

APPENDIX (ii)

The 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Welfare Fund

The title for this chapter is taken from a program for a concert held on 12th July 1941 to aid the Fund. Within the program was a description of the Fund and its aims; it read as follows:

"The 3rd Anti-Aircraft Regimental Welfare Fund was formed at the request of Colonel J. Rhoden, the Officer Commanding the Regiment, the first General Meeting being held in September 1940.

"The main objects of the Fund are to raise money to send abroad to the Commanding Officer to use as he thinks fit in the interests of the men of the Regiment, for extra comforts not supplied by the Defence Department or the Comforts Fund. The money is distributed evenly to each battery, and each officer commanding the battery uses it for the benefit of his men. Various sums are being sent periodically.

"Before the Regiment left for overseas a library consisting of 500 books and 400 magazines was packed and dispatched with the Regiment.

"Another object of the Welfare Fund is to look after the families at home in conjunction with the A.I.F. Womens' Association. Knitted goods also are sent from the Depot of the Welfare Fund to the Australian Comforts Fund. Money is being sent to the Red Cross for Prisoners of War.

"Just as important is the Depot on 4th Floor, Champion House, Swanston Street, Melbourne – where members meet on the second Monday in every month at 8 p.m. Over 100 members are usually present at these meetings and it is to be hoped that, as the Fund grows, more and more members will be welcomed. At these meetings, members come to make friends, exchange news, letters and photos, and generally to be cheered up. There is a spirit of comradeship about the Depot that helps to lessen for a while cares, worries and anxieties. Also letters of interest from the Commanding Officer are read, giving welcome news of the men.

"This Depot is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 p.m. till 4 p.m. The Rooms are bright and cheerful with a homely atmosphere, afternoon tea is available, and all friends and relatives of the men of the Regiment are welcomed."

The office bearers at that date were:

President: Mrs. Macindoe,

Vice President: Mrs. H. C. Coggins

Treasurer: Mrs. A. G. Margetts

Secretary: Miss P. Speeding

Assistant Secretary: Mrs. R. N. Hammon

Trustees: Mr. H. C. Coggins; Mr. J. A. Edwards.

Mrs. Betty Margetts has provided the following additional information:

At a meeting early in 1941 several mothers, wives and sweethearts of the men of the Regiment gathered together at the Hotel Australia, in Collins Street, Melbourne. At that meeting Mr. H. C. Coggins was elected President, Mrs. J. P. Rhoden, Vice President, Mrs. Chester Guest, Secretary and Mrs. Garfield Margetts, Treasurer. The Trustees were Messrs. H. C. Coggins and J. A. Edwards.

Tea rooms were opened on the 4th floor of Champion House, at 57 Swanston Street, serving hot pies, sandwiches and scones with cups of tea. Cakes and jams made by the ladies of the committee were also brought in for sale. It proved a wonderful success opening every day at lunch time for people working in the City. It was also a wonderful meeting place for mothers and wives to exchange news.

A frequent visitor was Brigadier N. Munro of the Salvation Army, who had conducted the Red Shield Hut at Werribee for the comfort of the men of the Regiment. Brigadier Munro kept a keen interest in the men of the Regiment throughout the War.

When the Regimental Association was formed, at the termination of the War, the money in the Welfare Fund was handed over to the Association. This money was used to assist men in civilian life, who were badly in need of cash to see them over a bad period. In most cases the money advanced was repaid.

A few years ago the Association decided to transfer the funds to Legacy.

Amongst those who served on the Committee were: Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Coggins, Mrs. J. P. Rhoden, Mrs. C. Guest, Mrs. B. Margetts, Lady Mann, Mrs. Grice, Mrs. N. Macindoe, Mrs. Stokes Snr., Mrs. C. Bird, Mrs. Bird, Mrs. D. Stanborough, Mrs. J. Reilly, Mrs. Richards, Mrs. J. Moodie, Mrs. P. Rose, Mrs. Sampson, Mrs. S. Noye, Mrs. Silver, Mrs. V. Jorgensen, Mrs. G. Rae, Mrs. H. Curtis, Mrs. J. Hammond, Mrs. C. Inglis, Mrs. M. Watson, Mrs. G. Cockram, Mrs. D. Stokes, Mrs. Thomas, Miss Rhoden, Mrs. Young.