



The Military Historical Society of Australia
ACT BRANCH



LE GROGNARD!

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The ACT Branch Committee has decided to suspend Branch Meetings until further notice (but hopefully briefly). This is in line with the circumstance that Branch Meetings are held in conjunction with the *Aspects of Military History* course that the Branch conducts for the U3A [University of the Third Age, Australian Capital Territory]. We will keep you posted.

The next Branch meeting will be advised.

Anyone who has an interest in the study of military history, customs, traditions, dress, arms, equipment, medals, insignia and related matters, particularly where such are relevant to Australia, is most welcome to attend meetings of the ACT Branch of the Society.

For membership or other enquiries contact the ACT Branch Secretary, PO Box 249, Jamison Centre ACT 2614, or visit the Society's website: www.mhsa.org.au. [A membership subscription form is attached to this newsletter.]

IMPORTANT:

To continue receiving the Society's Journal *SABRETACHE* over the coming year you need, if you haven't already done so, to renew your membership now.

A membership subscription/renewal form, and payment option instructions, is attached to this newsletter. [If you have paid the annual subscription fee direct to the MHSA Membership Officer, based in Queensland, rather than to the ACT Branch, please advise me: ian.stagoll@gmail.com]

THE QUIZ!

Answers are at Page 15 of this issue.

Question 1

By 7th December 1941, RAAF squadrons were operating the Supermarine Spitfire in the United Kingdom and the Hawker Hurricane in the Middle East.

But what was the principal RAAF fighter in the home theatre?

Question 2

What happened to HMAS *Vampire* and HMAS *Manoora* at 0300 on 8th December 1941?

Question 3

The following sheet of stamps appeared in *Closet Collector* in the June 2022 issue of *LE GROGNARD!*. It commemorated the 75th anniversary of VE Day, 8th May 1945.



Nevis 2020: The 75th Anniversary of the VE Day.

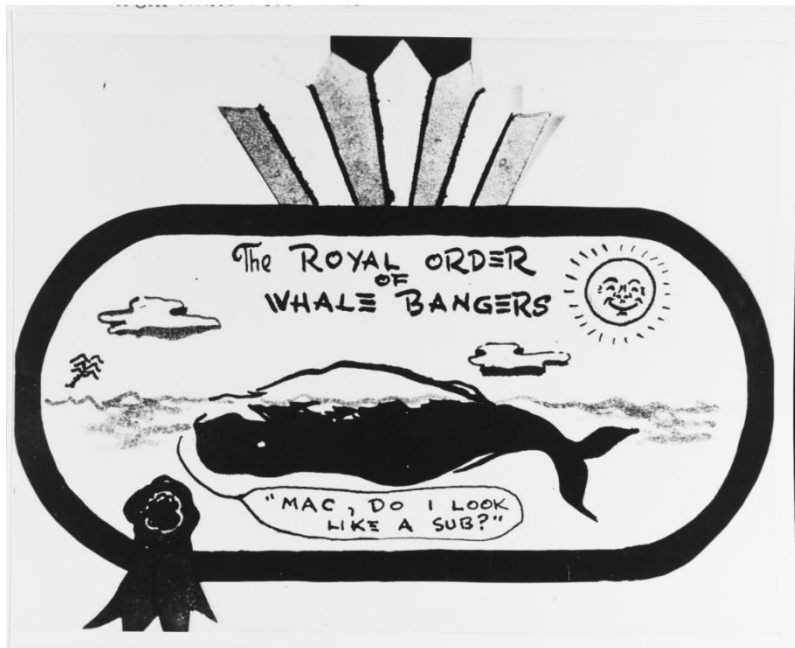
Given that it is commemorating the 75th Anniversary of VE Day, it includes a slightly odd collection of Second World War leaders. Three of these were heads of Allied governments (two, Roosevelt and Truman being Heads of State). Somewhat oddly, Roosevelt is included even though he had died on 12th April 1945 (a month before VE Day).

The fourth man included is Alfred Jodl. Jodl was neither a head of government nor a head of state.

Who was Alfred Jodl and why would he earn his place on this stamp?

Question 4

What would you have been awarded this medal for?



CLOSET COLLECTOR

By ACT Branch Member Dr Chris Yardley

Remembering the Second World War from a European perspective

Part One

Compiling my reference of the stamps of WW2 I have been motivated to look more closely at the EUROPA 1995 issue with the theme of "Peace and Freedom". The issue coincided with the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. It is a double look-back nearly thirty years after the issue. The Soviet Union has broken up and there are new countries emerging. The United Nations was celebrated with UN Institutions during the year.

A background to the issue

PostEurop is the trade association that has been representing European public postal operators since 1993.

EUROPA stamps are special stamps issued by European postal administrations/enterprises and bears the official EUROPA logo, a PostEurop registered trademark under the aegis of PostEurop in which Europe is the central theme.

EUROPA stamps underlines cooperation in the posts' domain, taking into account promotion of philately. They also build awareness of the common roots, culture and history of Europe and its common goals (www.posteurop.com).

In 1995 49 European countries responded to 1995 EUROPA choice of a common theme for the year.

During this same year three worldwide organisations were celebrating major anniversaries remembered on most European countries: The United Nations, UNESCO and the World Food and Agricultural Organisation (<https://europa-stamps.blogspot.com/2008/08/europe>).

Analysing the themes of the issue

I have scanned the stamp issues and shown them, countries in alphabetical order below. These are the images that are recorded in the 'standard' catalogues of the world. In addition to a basic number of stamps some postal authorities have also printed miniature sheets of multiple copies of the images. Miniature sheets raise the revenue opportunity of the issue for the post office. The design of the images is paid for and the stamps are sold in multiples. The different format is of interest to the serious collector who will savour the new format, and it is more economical at the post counter to sell multiples rather than single items. Miniature sheets are not always recognised in all catalogues. Miniature sheets are generally found for sale from specialist stamp dealers, who may have not made product available for some time and on-line from such as E-bay.

