the ships to the captain of another vessel and received a message in return. This visit was one of the factors which led Prime Minister Fisher to go ahead and order three new destroyers to be built in England for the shamefully obsolete Australian Navy.

Early in August 1909, the Tickells learnt of the tragic death of their only son, Alan. Having also attended Scotch College, he had recently graduated as an engineer from the University of Melbourne and was bound for Montreal to do further specialist training in metallurgy. He had taken an engineering position on the Blue Anchor liner, the *Waratah*, when it had sailed from

¹⁶ Written on board HMAS *Gayndah*, and dated 10 April 1907.

¹⁷ This probably refers to the visit of the *Etna* in April 1899, as by the time the *Liguria* made a visit in August 1904, Tickell may have already been in Queensland. Both ships were of the Italian fleet, which made official visits to Melbourne. Apparently, Tickell must have been left considerably out of pocket.

¹⁸ Brisbane *Courier*, 20 May 1907.

¹⁹ His wife also was a good bridge player. Mary was not only an avid reader but also a great letter writer who, in later life, kept detailed journals of her travels.

²⁰ Tickell published the entire program in the *Argus* of 7 August 1908.

Melbourne for London in July via Adelaide, Fremantle and Durban. She was last seen on 27/28 July by the *Clan MacIntyre* battling 100 ft waves on her way to Capetown. No trace of her or any of her crew and passengers was found until many years later. As most of the passengers came from Melbourne, the Tickells, along with others in Melbourne, raised funds to send a ship to search for the missing vessel, but all in vain. Tickell never gave up hope of finding his son for the next two years.

But personal grief had little place in the life of a busy and dedicated Captain, and the following month, in his role as the Acting Director of the Commonwealth Naval Forces, in the absence of Captain Creswell, Tickell drew up a memorandum for establishing a Naval Cadet College in Australia based on the training of Naval Cadets at Osbourne and Dartmouth. He estimated that 80 officers would be required for an Australian fleet and, allowing for wastage, he considered that 100 cadets would be needed for a start with an entry of 10 annually taking 9 or 10 years from the time of entry to reach the rank of Lieutenant.²¹

However, it must have been with mixed emotions that on 11 June 1910, Tickell himself sailed in the *Ophir* for England, where he was to take charge of the fitting and manning of two of the new torpedo boat destroyers, *Parramatta* and *Yarra*, that Prime Minister Fisher had ordered. These were the first ships of the new Royal Australian Navy and Tickell was to take command of them on their voyage back to Australia. Tickell captained the *Parramatta* while Lt Biddlecombe captained the *Yarra*. They were farewelled by Sir George Reid, the Australian High Commissioner on 19 September for their journey to Australia via the Suez Canal and Singapore. When they reached Fremantle on 23 November they were given a rousing welcome, led by the Minister of Defence, Senator Pearce, who performed a ceremony of historical significance when he presented Tickell with the first sailing orders for the new Royal Australian Navy. While in Fremantle, it was proposed that the ships be open for inspection and illuminated at night, to which the ever prudent Captain agreed—provided that all the necessary wires, power and light globes were provided.

The ships' welcome at Williamstown on 10 December was even more rousing—though slightly marred by the unfortunate incident of the engineering officer of the *Yarra*, having fallen overboard just before the ships entered the heads earlier that morning. Upon their arrival at the Graving Dock, they were greeted by a large official party led by the Governor General, Lord Dudley. The official speeches were reported as being 'suitably responded to by Captain Tickell—a picturesque figure for many years in the Naval Service of Victoria.'

After attending Lt Robertson's funeral and the court of enquiry into his death in Melbourne, Tickell was appointed the Director of the Naval Auxiliary Forces on a salary of £800 per annum — which rose to £850 four months later. This position, which while it entailed much travelling throughout the country, was restricted to shore activities inspecting all the Commonwealth's Naval establishments and services. This was the time of compulsory conscription and the Navy had the pick of all the conscripts. Tickell was immensely proud of his naval cadets and took a great personal pride in their achievements. In 1912, he was appointed Aide-de-camp to the new Governor General Baron Denman.

²¹ Eldridge, F B, *A History of the Royal Australian Naval College*, Melbourne, 1949, p. 16.

When war broke out on 3 August 1914 Captain Tickell, now on a salary of £900 per annum, was working from an office in the Normanby Chambers at 430 Little Collins Street. He was so conscientious he even slept in his office to ensure the safety of the shipping codes until he was satisfied that tight security arrangements were in place. It is interesting that in the chapter on the Royal Australian Naval Brigade in the series of the *Official History of the War of 1914-1918*, the author, A W Jose, never mentions the Director by name. It was Captain Tickell.

During the war, Tickell was responsible for policing practically all naval shore work—local patrols, mine-sweeping, examination of ports, harbour patrols, dock defences, defending wireless stations, as well as all sorts of naval intelligence. He would also have been involved with the organisation of the contingent sent to German New Guinea to secure the colony, and the 'Naval Bridging Train Team' sent to the Dardanelles. In September 1914, it was Captain Tickell—not Cresswell—who was presented with the German Flag that was surrendered to the Australian Naval Force in New Guinea.²² Tickell made a complete tour of all establishments throughout the Commonwealth at least once each year. He was constantly travelling although he was home long enough in 1915 to see his eldest daughter, Charlotte, married to Kenneth Henderson.

It was in his position as Director that Tickell's administrative skills were best appreciated. He was rewarded by being promoted, in April 1916, to the rank of Commodore and on 1 March 1918 in recognition of his dedication to his somewhat tedious position—but nevertheless a vital one for the security of Australia—he was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, but only on the understanding that the promotion did not involve any increase of salary. Tickell was due to retire on the 7 March 1919 but with this promotion, his retiring age was extended by two years.

In 1919, Rear Admiral Tickell was living very comfortably with his wife Mary and his two still unmarried daughters, Lucy and Kathleen, in their lovely home, 'Delmira' in Denmark Street, Kew. Tickell had been one of the most popular and highly respected naval officers in Melbourne and the only one with no former service in the Royal Navy.²³ He and his wife were frequently mentioned and photographed in the social pages having attended various, but one would suspect mandatory, social functions.

