

# FRONTLINE

## A DEFENCE SERVICE JOURNAL

OFFICIAL JOURNAL

1<sup>ST</sup>/19<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION

THE ROYAL NEW

SOUTH WALES

REGIMENT

ASSOCIATION &

2<sup>ND</sup>/19<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION

A.I.F. ASSOCIATION.

MEMBERS OF THE

AUSTRALIAN

DEFENCE

FORCES

RESERVES

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# FRONTLINE



## VALE GOOD FRIENDS

### 217421 MAJOR John STRASKYE, OAM, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY MEDICAL CORPS



Late of Dawes Point NSW, John was born on 21 February 1950 and sadly passed away at St Vincent's Hospital on 15 February 2012 following a stoic battle with leukaemia. Dearly beloved husband of Wendy. Much loved father and father-in-law of Carmen and Michael. Dearest Poppy of Charlotte and Cooper.

Following 20 years service the ARA, John re-enlisted in 1/19 RSWR on 17 April 1988 and served as Company Sergeant Major Admin Company until transfer to Army Reserve Recruiting Unit Randwick. Commissioned on 1 January 1997, he served with Health Services Army Reserve Eastern Region at Victoria Barracks Sydney.

Our thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Victor Tsang – a close friend and associate of John in providing the following tribute to him:

I knew Major Straskye for more than 20 years through his service as an Officer of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps and as a former member of the Australian Federal Police. He was of the highest integrity and with an outstanding sense of community spirit. I worked with him at the Health Services Army Reserve Eastern Region. Major Straskye was an integral member of the Unit who was awarded the Surgeon General's Commendation and the Jeffrey Harkness Award, the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps (RAAMC) highest award to outstanding officers and recently the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2010.

Major Straskye involved himself in the Sydney Chinese Community's Australia Day Celebrations by assisting me with its coordination for the past several years. At his own instigation he created a website illustrating the contribution to Australia the Chinese have made, particularly the military contributions made by Chinese Veterans in all wars. He regularly attended our celebrations and took photos and videos and published them on a website he created. He maintained this website for us for no charge. This has been an outstanding contribution as it keeps our members informed and illustrates the Chinese contribution to Australia. It can be viewed at: <http://chinesediggers.rydevvaa.org/>.

Major Straskye was extremely active in the RAAMC Veteran Community by organising and coordinating them through the RAAMC Association. Major Straskye at his own initiative and at his own expense, created and incorporated the RAAMC Association and through meetings and negotiations brought together the RAAMC Unit Associations, regular and reserve, which are now unified. This is an outstanding achievement. He also created websites for the RAAMC Unit Associations throughout Australia and maintained them financially and through his own time putting them together and updating them. This website has been responsible for the creation of several Associations which would have never existed and an example of this is the recent Reunion of 11 Field Ambulance in Enoggera, which by in large was a defacto RAAMC Reunion. Major Straskye ensured that all members of the Royal Australian Army Dental Corps were welcome to participate with the RAAMC in their activities. The RAAMC Association website can be viewed at [www.raamc.org.au](http://www.raamc.org.au).

I know that Major Straskye, in his former civilian occupation as an Australian Federal Police Officer, deployed on many occasions to countries which were in turmoil. I know he volunteered on each occasion as I was required to do his dental examination prior to him departing. During his earlier Army service he served as a Rifle Company medic on active service with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment in South Vietnam in 1970/71. His later postings saw him serve in Singapore in 1973/74, and on exchange with the British Army in West Germany in 1986. During his service with the Australian Federal Police he deployed to Cyprus in 1992, Haiti in 1995, with the National Crime Authority International Division in 1997, and East Timor in 1999.

A large congregation farewelled John at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 20 Grosvenor Street, Sydney on Friday February 24, 2012 with his service being conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Chaplain Reverend Canon Colin Aiken OAM RFD ChStJ and Father Ray of St Patrick's Church. Tony Ang (senr), Bob Pink, David Ring, and Bryan Schafer, represented the Association at John's farewell.

**NX355808 PRIVATE William Thomas "Bill" BAIRD, OAM**  
**17 Platoon, D Company, 2/19 AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION AIF**

Bill's brief eulogy was published in the late running December 2011 newsletter and we thank Kay Willis for her detailed tribute to Bill from the Hay Riverine Grazier and Association member Mrs Marj Flack of Hay for forwarding it on to us.

## HAY RIVERINE GRAZIER Wednesday February 1, 2012



### Bill Baird - OAM; a humble legend

**Bill Baird was a generous and courageous man with a keen sense of social justice and community spirit.**

He received many awards in the latter years of his life, including Hay's Citizen of the year award and the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) but remained a humble man. Bill was born on August 20, 1916 at Hay, the son of Tom and Charlotte, devout and hardworking Scots who emigrated in 1910 in a bid to escape the centuries old landlord/tenant system. They set up a 40 hectare farm in the Hay Irrigation area for supply to their small milk run. He had little formal education as a child, having been diagnosed with a heart problem.

Bill busied himself during these years, working on his parents' small farm and milk run. With many farms and milkmen to choose from, competition for customers was intense and he was once sacked for tripping over a pushbike during darkness on a night delivery.

Bill married Doris Treasure in Deniliquin in 1940. He often spoke of the happy times they had together in this period riding their pushbikes to what was then a beautiful clear river with sandy beaches, enjoying each other's company in the short times they could spend together. Doris was a quiet 'bookish' young woman who had done well at school and Bill was full of conversation and eager to learn. They were well matched.

He enlisted in the army in late 1940. His 8th army division had initially been trained in desert warfare for battle in the middle east, however Japanese advances in Asia meant they were diverted to Singapore in 1941. Like so many of his comrades, this episode would both haunt him and provide strength to him for the rest of his life. The British High Command had estimated the Japanese would take six months to travel the 1100 kilometres to southern Malaya; they travelled the distance in 55 days.

Captured by the Japanese in the fall of Singapore in February 1942, Bill endured three and-a-half years of brutality as a Prisoner of War under the Japanese in Changi, the Thai-Burma 'death railway' and Japan, where they worked in underground coal mines just 20 kilometres from the site at the time of the Hiroshima atom bomb explosion.

Upon returning to Australia, Bill was finally reunited with his wife and met for the first time his four and-a-half year old son Robin who had been born six months after his departure overseas. He began building up a dairy business. There were 13 milkmen in Hay in 1955; by 1966 he was the only one remaining. Life was not easy, with injuries and sickness to his wife and children and the usual problems faced by farmers - droughts and floods.

Foreseeing the introduction of compulsory pasteurisation of milk throughout NSW, Bill purchased a disused butter factory in Alma Street in 1961 and began the difficult task of assembling a milk pasteurisation and packaging factory. During the nationwide credit squeeze of 1962 the bank advised they had begun proceedings to call up his loan and sell up his business. Fortunately he was able to convince the bank management that little benefit would flow to them from this course of action and he was able to trade his way out of debt.

By the mid 1960's through hard work, persistence, vision and of course the invaluable aid of his wife Doris, a woman of unlimited energy, and later Ray and Graham, he developed what was, by any stretch of imagination, a successful business comprising a dairy, milk factory, milk run and ice works.

He left Hay in the '70s for a brief time to live in Brisbane where he worked for the James Hardie company. Upon returning to Hay and on the suggestion of his son Graham, Bill began the Ivanhoe run in 1982, at the age most people are thinking of retirement. This was to last for the next 27 years until ill health overcame him in 2009. It was here, as in Hay, that he made many long-term friends. There can be little doubt he enjoyed this work and the social interaction it gave him. It also brought with it many challenges in negotiating the many kilometres of unsealed roads during times of heavy rain and his battles with bureaucracy were legendary. Bill's commitment to uninterrupted delivery was paramount, and the people of Ivanhoe responded with equal commitment to help Bill in any way possible. In 1986 he was devastated when Doris, his wife of 46 years died suddenly.

In 1992 he was diagnosed with malignant melanoma and was given six months to live. Inexplicably the cancer went into remission. He had refused treatment.

He was to undergo further traumas in 1993 and 2001 with the deaths of his sons Ray and Robin. Bill's life has been well documented in the book 'The man who loved crocodiles' by Marg Carroll, which was launched in Hay only months before his death.

**KAY WILLIS**

Loved Husband of Doris Marie Treasure (dec) Loved father and Father-in-law of Robin (dec) & Crystal; Ray (dec) & Martha Graham & Janet; Mervyn & Lynne; and Brian & Anna. Loved Pop of Adrian, Mark, Keith (dec), Craig, Naomi, Dallas, Travis, Chelsea, Warren,

# FRONTLINE



**216189 MAJOR Mark COX**  
**Battalion Headquarters,**  
**1<sup>st</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment**

Late of Casula, Mark was born at Kempsey NSW on 22 April 1947 and sadly passed away on 30 January 2012.

During his early years he underwent seminary training for the priesthood however, he didn't pursue the calling and undertook a series of occupations which included coal miner, steel worker and a manager for the St Vincent de Paul Society.

He enlisted in the Citizens Military Force in the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion and soon rose through the ranks soldiering in a variety of postings and was commissioned Lieutenant in 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 30 January 1958.

Promoted Captain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment on 2 April 1965, he commenced Full Time Duty in 1964 and was appointed to the Regular Army

Royal Australian Infantry Corps on 12 January 1965. He subsequently served as the Adjutant 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment, Quartermaster 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Pacific Islands Regiment in New Guinea, and Quartermaster General Eastern Command Sydney.

On promotion to Major he was posted as Battalion Second-in-Command to 19 RNSWR and later 1/19 RNSWR during its formative years and served with the Battalion at Old Holsworthy and Wallgrove. He then served as Quartermaster General Deputy Adjutant Headquarters Australian Force Vietnam (Army Component) from 23 June 1971 to 24 February 1972.

Loved husband of Margaret (dec) Loving father of Jeff, John, Denis, Nelson, Darrell, Valerie, Catherine, Mary, Bernadette and their families. Cherished grandfather and great-grandfather. Mark was farewelled at All Saints Catholic Church Liverpool on 3 February, 2012. Ken McKay and Bob Pink represented the Association at Mark's farewell.

## **NF454982 SERGEANT Betty MINTO (nee GILL) AUSTRALIAN WOMENS' ARMY SERVICE**

Betty's nephew Graeme advised with deep sadness of her passing on 4 February 2012. Betty was born at Banff, Scotland on 26 May 1921 and enlisted in the Australian Womens' Army Service on 6 April 1943 at Paddington NSW where she served until discharge on 19 July 1946.

Betty was the widow of NX57909 Lieutenant William Gordon (Bill) Minto of the Signals Platoon 2/19 Battalion AIF who predeceased her on 16 November 2008. Betty was the much loved mother and mother-in-law of Iain and Gillian, Warren and Nong. Loved grandfather of Rona, Lindsey, Samantha and Joy and aunt to Association Committee Member Graeme Gill.



**2103738 SERGEANT Neville James GREENTREE,**  
**A Company, 1<sup>st</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal New South Wales Regiment**

Late of Bringelly NSW, Neville was born on 11 August 1948 and passed away following a motor vehicle accident on 18 February 2012. He is survived by his beloved wife Irene and family.

Neville enlisted in 23 Field Regiment RAA on 4 July 1983 and transferred to 1/19 RNSWR on 2 January 1987. He was promoted Sergeant on 16 May 1992 and served as the Company Quartermaster Sergeant A Company.

He was farewelled St Andrew's Ukrainian-Greek Catholic Church Lidcombe on 28 February 2012. Roy Mundine, Bob Pink and Bryan Schafer represented the Association at Neville's farewell.