Also included below are the stamps from eight European postal authorities who are not EUROPA members, for whatever reason, but have issued within 1995 a set of stamps themed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Basic count of images used

EUROPA initiative

Country count	Number of stamps in the set				
	1	2	3	4	5
49	11	31	5	3	1

Independent country initiatives

Country count	Number of stamps in the set				
	1	2	3	4	5
8	3	4	1		

The image themes within the EUROPA issues

A 'flying free' image	Doves	27
	Other birds	10
Broken bonds / barbed wire		16
Hands		13
Ancient myths as allegory		13
Images of war		11
Monuments, effects of war		8
Retreating soldiers		4
The atomic bomb		1



Åland 1995: The EUROPA "Peace and Freedom" issue of two stamps.



Albania 1995: The EUROPA "Peace and Freedom" issue comprising two stamps and a single miniature sheet.



French Andorra 1995: The EUROPA "Peace and Freedom" issue of two stamps.



Spanish Andorra 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of a single stamp.



Armenia 1995/Artsakhpost: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue comprising two stamps and three miniature sheets. The sheets are reduced in size during the scan.



Austria 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of a single stamp.



Belarus 1995: Inspired perhaps by EUROPA, this set of two issues is entitled “The 50th anniversary of the victory in WW2”.

The national state memorial “Khatyn” of the Republic of Belarus is the central war memorial of Belarus for all victims of the German occupation during the Second World War. It commemorates particularly the more than 600 “burnt villages” which, together with their inhabitants, were destroyed in the National Socialist genocide and the Nazi policy of the “burnt earth” in Belarus since the beginning of the Second World War. Khatyn was one such village.



Belgium 1995: The EUROPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps.



Bosnia and Herzegovina: The EUROPA “Peace and Freedom” issue, a single stamp and miniature sheet.



Bulgaria 1995: The EUROPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps.



Croatia 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps and



Croatian-Post-Mostar 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of a single stamp.

Hrvatska pošta Mostar (English: Croatian Post Mostar) is one of three companies responsible for postal service in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It operates mainly in Croat-majority areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina and its headquarters are in Mostar. It was established in 1993. The other two postal operators in the country are BH Pošta (covering majority of customers in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Pošte Srpske (operating in Republika Srpska).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hrvatska_po%C5%A1ta_Mostar



Greek Cyprus 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps.



Turkish Cyprus: 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps a miniature sheet. The context is explained.



Czech Republic 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps.



Denmark 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of four stamps.



Estonia 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of a single stamp.



Faroe Islands 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps and miniature sheets.

Two images are used from the Norse mythology of the Faroes; “The new world - the return of Gods” and “The new world - Lív and Lívtrasir”. The designer is acknowledged on the stamps to be Bárður Jákupsson.



Finland 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of a single stamp.



France 1995: The EUPOPA “Peace and Freedom” issue of two stamps. Although being French they have determined to commemorate Freedom and Peace.

Look forward to Part Two in next month’s *LE GROGNARD!*

TALL TALES & TRUE STORIES! (Our Watch on the Media)

Why Ukraine uses a 100-year-old machinegun

The Economist

11 May 2022

Ukrainian forces are fighting off Russian invaders with types of machineguns that entered service when Ukraine was part of a Russian Empire ruled by a tsar.

The Maxim M1910 has a steampunk aesthetic: it weighs 68kg and has an armoured gun shield on a distinctive two-wheeled mount allowing it to be towed behind a vehicle or manoeuvred by the gun crew.

Russian media mock these antiques and say the Ukrainians use them because they lack modern weapons.

The truth is more complex.

As the name suggests, the weapon was introduced in 1910. It is a Russian-made version of the first truly automatic machinegun, which was patented by Hiram Maxim, an American-British inventor, in 1883.

Earlier Gatling guns had six barrels which needed to be cranked by hand. In Maxim's design, the expanding gases from firing a bullet work the action and load the next round. One finger on the trigger unleashes a succession of bullets. A water-cooled barrel allows it to keep firing for extended periods. Versions of Maxim's gun proved lethally effective in the trenches of the First World War.

Modern medium machine-guns firing the same 7.62mm ammunition as the M1910 are much lighter and more portable - the current Russian PKM weighs less than a fifth as much. However, they lack water cooling. Firing continuously even for a minute can cause the barrel to deform, or the weapon to "cook off", when bullets fire without the trigger being pulled.

In 2016, Ukraine’s defence minister confirmed he had authorised the release of some M1910s from government stocks (the Maxim gun is not standard issue but available when requested, as

some territorial defence units have done). An audit in 2012 showed that Ukraine had 35,000 of the weapons in storage, all manufactured between 1920 and 1950.

Only a handful of M1910s have been seen in use since Russia invaded in February, but they have reportedly proven effective in fixed defensive positions and fortifications.

As well as water cooling allowing sustained fire, their fixed mounts make them easier to aim. A Ukrainian soldier interviewed in 2016 said the M1910 was highly accurate at 1000m, effective to 3000m, and he would not swap it for a more modern weapon.

Some M1910s have even been modernised, with images on social media showing vintage machine-guns with modern electronic “red dot” sights. The gun is not officially in service with any other army, although Russian-backed separatist militias in the Donbas region also use them, and they have cropped up in conflict zones from Syria to Vietnam.

One element of Russian propaganda may be accurate: Ukraine’s attempt to develop their own copy of the modern Russian PKM in 2011 was not a success. Troops reported severe problems with the Mayak KM, as it is known, including that it was impossible to aim at targets less than 400m away because of a fixture obscuring the sight. The head of armaments of Ukraine's armed forces admitted in 2016 that there were still problems with the gun but the design was being modified. There is still little sign of the Mayak KM in service.