Tickell was, despite long enforced absences, first and foremost a wonderful husband and dedicated father who was always concerned about and delighted with his girls academic achievements.²⁴ He delighted in nothing more than taking his family for summer holidays on Swan Island, to the theatre and the cricket at the MCG, where he had been a member since 1899. He had also been a member of the Naval and Military Club since 1896, was on the 'Old Boys Committee' at Scotch College and was a devout churchgoer—being a Vestryman at the Holy Trinity Church in Kew. Tickell was a very practical and considerate man who was always

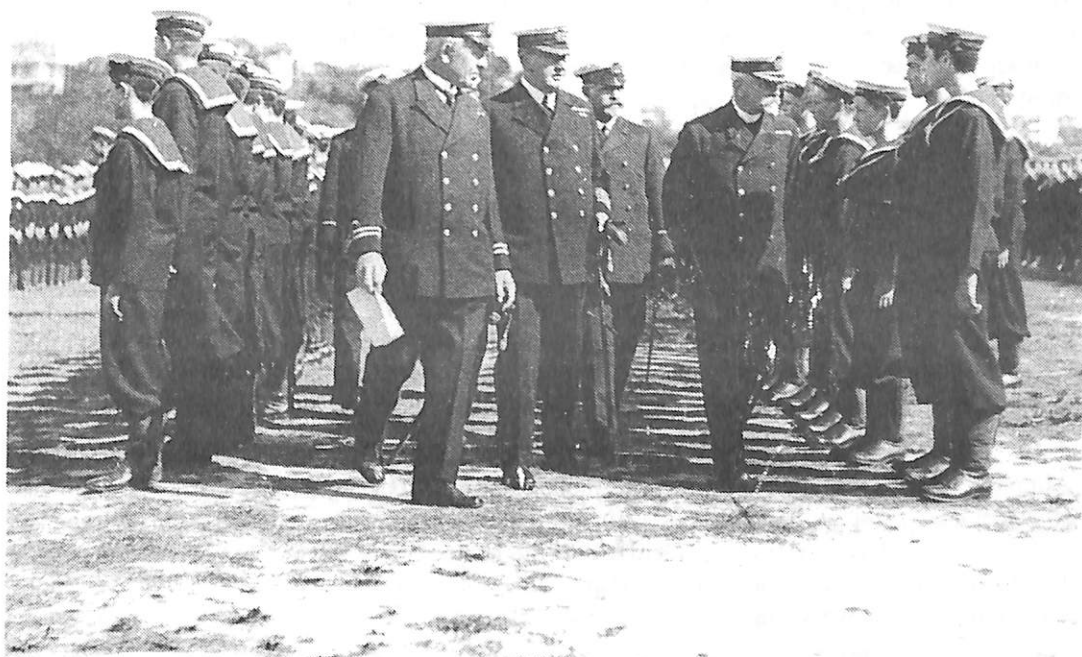
²² The Tickell family presented this flag to the State Government of Victoria. Some years later it was stolen and its whereabouts are now unknown.

²³ The Tickell family has hand written lecture notes Tickell gave during his career. One of special interest is on the American Civil War and its relevance to Australia.

²⁴ Tickell's three daughters attended Ruyton Girls School in Kew. Charlotte then attended the Emily MacPherson College of Domestic Economy for one year before marrying her life-long sweetheart, Kenneth Henderson. Lucy studied Architecture and won the Bronze Medal in her final year in 1918. Lucy married fellow architect John Wright and was later Lady Mayoress of South Melbourne. Kathleen studied Massage (now Physiotherapy) at Melbourne University and married Frank George, who eventually joined his family law firm in the Western District of Victoria.

concerned for those in his charge at all levels of service. He was a man who had seen the horrors of war, had known and experienced the risks of a career at sea, had known the grief of losing a beloved son, and experienced the frustration of dealing with bureaucracy but he had also known great pride in his family, his chosen profession and personal achievement. He could be considered a truly fortunate man.

On 16 September 1919, he inspected the Naval Cadets at Rushcutters Bay, having just returned from a rather tiring and strenuous official visit to Thursday Island. Three days later, on the evening of the 19 September 1919, aged 62, he died suddenly at his home. Rear Admiral Frederick Tickell RAN CMG was given a funeral conducted with full Naval Honours at the Holy Trinity Church and is buried in the Boroondara Cemetery in Kew.



Captain Tickell inspecting the Naval Cadets at Rushcutters Bay, Sydney, 16 September 1919. He died three days later at his home in Melbourne (M.Henderson).

Australia and the American Civil War

Barry Crompton

It is not generally known that Australia had any participation in the American Civil War, although the most well known episode of the war was the visit of the Confederate raider *Shenandoah* to Melbourne between 25 January and 18 February 1865. The *Shenandoah* had already destroyed several Yankee merchant vessels in her quest for enemy ships and made Melbourne her destination to refit and supply of food and provisions.

Due to storm damage to her propeller, the *Shenandoah* was placed into a slipway at Williamstown while repairs could be carried out. In the meantime her officers were given royal treatment and shown the best hospitality that could be provided by the local gentry including a dinner in their honour at the prestigious Melbourne Club.

At the same time, plans were made to bring on additional recruits to assist the depleted crew then serving the vessel, and when the *Shenandoah* departed Melbourne, 42 crew members had been secretly placed on board the ship and made their presence known to the officers as soon as the ship entered international waters.

These new arrivals continued to serve the *Shenandoah* and when the Confederate raider surrendered to English officials at Liverpool in November 1865, they were the last Confederates left fighting. The *Shenandoah* had been the only Confederate ship to circumnavigate the world, sailing 17,000 miles and capturing 38 United States vessels. She had taken 1,073 prisoners and inflicted damage to US shipping amounting to US\$6,488,320 (an vast sum at that time) while during her activities had not lost nor taken a single human life. Commander Waddell stated in his official report to the Confederate government that the *Shenandoah* was the only vessel that carried the Confederate flag around the world, and she carried it six months after the overthrow of the South". He also stated that the *Shenandoah* had fired the last gun in defence of the South from her deck on 22 June 1865 in the Arctic Circle.

Although members of many ethnic backgrounds were involved in the Civil War, some of the strangest and most unlikeliest may have been those from Australia. Research has located approximately 48 Australian-born members of the United States military and naval forces with a further two known from New Zealand, although that number may increase as more information becomes known.

There were several instances of those working on the gold fields who went to the war from Victoria and served in the Union Army and Navy.

Melbourne

With the countless veterans who fled to every corner of the world after the Civil War, local researchers have, so far, located the graves of over 100 veterans around Australia in every capital city, and many country centres.

Over 80 per cent of those located and verified have been found to have served with the Union; again a notable portion were former Union Navy personnel, possibly arriving in Australia aboard merchant ships as well as those American naval vessels that continued to sail around the world in the 1870s as a part of the Far East Fleet.

Only a small number of Confederate veterans have been identified. This is possibly due to the shortage of information on ex-Confederate soldiers as well as the lack of pensions payable to ex-Confederates as against those Union veterans who filed for pensions up until their last days.

Through the United States Government, grave markers and headstones are available on application, and those who had not been previously located, have had their final resting places recognised.

Melbourne hosts the second-greatest number of veterans buried in Australia, possibly because Sydney had returned to being the leading city in Australia and the first port of call for many immigrants. The Melbourne General Cemetery in Carlton has six Civil War veterans buried within its grounds. Others lie resting at Brighton, Footscray, Boroondara and Coburg.

The only known Confederate, so far, who was Victorian-born is William Kenyon, who enlisted in the Confederate Navy when the *Shenandoah* entered Melbourne. Kenyon is the only one of the 42 who signed on while the *Shenandoah* was in Melbourne who has been traced to being a local Melbournian.

