

CASCABEL

Journal of the

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION
(VICTORIA) INCORPORATED

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Courtesy WO 2 Lionel Foster 10 Mdm Regt Assn

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CASCABEL

Journal of the

----- ROYAL AU STRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC -----



FOUNDED:

First AGM April 1978
First Cascabel July 1983

COL COMMANDANT:

BRIG D.I.Perry RFD, ED

PATRONS and VICE PATRONS: 1978

Patron: LT GEN The Hon Sir Edmund
Herring

KCMG, KBE, DSO, MC, ED

Vice Patron: BRIG Sir William Hall KBE,
DSO, ED

1982

Patron: BRIG Sir William Hall KBE, DSO,
ED

Vice Patron: MAJGEN N. A. Vickery CBE,
MC, ED

1999

Patron: BRIG K. V. Rossi AM, OBE, RFD,
ED

Vice Patron: MAJ GEN J. D. Stevenson AO,
CBE

PRESIDENTS:

1978 MAJGEN N. A. Vickery CBE, MC, ED

1979 MAJGEN J. M. McNeill OA, OBE, ED

1981 COL A. (Sandy) Mair ED

1984 MAJ P. S. (Norman) Whitelaw ED

1988 BRIG K. V. Rossi AM, OBE, RFD, ED

1991 MAJ M. Taggart RFD, ED

2004 MAJ N Hamer RFD

JOURNAL NAME:

CASCABEL - Spanish - Origin as small bell
or Campanilla (pro: Kaskebell), spherical bell,
knob like projection.

CASCABLE - English spelling.

ARTILLERY USE:

After 1800 AD, it became adjustable.
The breech is closed in large calibres by a
CASCABEL(E) screw, which is a solid
block of forged wrought iron, screwed into
the breech coil until it pressed against the
end of the steel tube. In the smaller
calibres, the A bore tube is carried
through to form the CASCABEL(E)

[Ref:

Royal Military College, Sandhurst, by COL
G. Philips, RE, 4th Ed, Ch-1, P9, para
28,1884].

[Source: COL Alan Mason, Vic, May
1993].

CASCABEL HISTORY:

The name was put forward by the first
editor, LTCOL Rob Gaw, and accepted
because of its unique and obvious Artillery
connection.

ASSOC LOGO:

Our Assoc Logo is the 1800 AD 9 Pdr
Waterloo Field Gun. Copy is taken from
Device, Badge and Motto of the Royal
Regiment of Artillery, as approved in 1833,
by HM King William IV.

LAPEL BADGE:

Copy of the left arm brass gilded gun
once worn by GUN SGTS above the
chevrons on each arm. Brassards worn by
IGs at North Head were embroidered with
this insignia. Selected by MAJ Warren
Barnard, 1984 Assoc Committee.

**RAA Association (VIC) Inc
Committee**

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**Honorary
Auditor:**

MUSEUM TRUST

Curator: SSGT B. Cleeman
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CONTENTS AND SUBMISSIONS

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Article style, clarity and conciseness remain the responsibility of the article owner or author.

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ORGANISATIONS ADF &

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The President Writes

It is that time of the year again when, because of printing requirements, I am writing this report on the last day in November to be posted about the middle of January. The December activities have, of course, not yet taken place, so it is very difficult, if not impossible, to comment on them. I will say that I think that the format for these activities should be successful.

The AGM in early November was supported by the usual number of about 35 members. I managed to keep the meeting running to time this year, and so we finished at a reasonable hour. A number of very good suggestions were brought up, and these will be discussed in more detail by the Committee.

Just a quick reminder that the Church Parade will be held on the **second Sunday** in February, not the first Sunday. It will be held at the Uniting Church next door to the depot in Chapel Street.

One of the suggestions from the AGM is that the Gunner Luncheon (Dinner) be a mixed function. That is that partners, wives, husbands and friends be invited to attend. The Committee is seriously considering this suggestion, and a decision will be made at the first Committee meeting in 2007. It is not intended that the format of the activity should be changed. The formalities of previous Dinners will be retained.

A number of activities have a short lead-time. The only practical, inexpensive way of notifying members is the email. If you have an email address, please ensure it is up-to-date. If you do not have access to the internet, maybe you know someone who does who would be prepared to take messages for you.

I would like to wish all members and their families the Compliments of the Season, and may 2007 be all that you desire.

Regards to all

Neil Hamer
MAJ (R)



MESSAGE FROM THE COLONEL COMMANDANT

Dear fellow Gunners,

This year has been busy for every member of the Defence Force, both Reserve and Regular. From my perspective it has also been a busy year and I am very pleased with the various activities with which I have been involved.

The year effectively commenced with the annual Regimental Church parade which was well attended and supported by the Band who make it a stirring event. I am not sure what the neighbours think however we inside certainly enjoy the celebration.

In no particular order, there was the unveiling of the Regimental Plaque at the Light Horse Memorial Park, which was well attended and Major Taggart's address was the highlight of the day. The visit to the 2nd/10th field firing later in the day made the occasion even more relevant.

The ANZAC day service at Chapel Street, followed by attendance at the ANZAC parade at Geelong was another busy and memorable day. This service is now part of our Regimental tradition and it is pleasing to see the increase in attendance year on year.

The Gunner Dinner and the Artillery ball were also well supported and successful social events and we must thank the organisers of those functions.

I attended a mid year Regimental Committee meeting at Randwick Barracks in July and the annual meeting at Puckapunyal in October. Time was taken out to attend the Annual Gunner Luncheon at the Naval and Military Club where our Representative Colonel Commandant MAJGEN T R Ford addressed us on Australia's involvement in International Peacekeeping and in particular his extensive and recent involvement. We were advised that more information on the subject was available at www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au and we were encouraged to consider a donation to the proposed memorial. I have asked General Ford to prepare an article for a future issue of Cascabel on this interesting and informative subject.

Perhaps the most significant event for the year was the presentation of a Regimental Flag to the Shrine of Remembrance. on St Barbara's day. Although a short and simple ceremony, I believe that this flag will significantly enhance the public awareness of our Regiment whilst giving a focus and source of pride and reflection to all Gunners and their families.

In conclusion, this has been a busy and exciting year for all of us and I put this down to three key words, Support, Communication and Inclusion.

At all times I have asked that all Gunners support our serving member, both Reserve and regular, by attending as many function as possible. I believe that this visible support goes a long way to assisting with morale and retention This support is facilitated by communication and whilst I readily accept that there have been some shortcomings in this area, I expect a significant improvement next year. Finally there is an ethos of inclusion and a welcoming attitude at both 2nd/10th and the School. Please take advantage of this as I know that Colonel Ashton will be particularly offended if you drive past any of his Barracks without dropping in.

To all members and your families I extend my best wishes for Christmas and prosperity and good health in the New Year.

Col Comdt RAA (SR)

Membership Report

January 2007

There has been very little change in the membership since the last issue of *Cascabel*.

Current Membership	
Life Members	213
Annual Members	78
Affiliates	41
Others (CO/CI, Messes, etc.)	11
RSL	1
Libraries	<u>5</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>349</u>

8 current members are still unfinancial for 2006/07

New Member

We welcome BDR H T Dunkley to the Association as an Annual Member and hope to see him at our functions in the near future.

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

Contact: Telephone: 9702 2100
0419 533 067
E-mail nhamer@bigpond.net.au



**Address by Major General (Retired) Tim Ford, RAA Representative Colonel
Commandant to Victorian Gunners on 20th Oct 2006 at the Naval Military Club, 27
Little Collins St**

I am delighted to be here, and I would like to thank Brig Doug Perry, the RAA Colonel Commandant Southern Region for the invitation to attend today's luncheon and the opportunity to address you. I am delighted to see present so many distinguished Gunners and Guests. I fully recognise the important role that Victoria and its Gunner units have played in the history of this nation. Long may that continue. May I also acknowledge the presence of Major General Barry and of Major General John Whitelaw, a previous Representative Colonel Commandant and Chair of RAA History sub-Committee, and the presence of other RAA Colonel Commandants Arthur Burke, Al Piercy and Reg Foster, who have taken leave from the RAA Regimental Conference occurring at Puckapunyal, to be present today.

I have promised today to talk on UN peacekeeping, but first let me say a few words on my role as Representative Colonel Commandant and that of the regional Colonel Commandants. We see ourselves as providing an important link between the history and traditions of the Regiment and the gunners in today's Hardened Networked Army. An Army, which as part of the Australian Defence Force, is designed to have the appropriate capabilities necessary to defend Australia in the difficult environment of the 21st Century. I seek your support in this task through the network of regional RAA unit and State associations. That link provides today's gunners with understanding of the proud traditions of the Regiment and its esprit de corps, and from that the determination to continue to perform well in the RAA challenges ahead. As part of maintaining our Gunner traditions, I particularly note the importance of properly recording our history, and in ensuring that we provide a future home for the memories of our World War 2 associations as their numbers dwindle. I look to you to assist with the Victorian associations.

As outlined by the current Head of Regiment, Brigadier Fogarty, in the latest RAA Liaison Letter, the RAA today provides 24 hr all weather capabilities of joint, interagency and coalition coordination; integrated surveillance and target acquisition; discriminate, precise and scalable fires; and counter air operations. While these words are different from the past so as to accurately describe the modern tasks of the Army and its artillery, in essence the Gunners still provide four essential capabilities - coordination of fire support, location of enemy fire units, close fire support to our forces and low level air defence.

But the Army and its Gunners today must also provide a wide range of other options for Government, including as part of the recent involvement of the ADF in .peacekeeping. or "peace support operations" around the world. These Operations are taking place in Timor Leste, in the Solomon Islands, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, and in the Middle East. The RAA is involved in these operations both with the provisions of key individuals and capabilities, and also with sub-units. All disciplines of the Regiment today - field, target acquisition and air defence - are involved in these deployments.

Let me now talk a little more about international peacekeeping today. This is based on my recent experiences as Head of Mission of a United Nations peacekeeping mission (UNTSO), as the Military Adviser to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and presently as a UN adviser and mentor

WE need to understand that UN Peacekeeping is first and foremost a very political process because:

- . The UN Charter and UN structure is based on the world of 1945 not 2006
- . The UN process contains inherent political and financial tensions (consider the lobbying surrounding the appointment of the next UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki Moon from South Korea)
- . There are now 192 UN Member States.
- . The UN is a tool of world opinion

- . The principle of sovereign equity (represented by the UN General Assembly) does not equal political equality (as carried out in the UN Security Council), and
- . National agendas more normally more important to nations than international peace and security

The current UN deployment on peacekeeping is as large as it has ever been. Today there are some 18 DPKO led Peacekeeping Operations involving over 95,000 military, police and international civilians from some 112 countries with an annual budget of almost \$4.75 Billion. Additional there are a range of other Peace Operations being conducted by regional organizations and coalitions, including the European Union, the African Union, NATO, RAAMSI , etc, often working in partnership with the UN or under a UN Security Council mandate.

