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VIETNAM. 19-08-1966. TROOPS OF 6TH BATTALION, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT (6RAR) ON BOARD ARMoured PERSONNEL CARRIERS (APC'S) OF NO 1 APC SQUADRON WAITING TO RETURN TO BASE AT NUI DAT AFTER THE LONG TAN BATTLE DURING OPERATION SMITHFIELD.

Photo courtesy of the Australian War Memorial AWM CUN/66/0695/VN

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The President Writes

I am pleased to note that at least one member noted the “intentional” mistake in my last report. The golf day in November will be on Friday 10th, not the 12th as stated.

The next two or three months will be a busy time with a number of activities by both the Association and the Regiment due to take place.

The visit to ADI Benalla will be over by the time you get this copy of the magazine, although it has not yet happened. The response was very good with an extra session required to fit in all those interested.

The Artillery Luncheon is to be held again this year at the Naval and Military Club. Further information about this luncheon is elsewhere in this magazine. However, I would like to stress that this is an **All Ranks** function and I urge all members of the Association to attend if at all possible.

The fund for the new Artillery flag for the Shrine has been full subscribed, and I would like to thank all those who made donations so that this could be accomplished. The RSM of 2/10 has ordered the flag, and a cheque has been raised to pay for it.

The flag is to be presented to the shrine at a ceremony held on St Barbara’s Day 3rd December at the Shrine.

The intention at this stage is that a social day will be held at the Royal Artillery Hotel in North Melbourne following the ceremony.

An Open Day is to be held at the new Geelong Depot on Saturday 18th November.

The depot is to be officially opened by the DIV COMD, MAJGEN Flower.

Both the Depot and the Soldiers Club are to be officially re-named.

A recruiting drive and a static display will also take place on the day.

2/10 FD REGT is to fire a salute at the MCG on Sunday 19th November in support of the 1956 Olympic Games Re-union.

A reminder that the AGM will be held at the East Malvern RSL on Thursday 9th November.

The Association Name Badges mentioned in the last issue have been requested by about 35 members. These have been produced and issued.

Any members who are interested in obtaining a badge should contact me.

The badges at the moment cost \$13 plus \$2 postage. This will probably increase when smaller numbers are ordered.

Regards to all

Neil Hamer
MAJ (R)

MESSAGE FROM THE COLONEL COMMANDANT



Dear fellow Gunners,

In this issue of Cascabel you will find an open invitation from the Naval & Military Club to attend a lunch for Gunners and their guests on Friday 20th October.

This lunch was for many years an annual event, however due to an administrative oversight it was not held last year. At the insistence of the "Old and Bold" it has been put back on the social calendar. It is simply an occasion to sit down with old comrades and tell lies. Bear in mind that it is now many years since the Naval and Military Club was an Officers only club and the only criteria for attendance now is their dress code of suit and tie.

Recently I attended the Chief of Army's address to the RUSI and before that a dinner presentation by the CDF at the Naval & Military Club. On both occasions, the Gunners (including retired, serving, regular and reserve) were the largest group in attendance at these important and enjoyable functions.

I am firmly of the view that recruiting, retention and morale are enhanced by the open support of all military functions and I encourage you to attend this lunch to show support for your Regiment and those who continue to serve.

Please make every effort to attend and to go out of your way to bring along a mate. To arrange your attendance please contact Neil Hamer or Reg Morrell. Existing Members of the Club should make their bookings direct with the Club.

I look forward to seeing you on the day

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Perry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Col Comdt RAA (SR)

Membership Report October 2006

Current Membership	
Life Members	213
Annual Members 2006/07	71
Affiliates	41
Others (CO/CI, Messes, etc.)	11
RSL	1
Libraries	<u>5</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>342</u>

14 current members are still unfinancial for

We have lost contact with LBDR R J Wood and GNR A Borg.

New Members

BDR R R Cheshier and GNR J Thomson have joined the Association as Annual Members. We welcome them both and hope to see them at our functions in the near future.

The Berwick Sub-branch of the RSL has been placed on our mailing list, and we look forward to hearing from other interested RSL Sub-branches.

Vale

It is with regret that we note the passing of CAPT Phillip Wortham. Captain Wortham was 89 years of age. He joined the Association in 1993. During his service he was awarded the Efficiency Medal.

No other information about CAPT Wortham is recorded.

Lest We Forget

The usual reminder about the proforma on the last page below the Parade Card.

If you have not already done so, it would be appreciated if you would provide the information requested so that our files can be kept up to date. This proforma should also be used to notify us of any changes in the future. It would also help if you could provide any information about your occupation, achievements and other service to the community.



Neil Hamer
MAJ (R)
Membership Co-ordinator

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D Coy s day

By Cpl Mike McSweeney

The Battle of Long Tan was one of the most remarkable actions in Australian military history, the reviewing officer told about 250 soldiers and thousands of guests commemorating the battle's 40th anniversary in Brisbane.

Land Commander Maj-Gen Mark Kelly reviewed the parade conducted by 6RAR near their Long Tan lines on August 18.

"To withstand continual assaults by a numerically superior enemy force over several hours in horrendous conditions, and be victorious at the end of the day, is a significant military feat," Maj-Gen Kelly said.

He commended the officers and soldiers of 6RAR for their excellent turn out and performance on a lengthy but superbly executed parade.

"Your performance today is a fitting tribute to the veterans and those men we lost during this significant battle", he said.

"In every sense it is a most appropriate way to honour their memory and to honour their sacrifice."

Like the battle involving 6RAR in Vietnam 40 years ago, the parade started about 3.30pm and finished as night fell. The soldiers of Long Tan once again stood-to as the commemoration began with a mortar barrage and machine-gun fire.

The parade included an Iroquois helicopter flypast, a United Drumhead Service and the firing of 1 Fd Regt howitzers.

Long Tan veterans were heavily involved with the ceremony, including marching through the ranks before laying hats on 18 upturned SLRs as the honour roll was read. Veteran DJ Collins recognised the lengths that the current members of 6RAR and supporting elements went to.

"You feel honoured that the guys put in all the effort," he said.

"We can remember what it was like ourselves [to be on parade]. You think it's never going to end and, as it was, tonight it ended for them in darkness."

"The support that the battalion has given us for the last 35 years or more since we actually got an association going has been wonderful and today's no exception with that effort.

"The whole celebration of today starting with breakfast in the city hall, the honour to lead the parade through the city of Brisbane was a fantastic thing for us, and it's culminated in a wonderful parade.

"I don't think as Long Tan veterans we can wish for anything more. It was fantastic."



Capital s tribute to Vietnam vets

By Barry Rollings

The first of the Long Tan fallen remembered was 2Lt Gordon Sharp, a former school mate who lived little more than half a block from me in Tamworth, NSW.

That in itself was enough to make the August 18 commemoration of the battle at the Vietnam Veterans' Day Memorial Service in Canberra personally moving.

2Lt Sharp was a year ahead of me at Christian Brother's. College Tamworth. A television cameraman in civilian life, 2Lt Sharp was a graduate of Scheyville, the first of its graduates killed in Vietnam. He was the only officer among the 18 who paid the supreme sacrifice when 108 Australian soldiers were outnumbered 25 to one that wet afternoon in a rubber plantation south-east of Saigon.

I had watched him compete with distinction as a school athlete. I had watched his funeral procession from the roof of my then newspaper making its way from church to cemetery. It might have been me but for the randomness of the National Service ballot.

Then there were reminiscences of two members of the Federal Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans' Motor Cycle Club who admitted "it still gets to you" while blinking back tears as memories of long-ago in foreign climes remained as fresh in their minds as yesterday.

At the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Anzac Parade, the Long Tan Honour Roll was read, wreaths were laid, prayers and psalms said and speeches made against the backdrop of the Australian Federation Guard, two APCs and AAB-Sydney, as a simulated field fire mission reverberated from artillery guns on the nearby shores of Lake Burley Griffin by the AFG and a detachment from the contemporary 161 Battery RNZA (also engaged at Long Tan).

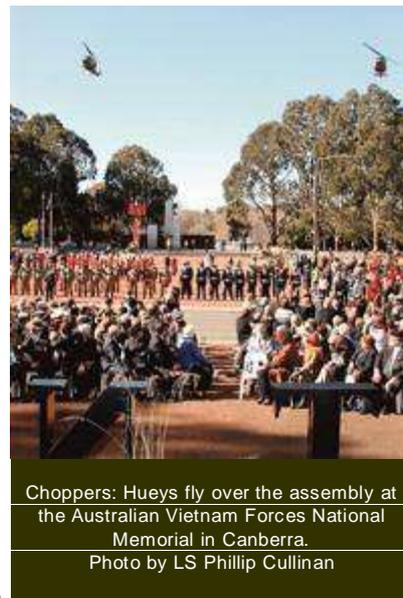
It was a morning when the ponytailed in bikers' garb stood side by side with their more formally dressed and equally be-ribboned mates.