Other Links

As well as those Australian-born members and those veterans who died here, a number of other Civil War personalities arrived in Australia prior to the war (such as the future Union naval admiral David D Porter, who was a merchant captain sailing between the US and Sydney and Melbourne). The attraction of the Australian gold rushes also drew men from all around the world, some of whom then went to America. Charles Francis Train, an American businessmen in Melbourne during the gold rush, returned to America at the close of the war and in his later life ran for President of the United States. Samuel Cobb, the organiser of the famous Cobb & Co coaches around the goldfields, also returned to the US in time to serve in the Massachusetts legislature during the Civil War.

The theatrical world also saw several leading American performers tour Australia, including Melbourne, before the Civil War, including Laura Keane and Edwin Booth. Laura Keane played *Our American Cousin* in the 1850s, the same role in which she was performing when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, at the end of the Civil War. Another particularly well-known actor in Australian circles was James Cassius Williamson who sought permission to enlist in the Union army, was denied, and so became an actor.

After the war, Australia became a temporary haven for veterans who were anything from lecturers, world travellers, businessmen, consular officers and attaches, to petty criminals. Their stories range from the successful entrepreneurs (such as Mark Twain and Henry Stanley, who travelled around Australia as lecturers) through to Samuel Crawford, an ex-New York veteran, who was arrested for fraudulent activities while raising funds for a non-existent religious and philosophical society.

The Working Military Historian

Major R S (Bill) Billett¹

In July last year when Neil Smith invited me to address this conference he indicated that I could select a topic, or he would 'suggest' a few areas that might be suitable. In particular, he mentioned my work as the Curator of Arms at the Museum of Victoria, and what I do now. On my long morning walks, and while on long drives to the Australian War Memorial since then, I thought about the topic. It came as somewhat of a surprise when I reviewed my past to rediscover how much history one learned in a military career, and how much more I absorbed in my civilian career.

Appointments for paid working military historians can be found in the defence forces, museums, and in universities. There are also self-employed military historians, like John Laffin, Neil Smith, etc, who earn a living from the profession. I think I now belong to a sub-category, having retired—self-supporting military historian. Today I would like to share some of my experiences in these categories with you.

On 8 January 1952, I enlisted in the Royal Marines as a Boy Musician at the age of fourteen. The Royal Marines School of Music was then located at Deal in Kent, about 15 kilometres north of Dover. Deal was the home of the Royal Marines Depot, where all regular recruits completed their first three months basic training before moving on to undergo infantry training at Lympstone in Devon, followed by a commando course at the Commando School on the edge of Dartmoor. Then on to Portsmouth for seamanship training to get their webbed feet, and finally two weeks of intensive spit and polish was applied during their time as the 'Kings Squad', the senior squad under training in the Corps. On their passing out parade, if the standard of the squad was high enough, the best all-round recruit was awarded the 'King's Badge'—in the form of the royal cypher of King George the Fifth to be worn on his left arm throughout his service. When I served in the ARA the Director of Infantry, I contacted the British authorities and I was told to continue to wear mine. I later discovered that one of the Warrant Officers in the Directorate was an ex-Royal Marine.

History played a significant part in Royal Marine training in order to promote *esprit de corps*. In times of strife, or when the going became hazardous, we were told, you could look back on the history of the Corps, and draw courage from it like a bank. So, throughout training all recruits were constantly quizzed on their knowledge of Corps history. On parade after your squad had been inspected, your drill instructor, or a nominated fellow recruit, would ask questions until all the squads in training had been inspected. During short breaks on route marches, and sometimes on the march, questions would be asked:

When was the Corps formed?	28 October 1664 by an Order-in-Council signed by Charles II.
What are the Corps memorable dates?	23 April 1918 Zeebrugge
	28 April 1915 Gallipoli (only the Plymouth RMLI Bn landed on 25 April)
	6 June 1944 Normandy D Day

¹ BA(Hons) MA

7 June 1761 Battle of Belle Isle
 14 June 1982 Recapture of the Falkland Islands
 17 June 1775 Battle of Bunker Hill
 14 July 1704 Gibraltar
 21 October 1805 Trafalgar
 28 October 1664 Birth of the Corps
 1 November 1944 Walcheren

(There are also many unit memorable dates)

What are the Corps battle honours? Gibraltar and the Great Globe itself

Name the Corps VCs? (There are 10 of them.)

I graduated as a general duties Marine in 1955 and began to play my part in forging Corps history. In November 1955, I was posted to 40 Commando RM in Cyprus, the EOKA campaign had just begun. In July 1956, after President Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal, the RM Commando Brigade was moved to Malta to train for possible operations in Egypt. Operation Musketeer, the Anglo-French invasion designed to recover the Suez Canal was launched on 6 November 1956. My section was in the initial assault wave, we were to be first on the beach. The invasion of Egypt was to herald the decline of the British Empire but became a memorable date for my unit, 40 Commando RM.

Later, when I was qualifying for a commission, history was among the general certificate of education (GCE) subjects I needed to pass to qualify. For candidates in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines the topics to be studied included European history from the French Revolution to the present time and the history of the Royal Navy.

Commissioned in 1963, I was posted to the Corps Records Office at Eastney as an assistant corps records officer. This did not thrill me at first, after a background in active units, but, when I learned that I would be responsible for answering all historical queries, I became more enthusiastic. One interesting piece of research I compiled was in response to a request from a retired general of the United States National Guard who wanted to confirm a family legend that one of his forebears was the Sergeant of the guard of Marines that escorted Napoleon to St Helena in HMS *Northumberland* (*Northumberland's* anchor swivel was used on HMVS *Nelson* and can be seen at Nelsons Place, Williamstown). The general also wanted, if possible, a replica of any medals his ancestor was entitled to. Research through the records at the Public Records Office at Hayes in Middlesex was very interesting, but time consuming. The general's family legend was correct, and a claim was established to the Naval General Service Medal (NGSM) with the bar 'Martinique'. The NGSM was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1848 to cover naval engagements from 1793 to 1840. Descendants of recipients, who had not claimed their medal, were entitled to apply for it. A claim was duly submitted to the Admiralty and a medal was specially struck at the Royal Mint for James Edmonds. The grateful general sent the Corps Records Officer a zippo lighter in response. My account of this research was published in the corps magazine *Globe and Laurel* at the end of 1964 or early 1965. *The Times* newspaper also published a version of this article on 23 February 1965, but I had been plucked from my comfortable office at Eastney Barracks and was posted at very short notice the Falkland Islands. An Argentine national, Miquel Fitzgerald, had landed on the racecourse at Port Stanley and presented the Governor with a written demand for the return of the Islas Malvinas to the Argentine. It was thought that Fitzgerald's guerrilla band would infiltrate and terrorise the

Falklands. I did not see the article in *The Times* until a few years ago in the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne.