The Peacekeeping environment today is also extremely difficult (consider Sudan, DRC, Georgia, Haiti). The conditions challenge the time honoured peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality, and minimum use of force, and there are real questions of legitimacy and credibility. In most cases the “so called” peace to be kept is weak and fragile.

We need to appreciate that while there is no specified enemy in peacekeeping operations, the environment is still dangerous and volatile (e.g. Timor, Lebanon). The military and police components involved are operating outside their normal role and must be specifically trained and well prepared for peacekeeping tasks. These operations occur in difficult locations amid destroyed infrastructure and failed institutions.

Today's Peacekeeping Missions are multi-dimensional with integrated components. For Example, MONUC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo operates in a country which is the size of Western Europe. This Mission involves some 16700 armed military, 780 UN unarmed military observers, 1121 police, 960 international civilians, some 2000 local staff, and 600 UN volunteers. MONUC has many different components and programmes involving security, humanitarian action, development, elections etc. It has a budget exceeding \$1.2 Billion annually and some 60 peacekeepers have died there over the last 5 years.

As with most Peacekeeping missions, the MONUC mandate includes both peacekeeping and peace building tasks, involve transitions, must address difficult Rule of Law and Human Rights issues. It can only be successful if its activities are fully coordinated, including with all the various UN agencies and the large number of other international actors and NGOs involved.

Australia plays an important role in Peace Support Operations and UN Peacekeeping today. Since 1947, over 26,000 Australians (military and police) have contributed to over fifty operations, in more than two dozen theatres of conflict around the world.

To celebrate and commemorate Australia's involvement in peacekeeping for almost 60 years, it is intended to build an Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project in Canberra. The vision is to create a national memorial that will appropriately honor the sacrifice of Australian Peacekeepers in the service of international peace and security, recognize the courage and professionalism of Australian Peacekeepers in the face of the particular challenges of their missions. The Memorial will be the focus for recognizing the continuing significant contribution by Australians to international peacekeeping. We hope to open the Memorial on 14th September 2008, and it is expected to cost about \$2.7M. to construct. I would welcome your support to this project.

For more information on this project visit the website at www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au

Thank you for your attention. Questions



RAA Association (Victoria) Inc
Corps Shop

The following items may be purchased by mail, or at selected Association activities.

PRICE LIST

<p>Badges, etc</p> <p>RAA Assn (Vic), members \$5.00 RAA badge cuff links \$9.00 Key ring, RAA badge \$4.00 Key ring, RAA (Pewter) \$4.00</p> <p>Ties</p> <p>Blue with single red gun \$30.00 RAA Burgundy with gold gun \$43.00 RAA Navy with gold gun \$43.00 St Barbara Stripe \$43.00</p> <p>Books</p> <p><i>Kookaburra s Cutthroats</i> \$39.00 <i>Aust Military Equip Profiles</i> \$13.50 <i>AMEF Profile Leopard Tank</i> \$17.00</p> <p>ENQUIRIES:</p> <p>BRIAN CLEEMAN (03) 9560 7116 REG MORRELL (03) 9562 9552</p>	<p>Stationery</p> <p>Card, RAA badge, with envelope Christmas message \$0.20 blank inside \$0.20</p> <p>Stickers</p> <p> Bumper: <i>Gunners do it</i> <i>with a bigger bang</i> \$2.00</p> <p> Square: gold badge, red and blue background \$2.00</p> <p>ORDERS: Most orders will require an additional FIVE DOLLARS packing and postage, which will cover one to several small items. If in any doubt concerning this, or availability, please contact one of the enquiries numbers above.</p> <p>Cheques should be made payable to RAA Association (Victoria) Inc, and be crossed <i>Not Negotiable</i>.</p> <p>Orders to: Mr B. Cleeman 28 Samada Street Notting Hill VIC 3168</p>
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AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPING MEMORIAL

AN INVITATION TO BE A SPONSOR OR MEMBER



The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will commemorate and celebrate Australian peacekeeping. It will honour the sacrifice, service and valour of Australian peacekeepers given in the same spirit as in other conflicts honoured in cenotaphs and memorials across Australia and on ANZAC Parade, Canberra.

Progress to Date

The Federal Government, through the Department of Veterans' Affairs has provided an initial grant of \$200,000 to assist with the construction of the Memorial, which experience indicates requires about \$2.5 million to fund such a major national memorial in Canberra. A committee for the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project has been convened with duly elected office bearers and representatives from the ADF, the AFP, State and Territory Police, and peacekeeping veterans.

The APMP Committee welcomes membership and support from all peacekeeping veterans, interested individuals and organisations.

Full details of the project are listed on our website : www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au

INVITATION
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY
CHURCH PARADE

SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2007, 10:00am

FEATURING

- * Marching of the Queen's Banner
- * Traditional prayer for artillery forces
- * Music by 2/10 Field Regiment Artillery Band

GUEST PREACHER

Rev. Don Ikitoelagi, Director in Multicultural Ministries
Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

WHERE?

St. George's East St. Kilda Uniting Church
4 Chapel Street, St. Kilda (150m from Dandenong Road)

Parking on site. Handy to Chapel Street trams and the Windsor
Train Station on the Sandringham line.

With morning tea next door at the R.A.A. Depot, 8 Chapel Street.

Inquiries: Rev. Angela Tampiyappa ph. 9731 0604
Major R.A.W. Smith RFD ph. 9435 6352
WO1 David Lehr ph. 9526 4222

Disaster at Fromelles

The worst 24 hours in Australian history occurred 90 years ago at Fromelles. Not the worst in Australian military history, the worst 24 hours in Australia's entire history. The Australians suffered 5,533 casualties in one night. The Australian toll at Fromelles was equivalent to the total Australian casualties in the Boer War, Korean War and Vietnam War put together. It was a staggering disaster.

And this catastrophic attack at Fromelles - advocated and orchestrated by a British corps commander - had no redeeming tactical justification whatsoever. It was, in the words of a senior participant, Brigadier General H.E. "Pompey" Elliott, a "tactical abortion". One-third of the Australian casualties at Fromelles were in Elliott's 15th Brigade.

In July 1916 Elliott and his men had just arrived at the Western Front. Like most formations new to the main arena in the biggest war there had ever been, they were given a relatively undemanding initiation in a quiet part of the line. Only twice since the Western Front had stabilised had there been fierce fighting in this benign sector near Fromelles. But Elliott and his senior officers had scarcely begun to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings when they received startling news: Elliott's 15th Brigade would be participating in the 5th Division's imminent full-scale attack against the Germans.



Brigadier General Harold "Pompey" Elliott, commander of the 15th Brigade in France.

H15596

Elliott was profoundly concerned. The operation seemed inadvisable for a host of reasons: preparations would be rushed, the artillery was inexperienced, and no man's land was too wide (400 metres in places). Elliott's men would also have to advance opposite the formidable German strongpoint known as the Sugarloaf, an elevated concrete bastion bristling with machine-guns.

With Elliott's misgivings growing, he met Major H.C.L. Howard, a visiting staff officer from the Commander-in-Chief's headquarters. Elliott took Howard forward, not just to the front line but beyond, to a post in no man's land that afforded a good view of the Sugarloaf. Elliott showed Howard his planned dispositions and draft orders and asked for Howard's frank assessment of what would eventuate. Visibly moved, Howard predicted the attack would prove "a bloody holocaust". Elliott urged him to go back to Sir Douglas Haig and say so. Howard promised he would.

Whatever Howard may have said to Haig, the attack was delayed but not cancelled. The attack was fixed for 19 July. Disaster loomed with terrible inevitability.

The preparations were rushed and inadequate. Moreover, the Germans on higher ground enjoyed sweeping visibility and could see what was happening. Crucially, the attackers' inexperienced artillery units did not achieve their objectives in the preparatory bombardment. In particular, they failed to deal with the Germans' lethal Sugarloaf machine-guns. Afterwards, a senior artillery commander complained that he had been severely handicapped. It was not just that he was given insufficient time to familiarise himself with the battlefield and register his batteries properly. He was allotted hardly any support staff and ended up without even a decent map to make sense of the messages he received during the battle.



The remains of the Sugarloaf were still visible two years after the battle, when the war finally ended in November 1918.

E03964

The unsubdued Sugarloaf machine-guns inflicted calamitous casualties on the 15th Brigade. Its attacking battalions, the 59th and 60th, were practically wiped out. On the scene was W.H. "Jimmy" Downing, who served in Elliott's brigade during the war and became his legal partner after it. He recorded his impressions:

Stammering scores of German machine-guns spluttered violently, drowning the noise of the cannonade. The air was thick with bullets, swishing in a flat criss-crossed lattice of death ... Hundreds were mown down in the flicker of an eyelid, like great rows of teeth knocked from a comb ... Men were cut in two by streams of bullets [that] swept like whirling knives ... It was the charge of the Light Brigade once more, but more terrible, more hopeless.

The 59th and 60th Battalions advanced in four waves five minutes apart. Each line surged forward to be cut down in its turn. Lieutenant Tom Kerr, ascending the parapet as part of the third wave, expected to see the previous lines pressing forward ahead of him, but there was no movement at all. He could see plenty of Australians, but all were lying still.

Major Geoff McCrae, the 60th commander, went forward in the fourth wave accompanied by telephone equipment. After a while, when General Elliott had failed to hear from the 60th, he directed his intelligence officer, 22-year-old Lieutenant Dave Doyle, to get in touch with McCrae. Doyle ventured into no man's land and found himself a target of such exceptionally heavy machine-gun fire that he regarded his survival as miraculous. He did not find McCrae.

Like hundreds of his men, McCrae was already dead. Of all the forces engaged in the war, few battalions, if any, accumulated more casualties more rapidly than did the 60th at Fromelles. Moreover, an unusually high proportion of the casualties were killed. Kerr, still in shock after losing so many friends and collecting wounds himself, was amazed to find himself acting commander of a battalion that had almost disappeared.

As stricken Australians in no man's land writhed in agony, shocked observers of the aftermath struggled for words. "Most awful scene of slaughter imaginable" noted Doyle. Witnesses likened the 15th Brigade's devastated trenches to butchers' premises: "If you had gathered the stock of a thousand butcher-shops, cut it into small pieces and strewn it about, it would give you a faint conception of the shambles those trenches were," wrote a 59th Battalion corporal, Hugh Knyvett.