*Lest We Forget*

## COMING EVENTS 2012

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	Remarks
WED	25 APR 12	0930	<b>ANZAC DAY MARCH &amp; REUNION – SYDNEY</b>	March - Form Up Outside NSW Leagues Club Elizabeth St Reunion - MV Good Time - Sydney Harbour Cruise <b>see further details on page 8 &amp; 9</b> <b>REPLY PROFORMA ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER</b>	
SAT	23 JUN 12	1800	<b>ROYAL NEW SOUTH WALES REGIMENT OFFICERS' REGIMENTAL DINNER</b>	TBA	Further details & cost Tele: Regimental Secretary LTCOL Don SHEARMAN H: (03) 9437 2383 W: (03) 9450 7059)
SUN	24 JUN 12	0930	<b>ROYAL NEW SOUTH WALES REGIMENT ANNUAL CHURCH SERVICE</b>	GARRISON CHURCH MILLERS POINT SYDNEY	
SAT	30 JUN 12	1330	<b>RESERVE FORCES DAY CANBERRA</b>	AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL CANBERRA	
SUN	01 JUL 12	1330	<b>RESERVE FORCES DAY REVIEW</b>	SYDNEY DOMAIN	Reunion & refreshments following parade at NSW Leagues Club Phillip St SYDNEY
SUN	29 JUL 12 TO BE CONFIRMED	0930	<b>POZIERES DAY COMMEMORATION</b>	WOOLLAHRA	St Columba Church Ocean Street WOOLLAHRA
WED	15 AUG 12	1030	<b>VICTORY OVER JAPAN DAY</b>	SYDNEY CENOTAPH	Reunion & refreshments following service at 'Barracks on Barrack (Combined Services RSL) Barrack Street SYDNEY
FRI SAT SUN	26 OCTOBER 2012 27 OCTOBER 2012 28 OCTOBER 2012		<b>1/19 RNSWR ASSOCIATION OCTOBER 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING &amp; REUNION WEEKEND</b>	<b>ORANGE EX SERVICES CLUB</b>	<b>DETAILS OF VENUES BEING FINALISED</b> Please note that accommodation in Orange is becoming limited – please make your reservations ASAP !
SUN	11 NOV 12		<b>REMEMBRANCE DAY</b>	SYDNEY CENOTAPH	

### ASSOCIATION PATRONS & OFFICE BEARERS

**PATRON & LIFE MEMBER** Lieutenant Colonel T.C. (Terry) IRWIN, MBE, OAM, ED, ARMIT, MIR, JP  
**PATRON** Colonel B.E. (Brian) MARTYN, RFD  
**HONORARY CHAPLAIN** Lieutenant Colonel Reverend Chaplain Canon C.G. (Colin) AIKEN, OAM, RFD, ChStJ  
**CHANCELLOR** Philip GERBER, LL.M., M.Crim.

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## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**



I wish each and every one of you a very happy, peaceful and successful 2012 and express the hope that all of your endeavours come to fruition. Sadly, the year started with dismal news. Association member David Ring advised that his father, Dennis, passed away in Cowra on 28 December. Dennis had been in poor health for some time. His farewell at Palmdale Memorial Chapel on 5 January was well attended. Bob Pink and I, along with Glen Scriven and John Burns represented the Association and conveyed our condolences to Dennis' family.

January 31 saw the death of MAJ Mark Cox, former Battalion 2IC of 19 RNSWR and 1/19 RNSWR. Mark had been ill for some time. Mark had a very large family with many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Bob Pink and Ken McKay represented the Association at Mark's funeral at All Saint's Catholic Church, Liverpool on Friday, 3 February.

On Thursday, 9 February I flew to Hobart to make, in company with LTCOL Peter McGuinness, a presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to the management and staff of Print Applied Technology, the printers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition reprint of *The Grim Glory* and more recently *Boldly and Faithfully the Journal – The Official History of 19<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion AIF*. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the actual men and women who produced the two excellent volumes and to express to them our gratitude for the care and professionalism that they had shown in the work that they had done on both publications.

It is very easy to accept the "finished product" as "something you have paid for". The reality is that it is the dedication of these artisans working away in their print shop who achieve what we accept as the norm. That they were very proud of the job they had done on both occasions was evident in the comments made to me. They had also entered a specially bound copy of *The Grim Glory* in some industry competition, which they won. I was honoured to be presented with this special edition award winning copy.

On Saturday, 11 February, Bob Pink and I represented the Association at a function organised by The Association of 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalions for the launch, by MAJGEN Gordon Maitland AO, OBE, RFD, ED, of Terry Smith's book *Training the Bodes*, the story of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam's work in training a large contingent of the Cambodian Army in South Vietnam in 1972. During his speech MAJGEN Maitland recognised the importance of those people "behind the scenes" who are so important in the production of the items of military history.

I received advice from Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) that Roy Cornford was selected as one of the contingent of five former members of the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division and one Royal Australian Navy veteran to go to Singapore for the ceremonies surrounding the commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore in 1942. Bob Pink and I represented the Association at a farewell dinner for the contingent on Sunday, 12 February. I am sure that Roy was a proud representative of the Association. I also want to thank the other members who nominated, unsuccessfully, for the visit.

Wednesday 15 February was the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore. Bob Pink and I, in company with Joe Coombs and Glen Scriven, represented the Association at this important event. Glen laid the wreath in memory of 2/19 Battalion AIF comrades. In lovely weather a very large crowd heard a very stirring address by LTGEN Peter Leahy, AC, the former Chief of Army. Among

those attending were, Kevin Connelly, Shirley and son Michael Drum who travelled all the way down from Yamba, Marta Folkard, Graeme Gill, Dorothy Howard, Maureen Mariner, Marjorie Merroll, Barry Nesbitt, Roy and Trish Rae, David Ring, Glen's daughter Gleness, John Walsh, and Bob deputised for me in entertaining our members at lunch after the ceremony. I, unfortunately, had other engagements.

During the post Commemoration celebrations we received the news of the passing of John Straskye who had served in 1/19 RNSWR as a CSM and was subsequently commissioned in the RAAMC. John was diagnosed with acute leukaemia and slipped downhill very rapidly at the end. John was farewelled at St Patrick's, Church Hill on Friday, 24 February. Tony Ang (jnr), Bob Pink, David Ring and Blue Schafer represented the Association at John's farewell, which was conducted by Association Chaplain, LTCOL Chaplain Reverend Canon Colin Aiken OAM RFD ChStJ and the parish priest of St Patrick's Father Ray.

On 21 February, Bob Pink and I travelled to Canberra to attend the dedication, by 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion Association, of a Memorial Plaque in honour of the men of 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF. The journey was a personal one for me as my late father served in 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF and subsequently, when the Division was split, in 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF.

There was a very moving address by MAJGEN Gordon Maitland AO, OBE, RFD, ED and a short dedication by MAJGEN Ray Sharp AO, RFD, ED. Both these distinguished soldiers served in 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion in its post World War 2 "incarnation" and went on to command 4 RNSWR. Bob and I also took the opportunity to check on the 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF and 2/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion plaques that we laid four years ago. A very successful day and the organisation was a credit to the Committee of 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association.

Recent weeks and months have seen an increasing roll call of members on the sick list. Betty Mansfield, Terry Irwin, John Samin and Felicity Jess. Bob will have printed details elsewhere but I wanted to ask that we keep our fellow members in our thoughts and prayers. Each and every member is important and special. Just as this edition was going to press I received news that Committee member Graeme Gill was hospitalised in Brisbane, having suffered a heart attack after attending his son's wedding. He is progressing well but is not completely out of danger. Our thoughts are with Margaret and the family.

To conclude on an "upnote"! I was pleased to learn that Rita Dean has been appointed a Patron of Gosford RSL Sub Branch, a fitting recognition for her very active role in the Gosford Ex-Service community. Well done Rita from all your friends and fellow members.

*Roger Perry*



## RETURNED MAIL

Mail has been received back from the following Association members marked "Return to Sender" - "Left Address". If any member/reader is aware of June's or Thelma's new address, the Hon Secretary (Tele: 0414 907 427 - PO Box 224 Ingleburn NSW 1890) would appreciate your advice:

**Mrs June MURDOCH 2/62 Vendul Cres PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444**

**Mrs Thelma TOLEMAN PO Box 70 FERNVALE QLD 4306**

# FRONTLINE

## ANZAC DAY SYDNEY WED 25 APRIL 2012

**\$80.00**

**PER PERSON (including Children) PAYABLE PRIOR TO ATTENDING**

**Includes cost of 4 hour cruise and all food and drinks (less spirits)**



### LUNCHEON MENU

To be preceded by light refreshments (coffee, tea, biscuits & cake) on boarding at Commissioner's Steps at Circular Quay at 12 noon. **Luncheon:** Freshly Cooked Prawns, Roast Chicken Pieces, Chargrilled Meatballs, Fettuccini in a Creamy Mushroom Sauce, Potato Wedges, Seafood Salad, Greek Salad that includes Fetta and Kalamata Olives **Dessert:** Freshly Cut Fruit Platter, Banana Cake, Chocolate Cake.

**ALL DRINKS ARE INCLUDED** (House Wines - Beer -Toohey's New, VB, Hahn Light, Soft Drinks, Tea & Coffee.. (Spirits are not included - however, if you would like to bring your own sustaining bottle of Mr Walker or Mr Smirnoff etc., you are most welcome to. **Just a reminder folks that we have to confirm the numbers attending to the Cruise Company by no later than 18 APRIL 2012. Your prompt attention would be appreciated. Berths will be allocated on a 'first in best dressed basis'. Please do not just roll up on the day or ring up the night before advising of your attendance and expect a berth on the cruise - you may be disappointed.** A sincere and warm invitation is extended to all family members and friends who are especially most welcome to attend.The weather forecast is once again for a fine sunny Sydney day!

### THE MARCH

**ASSEMBLE from 9.30 a.m. Elizabeth Street (between King St & Martin Place) SYDNEY outside the NSW Leagues Club to march with the 2<sup>nd</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF**  
This year, 1/19 RNSWR members will march with the 2/19 Battalion AIF Association contingent and then move to Circular Quay after the march to join the cruise vessel MV 'Good Time' at 12 noon.

**8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division AIF Association has been allocated 3 x Land Rovers for members of 2/19 Battalion A.I.F. and other th 8<sup>th</sup> Division units who are unable / do not wish to march..**

### THE REUNION – SYDNEY HARBOUR CRUISE

The MV 'Good Time' will pick up members & guests after the march at the Commissioner's Steps (opposite the old Maritime Services Board building - now the "Museum of Contemporary Art") at Circular Quay at **12:00 NOON ONLY.**

**THERE WILL BE NO SECOND PICK UP THIS YEAR,** The cruise of Port Jackson and environs will continue all afternoon and return to Circular Quay at 4.00 p.m. It is suggested that family & friends view the march in George St Sydney adjacent to Town Hall Railway Station which has lifts installed on all platforms. They can then travel by train to Circular Quay Railway Station (which has escalators on each platform) to join the MV 'Good Time' at Commissioner's Steps.

**PLEASE RETURN THE REPLY SLIP ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER TO THE HONORARY SECRETARY 1/19 RNSWR Association PO Box 224 INGLEBURN NSW 1890 WITH YOUR PAYMENT BY NOT LATER THAN FRIDAY 13 APRIL 2012.** PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU PAY AND THEN FIND YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, YOUR \$\$\$ WILL BE REFUNDED.