When Harold Wilson, British PM in the 1960s, announced the withdrawal of British forces from East of Suez, I decided to apply for a commission in the Australian Regular Army. I resigned from the Royal Marines, but it took nearly two years before the Admiralty would release me. A sympathetic Military Secretary granted my request to be posted to 42 Commando RM, based on Singapore to serve out my time. It also enabled me to apply for an Australian Army commission through HQ, Far East Land Forces, which had an Australian Army component, AUSTARM. I duly appeared before a Command Selection Board, and while the members of the board were deliberating the result, I was sent to 1/7 Gurkha Rifles in Hong Kong on secondment. I'm not sure if the Marines were hiding me, or the Gurkhas enticing me to remain in the British Services. So that was how it was that at Queens Hill Camp in the New Territories, I received a signal offering me a commission as a captain in the ARA with an initial posting to Special Air Service Regiment at Perth, Western Australia. There was quite a party in the regiment that night. I left the Corps on 6 December 1969.

Military history in the ARA

In early 1970, not long after I had settled into my new posting as the intelligence officer of SAS Regiment, the adjutant warned me not to make any plans for the first two weekends in June, or July. He had nominated me to complete my written examinations for promotion to major—bless him. There was no time for preparation for the examinations as I was in the bush for most of the time, so I sat the four examinations cold. Having passed two, administration and the general paper, I knew that I needed to attend coaching courses for the other two, staff duties and the military history papers. The former required a detailed knowledge of all the organisations in the army, and their roles and tasks. Military history required a detailed knowledge of one campaign and an outline knowledge of another. In 1971 the subjects were, in detail, the Burma campaign and in outline, Papua New Guinea, the first year. For Burma we were coached by a reserve officer who had served in Fourteenth Army in Burma and he really did inspire his students. For Papua New Guinea, I remember two of the coaches, Major Harry Smith MC (Long Tan), and Major Malcolm Count, an armoured corps officer who loved military history. I passed my two subjects that year.

When I left the army in 1985, I decided that I wanted to go to university part-time to study international relations, strategic studies and history, in order to examine the background to the savage wars of peace my generation of soldiers had served through.

My first civilian job was as a methods engineer with Flexdrive at Gisborne. This lasted from April until October 1985, when I was selected for a position as a methods officer in the Office of the Chief Commissioner of Police. My new employer encouraged officers to improve their qualifications, so I commenced my academic studies at Deakin University. I had nearly completed my BA when applications were called for the position of Curator of Arms at the Museum of Victoria. My application was successful. While museums want staff with detailed knowledge in their subject areas, they are reticent about appointing people who are collectors. From my military career I brought to the job, research skills, knowledge of military history, as well as extensive knowledge about weapons.

The Museum of Victoria has a large collection of military memorabilia, which, when I took over, was still in boxes. The task of identifying and cataloguing the contents of these boxes was very interesting and the job was finally completed just before I left the Museum. Also, the Museum used to receive a great deal of letters about the military past of the State. Members of the public would also arrive at the front desk with badges or other items that they had brought in to be

identified. One interesting item I was confronted with on one occasion was a miniature of an officer wearing a blue tunic with unusual gold lace frogging painted during the Napoleonic Wars. After quite a lot of research, the lace frogging provided the answer—an Aid de Camp (ADC) to the King, or his Commander in Chief. The blue high collared tunic led me a merry dance until I came across a photograph of a Royal Marine Artillery colonel in his uniform as an Artillery ADC to Queen Victoria. In most pictures ADCs are portrayed wearing scarlet tunics.

My honours thesis at Deakin University was an examination of the defences of Victoria from 1854 to 1870, and the procurement of armaments by Sir George Verdon in the period 1866 to 1870. Naval and military technology was developing so rapidly at the time that the decision on what technology to buy, even with the advice of agents in London who had served in the Colony, was very difficult. However, Verdon was in a unique position, he was both treasurer and de facto Defence Minister at the same time. During the war scares that marked the middle of the 19th century, the Admiralty continued to refuse to provide Victoria with a guard ship to protect the Port of Melbourne. Verdon visited London and obtained the *Nelson* as a guard ship until the ironclad monitor *Cerberus* was built. Although the *Nelson* is no longer with us, *Cerberus* is, just. Many of the guns bought by Verdon have survived because they were distributed around the State when they became obsolete. While I was at the Museum, in my spare time, I produced a book on the subject *Victoria's Guns: A Field Guide*. It is important to publish the results of research, then your efforts are not lost to the following generations of historians and enthusiasts. Over recent years I have written articles on Colonel Collins for the Royal Marines Historical Society, Melbourne's links with the Crimean War for the Crimean War Research Society, and researched the Crimean War trophy guns in Australia for publication in *Sabretache*. That article is destined to become a chapter in a book on the subject to be published in England. These articles and overseas book sales inevitably lead to queries and requests for assistance from colleagues. Adrian Caruana recently wanted me to provide him with more details on the guns at Eaglehawk. He was writing his second volume of sea service guns at the time.

My MA thesis at the University of Melbourne continued the theme of Victoria's defences from 1870 until 1901. The technology became more complex as did the scramble for overseas territory by the European Powers and overlaying this was the development of the State militias and the efforts to standardise them by the Imperial Government in London. After the NSW Sudan contingent proved the value of the white settlement colonies as a source of military manpower to police the Empire, Imperial generals visited the colonies to inspect their defence schemes and provide recommendations for their improvement. My thesis also discussed the military impetus to Federation. It is my belief that the need for defence co-operation between the colonies was the one common issue that brought all the Australasian colonies to the conference table. (NZ was included initially.) The Premier of Victoria, Duncan Gillies, advised by Colonel Brownrigg, Victoria's Military Commandant at the time, took on the role of the instigator of Federation until Henry Parkes, the Premier of NSW, hijacked the debate to become the Father of Federation. One of my academic assessors did not agree with this argument, and one did. As a result of this my thesis scored one mark under that required for a H1.

My academic work provided the background material for exhibitions in the Museum, some of which was used in the exhibition 'Present Arms', before it was recently dismantled.

Another avenue that museum curators become involved in is the Movable Cultural Heritage Act. Federal Government often requires the advice of expert examiners to determine the value to Australia of artefacts. The major question to be considered is, 'will the military heritage of Australia be diminished if the subject item is allowed to leave the country?' In the military field, medals, in particular Victoria Crosses, are the subject for examination. Export licences are applied

for by owners, collectors or dealers, who wish to sell important military artefacts overseas. Having provided an examiners report, one may then be required to appear in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal as an expert witness, as in the recent case of Edgar Towner's VC.

One enjoyable aspect of my time at the Museum was the network of colleagues that I became a part of. At the Australian War Memorial (AWM), Peter Burness, Bob Courtney and Mike Etzel were always ready to share their knowledge. I often picked Peter Stanley's brain on suitable areas of military history for further study. Peter will be known to many members of the Society. In London, Guy Wilson, Master of the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London, is another military historian. I enjoyed my visits to The Tower immensely. On my last visit, Janet and I had dinner with Guy in his little house next to the Bloody Tower. Guy and Janet cooked—I looked after the liquid refreshments, a realistic distribution of duties, I thought. During dinner, Tower Bridge opened and a large cruise ship passed into the Pool of London, quite a sight. At the Imperial War Museum (IWM), Peter Simkins, the Senior Historian is a valued acquaintance. Peter had been Captain Liddell-Hart's research assistant before commencing at the IWM and has many years of experience as a working military historian.