Lieutenant J.D. Schroder accompanied Elliott on an inspection:

Ordinary sandbagged trenches were now heaps of debris, and it was impossible to walk far without falling over dead men, [but] Pompey went from battalion to company headquarters and so on right along the line. A word for a wounded man here, a pat of approbation to a bleary-eyed digger there, he missed nobody. He never spoke a word all the way back to advanced brigade [headquarters] but went straight inside, put his head in his hands, and sobbed his heart out.

Afterwards Elliott greeted shocked survivors as they returned. Decades later, Lieutenant Neil Freeman remembered seeing Elliott "with tears streaming down his face"; as he shook hands with the "pitiful remnant of his brigade". Other survivors were struck by the intensity of his anguish. At one stage Elliott called out to Captain Bill Trainor, "Good God Bill, what's happened to my brigade?"



Men of the 53rd Battalion, 14th Brigade minutes before leaving the safety of their trench for the attack.

H16396

The ghastliness of Fromelles seared Elliott's soul. More than 1,800 officers and men in the 15th Brigade obeyed orders, did their best, and became casualties in a catastrophe that Elliott had predicted and tried to prevent. And it was quality as well as quantity: among the officers killed was Major Tom Elliott (no relation), a Duntroon graduate of such outstanding promise that Pompey Elliott had tried - unsuccessfully - to keep him out of the battle because he regarded him as a potential "Australian Kitchener".

Furthermore, of all the thousands of casualties in units under Elliott's command, none tormented him more than the death of McCrae, a talented and popular officer who had served under Elliott at Gallipoli and in the pre-war militia. "If I myself should fall in France," Elliott later wrote, "I should like to be buried near poor Geoff." Elliott survived the war, but his death in 1931 was a war-related suicide. His sad demise had a great deal to do with the disaster of Fromelles.

Author

Ross McMullin's books include the award-winning *Pompey Elliott* and, most recently, *Will Dyson: Australia's radical genius* (both published by Scribe).

Reprinted from Wartime Magazine issue #36

<http://www.awm.gov.au/wartime/36/article.asp>

RAA FLAG for the SHRINE

Donations were generously received from:-

Major General	Barry J.	Lieutenant Colonel	Henry J.
Brigadier	Perry D.	Lieutenant Colonel	Morkham J.
Brigadier	Rossi K.	Lieutenant Colonel	Murphy D.
Colonel	Vincent M.	Lieutenant Colonel	Rowley P.
Lieutenant Colonel	Allison G.	Captain	Cooper P.
Lieutenant Colonel	Ashton D.	Staff Sergeant	Cleeman B.
Lieutenant Colonel	Buckridge M	Staff Sergeant	Morrell R.
Lieutenant Colonel	Cahill B.	Sergeant	Miller R.
Lieutenant Colonel	Christie J	38 Bty Gunners	GD
Lieutenant Colonel	Freeland R.	10 Mdm Regt.	RAA Assoc.
Lieutenant Colonel	George I.	RAA Association	(Vic) Inc.

RAA Flag Handover at the Shrine





Photos Submitted by Lt. Col. Robert Sealey

Loyalty and Courage at Bardia

By Julie Padanyi-Ryan

Blurb: Sixty years ago Australians of the Second AIF fought their first major battle of the Second World War in North Africa.

I said to the corporals, "Righto! Scotty, Brian, John," and off we went. Up to now it had been dark and cold, and down in our wadi we had felt sheltered and somehow protected. But as we moved into the exposed ground, our artillery commenced firing. The Italians replied and almost at once the air was filled with the crash and scream of shells. The dark was broken by the flash of explosions, while the sky above us was criss-crossed with phosphorescent tracks of the tracer.

H.B. Gullett, Not as a duty only

So begins Henry "Jo" Gullett's account of his part in the attack by the 2/6th Battalion's D Company on Post 11, the strongest of the front-line posts surrounding the Italian fortress at Bardia, Libya.

The Italians had dug in at Bardia after being pushed out of Egypt. The 10th Italian Army had advanced into Egypt in September 1940 with 250,000 men in an attempt to seize the Suez Canal. Indian and other Commonwealth troops had stopped the Italian advance and forced the Italians back across the Libyan border. Six battalions of the 16th and 17th Australian Brigades, supported by artillery and the 7th Royal Tank Regiment, were tasked to attack Bardia. After several months of rigorous training in Palestine and Egypt, the Australians moved to Egypt's Western Desert in December. For the Australian troops, this would be their first major action of the Second World War.

The collection of the Australian War Memorial pays particular attention to this battle. Official war artist Ivor Hele completed a number of contemporary drawings of Australian troops during the battle and photographer Damien Parer accompanied the troops into action - at times filming from in front of the advancing troops. In 1966, the Memorial commissioned Hele to commemorate the battle. Hele's riveting Bardia (action leading to the fall of Post 11) shows the survivors of 17 Platoon, 2/6th Battalion in the aftermath of intense fighting. Post 11 was the last garrison to fall in the battle that lasted 3-5 January 1941.

Gullett's account of the battle in *Not as a duty only* has become a classic of Australian war literature and the passage of time has neither dulled his description's vividness nor the courage and pathos depicted in Hele's painting. Gullett wrote that the men advanced into battle determined to live up to the reputation of the diggers of their fathers' generation. Sixty years on it is worth remembering their courage.

The Italian defensive positions

On the morning of 28 December, the 2/6th Battalion positioned itself on the left flank of the Italian defence line that ringed the harbour and garrison town. The Italian fortifications were extensive, making penetration of the posts extremely difficult. The defensive line - an arc almost 30 kilometres in length - comprised an elaborate system of anti-tank ditches and rows of barbed wire. Concrete entrances and passageways led to a network of underground shelters, bunkers and strong points. These points were well-armed with 47 mm guns and machine-guns, which were fired from concrete-sided pits connected by trenches with a deep underground shelter occupying most of the area of each post. Dry watercourses - called "wadis" - were used to the Italians' advantage. Varying in size from small creek beds to near gorges, they offered protection from enemy observation and approach. The longest, Wadi Muatered, ran across the Australian front. The foremost Italian defences were based on its inside bank. Gullett recounted,

Post 11 was particularly strong because it was sited at a point where the wadi made a wide inward curve, providing the defenders with a semicircular field of fire as they faced outwards towards us.

A battalion in the attack

Due to Gullett's recollections and the battalion history written by David Hay and published by the Memorial in 1984, the most detailed accounts of the battle come from the 2/6th Battalion and generally concentrate on the fierce fighting for the heavily-fortified Post 11. In the days preceding the attack, the Australians made numerous night patrols. The bitter cold required the Australian troops to don greatcoats, balaclavas and leather jerkins. Patrolling continued until 2 January when Colonel Godfrey, commander of the 2/6th Battalion, received orders to capture enemy positions on

Wadi Muatered from Post 3 to Post 11. The attack commenced the next day at 6.30 am after two brief artillery concentrations on Posts 7 to 13. Post 11 became the objective of D Company with the support of machine-gunners of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers.

In the first day of the attack, 17 Australians were killed and 32 wounded. D Company bore the brunt of the fighting. Early in the attack, heavy firing from a machine-gun post pinned down members of 16 Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant John Bowen. Gullett's 17 Platoon came to their aid, attacking the machine-gun position. However, Gullett was hit in his right shoulder and two of his men were killed. Combined with earlier losses the company had suffered, 17 Platoon could not press the attack.

The dramatic events that followed form the subject of Hele's painting. Gullett, who had been wounded several times, regained consciousness in a trench. He found himself surrounded by a mass of bodies - dead friends and enemies together.

I came to in that trench where Brian Latham and his section had died. Brian lay on his back, just as he does in Ivor Hele's picture in the War Memorial. It was getting light now. The trench was a shambles in the full meaning of the word. I did not feel myself, but I was able to notice things and I still have the impression of the bright fresh blood all over the dead and the wounded. Maloney was wounded in the face and limping but still firing from the parapet. Presently Bernie Damm clambered down carrying his brother Claude on his back.

Gullett, supported by Private Harold Brockley, is the painting's central figure. Privates Bernie and Claude Damm can be seen behind them. This depiction provides a vivid testimonial of the intensive fighting and heavy losses experienced by both sides. While withdrawing from the trench under fire, both Gullett and Claude Damm were hit again, killing Damm. By the time the remaining party returned to the Wadi Muatered, Major John Rowan's C Company arrived to relieve D Company. Combined with an assault by the 2/11th Battalion and ending with the charge of the Bren Gun Carrier Platoon, Post 11 surrendered at midday on 5 January.

The anniversary of the Battle of Bardia is a timely reminder of the beginning of five years of battle for Australian soldiers. Bardia was the largest single operation in which the 2/6th Battalion took part during the war, with 22 killed in action and 51 wounded. The 6th Division lost a total of 130 soldiers. In the rout that followed the battle, no figures were recorded of the Italian casualties.

The Battle of Bardia is remembered significantly for the loyalty of Australian soldiers to their friends, unit, country and Britain. Gullett regarded this quality as an extension of the spirit which their fathers, as members of the First AIF, engendered:

It did not strike us as extraordinary or unfair that our generation should be called upon to fight. As volunteers we were there of our own free choice anyhow. Neither did we believe in our hearts that our country was threatened and that we were fighting for Australia's existence. Even when the Japanese came in we did not think that. But we knew England's position was very serious and that we should help her as our fathers had done. It was the order of things.

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Major General Harold Edward Elliott

19 June 1878 - 23 March 1931

Harold Edward Elliott was born in West Charlton, Victoria on 19 June 1878, the son of Thomas Elliott, a farmer. He was educated at Ballarat College and in 1897 he enrolled in a Bachelor of Law course at Ormond College at the University of Melbourne. While there he enlisted in the Melbourne University Regiment.

When the Boer War broke out a year later he interrupted his studies to enlist as a private in Captain E. Tivey's squadron of the 4th Victorian Contingent (the Imperial Bushmen). He arrived in South Africa in May 1900 and soon was promoted to corporal. Elliott participated in a daring attack on a numerically superior Boer force which resulted in the capture of 33 men and 54 horses. For this exploit, he was congratulated by Lord Kitchener and later awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), the most prestigious award available to a soldier of his rank after the Victoria Cross. Elliott obtained a commission as a lieutenant in the 2nd Berkshire, a British unit, but he chose to remain with the Australians. He returned to Australia in July 1901.

Elliott, now a lieutenant, sailed for South Africa again in August. On arrival, all the men on his transport were given the choice of joining irregular British units or immediately returning to Australia. Elliott joined the Border Scouts while successfully defending a post, Elliott and another man found some Boers asleep and untied their horses and led them away. For this he was mentioned in dispatches and congratulated by Lord Kitchener.