Instead Ukraine has imported a number of foreign machineguns, and Ukrainian mechanics are scavenging guns from destroyed Russian vehicles to convert into infantry weapons. And some troops are still using the trusty M1910. Machineguns remain an essential feature of infantry combat. Just as it was a century ago, the M1910 remains deadly.

And why Australia does too!

The Browning .50 calibre M2 Heavy Barrel Quick Change Barrel machine gun is used as the primary or secondary armament on various Australian Army vehicles and watercraft in the offensive, defensive, suppressive and neutralising roles.



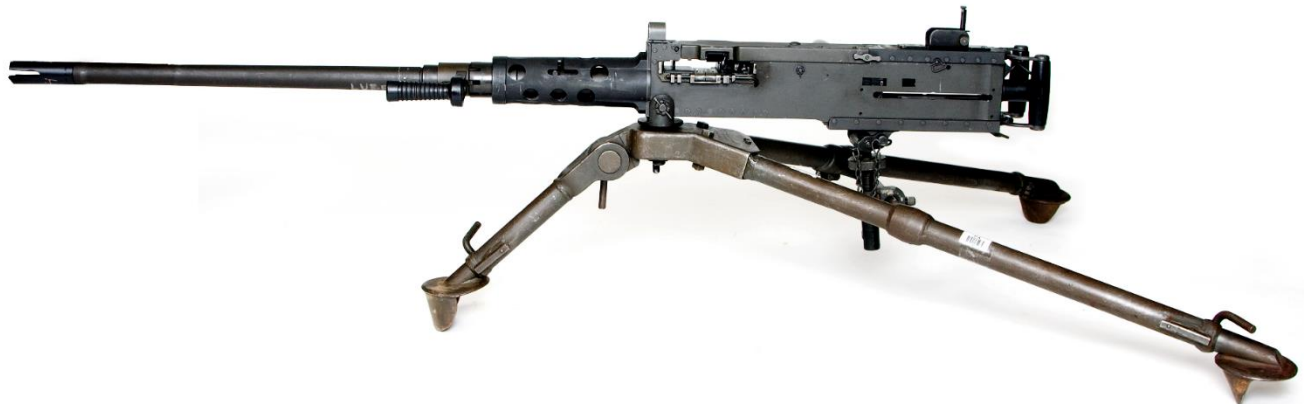
The Browning .50 calibre M2 Heavy Barrel Quick Change Barrel machine gun is carried by all Royal Australian Navy surface combatants.



The Browning M2 .50 calibre machine gun is a heavy machine gun whose design dates back to the end of the First World War. Around July 1917 (105 years ago), John M. Browning started redesigning his .30-06 M1917 machine gun for a larger and more powerful round. The first .50 calibre machine gun underwent trials on 15th October 1918 (104 years ago). It fired at less than 500 rounds per minute, and the muzzle velocity was only 2,300 ft/sec. The gun was heavy, difficult to control, fired too slowly for the anti-personnel role and was not powerful enough against armour. Efforts by John M. Browning and Fred T. Moore resulted in the water-cooled, .50 calibre M1921 Browning machine gun and an aircraft version.

John M. Browning died in 1926.

Further development resulted in a single receiver design that could be turned into seven types of .50 calibre machine guns by using different jackets, barrels, and other components. The new receiver allowed right or left side feed. With support from the U.S. Navy, Colt started manufacturing the Browning M2 .50 calibre machine gun in 1933.



CONUNDRUMS

Who was Vice-Admiral T.B. Drew?

The Editor came across the following in *H.M.A.S Mk. III* (published for the Royal Australian Navy by the Australian War Memorial in 1944):

AWARDS TO AUSTRALIAN NAVAL PERSONNEL

THE following Awards to personnel of the Royal Australian Navy have been promulgated, between the 30th September, 1943, and the 30th September, 1944.
The rank or rating of each recipient is shown as at the date covered by the award.

GEORGE CROSS

For great gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty: Lieutenant L. V. Goldsworthy, G.M., R.A.N.V.R.

C.B.

New Year Honours List: Vice-Admiral T. B. Drew, O.B.E.

Now, this is headed 'AWARDS TO AUSTRALIAN NAVAL PERSONNEL' but Vice-Admiral T.B. Drew is not indicated to be RAN, RANR nor RANVR.

Who was Vice-Admiral T.B. Drew and why is he on this list?

He is not an easy man to track down. He has no Wikipedia entry (pretty unusual for a Vice-Admiral) and there is no biography for him on the Royal Australian Navy's website. And he doesn't get a mention under Honours and Awards on the Australian War Memorial's website. Nor is he on Wikipedia's list of Royal Navy Vice-Admirals.

But you can find him on the website *World War II unit histories & officers* (a very useful website).

He is Thomas Bernard Drew. He was certainly not Australian as he was born in the St Thomas district, Devon, United Kingdom on 13th March 1887.

He joined the Royal Navy (HMS *Prince George*) on 15th September 1903 (aged 16). He was promoted to Vice-Admiral on 21st January 1943 and retired on 6th February 1943. His last appointment was as Vice-Admiral, Minelayers.

[Unfortunately, this is the best photograph of Thomas Bernard Drew that the Editor was able to find.]

The Australian connection

On 1st April 1943, Drew was lent to the Royal Australian Navy in the rank of Captain. It is not clear how or why.

From 23rd April to 25th June 1943, he is listed as: HMAS *Cerberus* (Flinders Naval Depot, Williamstown, Victoria) (additional) [lent to RAN] [in rank of Capt.]. From 25th June 1943 to 1st October 1945, he is



listed as: Commanding Officer, HMAS Cerberus (Flinders Naval Depot, Williamstown, Victoria) & as Commodore Superintendent of Training [lent to RAN] [in rank of Cdre. 2nd cl.].

This appears to be the reason why he appears on the list of 'AWARDS TO AUSTRALIAN NAVAL PERSONNEL' in *H.M.A.S Mk. III*.