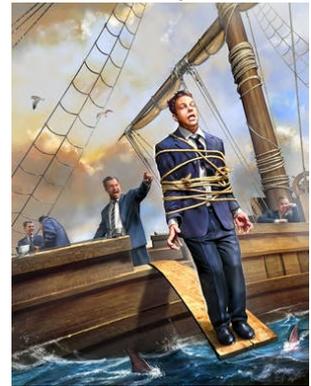
# ANZAC DAY SYDNEY HARBOUR CRUISE RE-UNION

## "To Cruise or nor to Cruise ??!!"

As we go to press with this issue of Frontline - the response (*apart from several Association stalwarts and regular attenders*) to the "Expression of Interest to attend the ANZAC Day Harbour Cruise" contained in the 2012 Subscription Reply slip which was mailed with the December 2011 Newsletter – was, to say the least, extremely disappointing – with only 28 likely attendances being advised so far.

When the 2/19<sup>th</sup> and 1/19 Associations merged the President gave the assurance that 2/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association would participate in the ANZAC Day March as long as, at least, one veteran was able to do so. Sadly, among those who have put their hands up for the 2012 March, there are only two veterans and they will both ride in Land Rovers at the head of the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division. This means that there will be NO veterans marching behind the 2/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion banner.

While the President has strongly resisted, and, indeed, defied the attempts by RSL HQ to "banish" descendants to the rear of the March it might be that the time has come for him to accede, with the greatest reluctance, to that pressure.



**A similar hard, and painful, decision looms in relation to the Reunion Harbour Cruise. We require a minimum of 70 attendees for the cruise – and have paid a deposit of \$500.00. The agreement is for us to pay the full cost of the cruise, a further \$5,100.00, by Friday 20 April 2012.**

**If we are to proceed with only the numbers who have indicated their attendance, then the Association will lose \$3,360.00** (i.e. we have to pay for the balance of 42 persons). We are sure all will agree that this is untenable and represents an unacceptable loss, which cannot be justified.

The ANZAC Day harbour cruise has been a popular and exclusive institution for 2/19 Battalion AIF Association members and their families since the War. In recent years 1/19 RNSWR members have also enjoyed the distinctively warm hospitality and camaraderie of the occasion that provides a unique, private, very comfortable and secure venue with ample seating cruising the finest harbour in the world for 4 hours.

Given the overpriced and at times exorbitant cost of beverages and meals in many Sydney establishments on ANZAC Day, the cruise certainly provides value for money, and you are urged to give further consideration to attending. Families and friends are especially welcome. (Regrettably there are no half price concessions for children).

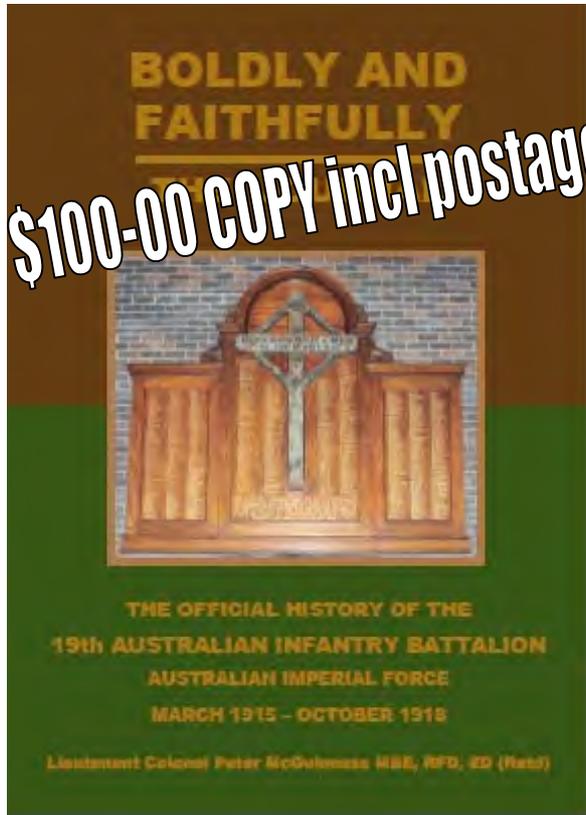
***Should we not reach the required numbers then we will be left with no alternative – albeit with much regret – but to cancel the cruise and seek an alternate land-based venue. All monies will be refunded to those members who have already paid and if we are able to secure a suitable venue, further advice concerning the reunion will also be notified.***

***We look forward to your close support in maintaining the traditional reunion cruise.***

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE ENCLOSED ANZAC DAY  
REPLY SLIP WITH YOUR PAYMENT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE  
BUT BY NO LATER THAN FRIDAY 13 APRIL 2012.**

# 19th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION AIF

THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE 19th AUSTRALIAN BATTALION AIF IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR



**\$100-00 COPY incl postage**

After three years of painstaking research, editing and formatting the official history of 19th Battalion AIF is in print.

**Some of the features of this outstanding**

**768 page unit history include:**

- ◆ A daily account of the Battalion's journey by day, date and location transcribed from the 19th Battalion War Diary and enhanced by extracts from the personal diaries of several members of the Battalion, intelligence summaries, action and incident reports and court-martial proceedings .
- ◆ Photos taken by Private Ray Jones a signaller with 19th Battalion during his tour of duty in Egypt and Gallipoli which have never been published before.
- ◆ Over 80 pictures from the Australian War Memorial's vast picture collection.
- ◆ Photos of the 19th and 2nd/19th memorabilia located at The Sailors and Soldiers Memorial Church of St Luke in Clovelly, NSW including the magnificent Honour Roll which features the 19th Battalion Memorial Pozières Cross and the names of over 860 members of the Battalion who made the supreme sacrifice at Gallipoli and on the Western Front.
- ◆ A revised Honour Roll which includes additional names discovered during research and emends a number of errors

in the Honour Roll at St Luke's Church.

- ◆ A detailed Nominal Roll featuring the names of more than 4,600 members of the AIF who at some time served with 19th Battalion. Each entry includes the Regimental Number, Rank on Embarkation, Surname and Given Names, Awards and Decorations, Age, Occupation, Promotions, Demotions and a brief Outline of Service.
- ◆ Images of a number of trench maps and field sketches used by members of 19th Battalion and 5th Brigade during the First World War.
- ◆ Details of the individual recommendations for awards recognising gallantry during battle and exceptional service.
- ◆ Details of an "act of mutiny" and other offences which led to courts-martial and on one occasion a sentence for desertion - which was later rescinded and changed to imprisonment with hard labour.



PLEASE SEND TO THE: HON SECRETARY, 1/19 RNSWR ASSOCIATION  
PO BOX 224 INGLEBURN NSW 1890 (Tele: 0414 907 427)

## ORDER FORM

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GIVEN NAME

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Please find enclosed  CHEQUE  MONEY ORDER FOR \$ ..... FOR ..... COPIES OF 'BOLDLY & FAITHFULLY'  
[PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH] (No.) at \$100.00 PER COPY

## SICK REPORT

*Get Well  
Soon*



**Felicity JESS**

spent a week or so in Orange Hospital undergoing a successful knee replacement and has nominated for the annual Cowra skateboarding competition

**Margaret JESS**

is in Cowra Hospital and is on the mend and sends her thanks to all for their kind and thoughtful wishes

**John SAMIN**

spent a couple of weeks in Tamworth Hospital and is now back home

**Terry IRWIN**

Association Patron Terry also spent a couple of weeks in Orange Hospital and is now back home convalescing. Whilst in Hospital he reports that he shared his room with Association member Keith HARRIS of 2/19 Battalion AIF.

**Graeme GILL**

has been in Brisbane Hospital since 26 February 2012 after a series of heart attacks and sends his best wishes to all

**Alf & Betty  
MANSFIELD**

Betty and Alf have had their share of woes in recent times. Betty is now back home and Alf has moved into permanent care at "The Abbey", Range Road MITTAGONG NSW 2575

**Keith HARRIS**

has moved to permanent care at the Calare Nursing Home Byng Street ORANGE NSW 2800 where he shares a room with his brother-in-law Cecil CANTRILL

**George THOMAS**

Is recuperating with his leg in plaster after a fall in Ireland during his recent overseas travels

**Ken GRAY**

Has moved to permanent care at the Chesalon Nursing Home 146 Beecroft Road BEECROFT NSW 2119

**Paul COUCH**

is recovering after successful neck surgery



# CONGRATULATIONS



To Col DENGATE on his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2012

To Tom and Jeannie FLETCHER on becoming great grandparents following the safe arrival on 15 February 2012 of Caitlyn Simone Behayon born to their granddaughter Emmalee and husband Michael.



To former Commanding Officer 1/19 RNSWR John BRENNAN who was promoted to Colonel on 1 January 2012 and is serving in Canberra as Director Reserve Officer Career Management – Army.



To former 1/19 RNSWR member Tony ANG who was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on 1 January 2012 and is serving as SO1 Training at HQ 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade.



## 45th BATTALION - THE ST GEORGE REGIMENT PLAQUE UNVEILING AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL CANBERRA Tuesday 21 February 2012

President 1/19 RNSWR Association Roger PERRY – President 45th Battalion Association Oliver STAGGS & Hon Secretary 1/19 RNSWR Association Bob PINK



Major General Ray SHARP AO RFD ED, Chief of Army Lieutenant General David MORRISSON AO & Major General Gordon MAITLAND AO OBE RFD ED



Major General Ray SHARP AO RFD ED, & Roger PERRY



Roger PERRY, Mrs Dorothy MAITLAND, Mrs Doyle & Flight Lieutenant Stuart DOYLE

## DONATIONS



It is a pleasure to once again acknowledge the generosity of the following members which is gratefully received.

Our Thanks folks !

CPL	Tony	<b>ANG</b>	LTCOL	Terry	<b>IRWIN</b>
MRS	Sylvia	<b>BELL</b>	LTCOL	Ken	<b>KIRKBY</b>
LTCOL	Gary	<b>BELTRAME</b>	MR	Murie	<b>LAYTON</b>
MR	Glen	<b>BERTRAM</b>	MRS	Junetta	<b>LEWIS</b>
MR	Warwick	<b>BIRCH</b>	MAJ	Bob	<b>LIDDEN</b>
LCPL	Geoff	<b>BLAIR</b>	SQNLDR	Alan	<b>LYONS</b>
MRS	Diana	<b>BLAND</b>	MR & MRS	Alf & Betty	<b>MANSFIELD</b>
MAJ	Allan	<b>BRABY</b>	MR	David	<b>MARINER</b>
COL	John	<b>BRENNAN</b>	COL	Brian	<b>MARTYN</b>
MR	Colin	<b>BRIEN</b>	MR	Norm	<b>McDONALD</b>
MRS	Joan	<b>BYE</b>	WO2	Neil	<b>MELVILLE</b>
MR	Phillip	<b>CATLIN</b>	MRS	Coralie	<b>MOWBRAY</b>
MAJ	Barry	<b>CHAPMAN</b>	WO2	Ray	<b>MULLER</b>
MAJ	Harry	<b>COLE</b>	PTE	Graham	<b>NEGUS</b>
MR	Joe	<b>COOMBS</b>	PTE	Tony	<b>OHLBACH</b>
MAJ	Brett	<b>COOPER</b>	MRS	Joan	<b>PAGE</b>
LT	Tom	<b>COOPER</b>	WO2	Roger	<b>PERRY</b>
MRS	Rita	<b>DEAN</b>	MR	Joe	<b>PICKUP</b>
MR	Charles	<b>EDWARDS</b>	MRS	Gladys	<b>POWER</b>
CAPT	Bill	<b>EDWARDS</b>	MRS	Ettie	<b>READ</b>
WO2	John	<b>ELLIOTT</b>	MRS	Reneth	<b>RENNIE</b>
MRS	Nancy	<b>ELLIOTT</b>	PTE	David	<b>RING</b>
MR	Tony	<b>FANNING</b>	MR & MRS	Laurie & Helen	<b>SHEEDY</b>
MRS	Marj	<b>FLACK</b>	CPL	Luke	<b>SPURR</b>
MAJ	Peter	<b>GODFREY</b>	MRS	Dell	<b>STAFFORD</b>
PTE	Paul	<b>GRUMLEY</b>	MRS	Jean	<b>TEERMAN</b>
MR	Mick	<b>HEYDON</b>	SGT	Peter	<b>TRACEY</b>
MRS	Lynette	<b>HISCOX</b>	MR	Wal	<b>WILLIAMS</b>
MRS	Christine	<b>HORROCKS</b>	PTE	Anton	<b>YUSWAK</b>