Elliott did not remain with the British Army after the war, instead returning to the University of Melbourne to complete his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree in 1903. A physically large and strong man, he played football with the Victorian Football League's University team and represented Victoria at state level. He also won the University shot putting and hammer throwing championships. After graduating in 1906, he began his own legal practice as a solicitor.

In March 1904, he enlisted in the 5th Australia Infantry Regiment and was soon commissioned as a lieutenant on the recommendation of Captain E. Tivey. By 1911, Elliott was a major and second in command of the regiment. When the 58th Battalion (Essendon Rifles) was formed on 1 July 1913, Elliott, promoted to lieutenant colonel, became its first commanding officer.

When the AIF was formed in August 1914, Elliott was selected to command the 7th Battalion, which he trained at Broadmeadows, Victoria, and later in Egypt. Like his brigade commander, Colonel J. W. McCay, Elliott believed in hard training and stern discipline. He also put his own distinctive stamp on the unit. One story concerns his insistence on the wearing of the Australian slouch hat. After issuing an order that anyone appearing on parade without his slouch hat would be severely punished, he discovered minutes before leaving for the parade ground that his own hat was missing. Elliott, who normally took a size 8, was forced to appear on parade in a borrowed hat a size too small. A month later, Mrs Elliott received the hat, carefully wrapped and addressed, in the post in Australia.

On the day of the landing at Gallipoli, Elliott was the first senior officer of the 2nd Brigade ashore. Ordered by McCay to take the 7th Battalion up to the 400 Plateau and plug the gap between the 9th and 10th Battalions, Elliott went forward to McCay's Hill in order to ascertain the situation for himself and was wounded in the ankle, and subsequently evacuated.

Elliott returned to the 7th Battalion on 2 June 1915. On 8 July he was in his headquarters behind Steele's Post when he received word that the Turks were in an Australian tunnel near the German Officers' Trench. Characteristically, he went forward in person to ascertain the situation, entering the tunnel with two men. Some twenty feet from the end there was a flash in his face and the man behind him was shot. Elliott drew his pistol and personally barricaded the tunnel with sand bags, refusing help for fear that anyone else coming forward might be hit.

On 8 August 1915, the 7th Battalion moved into the positions at Lone Pine captured the previous day, and Elliott took over responsibility for the defence of the entire position. Elliott led his men from the front trenches, steadying them in a very uncertain situation. His men fought off a series of Turkish counterattacks, winning four Victoria Crosses in the process. Elliott himself was not decorated for the battle despite brilliant leadership. Apparently his name, originally at the top of the recommendations for decorations, had been struck off the list.

Elliott was evacuated to England towards the end of August with pleurisy, and he did not rejoin his unit, which was then resting on Mudros, until 22 November. On 18 December, one day before the evacuation of Anzac, he sprained his ankle and was evacuated ahead of his troops.

On 24 January 1916, he was appointed to command the 1st Brigade. Commanding a New South Wales formation was one thing, but on 1 March 1915 he was given the still more congenial task of organising the 15th Brigade, the AIF's newest Victorian formation, and was promoted to Brigadier General. He immediately reorganised the 15th Brigade to correspond exactly with the brigade of the same number in the AMF. In doing so he built an *esprit de corps* that was to survive long after the war.

Elliott's style of command required trusted and capable subordinates, and within a fortnight of his appointment, he attempted to replace three of his four battalion commanders with younger men of whom he had more knowledge. This brought him into conflict with Brigadier General C. B. B. White, who told him that the officers' reputations were sacred. Elliott replied that the lives of his men were more sacred. White forced him to accept the officers, but eventually, Elliott managed to have his way.

The 15th Brigade was the last to have to make the three day 39 mile march across the desert to the Suez Canal. The 15th Brigade arrived in better order than the other brigades because Elliott -- now known as "Pompey" to his men -- had it march only in the morning and evening, and threatened to shoot anyone who tried to drink from the Sweet Water Canal, a source of illness for the other brigades.

In June 1916, the 15th Brigade moved from Egypt to the Western Front. The brigade's first attack, at Fromelles, on the night of 19 July 1916 -- an attack that Elliott opposed -- was a bloody holocaust. The brigade lost 1452 men in 24 hours and the 59th and 60th Battalions were nearly wiped out. After the battle, Elliott shook hands with the survivors, tears streaming down his face.

The brigade moved to the Somme sector in October 1916. Twice ordered to make attacks that he didn't believe would succeed, Pompey refused and the attack was cancelled. He was able to speak with great authority about conditions in the front line because he visited it every day, usually first thing in the morning. Elliott's tactics were always based on a deep understanding of the possibilities, coupled with first hand knowledge based on personal reconnaissance.

When it became clear that the Germans were retreating in March 1917, General Sir H. de la P. Gough, commander of the British Fifth Army employed something much discussed and practiced before the war but not yet used: brigade groups, all-arms formations of brigade size. Each was built around a brigade and had its own artillery, engineers, transport and medical elements, and a flying squadron to fly top cover for it. The I Anzac Corps commander, Lieutenant General Sir W. R. Birdwood selected Elliott and Brigadier General J. Gellibrand for these quasi-independent commands.

In an independent command, Elliott demonstrated a flair for brilliant and innovative tactics, using single and double envelopments to drive the Germans out of their positions. His success brought further conflict with White, because Elliott worked to the ground rather than halting at straight lines on the map, and because double envelopment was a tactic that White had denounced before the war. When Elliott's men came under fire from villages outside his assigned zone, he occupied them, receiving a reprimand from Birdwood for his trouble. For this campaign, Elliott received congratulations from Gough, Birdwood and Hobbs, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

At Polygon Wood on 25 September 1917, Elliott found the battle plan disrupted by a German counterattack on the troops on his right. As usual, he was up with his forward troops at dawn. He immediately ascertained the situation and took strong, decisive action, which resulted in the capture not just of his troops' objectives, but those of the units hit by the attack as well. The official historian called Polygon Wood Elliott's greatest fight, and noted: "his staunchness and vehemence, and power of instilling those qualities into his troops, had turned his brigade into a magnificently effective instrument; and the driving force of this stout hearted leader in this inferno at Hooge throughout the two critical days was in a large measure responsible for this victory".

At dusk on the 26th, the commander of the 60th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Norman Marshall, informed Elliott that a pillbox called Cameron House was holding up the advance whereupon Elliott and Marshall led some junior officers in the capture of the pillbox. Characteristically, Elliott played

down his own part in the capture of the position, giving credit to Marshall and recommending him for a richly deserved Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for the action.

When the German Offensive opened in March 1918, the 15th Brigade was ordered to guard the Somme bridges. Ordered to crack down on looters in Corbie, Elliott refused to single out a British private soldier and instead arrested a staff captain caught looting wine. The captain protested to higher authorities and Birdwood was compelled to order Elliott to release him.

Elliott's tactical brilliance came to the fore again when the Germans captured Villers Bretonneux, threatening to cut the British sector in two at Amiens. Elliott immediately swung into action and organised a counter attack, based around his old favourite tactic, double envelopment. When it was eventually delivered in conjunction with the 13th Brigade, this bold stroke completely restored the situation. It rivals Polygon Wood for Elliott's greatest battle.

In May 1918, Elliott received a shattering blow, being passed over for command of a division by less able officers, Brigadier Generals J. Gellibrand and T. W. Glasgow. Nonetheless, he continued to lead his brigade with the same fire. He developed tactics for co-operation between infantry and tanks that were put into devastating effect at Hamel and Amiens on 8 August.

When, in September 1918, seven battalions mutinied rather than be disbanded, Elliott made a personal appeal to the men of the 60th Battalion. They obeyed and disbanded. Elliott was the only brigadier who was loved and respected enough by his men for them to obey the order. On 21 January 1919, Elliott made a final farewell speech to the men of the 15th Brigade. He assured his men that no decoration the King had given him meant as much to him as the goodwill of men who had accomplished everything that was asked of them, and told them to believe in themselves, in Australia, and in the Almighty.

Elliott returned to Australia in June 1919 to rebuild his firm, which had collapsed during the war. He became city solicitor for Melbourne and director of National Trustees, Executors & Co in 1919. He stood for election to the Senate as a Nationalist in 1919, an election he won handily. He used his position to air wartime grievances against Birdwood, White and the British High Command. Elliott was involved in veterans' affairs and was responsible for drafting the constitution of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia. He was re-elected to the Senate in 1925.

In 1920, the University of Melbourne awarded him Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Master of Laws (LLM) degrees.

His military career resumed in September 1919 when he was reappointed to command the 15th Brigade but in 1921, disliking service under White, then Chief of the General Staff, Elliott requested to be placed on the unattached list. In 1926, with White gone and Chauvel now Chief of the General Staff, Elliott was again appointed to command the 15th Brigade. Finally, he was appointed to command the 3rd Division and promoted to major general in August 1927.

On 23 March 1931, Elliott died from a wound to the arm. An inquest returned a verdict of suicide. Parliament rose in Canberra, and he was accorded a state funeral. His pallbearers were Rear Admiral Kerr, Major Generals Tivey, Johnston and Grimwade, Brigadier Generals Brand, Blamey and Stewart, and Air Commodore Williams. He was buried at Burwood Cemetery. A year later his men erected a monument over his grave. A service is held there every year on Anzac Day.

Elliott was a maverick general of outstanding ability. As a tactician, he was without peer in the AIF. His methods, of leading from the front, of selecting extraordinarily able subordinates and trusting them, of always making his decisions based on personal reconnaissance, and of setting a personal example in all things, deserve emulation. His forthrightness, his generosity, and above all his refusal to waste lives, made him beloved of his men. In the end, Pompey claimed a special place in the heart of his nation.

Sources: Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1899-1939, Vol 8, pp.428-431; Bean, C. E. W., *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Volume I: The Story of Anzac* pp. 133-134, 326, 361-364, 371-373; *Volume II: The Story of Anzac* pp. 333-335; *Volume III: The AIF In France 1916*, pp. 46, 52, 443; *Volume IV: The AIF In France 1917*, pp. 155-202, 797-824, 832; *Volume V: The AIF In France During the German Offensive 1918*, pp. 522-525; McMillan, *Pompey Elliott*

<http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/~rmallett/Generals/elliott.html>

"Yet they're human just as we are"

Australian attitudes towards the Japanese in the South-West Pacific, 1942-1945 **Dr Mark Johnston**

[Note: More detailed explanations and evidence for the contentions in this talk can be found in my books, *Fighting the enemy* (CUP 2000) and *At the front line* (CUP 1996).]