It was a morning of sombre reflection made more meaningful when two Iroquois made their way in from the east to hover in front of the memorial. The familiar "tocka, tocka, tocka" of whirling blades and rotors caused many a moist eye in the upturned faces of the several thousand in attendance, including more than 100 Long Tan veterans or their next of kin, before the Hueys dipped their noses in salute and flew off.

In a moving address Prime Minister John Howard thanked all Vietnam veterans "on behalf of a grateful nation which perhaps certainly was not as grateful and respectful as it should have been 40 years ago".

"As you leave Canberra and go to your homes all around the country, your nation honours you," he said.

"It respects you and thanks you for your courage and commitment and the way in which you did your duty as asked of you by your nation, and the way in which you upheld the finest traditions of



Choppers: Hueys fly over the assembly at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra.
Photo by LS Phillip Cullinan



Pipes: Cpl Karl Engstrom and Cfn Duncan Clement, 3/4 Cav Regt, prepare to play at a Battle of Long Tan remembrance service in Dili.
Photo by Cpl Bernard Pearson.

military service of which Australians are so proud. It was a war that placed an enormous psychological strain on those who participated and we are very conscious of the lingering impact of that psychological strain.

Ron Sheargold, president of the Federal Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans' Motor Cycle Club, and his vice-president, Bill White, were about to give a personal perspective on the Vietnam War just as the two Hueys flew overhead again, prompting an emotional pause in proceedings.

"It's hard, I tell you; it still cracks you up," Mr Sheargold said before continuing. "I think it's not just Vietnam and Long Tan is certainly significant but I think today people have a greater understanding of what in so many conflicts this country has put on their military; the sacrifices made around the world.'

Mr Pete Ryan, president of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia (ACT branch), said the feedback on the extra effort with the helicopters, artillery and armoured vehicles to mark the 40th anniversary was excellent.

"The quintessential sound of the Vietnam War was the Iroquois,. Mr Ryan said. .If you saw theguys all turn around and look at those choppers and giving them the thumbs up 'friendly here' sign, you would know the significance of that to a Vietnam vet.

Coincidentally, Mr Ryan was the engineer who commissioned one of the helicopters that took part in the observance, A2-773, into service in July 1968.

Saddest war of them all

By Peter Meehan

EMOTIONAL wounds were evident among the 3000 Vietnam veterans at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance on August 18.

They answered the call to pay tribute to those who fell during the Battle of Long Tan 40 years to the day.

A replica of the cross erected at Long Tan in 1969 was positioned before the Shrine's imposing structure.

In his address, Maj-Gen David McLachlan (retd) said Vietnam was healing process that still burns deeply within the hearts and minds of many Vietnam vets.

A crowd of 5000 heard WO1 Peter Zajac, WO ceremonial Victoria, read the names of 18 6RAR D Coy soldiers killed in the bloody 1966 rubber plantation fire fight.

Accompanied by AAB-Melbourne, 1960s entertainers Denise Drysdale and Marcie Jones sang Lonely Heroes, an original song written by Jones for the Melbourne ceremony.

During the performance, Drysdale who entertained the troops in South Vietnam during the late 60s, was moved to tears. She was not alone.



Gray day: Battle of Long Tan commemorations at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. Photo by Cpl Belinda Mepham

Battle retold

By Cpl Mike McSweeney

The 108 men of D Coy 6RAR had drawn the short straw. In the afternoon of August 18, 1966, the Australian task force was looking forward to a concert at their Nui Dat base, featuring Little Pattie and Col Joy.

But there would be no concert for D Coy. Someone had to relieve B Coy, which was out looking for the enemy's mortar base plates used in the shelling of the base the night before. 11 PI rifleman John Heslewood said he and his mates were pretty disappointed.

"We were warned before lunch to get rations and ammunition," Mr Heslewood said.

.We weren't far out of the camp and you could hear the band kick up and we thought .this is bloody lovely. First time they've been over here and we're going for a walk.. That's life..

Unknown to 6RAR, which had only formed the year before, a force of about 2500 Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army troops had formed up near Australia's first fire base in Vietnam. The base defences were not quite complete, and with no one in their way they would almost certainly crush the Australian force.

After rendezvousing with B Coy and exchanging information, D Coy patrolled into the rubber plantation at Long Tan unaware of what lay ahead of them.

"Shortly afterwards we encountered a small force of enemy,. Mr Heslewood said.
"We fired upon them, one was wounded and left blood trails. They shot through and we were told to follow them up.

It was just an accident. They didn't expect to run into us. They were heading for the task force for sure, and we didn't expect to run into them.

So we followed them up into the rubber in extended line for about 200-300m and then we just came under this huge amount of small arms machine-gun fire. They just opened up and it just kept getting worse and worse."

Several 11 PI soldiers were killed almost instantly, including troop commander 2Lt Gordon Sharp.

"We were sort of pinned down. 10 PI came up one side to try and get to us. They ran into enemy forces who were trying to get around behind us."

10 PI withdrew and 12 PI attempted to move up the other side of 11 PI.

"They also ran into an enemy force trying to outflank us the other way," Mr Heslewood said.

Caught without any real cover, a timely torrential downpour favoured the diggers by lowering visibility. Grossly outnumbered, D Coy held on with the help of New Zealand and Australian artillery support.

"By that stage we'd taken pretty heavy casualties and the only thing that was keeping us there was the artillery. It was landing within 30-50m of our position pretty close.



Hallowed ground: 6RAR soldiers parade in honour of the Vietnam veterans.
Photo by Cpl Neil Reeves



Honour: A veteran pays his respects to the fallen during the Long Tan Honour Roll.
Photo by LAC Rodney Welch

You could see them [the Vietnamese] lining up in the background and marching towards us at a sort of half run. It seemed like every time we looked like being overrun a huge barrage of artillery would fall on them.”

Knowing they couldn't hold the enemy back indefinitely, 11 PI withdrew.

“We made our way back as best we could to the company position. The CSM grabbed us as we came in, a few at a time and gave us more ammunition.

“Then most of us were put out the back of the company position, which at that stage was unguarded. As it turned out that was where the enemy were forming up to come and have a chop at the back of us.

By then D Coy had been fighting desperately for three hours when reinforcements finally arrived in the fading light.

“With the heavy rain and the noise the enemy didn't hear the APCs arriving apparently. The APCs ran them over and that was basically the end of it, The APCs broke the back of it,” Mr Heslewood said.

“The enemy stopped firing at us and they started taking out their own dead and wounded. We collected ours and moved back 500-odd metres to an open area where we called the choppers in to take out the wounded. Then we harboured up there for the night with the APC's.”

At the end of the battle, Australia had suffered 18 dead and 24 wounded, whereas the enemy lost hundreds. For their gallant stand, D Coy was awarded the US Presidential Unit Citation from Lyndon B. Johnson.

Forty years later Mr Heslewood and his mates banded together once again to commemorate the battle and honour their fallen mates at a ceremony held by 6RAR near Brisbane. After the parade diggers both new and old had a chance to catch up over a beer while being entertained by a concert hosted by the real Adrian Cronauer. At last, the members of D Coy got to see their concert with Col Joy.

Long Tan articles reprinted from the Army Newspaper Volume 11, No. 51, September 07, 2006

<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/armynews/editions/1151/features/feature01.htm>



APOLOGY

We wish to apologise to BDR David English
The caption under the photograph on page 8 of issue 88
has his first name spelt incorrectly.

The forgotten man: Lieut.-General Sir Frank Berryman

Peter Dean

Cont ..

America's ally

{30} Berryman's importance within the army high command was further enhanced by his particular talents in inter-Allied cooperation. One of the most beneficial skills that he possessed, which assisted both Blamey and the army, was that Berry developed an intimate, personnel and professional relationship with Australia's most important allies, the Americans. As the key planning and operations officer, Berryman worked closely with MacArthur's General Headquarters (GHQ). The relationship between Australian and American commanders was often difficult and strained, fuelled by competing political and military objectives and cultural misunderstandings. But as John Hetherington (Blamey's biographer) points out:

Berryman understood the Americans and they understood him; he had a knack of avoiding friction without sacrificing Australian dignity or interests. His achievements in keeping the peace were of no mean order in light of America's preponderant contribution to the overall forces under MacArthur's command. It was a time when a careless word or a thoughtless gesture could have upset the delicate balance of the Australian-American partnership.⁴⁵

{31} From August to November 1943, Berryman was present at the 3rd Division's operations in the Salamaua area, at the behest of the Commander-in-Chief, where he took an active role in guiding the operations of Major General Savage. In November, Berry was finally given the command that he had desired for so long, taking over the 2nd Australian Corps from Lieutenant General Morshead.