After leaving the Museum in January 1997, because of my health, I have been able to concentrate on finishing a book on First World War trophy guns—*Mad Men of the Antipodes*, which is soon to be published by Simon & Schuster Australia (Kangaroo Press). Given the competition to have books accepted for publication at present, this is very gratifying. I have also conducted research for an exhibition in the Old Melbourne Goal, 'Love Leave and Larrikins', it relates the story of the Goal during the Second World War. This was very interesting as Captain Dettmers of the raider *Kormoran* was held there for a while after leading a mass escape from Dhuringile near Tatura. Captain Helmuth Pich of U 168 (The Monsoon Squadron) was also held there during his interrogation after his boat was sunk by the Dutch submarine *Zwaardvisch* off Sumatra in 1944.

At Melbourne University, I lecture on Victoria's defences to history students on John Lack's 'Australians at War' course. For Deakin University I am sometimes called upon to assess displays and mark post graduate student assignments in Museum Studies. I also provide input on defence topics to a group of academics across the universities who are compiling an *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* as a Year 2000 project. The military history contribution to this project is co-ordinated by John Lack.

The day after Anzac Day this year I was asked to lecture on the art and construction of armour at the National Gallery as part of the program of events supporting the Arms of Styria exhibition. Last week I was interviewed by Monash University PR/journalism students—they like interesting people as subjects for their note taking classes. These tasks are fine, but the costs involved in research, preparation and travel are barely covered by the honorarium. Casual lectures at University likewise, although there can be other benefits. There is always a project to be worked on in between the temporary commitments that periodically arise. Currently, I am researching and background reading for my next book on the Battle of Mont St Quentin. On this note, congratulations to Neil Smith on his recent work on one of the participating battalions, it will be most useful.

Private Harry Derrick, a soldier of the 3rd Division AIF

Douglas Hunter

I left the valley after dinner to go to Tallangatta ...' Thus Private Harry Nutman Derrick, a soldier of the 3rd Division AIF began his diary on Wednesday, 16 February, 1916:

'... we got our passes that night, but only as far as Seymour, will have to pay our own fare on to Melbourne.'

On the following Monday, after four days in Melbourne spent with friends visiting the Tivoli, Luna Park, the Museum, and the races at Caulfield, Derrick and three others reported to Seymour:

'Bill, Ned and I left town for Seymour by the 2.40 train. We had our photo taken at Talma Studios before we left, J Hunter also. We went into camp that night and had bread & jam for tea.'

Harry Derrick had obviously decided to begin a new diary to keep a record of his military service, commencing on the day he departed Tallangatta Valley in north east Victoria. With few exceptions, he wrote something for every day between 16 February 1916 and 31 December 1917. He created a remarkable record of the life of a private soldier of the 3rd Division, AIF. The diary and a memorial plaque was treasured by family members for many years and finally given to the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles Museum at Albury.

Harry Derrick was allotted to the 37th Australian Infantry Battalion and served with it throughout the war. He was wounded in action on three occasions. On the third occasion, in late August, 1918, he was taken prisoner. He died in a POW camp in Germany on 12 November 1918, one day after the Armistice. The cause of his death never became clear.

Of particular significance, I thought, Derrick recorded the stages through which wounded soldiers passed: evacuation from the battle field to hospital in England; then to a convalescent establishment; when recovered, to training camps in England and France; and, finally when battle-fit, return to his battalion. In Derrick's case, between June 1917 and April 1918 he was 4 months recovering from wounds, 2 weeks with his battalion, then 6 months recovering from wounds again. Derrick's youngest brother, Horace, was also in the 37th Battalion. They were not in the same company and do not appear to have had a close relationship. Harry mentioned his brother only occasionally:

'Tuesday 10/10/16. I joined the snipers today. Horace is in them also, had an easy day.

Tuesday 17/10/16. I went to London on 4 days' leave, Horace went too, we stopped at Bull-dog club in Edgware Rd. It rained all the evening, we went to a picture show in afternoon & to "The Bing Boys" at Allambra Theatre at night, it is a splendid play.'

Harry Derrick described the attack at Messines on 7 June 1917 in which he was wounded and brother Horace killed:

'Mines went up at 3.10 & then the barrage opened & the 1st wave went over. We had to wait in our trench till 10 a.m. under bombardment all the time. At 10 am we started off & went across through enemy 1st & 2nd lines which our brigade had captured & moved on

past them & waited there till after 3 p.m. We then started our attack to reach our objective 600 yds further on & got there about 5 p.m. but lost a lot of men. I was knocked over by a bullet just before reaching our position. I got my wound dressed & walked to dressing station then had it properly dressed & went to Steenwiuck in motor & stayed there for night.'

Harry did not hear of his brother's death till 25 June. He was at the Voluntary Aid Hospital at Cheltenham when the news reached him. He wrote:

'Got a few letters today & got news today that Horace had died of wounds.'

Harry Derrick was hardly the bronzed Anzac archetype. He was thirty years of age, was 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighed only nine and a half stone. He became one of the 254 Australians who died in POW camps.¹ He was buried at the cemetery at Quedlinburg. In 1924, his body was exhumed and reinterred at the British Cemetery near Kassel, Germany.

Derrick's personal effects trickled home to his next of kin, his sister Mrs Alice Bingham. They consisted of: a handkerchief and a souvenir silk scarf (received in July 1919); a civilian overcoat (received in August 1919); and a wallet, 2 woollen unit colours², metal cross and a metal brooch (received May 1920).

Harry Derrick's British War Medal and Victory Medal were also sent to Mrs Bingham, as was the memorial scroll and plaque. The plaque is with the 1916/17 diary, but the fate of the medals and scroll is unknown.

The 37th Australian Infantry Battalion, of which Harry Derrick was a member, was one of three battalions raised in Victoria as part of the 3rd Division. Derrick along with his comrades spent 4 months training at Seymour, 100 kilometres north of Melbourne before sailing for England on the *Persic*. They arrived in England on 25 July:

'A destroyer met us at 7 o'clock this morning & cruised back & forwards in front of us till we reached Plymouth at 12 noon. We went off on to a smaller boat as our boat was too large to pull into pier called Sir Walter Ralieggh & disembarked at 7.15. Left Plymouth & got to Amesbury at 12.30, then got issued with blankets & got to bed at 3 AM. I & 5 others were on guard on the trip out, we had refreshment given to us at Exeter by the Mayor. The scenery was beautiful on the trip out.'

The 3rd Division occupied a training camp at Lark Hill adjacent to Salisbury Plain and only a few miles from Stonehenge. Training began immediately under the watchful eye of the new divisional commander, Major General John Monash.

Monash's impression of his new command was favourable. He wrote to Birdwood:

'[The men are] equal in every way, in physique and bearing, to the earlier Divisions. ... Most of them are men of standing—a great many master tradesmen, owner farmers, miners, professional men and several members of parliament ... it is going to be a pleasant and

¹ Alan M Nixon, *Somewhere in France*, Five Mile Press, Fitzroy, 1989, p.157, gives a figure of 16 officers and 238 other ranks. A pamphlet *Remember*, produced as part of the Australia Remembers Celebrations by the National Support Group of the 55/53 Inf Bn, December, 1995, gives a figure of 397.