In December 1942, an Australian private – a veteran of recent fighting at Sanananda and of the Libyan and Greek campaigns – wrote some thoughts about the enemies he had faced. "My regard for Tony [the Italian] was always impersonal and for Fritz tinged with admiration, but none of us know anything but vindictive hatred for the Jap".[1]

Australian soldiers felt an animosity towards the Japanese that they generally didn't have towards their European enemies.

In action the hostility expressed itself in Australians' greater enthusiasm for killing Japanese. "If an Italian or German were running away, one might let him go". wrote Jo Gullett, "but never a Japanese".[2] Whereas in the Middle East, Australian commanders had struggled to awaken fully a killing instinct in their men, the Japanese brought out that instinct.

Thus the following extract from a diarist's account of action against Japanese in 1943, is scarcely imaginable against the Germans or Italians: Japs are running out of the jungle everywhere and we start some very good shooting. Got on to one with the Bren gun trying to crawl away in the grass...Saw one with his pack on his back walking up the track and soon everyone was stuck into him. He soon hit terra firma. Later in the day we saw his body and pushed it over the cliff into the sea.[3]

An official wartime publication described how, at Wau, fifty Japanese were "hunted down and exterminated".[4] The concepts of hunting and "exterminating" capture the mood of the time, which was not one of trying to bring an essentially like-minded foe to accept defeat by the rules of war, but one of seeking to annihilate an alien enemy.

The killing of unarmed, sleeping, sick or wounded Japanese was common. Although official pressure was put on troops to take prisoners, the Australian front-line soldiers – like their American counterparts – had little desire to do so.

Japanese dead were not considered in the same light as German or Italian dead. Frank Legg, who had been a member of the 2/48th Battalion at Alamein and become a war correspondent in the Pacific, noted while first reporting 9th Division fighting against the Japanese that, whereas the common practice had been to bury each other's dead in North Africa, here there was a strange callousness.[5] For example, a Japanese who lay dead on a track on the Huon Peninsula had a bullet hole between his eyes and a note pinned to him which read: "Don't bury this bastard, it's the best shot you'll ever see".[6]

I want now to examine briefly the sources of this contempt and hatred. Most obvious was that the Japanese were a far more pressing threat to Australia itself than were the European enemies.

In January 1942, a signaller in the Middle East wrote to his fiancée of his concern about the yellow horde. He wrote, "my thoughts are full of smashing them, before they reach what they desire".[7]

Tied to this awareness of the threat the war now posed to their homeland was a hatred for those who menaced it. Early in 1943, General Blamey tried to stir up hatred of the Japanese in veterans of the recent campaign by emphasising that the Australians were fighting to prevent both the deaths of their families and the end of civilisation.[8] The Japanese forces which advanced along the Kokoda Trail were described by the historian and second in command of the 2/14th Battalion "cocksure hordes" seeking "to glut their lust and savagery in the blood of a conquered white nation".[9]

Australians had perceived a Japanese threat to their white outpost since at least the beginning of the century. As talk of threats to "civilization" and to a "white nation" suggest, Australian soldiers' hatred of their Japanese foe was racist. If fear of invasion was one source of hatred, racial animosity was a second.

The Australians who fought in the Second World War had grown up in an era when assertions of racial superiority were far more acceptable than today. In 1941, Prime Minister Curtin had justified Australia's entry into the war against Japan in terms of the nation's commitment to maintaining the "principle of a White Australia"[10].

Australians considered the Japanese racially inferior. The commander of the 7th Brigade at Milne Bay reported after the battle that destroying the enemy was "a most effective way of demonstrating the superiority of the white race" [11]

White superiority had been challenged by the outcome of other campaigns earlier in the year. The racism of Australians who had scoffed at the Japanese in 1941 had to be refined in the light of defeats in Malaya, Singapore, Java, Timor, Ambon, and New Britain. These Japanese successes added a hysterical edge to the racial hatred against them. An image of the Japanese as a "superman" or "super soldier" grew up. This conception was fairly persistent, but not the majority view after 1942. The feeble physical condition of many Japanese encountered in campaigns after 1942 heightened racial contempt for them.

A far more common image than that of superman was that of a creature less than a man. "Jo" Gullett concludes from his experience in the 2/6th Battalion: "The Japanese] were like clever animals with certain human characteristics, but by no means the full range, and that is how we thought of them as animals. [12] Australian soldiers, like Americans, often compared Japanese to animals, especially rats or vermin. Senior officers encouraged this attitude. General Blamey told troops at Port Moresby in 1942 that the Japanese was "a" curious race a cross between the human being and the ape" [13]

This idea helped Australians to account for Japanese success in the early campaigns, for it explained Japanese adaptability to primitive conditions. It also excused murderous treatment of them. A normally very humane veteran of the desert, Private John Butler, wrote of his first brush with the Japanese: "Out foraging this morning I came across the head of a good Jap for he was dead like a damned baboon he was; this is not murder killing such repulsive looking animals" [14]

Some of the language used by Australians is disturbingly reminiscent of Nazi race propaganda. In most respects, Nazism was repugnant to Butler and his comrades. However, the same racist disdain appears in American writings of the time, and there is no doubt that on this issue many otherwise compassionate western soldiers maintained attitudes towards the Japanese which today seem insupportable. As I've said, this was a racist age: the Japanese themselves harboured racist attitudes towards whites.

Moreover, we mustn't exaggerate the importance of racism in wartime Australian hatred for the Japanese. When in Australia the government launched an intense hate campaign in March-April 1942, the *Sydney Morning Herald* argued that Australians needed no stimulus to fight the Japanese aggressor, and certainly not "a torrent of cheap abuse and futile efforts in emulation of ... Goebbels". The propaganda campaign was opposed by 54 per cent of Australians surveyed in a Gallup Poll on the issue.[15]

Moreover, the peculiar circumstances in which Australian front-line soldiers served gave them reasons to temper their racism, or at least to suppress it occasionally. Realism was important. While Australian training staff did not want their soldiers to feel inferior to the Japanese a real danger in the early years they did want them to be level-headed about his strengths. Propagandist notions are dangerous when formulating tactics. On the battlefield, being realistic about the enemy's capacities was a matter of life and death.

The life-and-death realities that Australian soldiers faced in their confrontation with the Japanese may have softened racism towards them in action. However, these realities also largely determined the character and intensity of their hatred for the Japanese. Among soldiers, the racist language of the pre-war era was a convenient means of expressing feelings that owed their existence to the unique circumstances of the front line. For it seems to me that the intensity of Australian soldiers' hatred of the Japanese derived from the reality of the fighting more than the prejudices of civilian life.

I believe that observation and experience heightened the hatred that Australian front-line soldiers felt for the Japanese. Racist prejudgements, and even the threat to Australia, did not goad Australian soldiers in the same way as personal experiences or personal expectations based on reports from other front-line soldiers. Many Australians who campaigned against the Japanese considered their opponent evil, detestable, underhanded and frightening in his methods.

At the jungle training school at Canungra, recruits were told that the Japanese was "a cunning little rat", who was "full of little ruses and tricks". [16] Australians were unwilling to take Japanese prisoners largely because of distrust born of bad experiences, with Japanese offering surrender and then acting as human bombs by detonating concealed explosive. The thousands of Australian soldiers who passed through Canungra were advised to shoot any Japanese surrendering with their hands closed. Frank Rolleston recalls that an apparently defenceless Japanese carrying a white cloth at Milne Bay was shot down on the grounds that "we

were not prepared to take the slightest risk with an enemy that had proved to be the limit in deception and treachery. [17] The fact that Australian wounded, and the stretcher bearers who carried them, could expect no immunity from enemy fire was a major source of criticism, as was Japanese bombing of medical facilities. Thus a medical officer wrote about a tent "ward" attacked by enemy aircraft in Papua: "When the smoke cleared the twelve [patients] were still in the tents, but each one was dead killed by the deliberate sub-human fury of Tojo's men. [18]

Japanese callousness and brutality towards helpless men caused fierce animosity in Australians. While unchivalrous and callous behaviour was encountered against the Germans, the Japanese lifted brutality to a higher level. Brutal acts were committed more often by Japanese than by any other enemy. I'm sure you are all aware of Japanese massacres of Australian prisoners in Malaya, Singapore, Timor, New Britain, Ambon.

It's hard to know how much Australians in New Guinea knew of the atrocities against their compatriots in the early 1942 campaigns, but my impression is that it wasn't much and that such information did not inform their hatred as much as it might have. Stories about New Britain became widely distributed, and well-informed Australians knew of Japanese excesses against the Chinese. However, the Australian wartime government, like the British and American, was unwilling to publicise material about atrocities for fear of worsening the conditions of prisoners.

Australians in New Guinea had the pressing relevance of the issue of brutality brought home to them by the many Japanese atrocities at Milne Bay. Unlike the men engaged in the early 1942 campaigns, most Australians who fought there were able to pass on their stories of Japanese atrocities. I'll give one example of the impact of these atrocities.

At the sight of men who had been bayoneted to a slow death at Milne Bay, a Tobruk veteran who had been sceptical of stories of Japanese atrocities said his "hatred rose to boiling point and I cursed those cruel, yellow cowardly curs of hell" [19]

The atrocities continued throughout the war. In March 1945, for example, a signalman on Bougainville reported that Australian provosts caught in a jeep by Japanese had been tied to their vehicle, then set alight. During the Aitape-Wewak campaign, the corpse of a member of the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion was found

and the hips had all flesh removed. [20] This was an atrocity of a type that horrified Australians and occurred also in the Papuan campaign: namely cannibalism.

Of course such sights created intense hostility to the perpetrators. For example, a lieutenant of the 2/1st Battalion recalls that during their advance on the Kokoda Trail, the sight of a dead young Australian soldier with one of his thighs stripped of flesh "incensed all our party and feeling against the enemy was explosive" [21] An officer whose battalion had suffered such casualties in the Aitape-Wewak area in 1945 argued:

The frequent evidence of Japanese atrocities had a remarkable effect on the troops. It developed a feeling of disgust that caused men to enter battle with a greater determination to eliminate the enemy. [22]

An astute regimental historian says that not propaganda stories, but the physical evidence of Japanese atrocities was crucial in making Australians hate the Japanese in a way they had not hated Italians and Germans. This is a crucial point in understanding Australian attitudes towards the Japanese.

The "feeling of disgust" about atrocities also explains much of the unusually murderous behaviour of Australians. As early as the Milne Bay battle, Brigadier Field wrote in his diary, "the yellow devils show no mercy and have since had none from us" [23]

The lack of prisoners taken by Australians owed much to resentment of atrocities. Cam Bennett, of the 2/5th Battalion, argues that Japanese attitudes to their captives "divorced them from any consideration whatever". whenever his Australian comrades had a chance to kill them.