## NEW MEMBERS



A very warm and sincere welcome is extended to the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter:

MRS	Peggy	<b>DRINKWATER</b>	CASULA NSW	2170
MR	John	<b>STEWART</b>	MONASH ACT	2904



## 70th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION **THE FALL OF SINGAPORE**

**SYDNEY CENOTAPH WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2012  
ORATION DELIVERED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL PETER LEAHY, AC**

*Tell me of their deeds of glory  
That shall live for evermore  
Tell me though the deeds be gory  
How they fought for Singapore.*

*Did they not with fierce endeavour  
Struggle on against mighty odds  
Shall not their spirit live forever  
In the temple of the Gods.*

*These words come from the poem, "Skies of Singapore", by Gerald Murphy a POW in Changi. It first appeared in the Borehole News a small newspaper written by prisoners at Christmas 1942.*

On Sunday 4th September 2007 I was privileged to stand beside the Simpang Kiri River at Parit Sulong in Johor State, Malaysia. I was there with 7 veterans who had fought in the January 1942 battles attempting to blunt the Japanese advance on Singapore. My companions were Charles Edwards, Cyril Gilbert, Gus Halloran, Jim Kerr, Rowley Richards, Jack Varley and Verdun Walsh. They represented the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division. We were joined by two war widows; Rita Dean and Mavis Kirley. We were there to dedicate a memorial to those who fought in the battles around Muar, Bakri and Parit Sulong.

The memorial was in view of the site where 107 wounded Australians had been massacred by the Japanese. I had spent some time with the veterans in the few days preceding the dedication of the memorial. I got to know them and grew to respect them and through them their fellow soldiers from the Australian 8<sup>th</sup> Division. The 8<sup>th</sup> Division was raised to fight in Germany. One of the original brigades, the 24<sup>th</sup> deployed to the Middle East. The rest of the Division, with the newly raised 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade, during 1941, as the Japanese menace developed were deployed throughout Asia and the Pacific.

The one thing I remember very clearly from my time with the veterans was their oft repeated statement, "Don't think of us as prisoners, think of us as fighters." And fighters they were. When the Japanese attacked Malaya members of the Division were in the thick of the action and fought valiantly to slow the Japanese advance. They stood to their task and showed great bravery and resolve. Along the way many units were over run and a large number of the men were killed or taken prisoner. By the end of January the Japanese had closed up on the Causeway to Singapore. After a week of relentless pressure, constant air attacks and artillery shelling the Japanese had seized a foothold on Singapore.

On 15 February, General Percival, running out of supplies and in order to minimise civilian casualties formally surrendered to the Japanese commander, General Tomoyuki Yamashita. The 8<sup>th</sup> Division were in the thick of the fighting during the Singapore campaign. In the fight down the Malayan Peninsula they were constantly on the move and had to adjust to the speed of the Japanese advance and their innovative tactics. The units of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division were frequently outflanked and outnumbered but they fought valiantly with a fierce determination which set the example for all Allied units. During the campaign down the Malayan Peninsula the 8<sup>th</sup> Division suffered more deaths in battle than any other allied unit.

After 15 February 1942 the 8<sup>th</sup> Division all but disappeared from view. Almost 15,000 Australians became prisoners of the Japanese. This was a substantial percentage of the allied prisoners held by the Japanese during World War II. For most of 8<sup>th</sup> Division the war was virtually over before it started. But not for all and in the performance of the separately deployed 23<sup>rd</sup> Brigade we see more of the fighting spirit of the Division. The Brigade fought on with great distinction and sustained over 50% casualties in Ambon, Timor and Rabaul. After the fall of Singapore the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division were still in our hearts and our minds but they were dispersed in POW camps throughout South East Asia and Japan and we heard little more of them until they returned after the war. They spent 3½ years in captivity throughout Japan and South East Asia. We know the names - Changi, the Thai Burma Railway, Sandakan, Manchuria, Hainan Island and the Home Islands.

About 8,000 of these men died. This constituted nearly 40 percent of those taken prisoner. Compare this with the 3% of prisoners of the Germans who died in captivity and you can get a sense of the difficulties and depravity they faced. Soldiers are always proud of their fighting prowess. While captivity cut short the battles the 8<sup>th</sup> Division were involved in we still learn a lot about them as fighters and men by examining how they fared in the battles down along the Malayan Peninsula to Singapore.

They fared exceptionally well and fought with courage, initiative and teamwork. We know a lot about the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division because of how they survived captivity. They showed their fortitude, courage and determination through the fact that so many survived. We know of their compassion and love for each other because of the way they cared for their mates in the hellish conditions they encountered. The men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division saw the start of the war against the Japanese in Malaya and Singapore. They also saw the end of the war against the Japanese and for some they saw this in Japan as prisoners. One of the veterans on the Malaysia trip told me of how he was in the back of a cookhouse in a coalmine on Japan where he was working in hellish conditions. He was scrounging for food and said that he saw a bright light off in the distance. He said that he didn't know what it was but that it was the most beautiful light that he had ever seen. He had seen the light from an atomic explosion. This was indeed the end of the war.

There are few of the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division left today. Their ranks thin year by year. We will miss them as family, friends and soldiers. They helped define Australians as fighters but also as a people who could forgive, perhaps not forget, but who could forgive. The men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division came back to be fathers and husbands, brothers and uncles. Some coped, others found it difficult. How can we blame them after what they had been through? They were not helped by Governments over many years who never really understood or appreciated what they had gone through. Of all the stories of Australians at war theirs was unique. They were both fighters and prisoners and were defined by their performance as both. They showed vigour, valour and courage and lived to a code of honour.

These men were indeed fighters. We know this because of their bravery and determination during the campaigns in Malaya and Singapore. But as prisoners they also performed as fighters, true to their values as soldiers and Australians and most importantly true to their mates. Many battles last for only a few days. The battles the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division fought in captivity were endless. There was no respite and they were weak with hunger, illness and mistreatment. Despite the ravages of dysentery, cholera, malnutrition, beriberi, tropical ulcers and amputations in intolerable conditions they persevered. The story of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division is full of personal stories of life, death, brutality and compassion, hope and despair yet all the way through a light shines bright and bold. This light is human dignity, comradeship and professional duty.

The men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division have left the Nation a legacy of courage and determination. They have left an indelible mark in the history of Australia and the Australian Army. I am proud to have stood beside the Simpang Kiri River with the veterans of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division and to have acknowledged their bravery and service. I am proud today, on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of commemoration of the Fall of Singapore, to be with them again.

---

Peter Leahy was born in Melbourne on 30 October 1952. He entered the Royal Military College in 1971 and graduated in 1974. His early career included instructional duties at the Officer Cadet School Portsea and command of a company of Gurkha soldiers during an exchange posting with 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles in Hong Kong.

Over a three year period he was a student and an instructor at the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Later in his career he was the Commanding Officer of the 8th/9th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, Military Assistant to the Chief of the General Staff, Director of Army Research and Analysis, Commander of the 3rd Brigade. Chief of Staff of Headquarters Australian Theatre and Deputy Chief of Army. He was promoted to lieutenant general and appointed Chief of Army on 28 June 2002.

He was reappointed for a further three years on 29 June 2005. He is also the longest serving incumbent of the position since General Sir Harry Chauvel in the 1920s. In 1995, General Leahy was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM), and in 2002 was upgraded to Officer (AO). In the 2007 Queen's Birthday Honours List, he was elevated to Companion (AC), Australia's highest civil honour.

On 19 September 2008, Leahy joined the board of Codan. On 7 October 2008, he joined the staff of the University of Canberra as a Professor and foundation director of the National Security Institute. On 4 May 2009 he joined the board of Electro Optic Systems Holdings Ltd. He is a member of the Defence SA Advisory Board, a Director of the Kokoda Foundation, and serves on the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal Committee in the Australian Capital Territory.

# FRONTLINE

## 70th ANNIVERSARY - THE FALL OF SINGAPORE - 15 FEBRUARY 2012 - SYDNEY CENOTAPH



Glen & Gleness SCRIVEN



Shirley & Michael DRUM



Kevin CONNELLY, Graeme GILL,  
Bob PINK, David RING



Glen SCRIVEN & Joe COOMBS in the VIP tent



Marta FOLKARD &  
Vice President  
8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division  
Association  
John WALSH PSM JP



Secretary 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Association Ron FERGUSON,  
President 1/19 RNSWR Association Roger PERRY & Kevin CONNELLY



Marjorie MERRROLL, Gwen MARINER & President  
7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Association Dick PAYTEN OAM



John WALSH PSM JP & Neville RILEY lay their wreaths

# FRONTLINE

## 70th ANNIVERSARY - THE FALL OF SINGAPORE -15 FEBRUARY 2012 - SYDNEY CENOTAPH



Dorothy HOWARD

Commander Forces Command Major General Mick SLATER AO DSC CSC with Glen & Gleness SCRIVEN



President 2/30<sup>th</sup> Bn Association Iain HUNTLEY & Trish & Roy RAE



Former Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter LEAHY AC & Glen SCRIVEN



Joe COOMBS & Glen SCRIVEN



The Cenotaph

## NEW BOOKS ON THE WAY

Peter BRUNE has advised that his forthcoming book on Singapore is almost complete and will go to print sometime this year. He has expressed his gratitude for the assistance received from the members of 2/19 Battalion AIF.

Pattie WRIGHT advised earlier in the month that she has finished her latest book - Ray Parkin's biography which will be published in October this year by Pan MacMillan. The venue is to be advised. The 2/19 Battalion AIF is well represented in Ray Parkin's biography ....Charles Edwards, Allan Brideoake, Ray Clendenning, Dougie Craig, Norm Flack, Reggie Newton....Ohama men.

## DVA COMMEMORATIVE TRIP - SINGAPORE



**Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs  
MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, 8 February 2012

### VETERANS RETURN TO SINGAPORE 70 YEARS AFTER THE FALL

The Repatriation Commissioner for the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Major General Mark Kelly, AO, DSC, announced today that six Second World War veterans will return to Malaysia and Singapore to remember their service, and those who fell 70 years ago during the fall of Singapore.

"This was a campaign which brought great suffering and sacrifice to Australians and was one of the defining moments in Australia's efforts during the war in the Pacific," MAJGEN Kelly said.

"The Malayan Campaign, which ended with the fall of Singapore, lasted just 68 days from 8 December 1941 to 15 February 1942," he said.

"It was one of the most costly campaigns in which Australians were involved, with over 20,000 directly affected.