² The colour patch of the 37th Battalion was oval in shape, divided horizontally, and coloured black over red.

agreeable job, and not a difficult one to create a very fine fighting Division out of these men.³

Monash, though genuinely impressed with the quality of the men in his new command, judged then to be untrained for the rigours of the Western Front. Again he wrote:

No single Brigade had met till they reached England. Even some Battalions had never been together, all in one place. Officers didn't know their men, and vice versa. The men had no rifles or bayonets, and had never seen a Mills bomb, or dug a trench, or seen a Vickers or Lewis machine gun, or a Stokes Mortar, or handled their transport. The gunners had never seen an 18 [pounder] or a Howitzer. All they learned to do was to stand up straight in rows and behave themselves. All the bayonet fighting they had been taught in Australia had to be unlearned.⁴

To remedy the situation a fourteen week training period was instigated and hundreds of soldiers were sent to specialist schools. Harry Derrick was one:

'Monday 21/8/16. I started in bombing class today, 9 out of our Coy & same out of every coy in battalion & the same out of 38th & 39 Batt are all in the one class.'

The Australians at Lark Hill received many distinguished visitors, none more so than King George V who came down to see them on Wednesday 27 September 1916. In a letter General Monash wrote in glowing terms of the occasion:

'As the King rode up to the flagstaff, the great Royal Standard ... was "broken" out, and fluttered out into the breeze precisely as I gave the "Royal Salute" and 27,000 bayonets flashed together into the "Present Arms" and the 16 massed bands played 6 bars of the Anthem. It was a moment of glorious sunshine, in an otherwise dull day, an impressive and magnificent spectacle. ... And then came the climax of it all. For I had had the troops drawn up, closely packed together 100 deep, on the sloping field adjoining the road, and, as the King rode by, each Unit broke into deafening cheer upon cheer—raising hats aloft on bayonets.⁵

Harry Derrick was there, and also wrote in some detail of the event, but it was a week of very mixed emotion for him. Two of his friends in the 37th Battalion had died of illness and their funerals took place either side of the King's inspection:

'Monday 25/9/16. Bill Supple was buried today at 12.30, the body was taken to grave on a gun carriage & firing party fired 3 volleys over grave while band played the dead march. We were learning funeral ceremony for Spicer's funeral, which takes place on Thursday, this morning & after dinner we got our packs squared up & brigade formed up on parade ground.

Tuesday 26/9/16. All the 3rd Division were out at Bulford for a rehearsal of review to be held tomorrow, there were a good many other troops besides the Div., about 26,000 all told & nearly all the Australian troops will be out tomorrow, about 40,000 they say.

Wednesday 27/9/16. Left camp at 7.30 & marched to Bulford & got ready for inspection. The inspection took place at 11.30 & after that we had a march past, then after the march past had finished, the King rode past on his way back to station & as he passed each battalion they gave him three cheers. We left at 1.30 & got back to camp at 2.45 & were

³ Geoffrey Serle, *John Monash: A Biography*, MUP, Melbourne, 1982, p.266.

⁴ *Ibid.* p.269.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp.273,4.

dismissed. It was showery on & off through day but rain kept off well through the inspection & march past. There were about 40,000 troops on review.

Thursday 28/9/16. Donald Spicer was buried today at 11.30, I was one of the firing party. We left camp at 10 A.M. & marched to Durrington Church where we met the gun carriage with coffin, we then marched to cemetery & the service was over about 12, got back to camp for dinner. After dinner had a lecture & a bit of musketry.'

The 3rd Division began its move to France in November 1916:

'Sunday 19/11/16. Snowed all last night & was about 4" thick everywhere today, we were out at range shooting & marking all day. We were issued with a steel helmet, extra blanket, singlet & cake of soap tonight. We are not to leave our lines after 10 o'clock tonight as we may leave anytime now. We were also issued with 2 gas helmets & a mask for tear shells.

Monday 20/11/16. Rained last night & melted the snow. Inspection in embarkation order this morning, have to carry two blankets, gas helmets, steel helmet as well as our usual pack, will also have to carry 150 rounds ammunition when we move off. We were issued with leather jackets tonight.

Tuesday 21/11/16. We were issued with 150 rounds ammunition. Had a parade with full equipment on & were allotted to our different trains, 3 trains for battalion, I am on the 2nd train. Got our emergency rations tonight—1 cake of chocolate, 1 packet desiccated soup, 6 tubes oxo.

Wednesday 22/11/16. Left camp at 11 & left Amesbury on 2nd train at 12.30, got to Southampton at 3 P.M. & embarked at 3.30 on board the 'Lydia', we steamed out at 6 and reached Harve at 1 A.M. & lay at the pier till morning. I was on guard from 3 to 4 A.M., got very little sleep through night, we were packed like sardines.'

The Division made its way by train and motor transport to the vicinity of Armentieres then completed the move on foot:

'Tuesday 28/11/16. Up at 5.30 & had breakfast & packed up & moved off at 8.30, carried all but blankets. We marched from Stranelle to Armentieres about 13 miles & got there at 3 o'clock & billeted in a hospital which had been partly destroyed by the Germans, this town has been damaged a great deal, hardly a window pane left & plenty of buildings destroyed, a lot of town is still deserted. We are less than 3 miles from front line & can be shelled anytime by enemy. We slept up on 2nd storie in a big room with every window broken in it.'

The Armentieres sector known as 'The Nursery' was a quagmire. Transport wagons could get no closer than 3,000 metres to the troops occupying the trenches. The routine for a battalion was 6 days in the trenches and 6 days out. Derrick was now a trained sniper in the Specialist Platoon attached to Battalion Headquarters. During the spell out of the trenches a battalion occupied billets still within range of German shells:

'Sunday 10/12/16. Came out trenches for 6 day's spell, the 39th Battn relieved us, we are billeted with A coy. The Huns shelled billet of D coy & killed 1 man & wounded 11 some seriously, this afternoon at 3.30, they sent 4 shells & the last one fell in doorway as men were rushing out, it did the damage. Two snipers who were camped with us, were there seeing their mates & 1 was killed & other wounded, both brothers.'

The resting battalion was called upon to provide work parties and carrying parties to take ammunition and rations, and other stores to the trenches:

'Wednesday 13/12/16. We were out digging a drain today, Fritz shelled it, we had to go back for a couple of hours till he knocked off, we went back & did a bit more & came in at 2 P.M. 90 of us had to go out tonight & carried up gas cylinders to the front line of 40th Battn, about 2 miles, we got back at 9.30.'

The conditions of the Armentieres sector made a large scale attack impossible, so both sides engaged in frequent raids even on Christmas Day:

'Monday 25/12/16. No work for us today, we had a fair dinner, plum pudding & roast meat & all got some chocolate & cigarettes, a lot of them got parcels, mine have not turned up yet. I went up to Y.M.C.A. in afternoon & wrote some letters. The raiding party went in trenches this evening to make a raid. General Monash & some other heads inspected the billets this afternoon.