The circumstances of jungle warfare also militated against the taking of Japanese prisoners. The fact that in the Kokoda campaign both sides took virtually no prisoners partly reflects the problems of getting POWs back over extraordinarily difficult terrain. Because enemies were hidden and ambush was a constant possibility in the jungle, there were few opportunities for the niceties of asking for surrender: one had to shoot first and ask questions later. This logic of jungle warfare was conducive to hatred of the enemy, who like oneself, could not afford to treat one chivalrously as a potential prisoner.

The mud, the decomposing vegetation, the pouring rain, the humidity and the eerie sounds of the jungle also

contributed to the hatred of the enemy with whom this place was identified. It was a place where soldiers fought in small groups, in isolation. The frightening enemy, with his apparent enthusiasm for death, and the menacing environment in which he was encountered made for a personal hatred for the Japanese that was peculiar to the soldiers who faced him.

I want to turn now to a discussion of how Australian soldiers evaluated Japanese as fighters. Australians were often impressed by certain martial abilities of Japanese soldiers. They respected their field craft, their ability to ambush, and their resilience and tenacity. As an Australian at Sanananda put it, "he is a tough nut to crack, this so often despised little yellow chap" [24]

Australians frequently wrote with grudging admiration of the defensive positions created by their enemy. The 22nd Battalion history for example says of ground near Finschhafen:

It was obvious that this was Jap country. Along both sides of the track were many weapon pits cleverly sited and expertly dug. They were exactly circular, as if marked out by compass with the sides plumb vertical. And they were finished to perfection with clever camouflage to an extent that they were quite unnoticeable until one had come abreast of them.[25]

Notes used in training Australians for jungle warfare conceded the "remarkable" ability of Japanese to dig or burrow into the side of hills.

I've mentioned the idea of the Japanese super soldier, which was quite prevalent in the months after Japan entry into the war. Defeat of the Japanese at Milne Bay and on the Kokoda Trail damaged this image, but the super soldier conception was a resilient one. Even in 1945, the Canungra Training Syllabus laid down that on Day 2, recruits should be told that the concept of the Japanese "super soldier" was a myth. [26]

Like all armies, the Japanese had units of varying strength, experience and ability, but the differences in quality between its soldiers were perhaps more striking than those in any other army faced by the Australians. Particularly apparent was the difference in quality between the Japanese faced by Australians in 1942, on the one hand, and those faced afterwards.

Many Australians who served in the campaigns from 1943 on wrote disparagingly of the Japanese. For example, Private Keys of the 2/15th Battalion wrote proudly to his sister in October 1943:

When we came up here we were told how bad the conditions were what a wonderful fighter the Jap is. Well, Min, the conditions here are 100 per cent better than in the desert. ... [The Japanese] has had everything in his favour, such as high ground, etc. every time we've met him we have belted him. he has run.[27]

By the last year of the war, Japanese forces were generally being defeated with greater ease than in earlier campaigns. In circumstances where casualty rates were running at more than ten-to-one against the Japanese, a sense of contempt had much to feed on.

In March 1945, a lieutenant of the 2/3rd Battalion pointed out that the soldiers they were facing this time were not in the same class as the men they had faced in the Owen Stanleys: and for good reason, as this enemy was out of communication with Tokyo and had little or no food.[28]

Aspects of the Japanese performance that were criticised in New Guinea included: their poor marksmanship; poor weapons; their tendency to be incautious, especially by chattering or laughing loudly near the front; their naivety in attack; their tactical inflexibility; and their tendency towards needless self-sacrifice.

For even the do-or-die courage of Japanese soldiers did not necessarily raise the military prowess of Japanese in Australian eyes. The Japanese willingness to die appeared bizarre to many Australians. Let me give you one example. A Japanese prisoner near "wept with frustration and humiliation" when his Australian captors would not shoot him, even though he bared his chest to them hopefully. Instead the Australians said, "wake up to yourself you stupid bastard, you don't know when you're well off!"[29] To the Australians, only a "stupid bastard" would want death, and to be alive was to be "well off". The Japanese attitude was incomprehensible. Their bravery in action often seemed like fanaticism or madness rather than traditional military heroism.

Naturally, many veterans of the Middle East compared the Japanese with their European enemies. "As a fighter the Jap might be a little better than the Italian," a 9th Division infantryman conceded in October 1943, "but he can't compare with the Jerry" [30] On the other hand, an Australian who had been with the 6th

Division in Greece said after fighting at Kokoda and Sanananda that, "I think Nip a better fighter than Fritz", and this may have been a common attitude among 6th and 7th Division veterans of the Middle East who fought the Japanese in 1942.[31] At Canungra, recruits were told that "The Jap is NOT like the German whom we have become accustomed to fighting. He is NOT as good a soldier. [32]

Most 9th Division veterans, who generally faced stiffer opposition from the Germans at Tobruk and Alamein than from the Japanese in their later campaigns, would have agreed with this judgement. Correspondent Allan Dawes reported that after the amphibious landings at Finschhafen, he heard many Western Desert veterans say:

If they'd been Germans, they'd never have let us on that beach - never. . No Jap would ever have got thisplace, if we had been where they were, and they had been the invaders.[33]

That conclusion is significant, for of course, at the top of the Australians' hierarchy of armies was their own.

Contemptuous poses were readily adopted from 1943 1945. Australian victory was certain, and the odds were greatly against the Japanese, who were suffering from life-threatening shortages of food and other supplies. A superior attitude had been more difficult to maintain through most of 1942, with all its military disasters. Yet in this period, too, many Australians had clung to a belief that, man for man, they were better soldiers than the enemy. Even as they lay down their arms in Singapore, they felt that they were yielding to "a force which they counted as less than their equals" [34]

When Australians discussed their defeats at Japanese hands in 1942, they complained about numerical inferiority and lack of air support. Their defeats were explained by factors external to their soldiering ability. Paradoxically, Australian victories later in the war tended to be explained by their own soldiering abilities, while external factors such as their numerical preponderance, aerial superiority and the lack of supplies available to the Japanese tended to be forgotten.

Even when Australians felt contempt for the Japanese, in battle he was treated with great caution. There was a terrible grimness about the campaigns against him in New Guinea. The fear of falling, dead or alive into Japanese hands ensured this.

I want to finish by discussing the issue raised by the quotation I used in the title of this talk. In March 1945 an artilleryman in action on New Britain wrote in a letter home:

When you stop to think war is a pretty rotten business, here we are throwing shells at the Japs hoping they blow them to bits and although we call them little yellow [expletive] yet they're human just as we are [35]

It was unusual for Australians to write in such a detached manner about the Japanese. However, detachment and even sympathy were occasionally evident. Dower's suggestion that Allied soldiers had images of Japanese as superhuman, subhuman and inhuman, but not as humans like themselves is not entirely accurate. Sometimes Australians showed empathy with the enemy: saying they knew what it was like to have dysentery as the Japanese did; imagining his discomfort under Australian gunfire; picturing his reaction as an amphibious invading force came towards him; or saying in the Aitape-Wewak region that living there for three years as the Japanese had done would be "pure hell".

While Japanese who survived to become prisoners never aroused Australian sympathy like those captured in the Middle East, sometimes they did touch emotions other than anger or contempt: the appearance of starved men could draw forth comments like "poor devils", and even gestures such as the provision of food, water or covering.

Moreover, the murderous treatment meted out to Japanese prisoners was not morally acceptable to all. Here's an example: Captain J.J. May was responsible for the loading of wounded men on air transports from the Wau airfield during the heavy fighting there in January 1943. He was approached one day to make room for six Japanese prisoners who would soon arrive, bound together, and who were to be taken to Port Moresby for questioning. The Japanese did not come at the expected time, but eventually:

A soldier appeared with his rifle slung over his shoulder and looking at the ground told me that they would not be coming. I blew off what the bloody hell do you mean you ask us to make room for you and now you don't want it. One could sense something was wrong and it very shamefacedly came out, they had been killed, a soldier had opened up on them with a Tommy gun and shot the lot. The boys and I were pretty aghast at this and we said they had been tied up; the poor messenger was also rather stricken and tried to explain how it happened. A soldier that opened up had his mate killed alongside him during the night. It

somehow cast a dark shadow over us including the poor B who had to tell us.[36]
So, some conceived of Japanese as fellow men, and believed that killing them was at times immoral.

Those who did the killing also had their emotions tested. An Australian who had just killed a walking Japanese skeleton at Sanananda described him as a "rather poor specimen of humanity" [37] Even such grudging admissions did acknowledge the humanity of this enemy, and soldiers who killed Japanese tended to think more than usual about this point. Thus an Australian who had ambushed and killed two Japanese soldiers elsewhere at Sanananda reflected that "it was pure murder" ..[38] Captain May reported a conversation with a wounded sergeant who had been on patrol near Wau when confronted by a Japanese officer wielding a sword. In a tone that made clear his regret, the sergeant told May, "I think he must have been an M.O. or something and I had to shoot the poor bastard". [39]

Occasionally, when Australians examined corpses, they saw evidence of the civilian side of their enemy. Fearnside writes of an incident in New Guinea in 1945 where his platoon ambushed and killed a lone, emaciated Japanese soldier. He says that although they were immune to compunction about such homicidal acts, searching the body brought a haunting emotional impact. They found two objects: one was a rudimentary map of Australia. The other was a faded photograph of a beautiful Japanese girl: such images brought home the fact that the enemy too had a civilian, peaceful background.[40]

However, such fellow feeling could vanish under the pressure of events. Thus one day in January 1945, a 6th Division infantryman wrote in his diary about how his unit had fed prisoners and protected them from angry natives. The day after, and immediately after an ambush of his unit, he wrote, "what little pity one had for the animal cravens we had here as prisoners yesterday has now vanished". [41] In jungle warfare, there was not much scope for compassion.

In preparing this talk, one particular story has often come back to me. It concerns an Australian NCO, Steve Sullivan, who took some men to look around the battlefield of Slater's Knoll, Bougainville, during the fighting there in March 1945. They found a wounded Japanese and several of the men suggested to Sullivan that they kill him. Sullivan objected. "I knew all about the Japs and their treatment of prisoners" he recalls, "but to my mind that is not good enough reason to kill a man in cold blood. We are not Japs" [42] He couldn't do what he identified as a Japanese thing to do: that is, kill a defenceless human being. Yet it was also an Australian thing to do against Japanese in this war. The fact that we were not Japs prevented Sullivan from killing the man; for other Australians, this difference was precisely what justified killing them:"they're not like us in their behaviour and their appearance, so we can kill them" Ironically, in their brutal treatment of each other, Australians and Japanese had something in common.