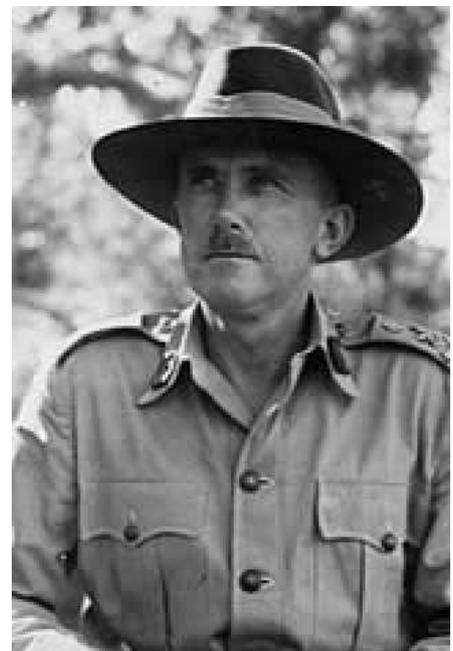
{32} Berry commanded the campaign in the Huon Peninsula in northern New Guinea until April 1944. During this time, the 9th Division, AIF, captured Sattelberg and fought their way up the peninsula, linking up with the Americans at Saidor. In the period from September 1943 to April 1944,⁴⁶ Australian forces:

had not only captured Finschhafen and other important points in the area,

it had also soundly defeated its principle opponent, the 20th Japanese Division, and had mauled elements of two other divisions. The Finschhafen-Langemak Bay-Dreger Harbour area was transformed into a massive sea and air base from which subsequent amphibious operations against Hollandia and Aitape were launched. It was a considerable achievement.⁴⁷

{33} Throughout his time as GOC 2nd Corps, Berryman followed the same ideals in personal leadership that he had shown in Syria and had continued, where possible, as a staff officer. He was steadfast, led by example and visited the forward troops as often as possible. During the assault and capture of Mount Tambu near Salamaua, and similarly on many other occasions, Berryman was in the front line sharing the privations of his men, motivating and making sure that every soldier knew that his contribution was appreciated. This was a situation that was not commonly seen with a lieutenant general commanding a corps of two divisions.⁴⁸

{34} Berry's work as a corps commander did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. MacArthur described him as "quite brilliant"⁴⁹ and Blamey praised his "skilful planning, able supervision and



Berryman as GOC 2nd Australian Corps, pictured at Port Moresby on 13 March 1944. AWM 070975

vigorous leadership".⁵⁰ However, when Berryman's headquarters was relieved by the 1st Corps, he was bitterly disappointed to find himself back in a staff position. He had again relished his time as a commander and shown his preference for command in the field to staff work, but Blamey required his talents and skills for a much more delicate and important post.⁵¹

{35} With MacArthur's interests moving further away from those of Australia, Blamey was hoping to base a Commonwealth Army in Darwin to fight northward back to Hong Kong and Singapore. Berryman moved to Advanced Land Headquarters where he took the position as chief of staff and commenced work on drawing up the plans for a force of British, Australian and New Zealand troops that would number around 657,000. Berry completed the report in August when Blamey returned from his trip to England, but by then it was obvious that Blamey's hopes were fanciful and Berryman was moved back to the "real war" with the US at Land Operations.⁵²

The lost commands

{36} During the course of 1944-45, Berryman was the Australian Army representative at MacArthur's GHQ. Berryman and the Forward Echelon of Blamey's Land Headquarters, which he commanded, were moved to Hollandia to "safeguard Australian interests".⁵³ It was during this period that Berryman was able to skilfully use his powers of conciliation to maintain a cohesive relationship between the Australian and American high commands. At this time there was intense speculation and debate about the use of the AIF in the remaining campaigns against the Japanese. This issue became increasingly politicised, especially the role that the Australians were to play in the invasion of the Philippines.

{37} As the Australians' commitment was being debated, MacArthur proposed that command arrangements be changed. He recommended that task force commands be formed and that Blamey, as Commander-in-Chief, should remain behind in Australia and that a task force for the three AIF divisions be formed under a separate Australian commander. MacArthur considered either Morshead or Berryman as the only two Australian officers suitable to fill this post.⁵⁴ Berry's relationship with the Americans, his command of 2nd Corps and his vast experience as a staff and operational officer had made him, by late 1944, one of only two officers capable, proficient and desired by GHQ for high command positions.

{38} Indeed, one could speculate that it would also have come down to Morshead or Berryman to hold the operational command of the Commonwealth Army that Blamey had proposed in 1944, if it had materialised. It would have been virtually impossible for Blamey to hold dual responsibility of commander of this army as well as Commander-in-Chief in Australia. Most probably, these two officers would have filled the positions of Army commander and commander of the AIF Corps. Morshead had considerable more command experience, but Berryman had been picked, as a result of his superior staff work, to draw up the elaborate plans for the Commonwealth Army and had displayed equal if not superior operational planning. Berryman had more intimate ties with the Americans, with whom this army would need to develop close strategic and operational relations, and at this time he had more experience in the Pacific campaign, being present and closely involved in operations since his time as BGS in Java. It was these very talents and his experience that had made Berry so valuable to Blamey as the Australian representative at GHQ.

{39} Despite his tact and the mutual admiration between Berry and the Americans, he failed to influence GHQ to use Australians in the push through the Philippines. Perhaps it is harsh to look at Berryman's role in the under-utilisation of the Australians in this campaign as a failure. It was simply not expedient for MacArthur to "return" to the Philippines on the backs of Australian troops, and no Australian general or politician had ever been able to curb his political impetus.

{40} MacArthur dominated his SWPA command during the Second World War. By early 1943 he had effectively sidelined Blamey as Commander of Allied Land Forces and Australian interests were continually relegated to second place in his list of priorities. MacArthur's headquarters was unusual in that it was not an integrated allied organization with Australian and American staff, like

those in the European theatre of operations. He did not accept advice to integrate Australians into his staff but relied principally for advice on the officers who had served on his staff in the Philippines, the so-called "Bataan Gang". Furthermore, GHQ was a highly centralised headquarters that operated, at all levels, on a "top-down" approach.⁵⁵ MacArthur was the pre-eminent figure in his command and he dominated the war in the South West Pacific at the political, strategic and operational levels.⁵⁶ He overshadowed not only Blamey, but the Australian prime minister, John Curtin, as well. It is easy to see how Berryman's identity as a commander and as an Australian was subsumed and submerged by his work with MacArthur and the Americans. If a lot of Berryman's work was overshadowed by the domineering personality of Blamey then his work at Advanced Australian Headquarters as a part of GHQ was buried by the dominance of the US in the Australian-American alliance and the forcefulness of MacArthur's personality. This forms a large part of the reason for the loss of recognition of Berryman's role in the popular memory of the war and his unwarranted relegation to the footnotes of Australia's history in the Pacific campaigns.

{41} Berryman had, in the end, missed his last chance to command Australian troops in action in what would have been Australia's largest combined operation of the war. With Japan's acceptance of defeat in August 1945, Berryman's contribution to that outcome was rewarded with an appointment as official Australian Army representative at the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay. Although he was immensely proud of this honour, and newspaper articles called this the high point



Australia's delegates at the Japanese surrender on USS *Missouri*, 2 September 1945; Berryman stands behind General Blamey, and between Air Vice-Marshal George Jones and Commodore John Collins.
AWM 019136

of his career,⁵⁷ to Berry the satisfaction of being chief of staff at the surrender of the Japanese *II Army* to the Australians at Morotai was much closer to his heart.⁵⁸

{42} With the war over, Berry returned to the family that he loved but had seen little of since 1939. The return to peace did not, however, bring to an end his ambition or career. Rather, the inevitable change in command relationships including the retirement of Blamey brought with it an opportunity for Berryman to rise to the paramount role in the Australian Army as CGS, or Chief of the General Staff. Again,

however, for Berryman it was to be a case of what might have been.

{43} With the cessation of hostilities, there was much speculation as to which of the Australian generals would become the next CGS. To the press there were a number of eligible candidates, including Berryman, who became one of the officers most frequently discussed. Berryman, however found himself in a difficult position. He was seen as a "Blamey man" and the new Prime Minister, J. B. Chifley, did not hold Blamey in high regard. Berryman's close personnel and professional relationship to the former commander-in-chief did not endear him to the new Labor hierarchy.

{44} Blamey had made major recommendations to the government about positions in the post-war army and one of these was to appoint Berryman as CGS. Blamey's biographer, Hetherington,

argues that one of Blamey's regrets at the end of the war was that he hurt Berry's chances of becoming CGS. Just after Blamey's retirement, a press cameraman tried to photograph Berryman and Blamey together at a social function. Blamey reportedly turned and remarked "You get out of the picture Berry If you're in it, it will finish you."⁵⁹

{45} Blamey's advice to the government was rejected. Lieutenant General Sydney Rowell had established himself as a favourite with the new Prime Minister, due not just to his experience and suitability, but also because it was seen that Rowell had been the recipient of injustice from Blamey over the his sacking during the New Guinea campaign in 1942. "I hate bloody injustice!", Chifley roared in an interview on Rowell's return from "exile" in Britain.⁶⁰ In a political move, Chifley made General Sturdee CGS with Rowell as his deputy as Vice CGS; Rowell eventually acceded to the position on Sturdee's retirement in 1950. Hetherington is right to point out that Chifley's sense of injustice was singularly lacking when the victim was a "Blamey man",⁶¹ but to no-one's surprise Berryman graciously accepted his posting as GOC Eastern Command and developed a close working relationship with Rowell.