"Following the surrender of the Allied forces to the Japanese, an unprecedented 15,000 Australians became Prisoners of War (POW). Sadly close to 8000 Australians lost their lives at camps including Changi and Sandakan, while others perished working on the Thai-Burma Railway.

"POW deaths in the Second World War accounted for nearly a quarter of Australia's fatal casualties."

MAJGEN Kelly said Australian troops suffered harsh conditions while in captivity but were renowned for their great fortitude, resilience and humour as prisoners of the Japanese.

"This will be an emotional journey for the veterans, retracing their steps through Malaysia and Singapore, including visiting Changi where many of them were held as prisoners," he said.

The six veterans will represent all Australians who served and died during the campaign. They will visit wartime locations including Gemas and Parit Sulong in Malaysia and Changi and Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore.

An Australian Memorial Service will be held at Kranji War Cemetery on 15 February-70 years to the day when Allied forces laid down their arms and Singapore fell to the Japanese.

The mission party will depart Sydney on Monday 13 February.

**Media inquiries:** 02 6289 6203 or 0428 805 578

**Editor's note:** A list of veteran representatives follows. Follow the mission on Facebook at *DVA Aus* or on Twitter at @dvaaus. Images and biographies of veterans, historical images and fact sheets are available at [www.dva.gov.au/media](http://www.dva.gov.au/media) Any mission inquiries contact Erin White at [erin.white@dva.gov.au](mailto:erin.white@dva.gov.au)

Service No.	Rank	Given Name/s	Surname	Service Branch	Unit
NX20061	GNR	Gordon	BUTLER	ARMY	2/15 FD REGT AIF
<b>NX44955</b>	<b>PTE</b>	<b>Roydon Charles</b>	<b>CORNFORD</b>	<b>ARMY</b>	<b>2/19 Bn AIF</b>
WX13869	PTE	Peter	DIMOPOULOS	ARMY	2/4 MG Bn AIF
Nx54468	SGT	William	ENNIS	ARMY	2/30 Bn AIF
24474	LEM(P)	Derek Arthur	HOLYOAKE	NAVY	HMS Lonsdale
NX50049	PTE	George Robert	SMITH	ARMY	2/18 Bn AIF

## DVA COMMEMORATIVE TRIP - SINGAPORE

"Pre-embarkation Dinner Rydges Hotel Sydney Sun 12 FEB 12"



L to R: Standing: National RSL President Rear Admiral Ken DOOLAN AO RAN, Commander Forces Command Major General Mick SLATER AO DSC CSC, Minister for Veterans' Affairs The Hon Warren SNOWDEN MP, Repatriation Commissioner Major General Mark KELLY AO DSC, Secretary Department of Veterans' Affairs Mr Ian CAMPBELL PSM, Rear Admiral Guy GRIFFITHS AO DSC DSO RAN, Representing The Hon Tony Abbott MP Mr Stuart ROBERT MP, Air Commander Australia Air Vice Marshal Mel HUPFIELD DSC.

Singapore Veterans seated at front L to R: Peter DIMOPOULOS, Roy CORNFORD, Gordon BUTLER, George SMITH, Derek HOLYOAKE, William ENNIS



**THE CORNFORD FAMILY AT RYDGES HOTEL 12 FEB 12**  
L to R: Roy & Joan, Stephen & Margo, Melinda & David

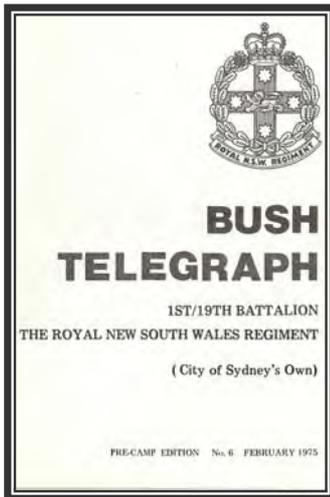


President Roger PERRY congratulating Roy on his selection to attend the trip.

# CASUALTY STATIONS

(or the Saga of the Big Green Ambulance)

*Martin Hanson sent in the following story from yesteryear after talking to John Samin reminded him of an real incident that happened while John Samin, JJ Brown and Martin were on a recruiting team at the Mount Druitt Woolworths Family Centre and was reported in the pre-camp edition No 6 February 1975 of the 1/19's Bush Telegraph. The incident was a real emergency and was reported in the Sydney Daily Telegraph and in a very humorous manner in the Bush Telegraph by the then Editor 2Lt Warren Page. Martin mentioned this to his wife Helen who she searched through her old archives and located the issue of the Bush Telegraph and they both had a good laugh reading the article again.*



(with a moustache that curls upwards at speed) and a hot-rod Dodge Ambulance as part of a recruiting team – well, something is bound to happen (and this is where the story really begins).

It all started when some of the staff at Mount Druitt Woolworths Family Centre got into a flat panic and sent for Mr Hatley – he's the manager there. You see, dear Mrs Attard had been doing her shopping and had just been through the traumatic experience of the check-out counter. Now Mrs Attard is a diabetic and has to take great care of herself and cope with all sorts of problems like pills and insulin. If she forgets some of these, things start to go wrong and when she felt a bit funny and sat down and then collapsed in a heap – everything went wrong. Nobody knew what to do – so Mr Hatley sent for Van-der-Lands (he's the Doctor there you know). "Very serious" said the Doc on arrival. A bit of first aid, and expert eye, a quick appraisal and a teaspoon of sugar, but Mrs Attard wasn't responding as expected. Now-what? "Send for an ambulance" said the Doc. Telephones to the ready and the emergency call was made to the Penrith Ambulance Station. But – problems; no ambulance available for perhaps an hour. The crowd was hushed, the staff whispered anxiously,

A funny thing happened to us at Mount Druitt and it had nothing to do with recruiting (which is what we were meant to be doing); it wasn't even really a military type problem (which was just as well) – but if you take along a conscientious medical staff sergeant, a fast Warrant Officer Driving Instructor

Mr Hatley and the Doc conferred, Mrs Attard lay still. One young lass mentioned that her boyfriend's panel van had a mattress in the back – comfortable too, but he was on the dole and probably at the beach.

Nobody noticed the little bald man with the big package and a worried look. But everybody heard him. "There's an Ambulance right outside the Bloody Door" he said. "Its them blokes over there – them ones selling guns or some-at" and the finger pointed at US. (Selling guns? Oh well, that's another story). Get the Army someone yelled. There was a soft voice in my ear "Can we borrow the Ambulance"; "But of course" I replied returning the humour – "EH?". Mr Hatley and the Doc took over, patient critical, need help urgently, must have intensive care at the Penrith Hospital, civilian ambulance not available. Staff Sammy was already at the patient's side, Martin Hanson adjusted his cap, his moustache curled upwards and he was off to wind up the Dodge. J.J. Brown produced an enlistment form in Regimental style.

From outside came an urgent roar from the Dodge engine. It had started first go – it doesn't usually, especially in the morning after the night before, then we have to push it, all 60 tons of it. The machine flew backwards in breath-taking form and stopped 2 inches from the glass doors; even



Martin blanched. The back doors opened like magic and a stretcher was produced instantly. Very efficient, looking good, running like a well oiled machine. The RMO would have been proud if he could have sat on his shooting stick on the sidelines and observed the operation. Stan wouldn't have been very happy tho'

– he couldn't have operated on this occasion. Mrs Attard was carefully transferred from Woolworth's floor to Sammy's stretcher and willing hands took the handles. Somebody thoughtfully lifted a blanket from Woolworth's stock and carefully covered the patient. (I think we've still got the blanket!)

"All together now – lift!" The stretcher was manoeuvred through the crowd. "Thank God for the Regular Army" someone yelled enthusiastically. Shocked, we rocked backwards and then in a chorus replied "We're not Regulars, we're the Army Reserve, 1<sup>st</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion!" Blank looks, whispers, all confidence gone, "What's that mean?" they asked suspiciously. Oh well, can't win them all. "It's all part of the Army" we added hastily. "Oh that's all right then" and they were happy again and everyone smiled.

Mrs Attard slid gracefully on castors into the yawning interior of the drab olive Dodge. The stretcher was secured, Sammy ducked in to tend to his patient and the rear doors clanged shut with the same provocative finality as a USAF Starlifter preparing for take-off. "Be back in a couple of ticks Sir" said Martin as if to re-assure me that he wasn't contemplating extending the emergency. He climbed into the driver's seat and adjusted his cap, his face a study in serious intent. And then it hit him – this was an emergency and he had a real patient on board; all that training and years of make-believe were ended – this was it, the real thing and he could use the lot. His face beamed, his eyes grew wider his moustache curled upwards and he reached for the switches. Interior fans, check, headlights, check, flashing red roof light, check, full siren, check, first gear, check handbrake off, check, - GO. The crowd were enthralled, Thursday shoppers by the score and everyone a firsthand witness; The Army was in action. The Ambulance screamed away from the family centre, turned into the highway and rose on the incline to pass over the railway bridge. With the flashing light and the scream of the engine and siren, if it had had wings as it rose to the bridge top it would have kept on climbing. Instead it disappeared the other side and continued with inspired velocity towards Penrith.

One of the two constables in the Police Holden patrolling the Western Highway yawned. It had been an uneventful day and they had only booked one motorist. Their shift was nearly over and they were cruising slowly back to Penrith timing it carefully so that they would arrive at the ultimate and appropriate moment. "Sounds like a siren in the distance" said the driver "perhaps there's a fire somewhere". "Not one of the Penrith engines though moving too fast". Like a bolt from the blue the Dodge bore down on them and screamed past in a blaze of light, sound, movement, glory and dust. They braced themselves as the first series of shock waves bucked the Holden, and then they looked at each other in amazement. "That's an Army wagon." The driver's foot was already hard on the accelerator and another siren raised its protest of the Penrith Plains. But the Holden just wasn't up to it. They didn't stand a ghost of a

chance of catching up with Martin. The settled for second place and reached Penrith far sooner than they had intended. Martin put out his air brakes and slowed the Dodge as he turned into the main entrance to the Base Hospital. "Ambulance Only" the sign stated emphatically and once again Martin exercised his rights. The over-heated Police Holden ground to a halt on the main road-they were not an ambulance. "To investigate or not to investigate", that is the question; but it looked OK and there was a patient being unloaded – besides it was nearly knocking off time. Reason prevailed and they slowly cruised off with a badly knocking engine. Mrs Attard slid gracefully out of the Dodge on castors and was taken over by the capable hands of the emergency ward. Martin adjusted his cap "Not bad, not bad my old son." Sammy smiled and waited for his stretcher to come back. A civilian ambulance pulled up in a hurry and two sweating ambulance men struggled to ease a patient out of the side door. He had a broken thigh and it was very painful. "Lend a hand then" and once again our heroes were helping the nation. "We've got to get a move on, another job collecting a lady diabetic from Mount Druitt" commented one of the Ambulance men. But that was one job they didn't have to do – 1/19 RNSWR had already done it for them.

## DO YOU KNOW THE TATE FAMILY ?

There is old man Dic-Tate who wants to run everything, while Uncle Ro-Tate tries to change everything. There's sister Agi-Tate who stirs up plenty of trouble, with help from her husband, Irri-Tate.

Whenever new projects are suggested, Hesi-Tate and his wife, Vege-Tate, want to wait until next year.

Then there is Aunt Imi-Tate, who wants our church to be like all the others. Devas-Tate provides the voice of doom, while Poten-Tate wants to be a big shot.

But not all members of the family are bad.

Brother Facili-Tate is quite helpful in church matters. And a delightful, happy member of the family is Miss Felici-Tate. Cousins Cogi-Tate and Medi-Tate always think things over and lend helpful, steady hands.