As this anecdote suggests, it's difficult to generalise about Australian soldiers' attitudes. However, one cannot help but make grim conclusions as to their feelings about their Japanese counterpart. Their evaluations of his martial prowess varied, but they usually feared him and almost invariably hated him. They were passionate in their willingness to kill him.

Notes

This paper was delivered at an international symposium for the Remembering the war in New Guinea project held on 19-21 October 2000 at the Australian National University, Canberra.

1. Pte R. Robertson, 2/2 Bn, Letter 15/12/42.
2. Gullett, *Not as a Duty Only*, p. 127.
3. Cpl J. Craig, 2/13 Bn, Diary 28/12/43.
4. *Battle of Wau*, p. 50.
5. Legg, *War Correspondent*, p. 54.
6. Wells, *"B" Company Second Seventeenth Infantry*, p. 159.
7. Sig T. Neeman, 17 Bde Sigs, Letter 16/1/42.
8. G. Johnston, *Toughest Fighting in the World*, p. 228.
9. Russell, *Second Fourteenth Battalion*, p. 123.
10. "Japanese Threat", *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 323.
11. In report: "Operations Milne Bay 24 Aug-8 Sep 42, Lessons from Operations", p. 11.
12. *Not as a Duty Only*, p. 127.
13. Johnston, *Toughest Fighting in the World*, p. 207. Dower, *War without Mercy*, pp. 53, 71.
14. Diary 20/9/43.
15. Charlton, *War Against Japan 1941-1942*, p. 34. McKernan, *All In*, p. 141. "Japanese Threat", *Oxford Companion*, p. 324.
16. AWM 3DRL 6599, "Aus. Trg. Centre Jungle Warfare Canungra Training Syllabus Precipis & Instructions", Serial No. 29.

17. *Not a Conquering Hero*, p. 83.
18. Robinson, *Record of Service*, p. 99.
19. O'Brien, "A Rat of Tobruk", p. 21.
20. Australian Archives (Vic): MP742/1, File No. 336/1/285.
21. Givney, *First at War*, p. 288.
22. Long, *Final Campaigns*, p. 342.
23. Brig J. Field, 7 Bde, Diary 31/12/43.
24. Tpr B. Love, 2/7 Cav Regt, Diary 12/1/43.
25. Macfarlan, *Etched in Green*, p. 123.
26. AWM: Canungra Training Instructions, Serial No. 62.
27. 4/10/43.
28. Lt B.H. MacDougal, 2/3 Bn, Letter 20/3/45.
29. Bentley, *The Second Eighth*, p. 186.
30. Pte Keys, Letter 4/10/43.
31. Robertson, Letter 15/12/42.
32. AWM: Canungra Training Instructions, Serial No. 19. The lecture continued: "but is, as has often been described, 'a cunning little rat'."
33. Dawes, "*Soldier Superb*", p. 44. My emphasis.
34. Walker, *Middle East and Far East*, p. 520.
35. Gnr.G. Chapman, 2/14 Fd Regt, Letter 10/3/45.
36. Diary 30/1/43.
37. Love, Diary 14/1/43.
38. Quoted in *ibid*, 31/12/42.
39. Diary 4/2/43. M.O.- Medical Officer.
40. *Half to Remember*, p. 195.
41. Pte Wallin, 2/5 Bn, Diary 20/1/45.
42. Shaw, *Brother Digger*, p.136.

<http://ajrp.awm.gov.au/ajrp/ajrp2.nsf/aa9b3f3247a3c8ae4a25676300078dee/68d938d4a9b54ee7ca256be40006f329?OpenDocument>

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Excursion to South Channel & Point Nepean Forts.

On Sunday, the 26th Of November, 2006, an excursion was arranged by Jim Newlands in conjunction with the RAE Historical & Heritage Association and the RAA Association to visit the South Channel & Point Nepean Forts. The weather was perfect, and it was interesting to learn & see some of our Artillery history. Approximately 30 people attended and this included Brigadier G. Standish, Lieutenant Colonel R. Freeland, Major M. Taggart, Major R. Dalton, Captain G. Rebbechi, Captain G. Wilson, WO 2 F. Marschner and yours truly.

Reg Morrell.

**James Ernest Newland VC
(1881 - 1949)**



James Ernest Newland (1881 - 1949), by unknown photographer, courtesy of Australian War Memorial. A02614.

NEWLAND, JAMES ERNEST (1881-1949), regular soldier, was born on 22 August 1881 at Highton, Victoria, son of William Newland, labourer and later railway employee, and his wife Louisa Jane, née Wall, both Victorian born. No details of his education are known.

Newland embarked as a private in the 4th Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse, for service in the South African War on 26 March 1903. His unit arrived at Cape Town shortly before the peace treaty was signed and was soon back in Australia. He served with the Royal Australian Artillery in Victoria from July 1903 until September 1907 and was a policeman in Tasmania from March 1909 until August 1910 when he rejoined the regular army there. He served with the Australian Instructional Corps until enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force on 17 August 1914 as regimental quartermaster sergeant, 12th Battalion. On 27 December 1913, at Sheffield, Tasmania, he had married Florence May Mitchell.

Newland embarked for Egypt on 20 October and landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 where he was wounded (probably on that day) and evacuated; he was commissioned second lieutenant on 22 May when he rejoined his unit. Leaving Gallipoli for Egypt on 9 June to take charge of 12th Battalion transport, he was promoted lieutenant on 15 October and captain on 1 March 1916. He was adjutant from 15 March, sailed for France that month and took command of 'A' Company in August. On 21 August, during the battle of the Somme, he led his company in a successful attack on trenches north-east of Mouquet Farm: though recommended for the Military Cross he was instead mentioned in dispatches. Late in February 1917 the Australians followed the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg line but found strong enemy posts at Le Barque. Newland led his company in the attack on the town on 27 February but was evacuated wounded. The advance continued and Newland rejoined the battalion in time to lead his company on 8 April in the attack on Boursies. Under heavy fire he led a bombing attack against a strong-point and secured the outskirts of the village. The Germans kept a sharp fire on the position during the day and after dusk counter-attacked, driving back most of the advanced posts. Newland, assisted by Sergeant J. W. Whittle and reinforcements, charged the Germans and regained the lost ground.

On 15 April a major German counter-attack was launched against the 1st Australian Division. Newland's company was south-east of Lagnicourt and held the Germans until outflanked. Forced back, the company made a stand at a sunken road where, despite repeated attacks, they held the position until reinforcements arrived. Newland's tenacity and disregard for his own safety while encouraging his men at Lagnicourt, as well as his courage in both the attack and counter-attack at Boursies, were recognized by award of the Victoria Cross. On 5 May, during the 2nd battle of Bullecourt, he was wounded for the third time and evacuated to England; his A.I.F. appointment ended in Victoria on 2 March 1918. He carried out full-time duty as a captain (Reserve of Officers)

until 31 December 1921 but this service was not recognized until 1927 as continuous employment in the military forces in a permanent capacity.

Newland's wife died of tuberculosis in 1924 and on 30 April 1925, at St Paul's Anglican Church, Bendigo, he married Heather Vivienne Broughton. Newland was promoted quartermaster and honorary major in 1930 and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in 1935. He retired from the army in 1941 and from April to September was deputy commissioner of the Northern Territory division of the Australian Red Cross Society. On 2 January 1942 he joined the inspection staff at Ammunition Factory, Footscray, Melbourne. Survived by his wife and their daughter, he died suddenly of heart failure at Caulfield on 19 March 1949 and was buried in the Methodist section of Brighton cemetery. In 1984 his daughter presented his V.C. and medals to the Australian War Memorial.

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3 Battery Reunion.

On the 26th October, 2006, a group of 3 Battery Members & Partners met for dinner at the Caulfield RSL, where we were welcomed by the President, John Decker, who is also a member of 3 Bty. It was a great evening and a chance to renew old memories such as the time, we won the Mount Schank Trophy on two occasions. The first time was, when 3 Bty. was originally named Q Bty. Names (excluding rank) included Bernie Pearson, David Osborne, Geoff Rebbechi, Darby O'Toole, Sam Phyland, Oka Brookes, Tim Crespin, Peter Harris, Brian Joyce, Andy Millis, Rod Olsen, Robin Smead, Barbara Monahan widow of Joe and yours truly.

Reg Morrell.



Part 26 – Colonel (Personnel – Projects), 1981-82

Having passed the title of Colonel Artillery to COL Mike Vincent on 28 Apr 81, I had been told that I would be the Staff Officer to the Senior Army Reserve Officer, 3MD in the appointment of Colonel (Personnel – Projects)¹. I was listed as UOL and remained on the Artillery List. This saved the necessity of acquiring a new mess kit. My artillery one had been acquired in 1963 when the Government Clothing Factory was still in existence. Through not having the opportunity for a fitting the jacket had always been a tight fit and remains so.

On Wed 29 Apr 81 I paraded at *Grosvenor* in my new rôle, having obtained Mike's permission to change into uniform in his office. I was given an office adjacent to MAJGEN Kevin Cooke's. On the following Saturday I visited the Warrant Officer's course at the Albert Park signals dépôt.

On Wed 6 May 81, I was briefed by the general as to my task. It was basically to be concerned with personnel. I then realised that life in the field force group was going to be very different to that of the supervision of the artillery. I started to wonder whether I was mentally ready for this change in direction and activity.

In the meantime the Gunner Dinner took place the following Friday. Once again, I invited the Braemar College chairman, Mr. Buck Brooksbank, to be my guest, as well as Father Fox from Salesian College. After much coaching before the dinner, Father Fox handled the artillery grace with only a word or two different. He concluded with, "Let's thank God."

Guest of Honour at 1981 Gunner Dinner

I was rather pleased to find that I was the guest of honour for the night. LTCOL George James referred to my "legendary map reading ability," amongst other remarks. He did note my attitude to the truth. My reply speech was such that MAJGEN Jock McNeill said it was the best he had heard from me. I took that in its most positive sense. Well, you only get one such chance in a career.

MAJ Carl Wood was teased mercilessly when the senior officers rose at the end of the meal. Someone even suggested that he should sign for ten polished dining tables in good condition, but his dancing demonstration of the previous year was not repeated.

ARRLS

Later that month I was asked to draft a paper to consider financial inducements for members of the community to join the Army Reserve. Later that night I attended a recruiting conference chaired by LTCOL Bev Blanksby², who ran a very tight ship. One of my responsibilities was to visit and liaise with the ARRLS group, of which LTCOL Blanksby was its commanding officer.

The ARRLS was a most efficient unit. It operated from the training dépôt in the city at the corner of Victoria and Therry Streets. Here the recruiting of soldiers for the Army Reserve was streamlined to meet all the requirements of inducting a person into the army and have the soldier uniformed, attested and parading with his or her chosen unit in the minimum of time. It was essential that the initial enthusiasm of the recruit was not lost due to bureaucratic delays. Bev was assisted by other members of the WRAACs.