Tuesday 26/12/16. The raiding party was a success & got a deal of booty but no prisoners as enemy cleared out of trenches, three killed & 4 wounded. We were on fatigue all the morning, trench digging & went on picket at 4.30 this evening. We go in trenches tomorrow for another go.'

Harry Derrick, fully recovered from his wound sustained at Messines on 7 June, rejoined his battalion on 29 September 1917 after an absence of 4 months. The 37th was preparing for an attack on Broodseinde ridge. The attack took place on 4 October, but Derrick was not involved. He had been sent back to the reserve battalion with the left-out-of-battle component:

'Thursday 4/10/17. Drill all day. the push started this morning, our fellows hopped over at 6 a.m.

Friday 5/10/17. Route march this morning, drill this afternoon. The push came off successfully, all objectives were gained.'

Derrick was with the battalion two days later for the attack on Passchendaele ridge. The attack had the added difficulty of adverse weather. Rain had begun to fall on 4 October and had become torrential by the 8th. The heavy shelling of the previous weeks had destroyed the drainage system and the countryside was covered with ditches and shell holes filled with mud and water. It was almost impossible to get guns forward to support the infantry attack:

'Wednesday 10/10/17. Left camp at 6 a.m. & marched up past Eypres to old trenches, then went on fatigue making a track up to firing line, came back that night & camped out in the open.

Friday 12/10/17. We got to the jumping off line at 3 a.m. & at dawn our barrage opened & we started to advance. I got hit in right foot before we got 50 yds & I went back to dressing station & then by ambulance to the C.C.S. at Poperinghe & stopped there that night.'

Derrick's wound was classified as serious so after only two weeks with his battalion, he was again evacuated to England. His diary keeping dropped below his usual standard, so that between 11 October and 31 December he made only 11 entries. He was still in hospital in England when he wrote his last entry:

'Monday 31/12/17. We had a fancy dress ball at the hall, it was a great success.'

It is almost certain Derrick continued to keep a diary during 1918. Evidence that he did so is contained in a letter his sister, Mrs Bingham, sent to Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, in July 1919, asking about Derrick's personal effects. She wrote, 'I fully expected

to receive his diary at least ...'⁶ Almost a year later, she rather excitedly acknowledged receipt of some of Derrick's effects including a 'note book' which, she wrote:

'contained the statement of his capture & treatment while p of war in Germany, you can imagine how pleased I was to receive same and I am indeed grateful to receive same and only wonder that the Huns did not destroy it.'⁷

Regrettably, the whereabouts of Derrick's 1918 diary and the note book returned in his personal effects are unknown. However, with some assumptions, it is possible to continue Harry Derrick's story.

His record of service shows he rejoined the 37th Battalion on 17 April 1918, (this time after a six months absence recovering from wounds). And as the next entry is 30 August 1918 when he was posted 'Missing', it is reasonable to assume he was with his battalion continuously throughout that four and a half month period.

Following the Battle of Amiens the 3rd Division moved to the north side of the Somme River and 37th Battalion became involved in intense and frantic fighting.

On 23 August, 'C' and 'D' Companies captured the village of Bray. On 26 August, Derrick's company rushed a German position in a wood near the village of Suzanne. The enemy, numbering as many as 500, fled. 'C' Company commander, Lieutenant E J Cox described the situation about dusk:

' 'C' Company occupies 700 yards of trench. The enemy has the range of it. Most of our casualties have occurred since arriving here. Ten machine-guns were captured in hand to hand fighting, revolvers and bombs being freely used. Two enemy field-guns were put out of action by Lewis guns and rifles. The whole company behaved with splendid dash and heroism. We are mounting three enemy Maxims for use. The company operated with no one on its flanks. Great initiative and daring was shown by all ranks. All very highly strung and tired now.'⁸

After Suzanne the 37th became brigade reserve, but it was unable to rest. Now led by light horse, the advance continued, so even the reserve battalion had to march hard to keep up. At 9 p.m. on the night of 29 August, Brigadier McNicoll, commanding the 10th Brigade received orders to attack and capture a spur line north of the village of Clery. This was to coincide with a move by the 2nd Australian Division to cross the Somme and attack Mt St Quentin.

McNicoll was shocked when he received the order. 'It will fail,' he said. 'The men are too knocked out, and the officers also.'⁹

The 37th Battalion, reduced to a fighting strength of 200, a quarter of normal, was ordered to carry out the attack, with the even weaker 39th Battalion in support. The attack was to begin at 2.30 a.m.

⁶ Letter from Alice Bingham to AIF Base Records, Melbourne, dated 31 July 1919, contained in Derrick's Personnel Dossier.

⁷ Letter from Alice Bingham to AIF Base Records, Melbourne, dated 22 May 1920 and included in Derrick's Personnel Dossier.

⁸ Ibid., p.233.

⁹ *Official History*, Vol VI, p.796.

At 1.30 a.m. a hot meal reached the troops who were described as 'almost dazed for lack of sleep,'¹⁰ but it had to be left uneaten because the companies were already moving to their start points.

The night was pitch dark. The country was rough and criss-crossed with old trenches. It was completely unfamiliar ground to the 37th Battalion. Even the guides provided to lead the companies to their start points became lost.

Finally at 4 a.m., after a confused and exhausting march, the attack began. But almost immediately the under-strength companies lost contact with each other. 'C' Company led by Lieutenant Cox advanced towards Clery Copse. It immediately became involved in a running battle with German machine-gunners and broke up into separated groups. Harry Derrick was with Cox.

At 7.15 a.m. Lieutenant J A Spalding sent a message to Battalion Headquarters:

'Am situated with three-fifths of 'C' Company on line H.6.d.9.9. to I.1.a.2.6. Both flanks in air. Lieuts Cox and Willis and about 10 men isolated near Clery Wood, 200 yards east of me. Left section under Sergeant Gilmour not in touch, but appeared to be in action half an hour ago, 400 yards north. Enemy active on three sides. We are held up 100 yards east of here by strong machine-gun fire. Short of bombs. Await instructions re flanks.'¹¹

A little later Spalding tried to break through to Cox, but in daylight this was impossible. Cox's party was under heavy fire from all sides and suffered casualties. Lieutenant H J Willis was killed, and Cox and Derrick and three others wounded. German infantry counter-attacked under covering fire from their machine-guns. They showered the Australians with grenades, forcing the survivors to surrender around mid-morning on 30 August.¹² Cox and his party were posted 'Missing'.

Lieutenant Cox wrote to his Commanding Officer from prisoner-of-war camp in Germany. The letter was received on 27 October:

'I beg to submit casualty report for 30/8/1918:-

Killed in action:: Lieut. Willis (sniped, died instantly).

Missing: Sergt.- Major Babchade (last seen with Lieut. Willis).

Wounded and Prisoner: Lieut. E.J. Cox (Bullet in back).

Corp. S.E. Varden (Bomb in thigh).

Pte H.N. Derrick (Bomb in thigh).