Why did he retire in the middle of the Second World War at the age of 55? (He was younger than Admiral James Somerville and the same age as Admiral Bertram Ramsey who continued to serve.)

Why was he then reduced in rank to Captain and lent to the Royal Australian Navy?

Does anybody have any further information about Vice-Admiral Thomas Bernard Drew?

What was 'the arsenal'?

The May 2022 issue of *LE GROGNARD!* featured as GUN OF THE MONTH the QF 3.7-inch AA gun, which included:

The QF 3.7-inch AA gun became famous in the Second World War, but the Australian-made version is little known.

Australian Forces first received the QF 3.7-inch AA guns in the Middle East and production of a static model began in Australia in 1939. All Australia's mobile versions of the gun were manufactured in either Britain or Canada.

Production was authorized in April 1937, and the first production guns were delivered in January 1938. As Vickers could not meet the demand for this gun, the Australian government proposed that they organize the production of this weapon. In order to reduce costs, a fixed model was specially selected for production.

Sample guns arrived in Australia in August 1939. Four of them were sent to Darwin, and the others were sent to the **arsenal** for reference.

It was not clear what was meant by 'the arsenal'.

Can anybody provide any information on what 'the arsenal' was?

WEBSITES WORTH A LOOK:

Flinders Naval Depot

<https://www.navyhistory.org.au/flinders-naval-depot/>

HANDBOOK ON GERMAN MILITARY FORCES, WAR DEPARTMENT, 15 MARCH 1945

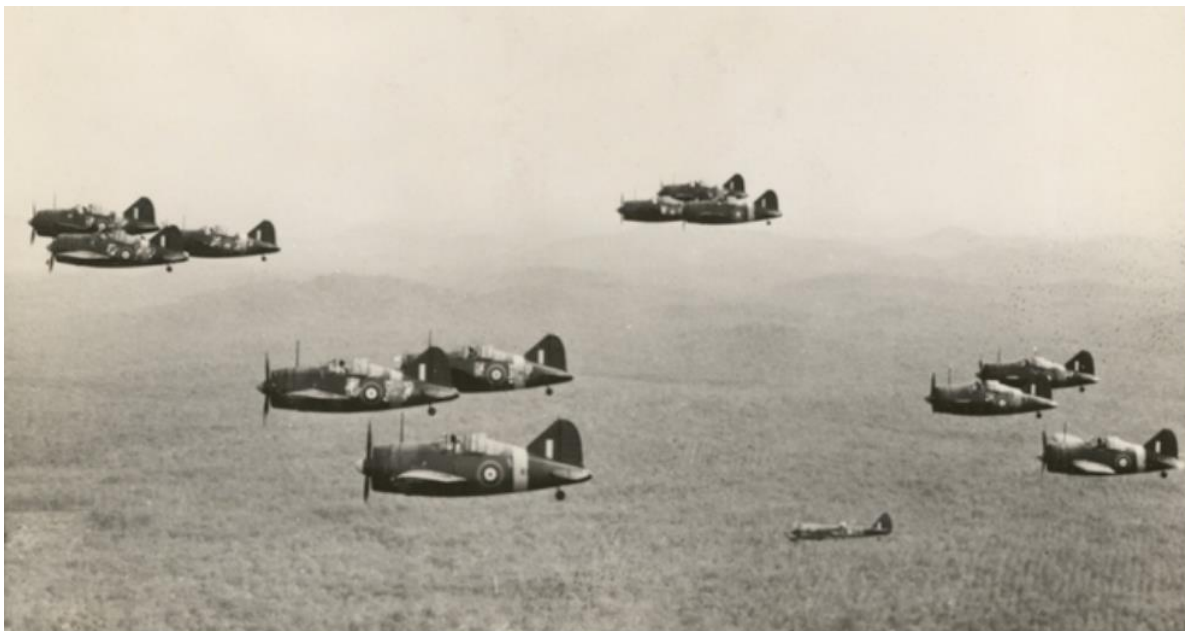
<https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/Germany/HB/index.html#contents>

THE QUIZ! - ANSWERS

Question 1

The Brewster Buffalo.

The aircraft originated in the U.S. in 1936 and was test-flown in January 1938. It was the first monoplane fighter used by the U.S. Navy. Versions, F2A-2 and -3 were purchased as Buffaloes in 1940 by England. The RAF found that the Buffalo, with its large, rotund fuselage and underpowered engine, had many operational limitations and was unsuitable for the European war theatre. As a result, 170 Buffaloes were transferred to the Far East where a number of these aircraft were taken over by the two RAAF fighter units in Malaya – Nos 21 and 453 Squadrons. When the Japanese invaded Malaya, the RAAF, RAF, and RNZAF Buffaloes, supported by Dutch Buffaloes, fought gallantly but were out-classed and outnumbered by the Japanese Zeros. Nevertheless, they claimed a 2:1 kill ratio against the Japanese.



453 Squadron RAF flying Brewster Buffalo aircraft over Malaya. 453 Squadron arrived in Singapore between 15th-21st August 1941 and were equipped with the Brewster Buffalo aircraft. By 5th February 1942, when 453 Squadron withdrew from Singapore to Sumatra, only six Brewster Buffalo aircraft remained operational (of the, at least, 21 that had been flown by the squadron), the others having been damaged or destroyed.

The Brewster Buffalo will be the Aircraft of the Month in the August issue of *LE GROGNARD!*

Question 2

HMAS *Vampire* and HMAS *Manoora* were both present in Singapore on 8th December 1941 when the first Japanese air raid on the island occurred.

The bombing of Singapore was an attack on 8th December 1941 by seventeen G3M Nell bombers of Mihoro Air Group, Imperial Japanese Navy, flying from Thu Dau Mot in southern

Indochina. The attack began at around 0430, shortly after Japanese forces landed on Kota Bharu, Malaya. However, both *Vampire* and *Manoora* recorded the air raid as at 0300.