And of course there is the black sheep of the family, Ampu-Tate, who has completely cut himself off from everything.

**Contributed by Reg Newton**

# FRONTLINE

## 6-7-8-9 DIVISIONS COMBINED MEMORIAL SERVICE Bardia Barracks Ingleburn SUN 26 FEB 12



LTCOL Vin HALLINAN, RFD ED, LTCOL  
CHAPLAIN Colin AIKEN OAM RFD  
ChStJ, Mrs Tricia AIKEN and grandson  
James



Roy MUNDINE OAM, COLONEL (now BRIGADIER) John  
CROZIER AM CSM and Ross BURNS



President 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Association  
Dick PAYTEN OAM with Allan & Peggy DRINKWATER



Roy MUNDINE, OAM laid the wreath on behalf of  
the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Association



Bob PINK & Pattie McALEER

# NATIONAL BOER WAR MEMORIAL DESIGN UNVEILED 12 MARCH 2012

The Minister for the Arts, The Hon Simon Crean MP, has advised that the National Capital Authority has approved the Boer War Memorial design proposed by the National Boer War Memorial Association. The memorial will be an inspired design of Australian troopers mounted on war horses breaking through the trees of ANZAC Parade Canberra.

The sculptures of a section of four horsemen are dynamic, bold and realistic; not impressionistic. The positioning and postures of the troopers create dynamism and tension. Each horse and soldier is portrayed with individual character and movement in the act of patrolling, searching and watching. The history-capturing design will bring a new note to Australia's national memorial precinct which leads to the Australian War Memorial. It will commemorate Australia's first war as a federated nation.



National President of the  
Boer War Memorial Association  
Colonel John Haynes OAM

The design embraces the horseman as the bushman folk hero of Australian culture; an independent and resourceful Australian acclimatised to a tough existence on the land. The significance of the four troopers is that they represent a four-man section, a formation for fighting and patrolling. When they went into combat, three men would dismount while the fourth would lead the horses to cover. This display of interaction and observation is reflected in the placement of the horses in the setting. Colonel John Haynes OAM, National President of the Boer War Memorial Association, describes the design as "*A magnificent and fitting memorial to the predecessors of today's troopers serving in the Australian Defence Force.*"

The National Patron of the Boer War Memorial Association General David Hurley AC, DSC, Chief of Defence Force unveiled the design in Canberra on 1 March 2012 to an audience of Boer War Memorial Association members, the Press and Sculptor Louis Laumen whose task it will be to bring the design to life.



## TUMUT & ADELONG TIMES ARCHIVES

FROM HOWARD BYE & JOHN CONNELL

Howard recently advised that he has been spending a bit of time at the National Library lately reading Tumut and Adelong Times during war years. In doing so he came across the following article dated 9/10/1945.

### PRIVATE BOB DEAR: DIED WHILST A PRISONER



Mr and Mrs Bob Dear of Cootamundra and formerly of Tumut, received the sad news on Wednesday last that their son Private Bob Dear had died of illness on August 4, 1943 while a prisoner in Japanese hands. He was 27 and born in Tumut. Mr and Mrs Dear thus have lost their only two sons in the service of their country, as Warrant-Officer Ken Dear (R.A.A.F.) was killed whilst taking off in a Spitfire in Corsica in 1944. A sister Mona, is a lieutenant in the Australian Army Nurses Service and has just returned from the Northern Territory. Bob was single and educated at the Cootamundra IHS. He was a gifted and enthusiastic pianist playing for a popular dance band at local and district functions. The flag of the Cootamundra Town Hall was flown at half mast on Wednesday in memory of Bob. It was also an expression of the town and district's sympathy to the sorrowing parents and sister. After leaving school he assisted on his father's property at Mt Coughlan. He enlisted in 1941 and sailed for Malaya with re-inforcements to 2/19 Battalion.

This is a touching story to say the least. Whilst I do not know of the soldier's family I thought it might be appropriate that the article appear in a future magazine. It was interesting that in going through the papers after the end of the war that there had been quite a few death notices inserted in respect of PoW's.

I hope that you find the article interesting.

Howard Bye

### **EMAIL FROM JOHN CONNELL 6 FEB 2012**

Hi Pete – Howard and Bob

There are truly some wonderful people in this Country -

Thanks Howard for thinking of me and for forwarding the details onto Peter.

Bobby Dear (Jnr) was a true family friend. His parents were shattered when they heard of his death during the War. Unfortunately they were to lose their lads within a short space of time – I cannot remember all the specific details as I was only about nine months old at the time that Bobby Jnr, my Brother Les and another local lad Roy Morris set sail for Singapore as Reinforcement troops for the 2/19 Battalion AIF. There was always chatter around the dinner table but I cannot remember much – I have a photo of my four brothers of the time we were together during Les' pre-embarkation leave, at our home in Bapaume Street and another in 1945, in Warren Street, when LJ returned home.

The boys were captured at the Fall of Singapore, spent some time in Changi and were later transferred to the Thai-Burma Railway Line – unfortunately Bobby was not to return home to Cootamundra. I remember with some clarity of the occasion when my brother returned in 1945, I was



not yet 5 years old, but he told my mother that he had a job to do and that was to visit Mr & Mrs Dear first before any other matter could be attended – (the family had arranged a “WELCOME HOME”) – some other lads had returned at the same time. His Father, also known as Bob, and his Mother, Gertrude, are both buried here in the Cootamundra Cemetery. Gertrude 1972 aged 87 yrs and Bob Snr 1976 aged 91 years. For many years the family lived on their property “Mt Couglan”, adjacent to the Main Southern Railway Line at the Southern end of Town and Mrs Dear attended the Railway Level Crossing Gates, on the Back Brawlin Road, during daylight hours, for the Railway Department.

Bob's dad, himself a Veteran of WW I, was a very accomplished musician with the local town band and the family was very much respected in the local community. My older brothers and sisters were to mention many times – the character “young” Bobby Dear and of how they enjoyed his company in pre-War days. Our families remained very close friends and shared many chats until their passing. In their later years they sold their property and moved into Town and following the death of Bob Snr, the removal of the level crossing gates with the introduction of Flashing Lights, a local lad, Peter Middleton, arranged for a monument to be erected adjacent to the Level Crossing in honour of the “Dear Family”.

Howard & Bob – I have included copies of photographs received by my mother from my brother Les – I am not sure of the time that they were taken but they were taken whilst the lads were at Singapore. There is a notation on Bobbies' photo indicating that his death was August 1943 – records I have from the AWM indicate his date of death as 4th August 1943. The Changi one, I believe, is of the area that they may have been located in (but am not sure).

Cheers to the THREE of you

With much respect

**John Connell**



## From Howard BYE

This is an excerpt about a bloke that dad and Bert Donaldson knew when they were PoW,s in Japan. Dad always talked about this fellow even though he would never have seen him again after the war. Dad always told a story about eating a dog about a month before the war ended. They were so hungry. Cocky Easton was also awarded the Military Medal.

I asked Jack if he'd tell me about his time as stable rider for legendary western Queensland trainer C.W. (Cocky) Easton, who Miller's Guide credits as being the only trainer in Australian thoroughbred history to train all seven winners at a race meeting – and he didn't do it once, he did it twice (Eulo in 1956 and Cunnamulla in 1961). Cocky Easton, taken prisoner of war by the Japanese and locked up in the notorious Changi camp, earned notoriety in that camp for his brave efforts. Jack said he got to know Cocky Easton when his normal stable rider “Bruce McLean broke his leg at one time and Bruce along with one of his managers, Con Sullivan, came and saw me to see if I'd ride horses for Cocky out there. I think we won seven races over two days and from then on I was his number one rider”.

Asked what sort of a bloke Cocky Easton was, Jack smiled broadly, had a laugh, thought for a minute, then said, “He was a good bloke, but honest to God he was a villain of a man. He used to drink a bit and that. All the graziers out there (west) respected him. You see all those graziers from out there at Bourke, Cunnamulla, Charleville and right down to Roma, they all went away, more or less, to the war together. And they were all in (prisoner of war) camps together and Cocky Easton looked after them. He'd kill the camp dogs and feed them to those people. They'll tell you that, those graziers, they swore by him. When they came back from the war he could do anything. They bought him horses and after the war, racing just took off out in the back country, due to the wheat, cattle and sheep. Cocky was very, very cross-eyed and so was his father Bill and I think the Japanese went a bit easy on him because of that.”

Charlie 'Cocky' Easton trained all seven winners at Cunnamulla on May 6, 1961. Noel Thompson, who later became a QTC steward, rode the seven.

## POET'S CORNER



From Leo RYAN's POW Diary

(Contributed by Wal WILLIAMS)

### BLOODY DARWIN

The bloody towns a bloody cuss,  
No bloody trams no bloody bus,  
And no one cares for bloody us,  
Up in bloody Darwin.

The bloody roads are bloody bad,  
The bloody folks are bloody mad,  
They even say you bloody cad.  
That's bloody Darwin.

And everything is bloody dear,  
Four bloody bob for bloody beer,  
And is it good? no bloody fear,  
Up in bloody Darwin.

The bloody flicks are bloody old,  
All the bloody seats are sold,  
You can't get in for bloody gold,  
That's bloody Darwin.

The bloody dances make us smile,  
The bloody band is bloody vile,  
They only cramp your bloody style,  
Up in bloody Darwin.

No bloody sport, no bloody games,  
No bloody fun with bloody dames,  
They won't even give their bloody names,  
In bloody Darwin

The best place is in bloody bed,  
With bloody ice on your bloody head,  
And you wish that you were bloody dead,  
That's bloody Darwin.

W.R. "Bill" Buchanan  
NX45079  
2/19Battalion  
2<sup>nd</sup> AIF

## HELLFIRE PASS UPDATE



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Office of Australian War Graves

Brigadier Chris Appleton CSC (Retd)  
Director

Reference: 1100242

Mr Alf Mansfield  
Villa 30, Henley Brae  
37 Etheridge Street  
MITTAGONG NSW 2575

Dear Mr Mansfield

I write to you as a supporter of the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum, regarding the recently completed refurbishment of the lookouts overlooking Konyu Cutting.

The lookouts had been closed to the public for some time due to safety issues. These issues centred on their location, in some cases beyond the crown of the Cutting (some fourteen metres above the ground), and the construction of the lookouts themselves, with handrails providing insufficient protection from a fall. The lookouts were constructed almost twenty years ago and as time has gone on unfortunately these issues had become more and more apparent.

It was determined that the best solution was to remove the lookouts and replace them with lookouts that met safety standards while preserving the character of the Pass. After negotiations with Thai authorities over authorisation for these works, they began in September 2011.

I am pleased to inform you that these works have now been completed and the new lookouts have been reopened to visitors of the Museum. Please find enclosed images of the new lookouts. Note that new vegetation has been planted and when grown will allow the lookouts to blend in with their surroundings and further integrate them with the natural environment.

If you have any questions or issues you wish to raise, please contact Robin Shortt on (02) 6289 6054 or at [robin.shortt@dva.gov.au](mailto:robin.shortt@dva.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

Chris Appleton  
3 November 2011

13 KELTIE ST  
PHILLIP ACT 2606  
PO BOX 9998  
CANNBERRA ACT 2601

TELEPHONE: (02) 62896477  
FACSIMILE: (02) 62894851  
INTERNET: <http://www.dva.gov.au>  
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*Saluting Their Service*



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Office of Australian War Graves

Mr Alf Mansfield  
Villa 30  
Henley Brae  
37 Etheridge Street  
MITTAGONG NSW 2575

Dear Mr Mansfield,

Please find enclosed some images of the recent refurbishment to the lookouts overlooking Konyu Cutting in the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum. These were originally meant to accompany the letter we recently sent you from Chris Appleton, Director of the Office of Australian War Graves.