Pte H. Nolte (Bomb in thigh).

Pte C.C. Bottomley (Bullet in knee).

Unwounded Prisoner: Pte G. Cruikshank

I have not heard anything of my boys since 1/9/18. None was seriously wounded. My own wound is nearly well. If anyone desires an exchange I will gladly come back. Towl and I

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ McNicol, *op.cit.*, p.241.

¹² *Official History*, Vol VI, pp.797-799.

carried on in accordance with recent divisional orders. With no one on our flanks we pierced our objective and the casualties sustained were not all in vain.

I would like to place on record that 'C' Company behaved with great steadiness, showing plenty of offensive spirit and kept up its reputation. If we had only had the least support on the left, only a demonstration, we would have had a repetition of the Suzanne success. It would have succeeded even if four hours late, but apparently nothing was done.'¹³

The letter cleared up the mystery surrounding Derrick and his comrades; their last desperate fight against impossible odds, and their subsequent capture when all but one had become a casualty. It is also an extraordinary statement of the sublime conceit and courage of the Australian infantry. And there in the midst of this indomitable little group was 854 Pte Harry Nutman Derrick, who three years before 'had left the Valley after dinner to go to Tallangatta ...'.

Harry Derrick's family was devastated by the news of his death. Already they had been distressed by the news that Harry was missing; then somewhat heartened that he was alive, a prisoner of war and in good health. Their hopes rose further with the news that the war was over, then came the crushing blow that he was dead. His sister, Mrs Alice Bingham, wrote in disbelieving tones:

'As late as 1st Nov, I had word from the Red Cross to the effect that he was at Quedlinburg (p. of war) and well apparently. I cannot believe that he is dead. Yesterday 3 post cards arrived for me from my brother in Germany. They were written on 5th 8th [or 18th] & 20th Sept. He said that he had a bullet wound in the right leg but was getting on alright & no need to worry.'

Relatives in the Tallangatta Valley also received letters written from Germany. Derrick said his wounded leg was improving and he was looking forward to being reunited with his friends in the Valley.

But no news of a mistake was forthcoming. The sad fact that Harry Derrick was dead, one day after the Armistice, was reluctantly accepted by Mrs Bingham. She begged to be told the circumstances of the death of this her 'second brother to die at the front.' Base Records, however, could give only sketchy details. Their information from London and Germany provided little beyond the fact that Pte H N Derrick had died.

A Death Certificate was obtained in 1919, but it only certified death and gave no details of cause death. Perhaps the lack of any explanation might indicate Derrick died of illness, not from any unusual circumstance such as an infected wound.

Mrs Bingham continued to seek details of her brother's death and the whereabouts of any personal effects. Over the next two years his personal effects, such as they were, trickled home.

The high point for Mrs Bingham came in May 1920. It was the receipt of the notebook Derrick had kept in prison camp. For Mrs Bingham it represented something intensely personal, almost a 'good-bye' from the brother she had hoped might return from the war.

¹³ McNicol, *op.cit.*, pp.241,242. The letter is attached to the War Diary of the 37th Bn on microfilm at the AWM Canberra, however, the legibility is very poor.

Book Review

The Military Small Arms of South Australia 1839-1901 by Anthony F Harris is available by mail order from the author care of PO Box 550, Mitcham 5062, South Australia, at \$27 plus postage and handling.

'We want little, but we want the best', thus wrote G S Walters the Agent General for South Australia when purchasing a quantity of the Westley Richards breech loading carbines for the colony in May 1861. Documenting the surviving correspondence of those responsible for the purchasing, issuing and using of the firearms and edged weapons of the military forces in colonial South Australia is as much a part of Anthony F Harris's *The Military Small Arms of South Australia 1839-1901* as are the detailed lists of types and quantities of the arms purchased.

The Military Small Arms of South Australia 1839-1901 by Anthony F Harris, self published in South Australia in 1997, documents the military and associated firearms and edged weapons used in the colony of South Australia from first settlement to federation. In over 200 pages Harris presents a comprehensive list of firearms and edged weapons. They are sorted by chapter in approximately the chronological order in which they were issued.

The book is thoroughly researched and well indexed and endnoted. It has a number of very useful, appropriate and clear photographs. Those illustrating issue markings will be particularly welcomed by amateur and professional museum staff as well as historian/collectors. The nine appendices provide a wealth of primary source documentation that will save researchers precious time and centralise and make accessible some very useful data, particularly dated lists of the quantities and types of firearms on issue in colonial South Australia.

Harris is one of a small but growing number of historians, collectors and researchers around the country who are prepared to give up their free time to conduct quality research on a subject too often ignored by 'professional' historians and dedicated enough to fund the publication of the results of their research. They are providing a valuable insight into life in colonial Australia. Books like *The Military Small Arms of South Australia 1839-1901* by Anthony F Harris can tell us a great deal about colonial economics, social values and attitudes to self and imperial defence as well as the purchasing power of the colony and the availability of types and quantities of goods colonial buyers had access to. This book is a must not only for collectors of Australian colonial firearms but for anyone with an interest in colonial Australia.

If you are interested in the subject you should also inquire of the Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth 6000, Western Australia, for a copy of George B Trotter's excellent paper "Military Firearms in Colonial Western Australia" in *Records of the Western Australian Museum*, 17, pp. 73-116, 1995.—Brad Manera

Around the Water Cart

by 'Joe Furphy'

Many members have expressed particular interest in this column, which will return in the next issue of *Sabretache*. Space has been limited in this special Biennial Conference edition.

Members' Notices

A history of the 13th Light Horse Regiment AIF, by Douglas Hunter

A comprehensive study of a light horse regiment at Gallipoli Sinai and the Western Front, 86 pages of text (40,000 words) 20 illustrations, 11 maps, 54 citations, nominal roll. A useful reference for family historians, medal collectors & all interested in light horse history. A4 soft cover. Expected cost \$30. If you would like to be notified when the book is published, advise D Hunter, 575 Poole Street, Albury NSW 2640.

"But Little Glory" The New South Wales contingent to the Sudan 1885

This publication of 79 pages was edited by Dr Peter Stanley and published by the Society in 1985. Individual contributions include operations in the Sudan, uniforms, weapons and a roll of members. Some copies are available and as a service to members Federal Council is offering them at A\$5.00, including handling and postage within Australia, and A\$9.00 including overseas airmail postage.

Orders should be sent to the Federal Treasurer, Mr N Foldi, at 9 Parnell Place, Fadden, ACT 2904.

Lost medals

I am searching for the following WW1 Medals and death plaques that have left my family:

- WW1 Trio for No. 2778 Lance Corporal Leslie Alexander SCOULLER 8th Battalion. He was KIA on 26 August 1918.
- WW1 Trio for No. 1964 Private Arthur James SCOULLER 23rd Battalion. He Died of Disease on 9 May 1916.

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I am an independent researcher working at the Public Record Office in Kew, London with major interests in Military and Naval history and the records of the Colonial and Foreign Offices.

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Treasurer

Notes from the Editor on contributions to *Sabretache*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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