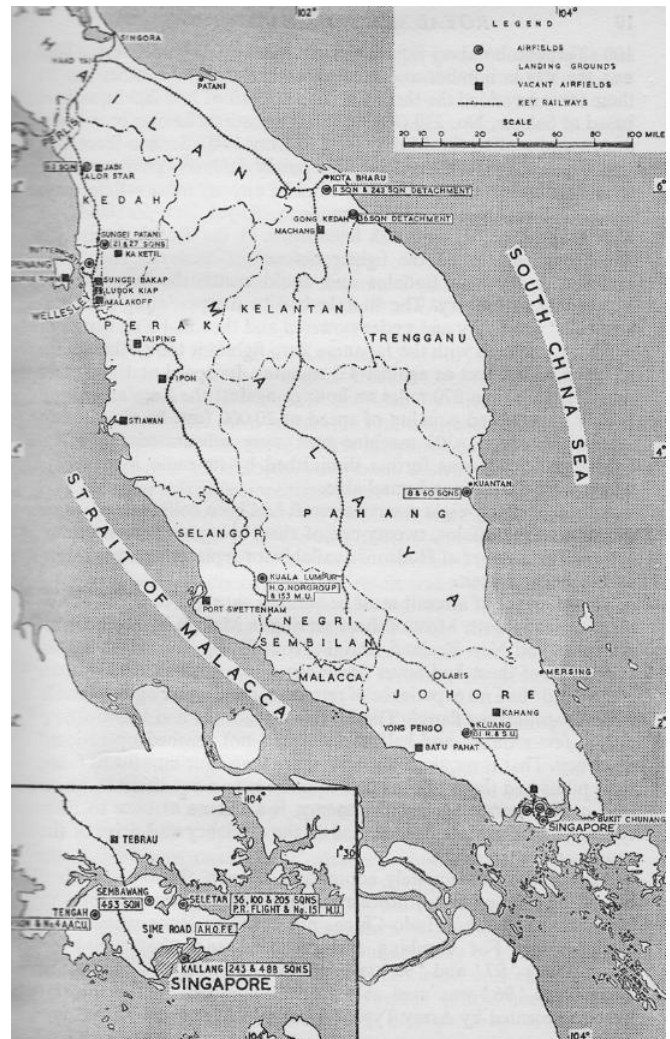


Mitsubishi G3M Nell of Mihoro Air Group, carrying bombs externally.

The attack on Singapore was assigned to 34 bombers of Genzan Air Group and 31 bombers of Mihoro Air Group. Their targets were RAF Tengah, RAF Seletar, Sembawang Naval Base and Keppel Harbour.

Six squadrons from both air groups took off from southern Indochina on the night of 7th December 1941. However, bad weather conditions were encountered while over the South China Sea. Only the seventeen G3M bombers of Mihoro Air Group reached Singapore on schedule, unobstructed by the bad weather.

The Japanese formation was detected by a radar station in Mersing, Malaya, almost an hour before it reached Singapore. Three Brewster Buffalo fighters of 453 Squadron RAAF were on standby at RAF Sembawang. The squadron had been deployed to Singapore in August 1941, as fears of war with Japan increased.



However, Flight Lieutenant Tim Vigors' request to scramble and intercept the Japanese bombers was denied. Headquarters preferred to leave the guns to deal with the raiders. Reputedly, Air Chief Marshal Robert Brooke-Popham, Commander-in-Chief Far East Command, feared that the anti-aircraft batteries would fire on the friendly fighters, despite Vigors being an experienced night fighter in the Battle of Britain. He was supplemented by the belief that the Buffalo fighter was only suited for daylight fighting and could not be used at night. One of the Brewster pilots described the oncoming Japanese bomber formation as 'the most perfect night-fighter target which I have ever seen'. Paradoxically, there were 12 Bristol Blenheim Mark IF night fighters of 27 Squadron RAF stationed in Sungai Petani, Malaya, but they were being used as ground-attack aircraft.



A line-up of RAAF Brewster Buffalo aircraft of 453 Squadron on Sembawang airfield.

The streets were still brightly lit, allowing the Japanese navigators to locate their targets without difficulty. This omission was not so serious as might appear, for there was a full tropic moon that night in the rays of which Singapore in all its detail was visible. The Air Raid Precautions organisation's headquarters were not fully manned and no reply was received to repeated summonses by telephone to go into action. Not until a direct approach was made to Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor, did the air raid sirens sound. When the bombers began their attack at 0430, Allied anti-aircraft guns immediately opened fire. The battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* and battlecruiser HMS *Repulse* also responded, but no aircraft were shot down. A formation of nine bombers flew over without releasing their bombs to draw the searchlights and anti-aircraft guns away from the other group. They were flying at 12,000 feet, while the second formation was at 4,000 feet.

Rudely awakened in the small hours of the morning by the screams of air raid sirens and the roar of ack ack guns and in the clear moonlit sky around a formation of Japanese bombers. Bombs were dropped but none fell in our area. So the war in the Far East started - all day we