¹ I do not recall the "projects" part of the title when appointed, but it was in the title by 1982

² LTCOL Blanksby died in May, 2006, her funeral being held on Mon 22 May 06. The size of the attendance of mourners indicated the respect held for this outstanding female officer

Shirley and I had the opportunity one weekend to meet socially with Judy and Derrick Austin. Derrick had previously been the CO of 10 Mdm Regt, RAA. He and Judy now lived at Barwon Heads, but during his CO-ship he travelled from his property at Mortlake to Colac and Geelong for parades. On Fri 12 Jun 81 I accompanied MAJGEN Cooke to an Ordnance Corps dinner.

Later that month I attended a cocktail party for the Committee for Employer Support. This was followed by the recruiting team having a “formal” dinner at the training depôt in Chapel Street, now RAA, but then RAEME. I have deliberately used inverted commas for “formal” as the meal was buffet style and rather relaxed. I was to gather that I was now referred to as the ARRLS’s “godfather.” This title was in keeping with Bev’s expectations of Field Force Group’s supervision.

By July I was coming to terms with the demands of my civil employment as headmaster of an expanding and successful school. Braemar College was now in its sixth year and becoming well known. But it was not yet mature enough for procedures to have been fully established. Far too many matters were referred to the person with the notice on his desk that “the buck stops here.” This was not a play on the chairman’s name although he backed me to the hilt and we worked in close understanding.

In short, I no longer had the time and energy to devote to outside activities, whether church, army or scouts. In many ways the army task was far more demanding than that of “Colonel Artillery.” I had no directly allocated staff backup as COL (Pers/Proj), either full or part-time.

The situation came to a head early in July when I found I needed to be in two places at once. The position had also been appreciated by MAJGEN Cooke and COL Bill Hocking³ came on to the establishment as the Chief of Staff⁴. Bill would be accepting some of the “staff officer” tasks that I had earlier been given. This enabled me to take a lesser but significant rôle at *Grosvenor*.

Invitations continued to come for functions within the field force. On Sat 11 Jul 81 I attended the 10 Mdm Regt, RAA, dinner, deputizing for COL Mike Vincent. I gave the reply to the regimental toast. A step that should have been taken earlier was that Mike would now chair the RAA Corps Planning Committee.

On 16 Jul 81, COL Mike Vincent reported to the AGM of the RAA Association on the aims and state of the Army Reserve and in particular its artillery components. After outlining the changes in roles from what had been the CMF to the Army Reserve, he listed the strengths of the current units. These were: 2/15 - 390, 10 Mdm - 250 and 132 - 60. Together with about one hundred gunners serving “out of corps,” the RAA in Victoria numbered about eight hundred or 12% of the Army Reserve in Victoria.

The plans for the Royal Regiment were to include: A third battery for 2/15; the re-raising of HQ RAA 3 Div; a third battery for 10 Mdm; the splitting of 2/15 into “two by two Battery Regiments”; and consideration for the raising of an Air Defence Battery. There was considerable evidence that these initiatives could be achieved with evident community support and the government’s desires to expand the defence force’s capabilities⁵.

Reserve Command Staff College

³ Later Brigadier as Comd 4 TF/Brigade

⁴ On reflection I now understand that I was not demoted but that an appointment was created that would be senior to the COL (Pers/Proj). I held the latter appointment for two years prior to being placed on the reserve of officers

⁵ In 2011 it is a sad reflection to see the decline in the Royal Regiment’s army reserve role.

It is represented by only one regiment, namely 2/15 Fd Regt, RAA, but equipped with mortars, not guns

Amongst other initiatives at the time was the creation of the Reserve Command and Staff College, through which all officers seeking promotion would acquire their qualifications. COL Don Sandow was appointed as its first commander.⁶

The Artillery Ball was held on Fri 7 Aug 81. COL A. Mair was still the President of the RAA Association.

On the weekend of 12/13 Sep 81, I, with COL Andy McGalliard, attended the board to examine senior NCOs for consideration to be Provisional Service Officers. Twenty-five or more years later I feel I can be more candid about this process. I have already referred to the factors that experienced warrant officers would have to take into account should they seek commissions in the later stages of their military careers.

I cannot recall the total membership of the board, but a regular LTCOL of the Psychology Corps had come down from Sydney to assist us. Each of the candidates had been assessed on a scale of ten for various aptitudes. I was to discover that an applicant with either a too high or too low an assessment would not be considered! This did not imply that PSO officers would be mediocre, but it did damn the very bright and exclude the others. Andy and I argued against this interpretation and sought to make judgments on the interview of the applicant, his past service and his potential in a PSO appointment.

This “horror” of high or low marks reminds me of how one should approach an assessment of a fellow officer when asked to comment on his solution at a TEWT. Assuming a possible score of ten, I had learned that one never awarded a mark less than four and never higher than seven. If one did so, then one had to justify this condemnation or praise!

On Sat 3 Oct 81 I was deputed to be the inspecting officer at the recruit parade at Puckapunyal. Recruit training continued to be conducted with a fortnight’s intensive course of training. “Red hat” officers were rostered for the reviewing officer task.

My friends know that I am tall and not all that agile. The task of entering into and alighting from a car in military uniform with cap, medals and sword has always challenged me. Either the cap would be knocked off, the medals come adrift or the sword would catch in the door or all three events would occur. On arrival at Puckapunyal I would plead with the parade commander to permit me to march on to the parade. My pleas were generally met, but it probably meant that I was put into the “OTBUAALR” category.⁷ But I would draft an address and deliver it in the best headmaster’s speech night manner.

Honours and pistol shooting

There was a requirement for senior officers to attend a pistol shoot at the Williamstown rifle range.⁸ On the morning concerned I worked on the re-wording of citations for the award of honours. This was one definite task that the COL Personnel would be required to undertake. The one that I worked on that morning was finally successful. I will refer to the honours system later in this chapter.

Out at Williamstown I met once again that indefatigable “army cook,” SGT George Beale. I have rarely met a person who could provide excellent meals with the minimum of cooking equipment and rations and do it in either a howling gale or storm or both. But one had to be tolerant with another of his characteristics.

⁶ COL Sandow, who lived at Tylden, died on 22 Jul 06 from cancer

⁷ Only to be used as a last resort

⁸ This has now been closed, with part of the range sold for housing development

On the range I met up with LTCOL Alistair Lloyd. Alistair was then CO of the Deakin University unit. He told me that he would be leaving Geelong to take up a new position in the pharmacy profession – a position that would nowadays be termed as the CEO⁹. He and I did some shooting on the range with the F1 and the pistol.

I confess that I had spent some of my youth watching western movies. The “goodies” could always draw their “six-shooters” and, firing from the waist, “drop” their opponent with ease. Presuming that there have been some technical advancements since those days, I found the pistol to be a very difficult weapon to aim and fire. Even using both hands, and sighting with the eye, the accuracy of the weapon was very questionable without I assume considerable practice. But then rifle shooting, apart from some success when in the ATC, had never been a skill for which I have been noted.

With the year coming to an end, there were still some social invitations to accept. One of these was the annual dinner for the army chaplains. CHAP Class 3 John Leaver¹⁰ was in attendance with his wife, Wendy. John attended many artillery camps in his chaplain’s rôle and has always been very much respected. He has often taken matters concerning soldiers to the highest level in order that they be sorted out in the most positive manner. That I also knew him in his capacity as president of the group of schools, of which Braemar was a member, was an added factor in our friendship.

Mr. Roach – Mil Sec

I referred above to honours. In 1981, the military division nominations were still a mix of Imperial and Australian awards. I was given a sheet that showed the respective levels of the orders in relation to the rank of the nominated officer. Mr. Roach, the member of the military secretariat, who would fly down quite regularly from Canberra, was able to provide me with “the form” in which such nominations should proceed. I got the feeling that a nomination had to be “knocked back” on the occasion of its first submission. The wording would then be “improved” or varied for its second and generally successful submission.

So ended my first year in my new posting. It had been very different from those in the Royal Regiment.

My duties were now more social and of a liaison nature. But as I have indicated, my civilian occupation and the distance from Woodend to Melbourne were clearly affecting my opportunities to be as effective as I would have wished. But the system was tolerant towards me and my posting was to continue into 1982.



⁹ He was appointed AO for his rôle in this executive appointment

¹⁰ He was appointed AO for his work in education some years later

Sergeant John Fairbrother

27th October 1941 23rd December 2005

Sgt John (Fairy) Fairbrother was born in Melbourne on 27th October 1941 and died at Lang Lang on 23rd December 2005 after a short battle with cancer.

Fairy was a contradictory nick name, as John was certainly not built like a Fairy, however he readily accepted it on the basis of "not by nature".

John was one of the first to enlist in the Army Reserve following the cancellation of the compulsory National Service scheme. He was posted to 10 Medium Regiment at Brighton and Frankston and returned to Brighton as a member of 3 Bty, 2 Fd Regt and served on the gun line for twelve years, rising to the rank of Sergeant. In 1968 he was a member of 3 Bty when it won the Mt Schank Trophy.

He is remembered as an excellent trainer and mentor of young soldiers. He was a gregarious personality and maintained his association with The Regiment through his membership of the RAA Association of Victoria and close social contact with those that served with him at 3 Bty. Fortunately many had the opportunity to visit him towards the end and were impressed by the courage and dignity with which he accepted his last hand.

Following his voluntary discharge in 1970 he focussed his attention on the Sandringham Football Club where he became head trainer. He was also involved, as a volunteer, with a wide range of community and sporting groups.

His funeral service was held at the Community Hall, Lang Lang, well attended by his fellow Gunners. The military segment of the eulogy was delivered by Brigadier Doug Perry and an appropriate wake was conducted at the Hotel opposite.

Reg Morrell.

Parade Card

JAN 2007

19 Committee
25 ANZAC Day

JUL 2007

01 Res Forces Day
19 Committee

FEB 2007

11 Church Parade
15 Committee

MAY 2007

17 Committee

AUG 2007

16 Committee

MAR 2007

15 Committee
?? HMAS Cerberus visit

JUN 2007

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

SEP 2007

20 Committee

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND DETAILS UP-DATE

Please forward to:
RAA Association (Vic) Inc.
101 Warralong Ave
GREENSBOROUGH VIC 3088

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Surname and Post Nominals _____

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_____ Postcode _____

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Serving Y/N _____ If so, Unit _____

Awards, Decorations, Medals, Etc. _____

Brief Service History _____

Additional Information (Committee, Unit Rep, Etc) _____

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