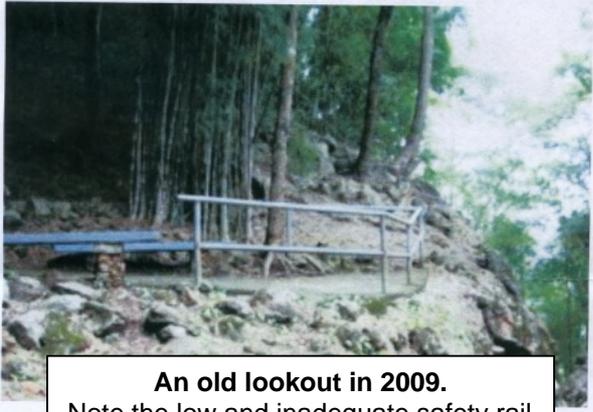
Please accept our apologies that these were not included with the original letter. If you have any further questions or issues you wish to raise on this matter, please contact Robin Shortt on (02) 6289 6054 or at [robin.shortt@dva.gov.au](mailto:robin.shortt@dva.gov.au).

Yours Sincerely,

Jenna Lobb  
Office of Australian War Graves

21 November 2011

# **HELLFIRE PASS UPDATE**



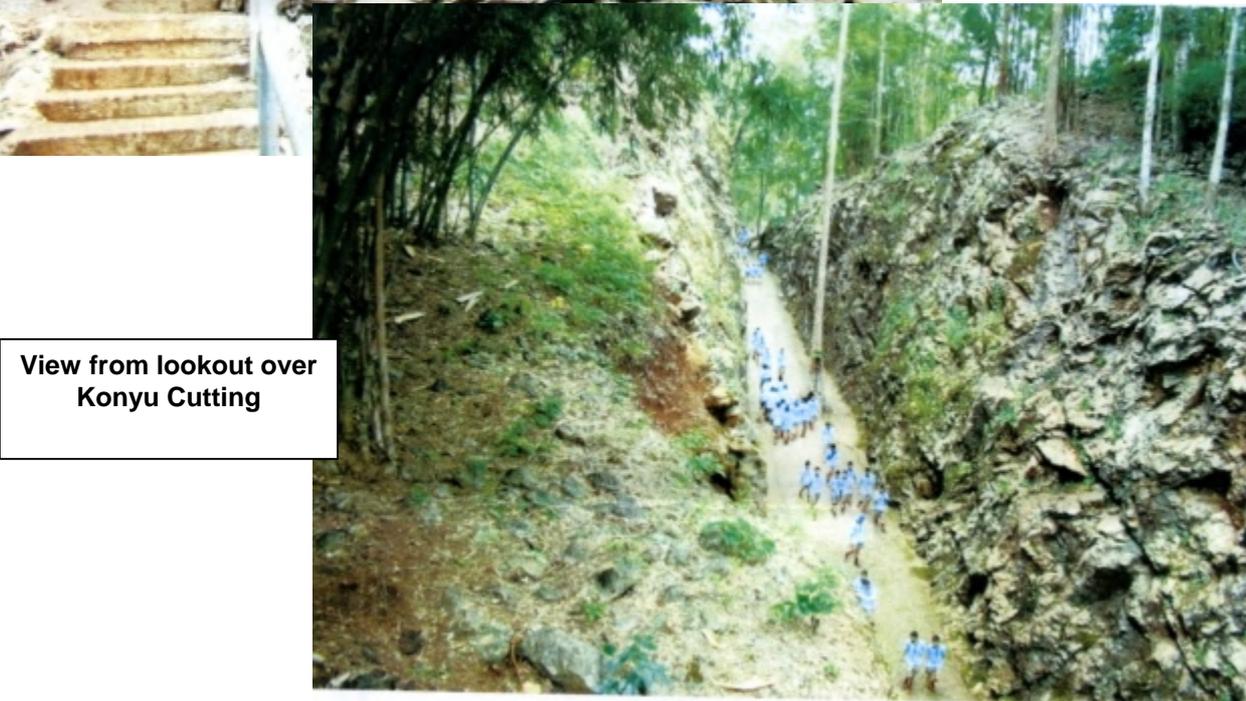
**An old lookout in 2009.**  
Note the low and inadequate safety rail



**Rear view of a new lookout**



**Vegetation planted beside new lookout**



**View from lookout over Konyu Cutting**

# BOOK REVIEWS

## GRAB THEIR BELTS TO FIGHT THEM

THE VIET CONG'S BIG-UNIT WAR  
AGAINST THE US, 1965-1966

Warren Wilkins  
Naval Institute Press, 2011,  
283pp

Reviewer:  
JOHN DONOVAN

Warren Wilkins has drawn extensively on North Vietnamese and Viet Cong records to write this compelling account of the battles between Viet Cong Main Force units and US forces in 1965-66. While mention is made of North Vietnamese units, the principal focus is on the Viet Cong. The battle of Long Tan, however, is mentioned as an example of allied use of firepower. Many western historians discussing the Vietnam War offer a narrative of indigenous Viet Cong fighters, largely part-time guerrillas wearing black pyjamas and sandals made from old truck tyres, and armed with captured weapons, defeating a clumsy US force armed with the latest military technology. Wilkins demonstrates the falsity of this narrative.

Using North Vietnamese documents, Wilkins traces the North's involvement and leadership from the earliest stages of the conflict, with deployment to the south of ethnic South Vietnamese who had 'regrouped to North Vietnam in the aftermath of the North-South division'. They were armed with modern Soviet weapons, and followed orders from the Central Office for South Vietnam, which was wholly subordinate to the North. Northern soldiers reinforced even nominally Viet Cong units.

The major limiting factor for the Viet Cong was US firepower. This caused a Viet Cong squad leader to tell his men to 'grab the enemy's belts to fight them', to close with US forces to prevent them using the full force of their firepower, to avoid causing friendly casualties. As Wilkins demonstrates, the real difficulty was in passing through the firepower zone to grab the belts! Wilkins' descriptions of battles between Viet

Cong and US forces highlight the courage of many Viet Cong soldiers, but demonstrate their command structure's inflexibility, which restricted Viet Cong options once their forces were committed.

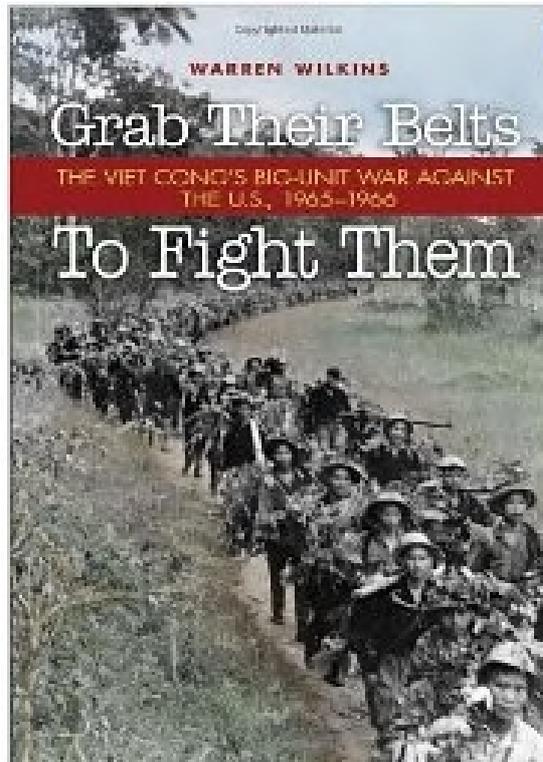
US firepower also led the Viet Cong to develop another tactic that became a hallmark of their activities – digging. Whether for the construction of field fortifications, bunker systems, or tunnel complexes, the spade became a key Viet Cong tool.

Wilkins uses North Vietnamese documents to show that the communist leadership was not unanimous in supporting the big-unit war. Many, including some southern leaders, preferred to revert to a guerrilla campaign while the north built up its economy, but they were over-ruled.

The result of this debate, and the failure of the big-unit strategy to cause the US to withdraw, was the 1968 Tet Offensive. This cost North Vietnam and the Viet Cong massive casualties, but gained them a psychological victory that paved the way for ultimate military victory, though not as quickly as desired.

Both sides fought a war of attrition, the US intending to use its firepower advantage, the Viet Cong to close with their enemy for hand-to hand combat. In attritional terms the US should have prevailed; even in less successful engagements, the casualty ratio favoured the US by a factor of three; in more successful battles, ten or more Viet Cong casualties were inflicted for each US casualty.

Had Field Marshal Haig or Marshal Joffre been able to inflict casualties at that ratio on the Western Front in 1915 or 1916, they would probably have won their war of attrition. The North Vietnamese, however, were prepared to accept heavy casualties to gain victory. Whether the victory was worth the cost is for them to judge, but the key lesson for western nations might be to choose tactics other than attrition when fighting opponents who place a low value on their subordinates' lives.



## ANZAC AND EMPIRE: GEORGE FOSTER PEARCE AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE

John Connor  
Cambridge University Press, 2011, 235pp,  
\$59.95

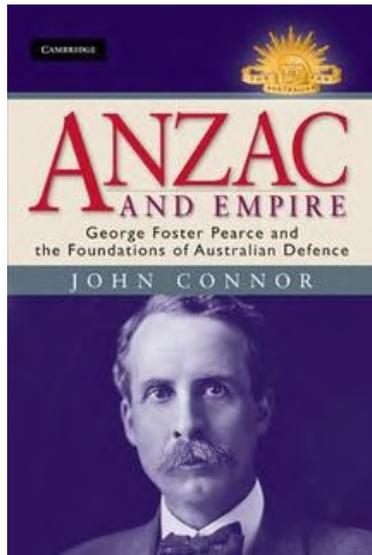
Reviewer: JOHN DONOVAN

John Connor has written an interesting biography of Pearce, Australia's longest serving Defence Minister. He focuses on Pearce's public life, because little information is available on his private life. Perhaps for this reason, the book feels incomplete.

Connor stresses that ignoring the British Empire context of this period would produce a narrow understanding of Australia's role in the First World War, a failing of many modern historians that he takes pains to avoid. He notes that in an age before 'official' multiculturalism, the former carpenter and trade unionist Pearce (like many of his contemporaries) considered himself 'both British and Australian, and saw no contradiction between the two'.

Connor also notes that Pearce was a man of his times in his racial attitudes. These attitudes, and the Russo-Japanese War that started in 1904, sparked Pearce's interest in defence. While his fears of Japan at that time might have been exaggerated, they remained a constant in his political life through to the 1930s, when he sponsored rearmament to defend against a then more realistic fear of Japanese aggression.

Connor traces Pearce's early development as Defence Minister, including his support for the Navy, military aviation and compulsory service, and the despatch of the First AIF overseas and maintaining it in action. However, he misses the opportunity to discuss in more detail the background to the (over) expansion of the AIF in 1916. This occurred even though the need for conscription to maintain its strength was already obvious. The later heavy casualties at Fromelles and Pozières should have caused a re-think, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this expansion caused many unnecessary problems, military and political, as the war proceeded.