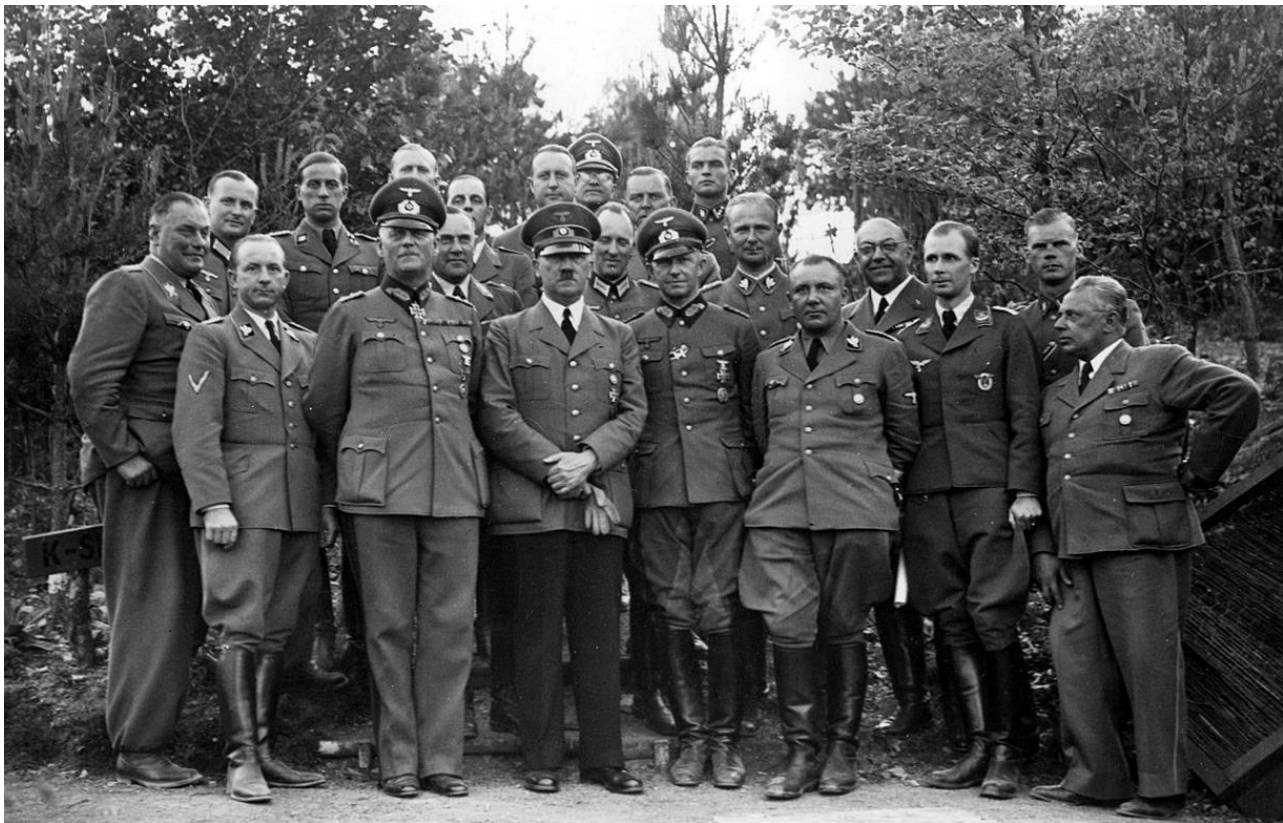
heard news bulletins telling of the wide spread treachery of the Japs - Well! They've asked for it - !!

Diary and 'Line' book written by the pilots of 453 Squadron RAAF

The 'Raiders Passed' signal was sent out at 0500. The bombers succeeded in bombing the airfields at Seletar and Tengah, damaging three Bristol Blenheim bombers of 34 Squadron RAF. A number of bombs also fell on Raffles Place. They caused little military damage but killed sixty-one civilians, mostly Chinese, and injured 133. The Japanese bombers all returned safely to Thu Dau Mot.

Question 3

Alfred Jodl was born on 10th May 1890 in Würzburg, Germany. Primarily a staff officer during and after the First World War, Jodl served as head of the department of national defence in the war ministry from 1935. A competent staff officer and Adolf Hitler's faithful servant to the end, he was named Chief of the Operations Staff of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW; High Command of the German Armed Forces) on 23rd August 1939, just before the invasion of Poland. With Generalfeldmarshall Wilhelm Keitel, OKW Chief of Staff, he became a key figure in Hitler's central military command and was involved in implementing all of Germany's campaigns except the beginning of the Russia invasion in the second half of 1941. As Chief of the Operations Staff, he had signed many orders for the shooting of hostages and for other acts contrary to international law. In January, 1944, Jodl was promoted to the rank of Generaloberst. He was executed on 16th October 1946 after trial and conviction for war crimes by the International Military Tribunal at Nürnberg.



Reichspressechef Otto Dietrich, Wilhelm Keitel, Adolf Hitler, Alfred Jodl, and Martin Bormann (front row, from left to right), at the Führer Headquarters of Felsennest, June 1940.

At 0241 on 7th May 1945, an Act of Military Surrender of the German armed forces was signed by Generaloberst Jodl, on behalf of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW), at Reims, France. Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith signed on behalf of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force and Major-General Ivan Susloparov on behalf of the Soviet High Command. French Major-General François Sevez signed as the official witness.



Generaloberst Alfred Jodl signs the Act of Military Surrender in Reims, France, 7th May 1945.

And this may be why Jodl, somewhat erroneously, got on the sheet of stamps with the three Allied war leaders.

However, some six hours after the Reims signing, the Soviet High Command stated that this Act of Surrender was unacceptable. Consequently, General Eisenhower arranged for a formal surrender to take place in Berlin early on 8th May. Jodl did not sign this second surrender document.

[For the full story see the May 2021 issue of *LE GROGNARD*!]

Question 4

A comic medal presented by Second World War U.S. Navy Patrol Squadron VP-53 to any of its bombardiers who bombed a whale instead of a U-Boat. Patrol Squadron VP-53, which operated PBY-5 Catalina Flying Boats on long-range anti-submarine patrols invented the unofficial 'Royal Order of Whale Bangers'.

Mind you, this was actually a serious issue. The following pages were in the South-West Pacific Anti-Submarine Report of July 1943 (classified SECRET):



Fin whale with blowhole about to submerge.



Fin whale.



Fin whale immediately after blowing.



Fin whale.



A school of Fin whales and slick.



Fin whale in blowing position.

WHALES AT SEA

was taking avoiding action. The submarine then dived and an Asdic hunt began."

"5. H.M.S. "Wolverine" - Ramming of U-boat:- On port leg of zigzag Radar contact was obtained at 5,000 yards. At about 600 yards I identified contact as submarine, increased to full speed ... and altered course to ram. The submarine was rammed amidships abreast the after end of the conning tower at an inclination of 90 degrees. My speed was 20 knots.