{46} Berry remained at Eastern Command until the time came for him to leave the army in April 1954. It is claimed that, with Rowell's retirement also due that year, he made a half-hearted attempt to conjure political favour for the CGS position by lobbying the Minister for Defence Production, Sir Eric Harrison, but his age was against him. Instead, he accepted an offer from Prime Minister Robert Menzies to become Director General for the royal tour of Australia by Queen Elizabeth II that same year. He then became Chief Executive Officer and Director of the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales, a post he held until 1961.

{47} In the end Berryman was, in all likelihood, his own worst enemy. He realised too late the power and benefits that could be gained by high ranking officers through securing the favour of political heavyweights and developing close and cordial relationships with the press. He was, ultimately, hampered by his own intensely private, loyal and assiduous nature as well as his intelligence and abilities. Through his skill as a staff officer, liaison officer and planning officer, he had made himself indispensable to the army and to commanders like Lavarack, Blamey and MacArthur. Yet it was the dominance of the personalities and characters of these commanders that has seen the submergence of Berryman's identity and the overshadowing of the role that he played in the defeat of Japan. It was the nature of circumstance, politics and his pre-eminence in staff officer roles that resulted in him being precluded from the command appointments that he so desired and the publicity that he deserved. Despite this, it can be argued that, given the marginalisation of the AIF and the Australian Army in 1944 and 1945, he achieved far more in this period in the roles that he fulfilled than he could ever have done as a divisional or corps commander in what is commonly referred to as the "unnecessary campaigns." In the end, Lieutenant General Sir Frank Berryman can be seen as Australia's "forgotten man" of World War II.



Oil portrait of Berryman by Joshua Smith, painted in 1958.
AWM ART27533

{48} Perhaps the ultimate assessment of Berryman comes from Sir John Lavarack, a professional colleague whom Berryman himself respected and admired. In 1945 Lavarack commented to the official historian Gavin Long that he:*consider[ed] Berryman the best combination of fighting leader, staff officer, and administrator that I have met so far in our army, and I should think he would be hard to beat anywhere.*⁶²

The Author

Peter J. Dean is currently writing a biography of Lieutenant General Berryman as his PhD thesis with the School of History at the University of New South Wales. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and a Diploma of Education in History and Sociology from the University of Newcastle. Peter has taught history from high school through to university. In 1999 he was a recipient of a NSW government *Access Asia* scholarship to conduct research in Vietnam and has served as a Director of the Professional Teachers Council of NSW and President of the NSW Society and Culture Teachers Association. He has been a member of the Australian Army (Reserve) since 1993.

Endnotes

45. Hetherington, p.343.
46. Berryman took command on 6 November 1943.
47. John Coates, *An Atlas of Australia's wars*, vol.7 of *The Australian Centenary History of Defence*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.252.
48. AWM 67 3-30 part 2, *Records of Gavin Long*.
49. Hetherington, p.343.
50. Dennis (et al), p.96.
51. Hetherington, p.343.
52. David Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998), pp.476-7.
53. Berryman Diary, 7 September 1944; Blamey to Forde, 26 October 1944, quoted in Horner, *Blamey*, p.478.
54. Horner, *Blamey*, p.445.
55. Coates, *Bravery above blunder*, pp.127-128.
56. *Ibid.*, pp.124-5.
57. Berryman family papers, pp.14-17.
58. AWM PR 84/370 *Berryman papers*, Series 2, item 87.
59. Hetherington, p.378.
60. S. F. Rowell, *Full Circle* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1974), p.159. See also Horner, *Blamey*, p.574, and Hetherington, p.378.
61. Hetherington, 1973, p.378.
62. Letter, Lavarack to Long, 14 February 1945, written from the Australian Military Mission in Washington, AWM 67 3-209 part 1.

<http://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j37/berryman.htm>



Royal Australian Artillery Association (Victoria) Inc.

Annual General Meeting

Thursday the 9th of November 7.30 pm

*East Malvern RSL
Stanley Grosse Drive
East Malvern*

*Bistro opens 6 pm
(Contact Reg Morrell 9562 9552 for bookings by 1/11/05)*

Light supper provided after the meeting

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Twenty-ninth Annual General Meeting of the RAA Association (Vic) Inc
will be held at East Malvern RSL, Stanley Grose Drive, East Malvern,
Thursday 9th November 2006, at 7.30 pm (bistro open 6pm)

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Business arising
4. Correspondence
5. Treasurer
6. Membership report
7. General Business
 - a. President's report
 - b. Regimental reports
 - c. Election of office bearers
8. Other Business

NOMINATION FORM

This form is to reach the Secretary not later than 2nd November 2006

< (full name) of

< (address)

a member of the Association, is hereby nominated for the position of
President / Vice President / Secretary / Treasurer / Committee member (cross out those positions not
nominated for) by the undermentioned Proposer and Seconder, who are also members of the Association.

< (signature of Proposer)

< (Proposer's full name)

< (signature of Seconder)

< (Seconder's full name)

Signature of consenting nominee: <

FORM OF APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

I, <

of <

being a member of the Royal Australian Artillery Association (Victoria) Inc, hereby appoint

<

of <

being a member of that Incorporated
Association, as my Proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the General Meeting of the Incorporated Association
to be held on 3rd November 2005, and at any adjournment of that meeting.

Signed <

Date <

RAA ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC MIXED SOCIAL GOLF DAY



To be held at the Berwick Montuna Golf Club
Beaconsfield-Emerald Road, Guy

(Melways 212 C4)

On the Friday 10th November 2006

Tee Time 0830 Hrs

This will be our third Annual Golf Day and we look forward to an even bigger and better field to compete for the coveted RAA Association Perpetual Trophy.

Golfers at ALL levels of expertise are invited to attend, including wives, husbands, partners, relatives and friends. Caddies, coaches observers and encouragers are most welcome to attend either, or both, the golf and the lunch.

Hire clubs, buggies and motorised carts are available from the Golf-Shop. These items should be booked directly with the Golf shop on 9707 5226 at least ten days prior. Photo ID and a deposit will be required for clubs and carts.

The cost for golfers is \$25.00 which covers green fees for 18 holes and trophies.

Lunch will be available in the Clubhouse at very reasonable prices.

The competition of the day will be a stableford competition for handicap golfers, and a stroke competition for non-handicap golfers. This means that you count all your strokes. Some **Special Local Rules** may be made for non-handicap golfers.

A separate competition for handicap and non-handicap golfers will be held if there are sufficient numbers in each field. If not, the non-handicap golfers will be given a stableford score calculated by the Match Committee.

Non-handicap golfers will be given a handicap at the end of the competition (by a very complicated and involved system called the Calloway System) so that all golfers have a fair chance of winning their competition. This Calloway handicap will be used to calculate the stableford points (if required). Stableford competition allocates points per hole according to handicap. This will be calculated by the Match Committee.

Trophies for the Best Score and Nearest the Pin (2) in both competitions will be given. Trophies will be awarded in the Clubhouse during lunch.

So that tee times and a number for lunch can be booked for this very busy time of the year, would you please indicate if you would like to attend, and the number of people in your group, by telephone, mail or e-mail to:

Maj Neil Hamer, 12 Marida Court, Berwick 3806;

Telephone, 9702 2100;

E-mail, nhamer@bigpond.net.au

Not later than 20th October 2006.

Please include your handicap, if you have one, and the number of non-golfers who will be attending for lunch.

Anti-Aircraft Defences Torres Strait Horn Island 1942 1944

There is little written about the military history of the Torres Strait during the Second World War.

Thursday Island is the well known and relatively small island, and administrative centre of the area. Horn Island has the airstrip, which was upgraded during the war and used as a refuelling base for heavy bombers en route to New Guinea in 1942-43.

The 34th HAA Battery was raised in Victoria and in September 1942 was posted to Horn Island with eight fixed mounting 3.7" Heavy AA Guns, which were deployed to guns stations at Double Hill and King Point. Each battery was equipped with a Predictor and Height & Rangefinder; and also had a 40mm Bofors gun, mainly for protection against low flying aircraft. Radar equipment arrived later.

Shortly after their arrival the 34th Bty. was joined by the 157 Lt.AA Bty [Bofors] and the 74th A.A. Searchlight Coy. The role of these combined units was the protection of the airstrip against attack by Japanese bombers and to make use of the strip safe for our aircraft.