Connor demonstrates that while Pearce was generally a successful minister during the First World War, he failed in the detailed administration of his Department – a task that has also beaten many of his successors! However, whatever Pearce's failings during the First World War, Connor correctly rejects suggestions that his eccentric Canadian counterpart Sam Hughes performed better. At least Australia did not have to establish a separate department overseas to remove the administration of its expeditionary force from the minister!

A darker side of Pearce's character is displayed by his willingness to censor dissenting views and to intern Germans whom he considered might pose a threat. However, Pearce and Hughes stood firm against applying capital punishment to the AIF, albeit on political rather than moral grounds.

Connor follows Pearce's involvement in post-war defence planning, including the establishment of the RAAF and his attendance at the Washington naval disarmament conference. While Pearce sought 'counsels of practicability' rather than 'of perfection' for the post-war development of the Army, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that its senior officers sought to re-create the AIF, without the logistic support needed to operate independently.

While he was attending the Washington Conference, Pearce was moved to become Minister for Home and Territories. Again becoming Minister for Defence in 1932, he commenced planning for rearmament against the Japanese threat. Inter-service rivalries hampered preparations, however, and a proposal for a regular brigade went nowhere before Pearce became Minister for External Affairs in 1934. After losing his Senate seat in 1937, he served on the Business Board of Defence Administration during the Second World War.

This book gives a good description of Pearce's public career, and is worth reading. For the later years of Pearce's time in Defence, reading it alongside David Horner's biography of Sir Frederick Shedden might give a broader context.



John Donovan worked in the Department of Defence for over 32 years, principally in the fields of intelligence, force development and resource management. He also served for several years in the Australian Army Reserve (Infantry).

## NOR ALL THY TEARS

**NX45804 Driver Herbert James McNAMARA, Carrier PI, HQ Coy, 2/20 Battalion A.I.F.**

*Continued from December 2011 Newsletter*

The rumour that the line was through had lost its force, and some had spoken to chaps who had been right up there earlier and were quite sure that the wicked country right at the top of the range was so bad that it would be impossible to break through it for years. We had an uneasy feeling that our worst worries were only just beginning.

But we went by train and that was a good sign. The train rocked and swayed and creaked and groaned. We could feel the line sinking into the soft mud of the embankment, pulling the engine up to a crawl, and freeing it again, stretching out to the limit every moment we awaited our fate. With sickening hearts we passed into the country we knew to be K.III. The water was deeper on the line and the engine laboured more heavily. Rounding a sharp bend it jolted suddenly and leaned over to one side. It was off the line!

*And why did it shy off the line, cried the Bad Abbot. Just look what's up there.* Seated on top of the bank above, bellowing to a team of Tamils was Jack Oakie. K.III and Jack Oakie. What a combination! It was to be K.III as we learned soon after we got back on the line, but K.III had changed as much as Oakie and the changes in Oakie still held good as far as we were concerned, and in fact he had little to do with us while we were there.

The line had gone well past K.III at all events and heavy rails cut through the centre of Hell-fire Pass. Our chief job was strengthening the long bridge some distance above Hell-fire Pass. The Nips had reverted to about average. The Tiger had remained at Tonchian and we lacked his protective care but there were no bashing worth worrying about, though they made things unpleasant. Bridge jobs are always on the nose. Apart from the gut-busting nature of the work you have to interpret impossible bellows every minute and mutual dislike becomes very considerable on a bridge. Almost solely on a bridge do you get the complaint known as itchy fingers. I shall describe its symptoms.

You have spent nearly all the day interpreting impossible orders for doing impossible tasks; have been cuffed and bellowed at and pushed about all the time and then you suddenly see your boss standing before you on the extreme edge of a sleeper. And you see below you a toe of sharp jagged rock and you see to the left of you there

are no Nips watching, and you see that from behind you there are no Nips looking. And right within you a still small voice encouragingly *No one will ever know!* And you mutter under your breath: *Get behind me Satan!* and go on working.



The strain on the system is enormous. Still that worry is small compared to cholera and the Nips were saints compared to the old inhabitants of Kanya. None the less K.III had too many memories to be a happy camp and we were glad enough to get the orders to move down the line to Tampii, even though it meant carrying all our gear. It was a poor swap.

The Fly camp was a vastly smellful swamp with flies so thick that the mosquitoes had a job to find their way to us, but they did find it and malaria became almost unanimous. All imaginable varieties of filth were scattered on the ground and we breathed as little as possible of the viscous fluid that passed for air until we finally cleaned it up. Some natives were camped nearby and we made the best use of this by acquiring a little negotiable wealth and disposing of it to them. More for future use than immediate, for buying facilities were very limited, but we could see brighter times ahead and notes are no load. The bulk of the work was ballasting the line, and that wasn't too bad, but they had a fearful habit of dragging us out of "bed" in the middle of the night to unload trains or get them back on the line. As it was usually raining, these jobs were a bit on the nose.

The line used to give way pretty frequently, and once a bridge collapsed letting a row of trucks fall down into a creek-bed, and we had to work two days and the night in between without a stop, rebuilding the bridge and sorting out the corpses from the mess of opium, food and merchandise. As this job was holding up the line we expected a revival of the old K.III days, multiplied by all the drawbacks of a bridge job, but it was nothing like that. Bashings were very few and even Bamboo, who was still with us, acted with some restraint (he had not yet seen the light). They even revived the ancient custom of letting the head go, though on a more modest scale. I need hardly say, however, that a forty-hour shift does not need any

artificial aids to make it unpleasant, though strangely enough you get a sort of "second wind" doing without sleep, and we had intervals of quite marked wakefulness right through. There were, however, the signs of brighter times to come. An unpleasant reversion to the old times came with a widespread search. The reason was fairly obvious. The opium.

A very large proportion of the Asian population of Malaya were addicted to opium smoking at least to the extent of being unable to break the habit. Therefore when orthodox I.J.A. methods of personnel management had been exhausted this weakness could be brought in to assist the New Order. Even a mild addict can be converted into a very diligent worker if his supply is made to depend on it. Therefore the opium scattered loose among the wreckage of the trucks had an importance much greater than its not inconsiderable cash value. Taken in conjunction with the fact that private dealers might be inclined to dispose of it without regard to the effect on the New Order, this gave them reason to be anxious about having possibly untrustworthy prisoners rummaging about the scarce commodity. The contented expressions on the faces of those who worked on the opium truck and the persistence with which all of us were subsequently plagued with enquiries from native traders, made it seem at least possible that they had grounds for anxiety.

Anyway they gave us the most thorough lousing we had ever had. They found things that were enough to have got us all shot, but as usual they put them all back as they were looking only for one thing - the opium. They must have unearthed practically everything we possessed - except the opium. The one day we were lined up on parade and a few foreign Nips came into camp with a native and he was taken from man to man evidently trying to identify someone. He did not pick anyone out, but they must have got their man, for a couple of days later the same Nips passed us at our work and with them were three Pommies.

The Pommies were blood from head to foot with great weals across their backs and cuts on their heads. One had his hands tied behind his back so tightly that they were black, and the Nips were prodding them all the while to urge them along. The food at the Fly Camp was poor, and the irregular hours irksome, and the malaria knocked it out of us pretty severely, but we will always remember the Fly Camp as the place where we got the first big news. It was there that we first got the news of the landing on Sicily. We had no radio with us at the time, but it came from contacts that were 100 per cent "authentic" from the start. We were dropped a quiet hint that there were big things on and it was spilt to us on parade. So the

journey back had begun. We hugged ourselves and almost danced to work with joy. The Nips were nonplussed. The inconsistency of the inscrutable occidental was beyond them. Then after a few days they got their news. We saw them lined up solemnly, and their fallen jaws translated the speech as clearly as any interpreter.

Bamboo was the first to translate it into audible English. Without so much as a grunt he marched his party out to the job, sat them down and produced cigarettes. *Resto O.K.* he said. *Japan silly. Build railway presento to England.* And from then on he never said a harsh word or raised an irate finger.

#### CHAPTER XV MORE SMALL WORK

With the usual notice we were shifted to Rintin where the Tiger joined us again, and arrived there in ample time to clear ourselves a camp in the dark. Rintin was north once more and a camp of foul repute, but the signs of better treatment were now becoming more marked. The engineers had less to say than ever before and it was here that the Tiger said that the engineers were killing the men with too much work. Unfortunately they first began to worry about the sick here, too, and to take the prophylactic measures I have outlined. It was no help that we were riddled with malaria. But the engineers were quite satisfied to let anyone who got sick go home. It was in what was likely to happen to you when you got home that the drawback lay.

Here we invented a new technique for easing the burden of work. Work consisted mainly of digging out soil for the embankment. We were given the task of digging so much soil in the day, and as proof how much things had changed, they really kept to the letter of the "finish go home" promises, providing we did not make it look too easy. Holes had to be dug to certain dimensions and the dirt carried up the embankment on bamboo stretchers. Quite by accident we discovered that if it were necessary to distort the rectangle from which the soil was dug, they made no allowance for the distortion. Thus a parallelogram two metres by two metres was considered to be equal in area to a square two metres by two metres, even though the closer sides were only half the distance apart. Therefore we all started to dig parallelograms instead of squares.

Seeing these horribly distorted squares the Nips would rush up and protest violently, whereat we would pick up the metre rod, show him that the sides were a good two metres and mutter "OK." and for fear of exposing his ignorance any further, he would retire crushed. But they were deeply suspicious.

*To be continued.....*

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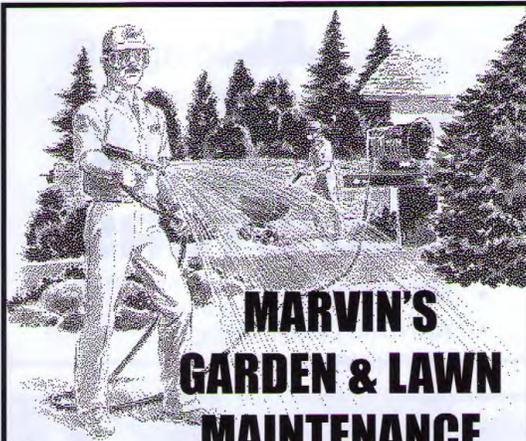
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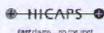
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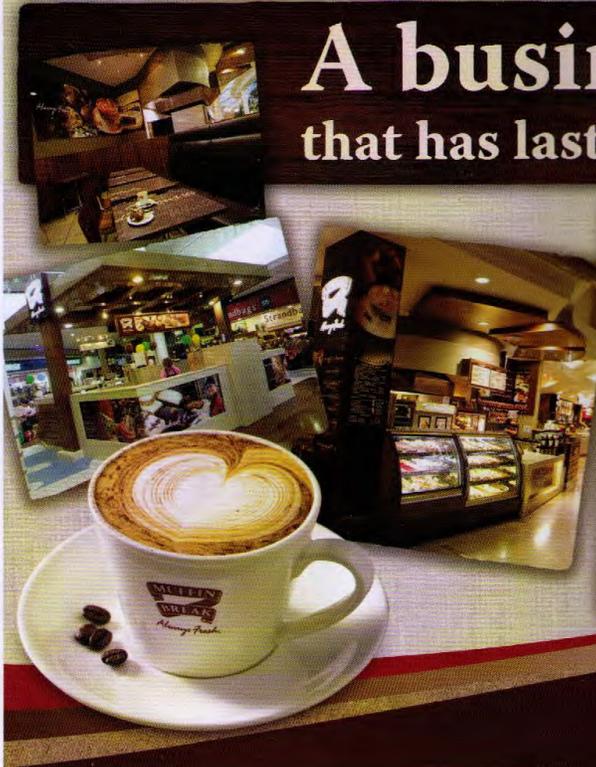


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