The submarine rolled over and sank immediately. The Radar set was in full working order after the ramming, the shock of which was considerable".

4. U-BOAT OR WHALE?

Cases have occurred recently of sightings of "U-boats" which later proved to be whales, and the number of these cases is likely to increase as more whales come north.

It is known that whales, particularly the Fin and large Humpback species, have two concentration points, one off Jervis Bay and the other off point Cloates W.A.. Between June and October whales are to be found in large numbers off these points, and, in smaller numbers, as far north as Townsville.

Since they are warm-blooded mammals and breath air, whales cannot leave the surface for long periods. They break surface to breathe, expelling air and so causing the characteristic "spout" or "blow". During this period the back is usually exposed, and it is then that the resemblance between whale and U-boat is greatest. In Fin whales the exposure period is only about 3 to 6 seconds, usually repeated five or six times at intervals averaging 25 seconds.

A whale produces very little foam except when travelling at speed although the tail flukes often leave a series of swirls at the surface.

Most of the oil in a whale is contained in the blubber and bones, but it is very unlikely that this would be sufficient to cause any extensive film of oil on the water, even if the whale had been badly lacerated by depth charges. In no circumstances does any living whale exude oil or leave a film of oil on the water.

5. U-BOAT OFFENSIVE ON WANE.

Most significant of all recent statements on the U-boat offensive is that made by the Admiralty Division of A/S Warfare. Always cautious in its claims and never giving way to unjustified optimism, the Division made the following statement in a recent



HUMPBACK ABOUT TO DIVE



43 FT HUMPBACK NEAR SURFACE



75 FT. FIN WHALE NEAR SURFACE



SPERM WHALE BLOWING



"BASKING" SHARK



HUMPBACK WAVING FLIPPER

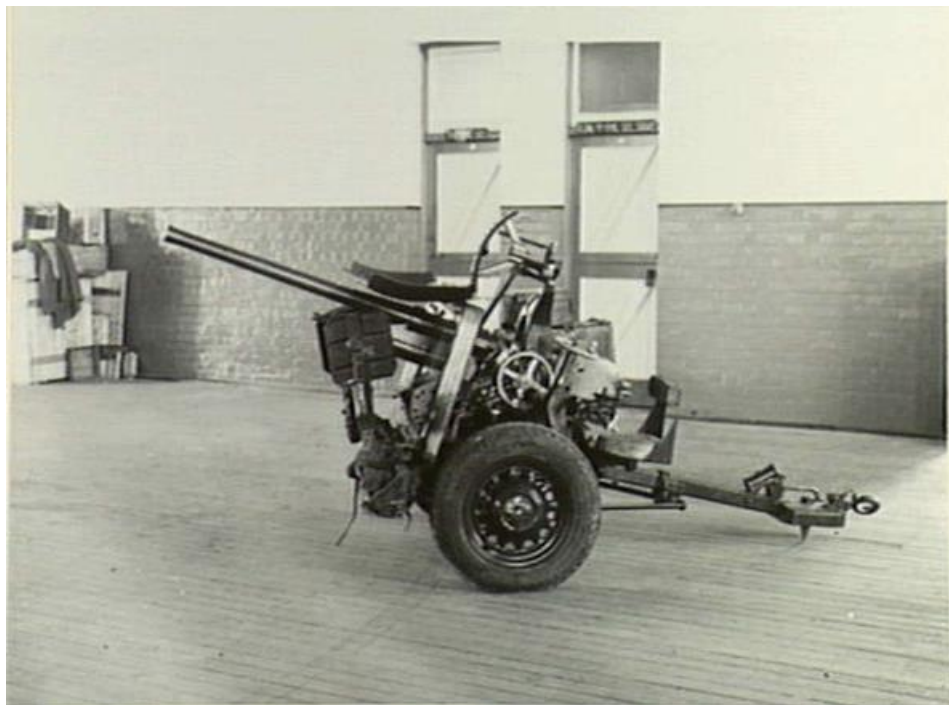


HUMPBACK'S TAIL FLUKES

- WHALES -

GUN OF THE MONTH

Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun



In 1934, the War Office released a requirement for an anti-tank gun of 40mm (2-pounder) calibre. Vickers-Armstrong proceeded with development but the War Office was slow to move, instead seeing the new gun being sold to interested foreign parties. The weapon featured a gun barrel mounted onto a base which was further affixed to a two-axle wheeled system. Wheels were rubber with steel rims and a split carriage assembly was connected at the rear for transport by mover vehicle. It was rather more elegantly engineered than other designs and the carriage opened fully to become a tripod for a firm seat onto hard ground and the travel wheels were raised to either side of the gun. The weapon was, after all, envisioned as a static defensive gun emplacement and did not follow the mobile-minded designs encountered throughout the rest of Europe. An armoured shield was provided for the gun crew and a No.24B 2x sighting telescope was set at eye level for the seated operator. The traversing gear was a two-speed device giving fast movement for picking up targets and slow movement for precise aiming. The upper portion of the shield was hinged and could be folded forward and down for an improved view (at the expense of exposure to enemy fire). To the lower right of the shield there lay a ready-use locker holding 16 rounds to be handled by a loader. The British Army did not receive delivery of their first gun system until 1938 as war in Europe seemed all but inevitable at this point. After some refinement of the initial design, the British Army formally accepted the weapon as the Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr in 1939 and the gun component was issued on the Carriage, 2-pdr, Mk III carriage assembly.

The Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun was 6 feet 9 inches long and weighed 1,848 lbs. The system fired an armour-piercing, 2.41b 40mm projectile out to an effective range of 600 yards at a muzzle velocity of 2,626 feet per second. Penetration of 53mm (2 inches) of armour was possible out to 500 yards. The tripod carriage assembly offered a complete 360° traverse (unlike other towed anti-tank artillery pieces in this class that rested on their two-arm split carriage stems) and an elevation range between -13° and +15°. The standard operating crew was between three and five personnel. It had a rate of fire of 20 rounds per minute.