Unlike Darwin, Horn Island had no infrastructure – no water supply, no electricity nor mechanised equipment was available. Each of the eight gun pits (8.5m x 2.5m) were dug with pick and shovel in ground which was extremely rocky; with the result that the picks were worn to a few inches in a very short time. Wheel barrows were used to remove the rock by being pulled by a rope up a wooden plank. The pits were then lined with concrete and local rock. The quality of the work by the gunners is reflected in the excellent condition of preservation of the gun pits and ammunition dumps 64 years later.

In recent years much interest in the military history of Horn Island has been generated by the tireless work by local historian Vanessa Seekee OAM. Recently funding has been promised for the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan for the area..

34th Hy AA Battery Association is delighted with this news and is exploring the possibility of obtaining a 3.7" gun to be reinstalled in one of the actual sites that were used in 1942/44. Our members are committed to raising funds for such a purpose. The historical value of this would be immense, there will be very few sites still existing today where a AA gun can be seen in it's actual wartime location.

We would be most grateful if any reader could let us know of the location of any gun that may be available.

R Gordon Cameron OAM
President
34th Aust Hy AA Battery Assn.
PO Box 34, Balnarring Vic 3926
Email: gordonc@surf.net.au

Island Defenders

by Vanessa Seekee

Numerals appearing in parentheses, eg (1), in or at the end of paragraphs indicate a cross-reference which appears at the end of the article.

One of the least recognised groups of Australians to serve in the Australian Army is the men of the Torres Strait Islands. The Torres Strait is the 150 km of crystalline water that separates the southern coast of New Guinea from the tip of Cape York in Queensland. During the Second World War this shallow area of water dotted by coral cays and islands, proved to be a vital strategic point for the American and Australian forces pushing northwards through New Guinea. By the conclusion of the first 12 months of the Pacific War, 830 Torres Strait Island men, almost every man of eligible age in the area, would volunteer to serve their country. Thus was formed the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion, the only Indigenous Battalion ever to be formed in our nation



L-R (back): Gnr Kiwai Kusu, Gnr Nikira Mau, Gnr Garnia Kabai, and Gnr Arnuitu Yoelu (sitting). Photo: B. Araha, via the Torres Strait Heritage Museum.

The people of the Torres Strait are a proud and diverse people, with a background entrenched in the warrior ethos. This code was essential to the survival of each island's community as often other groups would conduct raids, thus forcing the defence of their island homes. This background ensured that when another country waged war on theirs, they leapt to defend it, even though they were not considered in the Commonwealth census of the very country they strove to defend.



A group of soldiers from the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion on Horn Island, 1943. Photo: Longmore via the Torres Strait Heritage Museum

During 1940, the Australian Government began to realise that should Japan be allied with Germany and enter the conflict, then a war would have to be fought on two fronts, Europe and the Pacific. This two-pronged approach would sorely stretch the human resources of Australia at the time. Thus the Director for Organisations and Recruitment suggested that the Torres Strait Islanders could be enlisted in the Australian Army, initially to allow the 49 Battalion to be released for service in New Guinea. Approval for the raising of a Company of Torres Strait Islanders was given in a letter from the Prime Minister, dated the 3rd May 1941.

"Investigations have indicated that the Torres Strait Islanders are well suited to be trained for military service and that there would be numerous volunteers forthcoming for such service at Thursday Island. As indicated in your letter of 14th January, the Director for Native Affairs would raise no objection to the recruitment of the Islanders."(2)



Everyone got along famously." Gnr Don Myers, far left with Torres Strait Light Infantry soldiers, Horn Island, 1943. Photo: Don Myers via the Torres Strait Heritage Museum.

Training for this initial company of Torres Strait Islanders began in late 1941, with a complement of 120. It is interesting to note that initially the enlistment of the Torres Strait Islanders was not welcomed by the Australian Government, as the Military Board's Policy of 1940 dictates. This policy prohibited Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders from enlisting, as they were not of 'European Origin', with their service being neither necessary nor desirable. The raising of a company of Torres Strait Islanders seemed to be in violation of this policy.

However this provides that no person will be enlisted voluntarily unless he is of substantially European origin and descent. This is only an order and does not affect the legal position and moreover could be varied or waived by a direction by Head Quarters. So far as is known, no such direction has been given but unless it has, the enlistment of Torres Strait Islanders was a breach of this order though perfectly lawful.(3)

These early recruits were quickly trained and then utilised in the defence of Thursday Island. There were several points on the

island to be defended. These included the fixed armament, which constituted the 4.7 inch gun and one anti-aircraft searchlight at Milman Hill; the wireless station; the supply stores; jetty; reservoir; power house; post office and oil depots. Due to the small number of troops on the island, the fixed armament was to be defended first, followed by the reservoir and then power house.(4) Other troops consisted of Royal Australian Artillery members, Royal Australian Engineers and the 49th Garrison Battalion.

By July 1942, the Torres Strait Company was utilised in a counterattack role, still defending the previous mentioned positions on Thursday Island, however, numbers would soon grow to allow members to be stationed on neighbouring Horn Island.



"These men look fine and savage in uniform . . ." Photo: Mrs Godtschalk, via the Torres Strait Heritage Museum.

Another recruitment drive began in June 1942, with a great increase in volunteers.(5) The reasons for this increase in volunteers can be attributed to several reasons. At this time of the year all the men were home from their respective marine industry jobs, and as such were available for enlistment. The other reason can be attributed to the known presence of the Japanese forces in the Torres Strait. This presence included Japanese submarines, air raids on Horn Island, and several incidences where the Japanese had machine-gunned villages. The Australian Government provided the vessel Melbidir to travel throughout the Torres Strait Islands, collecting those who wished to join and transporting them to Thursday Island.

Whap Charlie was one of the many who joined.

I was part of the crew of the Melbidir, the Government boat. I was the cabin boy. We went to Murray Island for recruiting there, all schoolboys, just 16 and 17 years old. They just left school and joined the Army. When we went to Thursday Island I saw No. 1 Platoon, No. 2 Platoon, and No. 3 Platoon like a snake, in perfect lines, marching along the road. It got my heart beating, so I signed up there on Thursday Island. They sent me to Pioneer Company.(6)

Such were the numbers of recruits, that the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion was formed, with a full compliment of 830 Torres Strait Island men, 40 Torres Strait Malays and mainland Aborigines. Training was per the Australian Army syllabus, with rifle drills, marching practice, Bren gun and

.303 rifle practices. They participated in joint exercises with other units, the construction of slit trenches and other defensive positions, reconnaissance patrols, dispersal of stores and ammunition. The training was intense with participation in tactical exercises focussing on attack, defence and patrolling, sniper and stalking exercises. One member of the forces reported:

These Islanders are a fine strong looking lot of men. They look well and savage in uniform. They are keen as mustard and can give us lessons in drilling and marching. I would rather fight with them than against them. If ever any trouble starts I should like to have a few of the boys handy.(7)

The Battalion's first Commanding Officer was Major Jock Swain, who had been on Thursday Island since March 1941 with the 49th Garrison Battalion. He remembers them fondly as being hard-working excellent soldiers.

"Many big jobs were done by the TSLI Battalion troops. During the Coral Sea Battle they unloaded and dispersed 7,000 tonnes of aviation fuel at Horn Island in five days - a great achievement considering the lack of facilities."(8)

On Horn Island members of the Battalion were part of the coordinated effort of Army and Air Force units to defend the island base. The primary defensive positions were the airstrips, thus reflecting the positioning of troops around these two airstrips and general aerodrome area. During the early months of 1942, Horn Island had little in the way of infantry troops, anti-aircraft weaponry or fighter aircraft. This Battalion was one of just two infantry units given the responsibility of the airstrip's protection. As at July 1942, two rifle platoons of the Company were to defend the Central Sector, with one rifle platoon of B Company and three mortar detachments of the 14th Garrison Battalion providing support. This Central Sector included the area from the wharf extending east around the coast to King Point, then from King Point to a line running north-south through the airstrip area to Double Hill.(9)



D Company, Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion on morning parade, Horn Island, 1943. Photo: Longmore via the Torres Strait Heritage Museum.

During 1943, the Torres Strait Light Infantry Pioneer Company was formed, with a compliment of 160 men. The reason for this formation was twofold. The first reason was due to the high numbers of Torres Strait Islanders volunteering for the Battalion, thus providing an excess of numbers. The second reason was to assist engineering units in the area with the construction of installations. The main engineering unit to be assisted by the new company was the 17th Australian Field Company, with jobs such as the Thursday Island wharf, water scheme for Horn Island, and a variety of buildings being undertaken. This Company came under the command of Major Mitchell, a veteran of the Middle East.

To assist the myriad of vessels traversing the waters of the Torres Strait, the 2nd Australian Water Transport Company was formed in early 1943. This Company had a compliment of 108 personnel, which was a mix of Torres Strait Islanders, Aboriginals and Malays. This unit was instrumental in guiding water craft through the treacherous waters of the Torres Strait. The vessels they assisted included the RAAF rescue launch, which plucked downed airmen from the waters of the Torres Strait. They also directed cargo boats throughout the islands with vital supplies and equipment for troops stationed on remote outer islands. Others were charged with piloting American PT boats through the Torres Strait. Walter Nona was one such pilot, and he recalls.

We guided the American PT boats from Thursday Island to Merauke or Daru. They were very fast. We would leave Thursday Island at 8am and get to Daru by teatime, 10pm. They had depth charges onboard in case we find the Japanese submarine, then the action would start.(10)

As the troop and airmen numbers in the area continued to grow during 1943, the administrative and logistical needs also increased hence the need for other units to support the fighting troops and airmen. These units included postal units, bakery, dentist, and members of the Salvation Army. Additionally there became an attraction for locating local foodstuffs, which would prevent the cost of transporting perishable foods over long distances, and the problem of short-term storage in conditions that were not conducive to their preservation. The solution was to form farming and marine supply units in operational areas, hence the formation of the 4th Aust. Marine Supply Platoon in August 1943. Ten members of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion volunteered for service in this unit, with the objective being the supply of marine food to the 1st Aust. Camp Hospital on Horn Island and the 6th Aust. Camp Hospital on Thursday Island. Combined with eleven recruits from other units, they set about achieving their objective.

Ray Cook recalls his time in the unit:

There was never any discrimination in those days. We all lived, ate, slept, and worked together and never a cross word was spoken. Everybody was jovial and full of joking. We all shared the clean and dirty work, whether on the boats or at the land camps.(11)

September 1943 saw both 'B' and 'D' Companies being amalgamated into the Mobile Force on Horn Island. This force came under the Horn Island Defensive Plan, which saw the mobile group as being able to challenge any Japanese troops that landed on the island, wherever the location. Their objective was to strike whilst the enemy were disorganised. The newly arrived 5th Aust. Machine Gun Battalion and companies of the 26th Aust. Infantry Battalion provided

support for the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion. Members of the Battalion on Thursday Island continued to defend key points on the island in conjunction with engineering jobs and dock operational duties.



Major C. Godtschalk, Commanding Officer Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion 1944-1946. Photo: Mrs Godtschalk, via the Torres Strait Heritage Museum

However, other issues soon became apparent in 1943, issues that had been festering since the formation of the Company and subsequent Battalion. These problems were the inequality of payment for the soldiers, their concern over village leadership while they were away, family food problems and other issues of equality.

The rates of pay were as follows:

Private	1st year: 3 pounds, 10 shillings per month 2nd year: 3 pounds, 15 shillings per month 3rd year: 4 pounds per month
L/Corporal	4 pounds, 7 shillings and 6 pence per month
Corporal	4 pounds, 15 shillings per month.

(12)

These pay scales were calculated on a comparison between the Papuan New Guinean Constabulary and not the Australian Army. A report on the enlistment of Torres Strait Islanders stated that this method of payment was incorrect.

Neither War Financial Regulations nor Military Financial Regulations provide for different rates of pay for Torres Strait Islanders and they appear to be entitled to full rates and not those which are in operation.(13)

In other units, a non Indigenous private received approximately 8 pounds per month. However the Malays in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion were paid the same as the non Indigenous soldiers, with Aboriginals paid at the same rate as the Islander soldiers. In addition, there were no allowances provided for the Islander soldiers, even though the Australian Government through a letter from Premier Smith to the Prime Minister approved such a scheme in December 1941.

"It is considered that if these allowances were granted, voluntary enlistment of Thursday Island men would be encouraged if it be decided to proceed with further enlistments. A large percentage of them has a dependent mother, father or some other relative and it is characteristic of this race that they consistently support their dependants."

The Director of Native Affairs disagreed with the process of providing allowances, stating that the usual arrangements in place for natives employed away from their island were to be adopted. As a result the Fortress Commander paid the Torres Strait soldiers one pound, one shilling per month, with the balance allotted to the Protector of Islanders.

Understandably, many of the men resented having to rely on the Protector to support their families.

The leadership of individual villages caused concern for the men whilst they were serving in the Australian Army. With the almost total removal of the men from each island, there was nobody left to provide leadership and to take on the role of Chief Councillor. Each island had been governed by a local election of Chief Councillor and his Councillors since the 1939 Torres Strait Islander's Act. During leave in 1943, the soldiers were appalled at the deterioration in the villages during their absence, with most of the population living in the caves and scrub on the island, due to the Japanese attacking the villages from the air. Another issue that affected the men's families was the problem of acquiring food. Since the war began there had been a steady rise in inflation, which saw the costs of food increase, making it increasingly hard to acquire foodstuffs, especially with the men not able to hunt.



Major Jock Swain, Commanding Officer, Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion 1942-1944. Photo Jock Swain, via the Torres Strait Heritage Museum.

Other contentious issues included the fact that alcohol was not permitted for the Torres Strait Islanders, but was permitted to the white troops and the Malays serving in the Battalion. Malays and white soldiers in the unit were also paid allowances, while the Torres Strait Islanders were not.

The event that brought all of the above issues to a point was the patrol of several Torres Strait Islanders into Japanese held territory in New Guinea. Wing Commander Thompson initially led this patrol. However, once he sustained injuries, Captain Wolfe took over. The patrol was made up of seven members of the Battalion, with their objective being to explore and report on any enemy

activity in the Oba and Wilderman Rivers area of Dutch New Guinea. Mr J. Anu explains their task:

"Some Japanese had been cut off in New Guinea. A patrol was sent to try to catch some for getting information. I volunteered and went to Merauke. We went out to the Murphy River in the launch

Rosemary and then we used a little pilot boat that came from Thursday Island. We had to travel inland in the rivers as it was too dangerous out in the sea."(14)

On the 23rd December 1943, the patrol engaged the Japanese on the Oetoemboewee River, with heated fire exchanged between their boat and the Japanese barge they encountered around a bend in the river. Four of the group were slightly injured, with one severely injured and one killed. The men were transported to Merauke via a Naval vessel, and from there to Horn Island, with the exception of the one seriously injured who remained in Merauke.

Upon their arrival back at Horn Island Cpl J. Anu spoke to his platoon commander Lt. Linklater concerning promises of extra pay for their New Guinea service. The Lieutenant in turn reported to Captain Godstchalk, commanding officer of 'D'. Company. The NCO's were paraded before Captain Godstchalk where they explained that since they had taken the same risks as a white soldier during the patrol work, they should receive equal pay. It was pointed out to the soldiers that the rate of pay would not increase because they had served in another area for a period of time. However, in his report Captain Godstchalk realised that the issue was not just an increase for the men of the patrol, but for the Battalion as a whole. The Military Board had recognised the problem of unequal pay scales in January 1942:

"...it has clearly been established that differentiation in matters of pay and the like have created such subdivisions and have had harmful effect on the Forces." (15)

Underpaid, worried about their families, frustrated at the political situation on the outer islands and additional issues of inequality, the Torres Strait Islanders instigated a mutiny. On the 30th December 1943,

expressing grievances in the Pearling industry of the Torres Strait pre World War 2. However, the Army saw it as a mutiny. Major Swain, Commanding Officer of the Battalion paraded the three companies and explained that it was not up to the officers of the Battalion to grant extra pay. However, he would pass their grievances further along the Military chain of command.

A result was achieved on 1 February 1944, when a Departmental Conference was held in Melbourne to address the topic of 'Natives in the Militar'.. The main point of discussion was the payment of the members of the Battalion; the second point was the practice of employing different types of Natives and Malays in the same area at differing rates of pay. The Conference decided that legally the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal servicemen were entitled to full rates of pay. However, payments were not to be made. Their reasons included the enormous cost of back payment at the full rate, the second was if the men were paid at these rates, which were far higher than what they achieved in civilian life, it would cause trouble when they left the Army. It was decided however to grant the Torres Strait Islander soldiers an increase, raising their pay to 66 percent of that which the white soldiers were paid. The War Cabinet approved this raise on the 20th March 1944, with the proviso that payment would still be made to the Director of Native Affairs.

A further result saw all Malaysians transferred to other units and all Aboriginals discharged from the Army. The problem of village leadership was rectified with voting conducted for village councillors and Chief Councillor. Those chosen were released from the Army in September 1944 to fulfil their duties as leaders on the outer islands. Upon their arrival onto their islands, they utilised skills acquired whilst in the Army, improving hygienic and living conditions in their home villages.