In addition to being used as a towed anti-tank gun the Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun was used in a wide range of light and cruiser tanks. It was the main armament for the Matilda II (also used by the Australian Army), the Mk VII Tetrach light tank, the first six Marks of the Valentine infantry tank, the Mk I and Mk II Crusaders, the Cruiser Marks I to IV and the Covenanter tank. It was also widely used to arm armoured cars including the Daimler, the Mk I AEC, the Mk I Coventry and the Marmon-Herrington Armoured Car.



**Australian Matilda Tanks fitted with 2 pr guns
in New Guinea, 1944**

Over 34,000 Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Guns were produced between 1936 and 1944, over 11,000 of these were deployed as anti-tank guns on carriages while the rest were used in various vehicles.

The Australian Connection

The Australian Army asked early in 1940 if it would be possible to produce 1,000 of the Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Guns in Australia. Three weeks after the evacuation of Dunkirk, a sample gun was received from the United Kingdom with the drawings, upon which to develop a manufacturing base. Some 30 sub-contractors were engaged by General Motors Holden - Australia who had been appointed as the coordinating contractor for the project.

The official order for 1,000 guns was placed on 4th September 1940. Australian production of Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Guns and munitions commenced in Melbourne and by Holden SA in 1941 and continued until 1945. The first Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun was handed over to the Army for proofing and testing and passed in April 1941. These guns were widely used by Australian infantry and anti-tank units, at firing ranges and on shorelines around Australia.

Several types of shell were produced in Australia including the following:

Practice (Prac) 'Flat Head' & Practice, Tracer (Prac/T) – solid projectile (no fuse however may contain a tracer element).

Armour Piercing, Tracer (AP/T, APHV/T, APCBC/T) – some models contained a small explosive charge; may contain a tracer element.

Armour-Piercing, Composite Non-Rigid (AP/CNR) - used with the Littlejohn adaptor; no explosive content or fuse.

High Explosive (HE), Point Detonated & Base Detonated – contained a fuse and explosive; base-detonated models were manufactured for the Australian Army by fitting Bofors HE shells to anti-tank cartridges and using a base fuse.



Various 2 pr complete munitions (L to R): Prac Flat Head, AP/T, APCNR/T, HE Mk I, HE, HE/T Mk XI, HE/T Mk VII

The Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun proved to be a more than a match for Japanese tanks such as the Type 95 Ha-Go light tanks, which had armour only 12mm thick. At the Battle of Muar in Malaya, in January 1942, Australian Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Guns, of the 13th Battery, 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, knocked out six, of possibly eight or nine, Japanese tanks as they attacked up a road near Bakri. Sergeant Charles Parsons, commander of one of the guns was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM).

Lieutenant Ben Hackney of the Australian 2/29th Battalion described the engagement during the Battle of Muar:

A couple [of tanks] attempted to turn and make a get-away but still those boys with the anti-tank guns were sending a stream of shells into them. At last they could not move forward any further and became as pill-boxes surrounded, sending fire in all directions; until one by one they were smashed, set on fire, and rendered useless and uninhabitable. There came then from the tanks sounds which resembled an Empire Day celebration as the ammunition within them burnt, and cracked with sharp bursts, and hissed, with every now and again a louder explosion as larger ammunition ignited.



A QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun of the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, 8th Australian Division, directed by VX38874 Sergeant Charles James Parsons, of Moonee Ponds, Vic, in action at a road block at Bakri on the Muar-Parit Sulong Road, Malaya. In the background is a destroyed Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go Medium Tank. The Anti-Tank Gun was known as the rear gun because of its position in the defence layout of the area.

Interestingly, the Australians referred to the Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun as the Tank Attack 2pdr apparently a designation common to Australian anti-tank weapons as they also called the PIAT the Projector, Infantry, Tank Attack.

The Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun remained capable of destroying heavier Japanese tanks too, the Type 97 Chi-Ha medium tank had 25mm thick front armour which the 2pdr could easily penetrate at ranges of over 1,500 yards.

For the first 2½ years of the Second World War, the QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun was the standard towed anti-tank weapon of the British Commonwealth armies (and remained so for the whole of the war for the Australian Army). It was a heavy and cumbersome weapon, so various attempts were made to create self-propelled versions of the weapon. Britain, Canada and Australia all designed self-propelled versions using the British Universal Carrier as the base vehicle.

2-Pounder Tank Attack Carrier

The Australian 2-Pounder Tank-Attack Carrier was built on an extended LP2 chassis by the Metropolitan Gas Company, to fill a gap as self-propelled artillery in the Anti-Tank role. The engine was relocated to the front left of the vehicle (a position usually reserved for the main armament of these type of vehicles, the Bren Gun). This allowed for the fitment of the 2-Pounder anti-tank gun. The driver had an open-topped compartment that was armoured on the front and sides. The gun was mounted on an open platform at the rear of the vehicle that allowed the gun to be traversed 360-degrees. The vehicle had a crew of 4: commander, gunner, loader and driver. Testing of the first prototypes began in August and September of 1941. At the conclusion of successful trials in February/March 1942, an order for 200 of them was placed with the first one being delivered in May 1942.



By the time the 2-Pounder Tank-Attack Carrier came into service, it was already obsolete as the German vehicles it was designed to combat had armour that was too thick for the 2-pdr to successfully penetrate. As a result, all of the carriers were kept in Australia and used as training vehicles and equipment for Australian reserve and volunteer units.

Only 204 of these were built.

The Ordnance, QF, 2-pdr Anti-tank Gun was also used as the main armament of the Australian cruiser tank, the AC1 Sentinel.

If you have any ideas or items for *LE GROGNARD!* please contact the Editor.



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