By December 1944, a lack of trained specialists in the Torres Strait area led the Fortress Commander on Thursday Island to request that the Battalion be trained in more specific roles. These included heavy vehicle drivers, motorcycle riders, shipwrights, crane drivers, carpenters and plumbers amongst other trades. As a result of successful training, the unit was employed in the role of a Docks Operating Company, with a small ships platoon, general transport platoon and a port maintenance platoon. During 1945, the Battalion was the last to be stationed in the Torres Strait, with all others either moving further north, or being disbanded. Hence by 1946, the unit was slowly disbanded, with all members returning to their home islands.

However, the men had changed. Post World War 2 in the Torres Strait would be a vastly different place than that of the pre War. The men had acquired new training and skills that were previously unobtainable to them in pre war life, thus enabling them to gain better-paid and more responsible occupations. They thus became empowered to make changes and improvements to the Torres Strait. These changes in attitude and training are still being felt today, some 56 years after the cessation of hostilities.

Major Jock Swain, the Battalion's first commanding officer, 1942--1944 recalls the men:

"All who served with the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion should be proud of their efforts during World War Two. I am sure that put to the test, their performance would have been excellent."(16)

Major Godstchalk, commander of the Battalion in 1944-1946 recalled the men he served with.

"As soldiers they were physically, morally and intellectually well above the average of men drawn from any other community, whether it be Australian, New Zealand, Indian or Great Britain. For this I can personally vouch. Intelligent and naturally bright, they quickly and easily absorbed the various military skills of an infantry battalion." (17)

Today, members of the Battalion march in the ANZAC Day parade, and take part in various commemorative days and functions. The largest function of recent days was the trip to Canberra to take part in the 2000 Remembrance Day ceremony at the Australian War Memorial. Wreaths were laid for the first time at the War Memorial to remember the 36 members of the Battalion who lost their lives whilst in the service of their country. The Battalion's grandchildren today serve in the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment, Charlie Company, Torres Strait, proudly marching on in the footsteps of their forebears.

For more information on the Torres Strait during World War Two, the author may be contacted on intheirsteps@hotmail.com

or via PO Box 6, Horn Island, Qld 4875.

Vanessa Seekee. *Horn Island, In Their Steps, 1939-1945* was released in December 2001.

An education kit produced by the author Spirit of ANZAC: A Torres Strait Perspective, with activities for Years 1-12, is available from the Thursday Island RSL Sub-branch.

Endnotes:

1. Aborigines did serve, but in unit strengths, or as individuals within units.
2. National Archives of Australia, Melbourne, Series MP 508, item 275/701/328. Letter from the Acting Prime Minister Collins re the Torres Strait Islanders for Thursday Island Garrison
3. AWM 54:628/1/1: 'Enlistment of Torres Strait Islanders.'
4. AWM 54 243/6/108: Appreciation of the Situation by Lt. Col .R.J.R. Hurst, 12th July 1941.
5. This increase led the Torres Strait Company to be officially renamed the Torres Strait Light Infantry.
6. Torres Strait Heritage Museum, Jock Swain Sound Archives: 'Interview with Whap Charlie, 1998.'
7. AWM 60, 9/785/12: 'HQ Qld L of C, Intelligence Report for the week ending November 20th, 1942.
8. Torres Strait Heritage Museum, Jock Swain Sound Archives: 'Interview with Major Jock Swain, January 1997.'
9. AWM item 01/42: Thursday Island Fortress, Operation Instruction No.2.
10. Torres Strait Heritage Museum, Jock Swain Sound Archives: 'Interview with Walter Nona, November 2000.'
11. Torres Strait Heritage Museum, 'Correspondence with Ray Cook.'
12. National Archives of Australia, Melbourne Office., MP 508, item 275/701/361. 'Employment of Torres Strait islanders on Military Duty, Thursday Island.'
13. AWM 54, 628/1/1, 'Enlistment of Torres Strait Islanders.'
14. Torres Strait at War, Thursday Island State High School, 1989.
15. Letter from 'A Short History of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion.'
17. Sydney Morning Herald, 17th December 1965.

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http://www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww2/bfa/island_defenders.html



MY SERVICE CAREER

By COL Graham Farley, OAM, RFD, ED (Rtd)

Part 25 Colonel Artillery, 1981

I still had nearly four months to go in my artillery posting. It was no secret in the corridors of *Grosvenor* that the handover would take place on 28 Apr 91. But it was still going to be a busy period, as the units would be going to camp in the first part of the year.

On another idea, I had received considerable support to the concept of gathering together the field artillery officers for a dinner at the Naval and Military Club. This was held on Thu 29 Jan 81. Eighteen officers sat down for what I termed, a "Mini Gunner Dinner". Invitations were extended to the group known as the .BBC, namely Brigadiers Jim Barry, (of course, already a gunner), Neale Bavington and MAJGEN Kevin Cooke. Two officers from *Grosvenor* were invited. These were COL John Haynes and LTCOL A. McGee. The Club combined the Blamey and Monash rooms to more than adequately and with dignity seat the dining group.



LTCOL George James, CO of 10 Mdm Regt, RAA, at the Open Day on Sat 4 Apr 81 at Puckapunyal

LTCOL Bill Myers was PMC, with MAJ John Henry was Mr. Vice. In addition to me, the lieutenant-colonels in attendance were Doug Perry, George James, Mike Vincent, Graeme Standish, Graham Allinson and Baxter Green. The majors were Keith Bunnett, Ian George, Bob Freeland, John Morkham and Dennis Murphy. MAJGEN Cooke was not able to join us until after the dinner had concluded, but was there for the loyal toast and 'afters'. Apologies were received from MAJGEN Jock McNeill and MAJ Jim Killender.

The dinner reflected the strength of artillery leadership in the 3 Div FF Gp at that time, particularly in view that seven of the majors mentioned above were qualified at Tac 5 level and were awaiting promotion to lieutenant-colonel. The gathering greatly assisted the changeover in personnel that would take place at the end of April and also assisted the co-ordination of the forthcoming unit camp program.

BRIG Neale Bavington, RFD, ED, was still Commander 3 Div Ff Gp. Since the command of the guns were part of that rôle, he held briefings for the artillery camps. 2/15 Fd Regt, RAA, had theirs on the Sunday previous to the normal parade night, when 132 Div Loc Bty, RAA, and 10 Mdm Regt, RAA, had theirs. (Units will be referred from now on in this article by their numeral, eg., 132.)

I was glad that the artillery had got in first with a dinner, as a 'red hat's dinner' followed on Tue 17 Feb 81 in the same venue, chaired by the Senior ARes Officer. I had been wise to book a bed at the club as it turned out, but it was an excellent evening.

2/15 was at Puckapunyal on the weekend of 20/22 Feb 81. As I have probably already explained, Braemar College was about hour's drive from Puckapunyal. This distance and length of trip made it feasible for me to .motor up,. as once might have been said. But the familiarity with the range, whether with imperial or metric maps, can never replace the need to study everything in one's 'in tray'. I had not.

Having arranged accommodation again, something that was sometimes left to good luck and chance I headed for the range camp. It was always good manners to call upon CAPT Maurie Bennett, the range officer, but in this case it was to find out as to where 2/15 were bivouacking. But one was always welcome at range camp. The noise of radios was always in the background in

the building, and hospitality was always forthcoming. Maurie over the many years that he held that very important job used to off-load some of his frustrations on visitors that he had got to know well.

2/15 were sited out in the new western section of the new range and it was not until after lunch on the Saturday that I had transport to get there. I watched the regiment's shooting both from the OP and the gun end. I was at Ives Hill the next day.

LTCOL George James, CO of 10, invited me to visit his regiment at the Geelong depôt the following Wednesday. Fortunately 'the system' could generally provide me with either a military or a Commonwealth car for such trips. If it was a military vehicle and it arrived before the students went home on their buses after school, it always seemed to provide much interest and comment.



LBDR Hudson

So down to Geelong I went. But George wanted to proceed to the Colac depôt, where the cadre staff member was being given a farewell function. For once it did not rain on that trip between depôts. In fact, I badly needed my sun-glasses, the sun was so glaring. I seemed to remember that on all previous trips to Colac, there had been a shower of rain either going or coming home. It seemed to be part of the package!

Colac was still a battery, although the Warragul depôt had long been converted to RAEME on the grounds that it was too far from Melbourne for the guns to be adequately maintained in firing condition. Yet Colac was much further in distance from Melbourne.

On Sat 28 Feb 81, there was a dinner for the PSO commissioned officers at *Grosvenor*. When senior NCO's were offered this opportunity, they often had to weigh very carefully the advantages and disadvantages of such an advancement. Many prospered as officers, albeit in adjutant or QM roles, but others, such as Warrant Officer Class 1 Bob Millet, MBE, declined the offer but was grateful for this recognition of his loyal and competent service.

My diary indicates that there was still some concern with the relationship between the Artillery Association and the Artillery Committee. Straddling these two bodies was the Colonel Commandant. It was perhaps all too easy for the Col Arty and his CO's to decide on dates for social functions, such as the Gunner Dinner, the Gunner Ball and St. Barbara's Day, for they and their regular army support would be the ones who would have to make most of the running. A better relationship was to exist after a luncheon that included MAJGEN Jock McNeill, the Colonel Commandant; 'Sandy' McNair, the Artillery Association president; LTCOL Mike Vincent, my successor; and me, took place.

2/15 entered camp on Sat 7 Mar 81. There was also a detachment from 48 Bty from South Australia, fresh from their Mount Shanck trophy win of the previous year, when they tied with 16 Bty from Tasmania. I endeavoured to spend as much time at Puckapunyal over that fortnight that I could justify with my headmaster's responsibilities. I often found it possible, say, to teach a period, visit the camp and yet be back in time for parent interviews. I was fortunate that both the army and the school worked to a strict timing. The staff and students got used to me wearing 'greens'¹

Once again, 2/15 had headed for the western boundary of the now extended range. They had a base camp closer to the new west range camp gate off Tooboarac Road. On the Monday when I sought transport to the bivouac site, I rather shocked the CO, LTCOL Doug Perry, when I got a lift as a passenger in the water truck from the base camp. Never over athlete, I was given a quick lesson in how to climb up to the front seat with one foot on the rim of the left front wheel hub!

¹They were even more impressed if I was in mess kit. But of course, some students would ask whether I was in the Salvation Army! Later, when Braemar College established a cadet unit 'greens' were quite common as would be the 'disruptive pattern' uniforms of later years. Braemar always had one or two applicants each year for ADFA.

On the Saturday I took a small student party from Braemar College to view the shooting. This included a visit to the Armoured Corps museum. Everything had been put in place for the Artillery Association's visit to the camp on Sunday, but only two or three could make the trip. In the afternoon there was a CVT shoot. The opportunity was taken to adjust the fuses so that with simultaneous firing, the trajectory of the rounds was illustrated with the airbursts. 48 Bty had organised Chinook helicopters for part of their camp and that added a fresh dimension to the opportunities. I again brought my school chairman up to Puckapunyal for a visit.

My diary records that it was at the direct shoot on Fri 20 Mar 81 that firing had to be suspended while first, a car and trailer drove unconcernedly across the area beyond the targets of old tanks and car bodies, only to be followed by a tractor. Were the drivers that confident of the accuracy of the gunners?

There was a farewell luncheon at the Club for COL John Haynes, who had stood in for COL Kevin Gureney, following the latter's untimely death. Everyone who was anyone was at the luncheon. COL .Lockey. Thomson, a gunner, was the incoming Assistant Commander to the FF Gp.



Two of the 5.5 inch.

By Wed 1 Apr 81, 10 was in camp. Braemar College had enjoyed a close relationship with Salesian College at Sunbury, the Roman Catholic boarding school that now occupied the building, *Rupertswood*, that had been built by Sir William J. Clarke, Bt. It had also in Clarke's time been the site for the legendary match when the stumps were burnt and the 'ashes' placed in an urn - the traditional trophy for which English and Australian test teams have competed ever since.

Sir William had not only influenced the route of the Bendigo railway to go past his home, complete with private station, but commanded a half battery of artillery, initially with Nordenfeldt guns. The other half battery was at *Werribee Park*.

Although the Sunbury battery was now no

longer on the order of battle, there had been sufficient traditionalists in the district to maintain the battery with its uniforms, drill procedures and some symbolic firing platforms. This group has always been very active in military re-enactment displays.

I had promised Father Fox of the Salesian College, a visit of a party of his cadets to see contemporary guns firing at Puckapunyal. This was arranged. I met the cadets at Romsey where they shared their transport with me to Puckapunyal. LTCOL George James laid everything on for the party of cadets from accurate shooting to be observed from the OP and then a Charge 3 shoot at the gun end. After an afternoon tea of chocolate milk and cake, the boys returned to Sunbury after a very exciting day, dropping me off on the way at Romsey.

On the following Saturday, the Artillery Association attended in strength. I also had a group of students from Braemar with me. The six rounds of battery right were very impressive, particularly as smokeless repellent was being used, resulting in dramatic flashes from the guns.

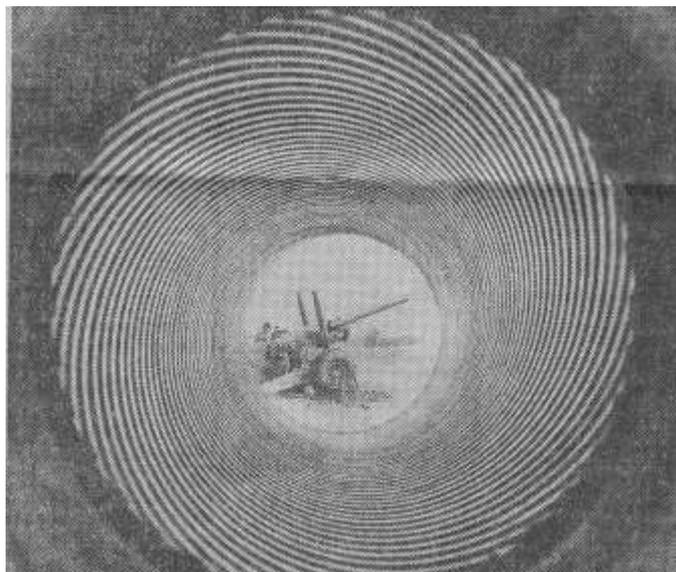
Sun 5 Apr 81 was in effect my last day as an active gunner officer. LTCOL James arranged for me to have a final shoot from the OP. My notes record that adjusting procedures were not quite according to the book, but the gods were merciful and the adjusting round landed right where I wanted it. I then turned round to see that three of the OP officers were holding up cards bearing

the numbers, 3, 3 and 4, as if they were diving judges! As the Col Arty had no powers of command, the officers stayed in their appointments, but it was a good way for me to go out. It was all very reminiscent of my memorable shoot at Sennybridge, Wales, in 1966, when, again, the adjusting round landed spot on!

I had my last official trip to 10 Mdm Regt at Geelong on Wed 15 Apr 81. I was the guest speaker at the Sunbury RSL Anzac Day Service. Three days later, on Tue 28 Apr 81, I woke up as officer to the Senior Army Reserve Officer, 3 MD' on the UOL and Artillery list. The following night I sought permission from the new Col Arty, COL Mike Vincent, to change in his office into uniform and for the time being I was allotted an office near to MAJGEN Kevin Cooke's.

Mike and I had been rivals for many years. My first acquaintance with him was in the Officers Mess at 2 Fd Regt, RAA, at Batman Avenue. Amongst the mess games was the 'Michigan Cavalry'. A group of officers would line themselves at one end of the room, link arms, and then charge towards the other assembled officers, (most of them innocently chatting and drinking together), bringing mayhem and chaos in their wake. A Captain Vincent was often amongst the cavalry!

Over the years, we were promoted at about the same rate and had been 'brother' commanding officers when I had 10 and he 15. In TEWTs we were always ready to score off each other. Both of us always endeavoured to maintain the traditions of the Regiment. It was through his integrity that, on being posted to Singapore in his profession, he declined the earlier appointment to Colonel Artillery and I was chosen in his place. It was fitting on his return to Melbourne that he should receive the appointment and the rank that went with it.



A 5.5" gun seen through the barrel of another one

In due course in his period as Col Arty, Mike would to all intents and purposes command the guns once again as Commander, Divisional Artillery, when the Third Division was re-raised. In rather a similar manner to the short-lived Pentropic Division, it seems that the army cannot resist trying different ideas, although the principle of a brigadier in a division commanding the guns had been proven and clearly established in the Second World War. So with the re-raised division, artillery recovered effective command of the guns but not the rank. This was a pity.

To all intents and purposes my period as a gunner officer was about to come to an end. I would now be a staff officer on the 3 Div FF Gp orbat, labelled as 'Colonel Personnel' or 'Col Pers'. I looked forward to learning my new duties. I would just have to keep the smell of cordite in small bottles on my desk.

The photos in this article appeared in *The Geelong Advertiser* on Tue 7 Apr 81 with a supporting article (not printed) written by Gary Villinger.



Parade Card

OCT 2006

03 ADI Benalla visit
19 Committee
20 Arty lunch (all ranks)

NOV 2006

05 RSL Springvale
09 A.G.M.
10 Golf Day
16 Committee

DEC 2006

03 St Barbara's Day
14 Committee

JAN 2007

FEB 2007

11 Church Parade
15 Committee

MAR 2007

15 Committee
?? HMAS Cerberus visit

APR 2007

19 Committee
25 ANZAC Day

MAY 2007

17 Committee
29 Gunner Dinner

JUN 2007

?? 3rd DIV lunch (all ranks)
21 Committee

JUL 2007

01 Res Forces Day
19 Committee

AUG 2007

16 Committee
?? Regt Ball

SEP 2007

20 Committee

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Brief Service History _____

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