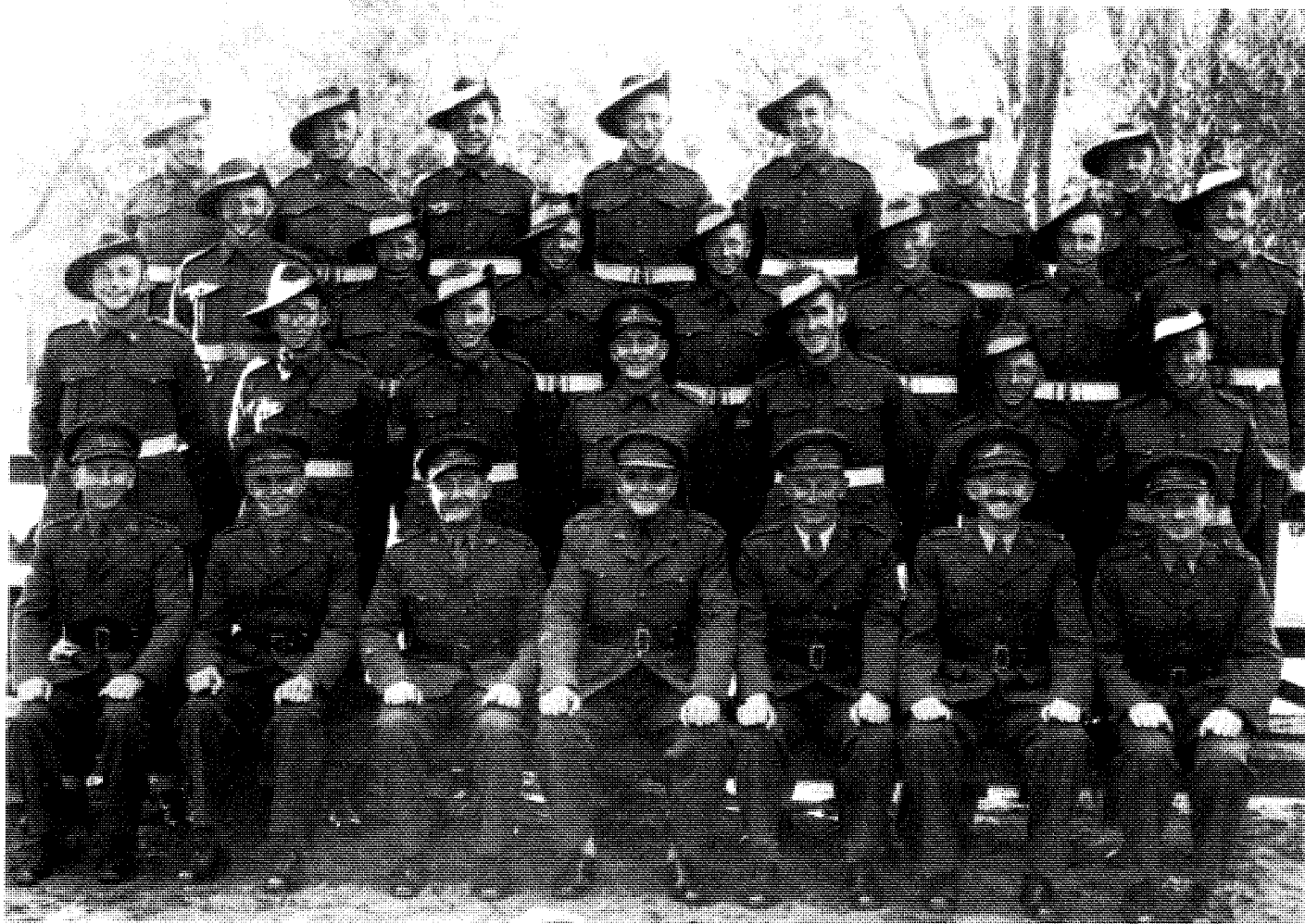


# "TAKE POST!"

Newsletter of the  
2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft  
Regiment Association

*Anniversary Issue.*

*March/April 1995.*



*8th Battery H.Q., 2/3 L.A.A. Regiment, in Western Australia.*

## **REUNION NOTICE**

The Anzac reunion will be held on **Monday, April 24, 1995**, from 12 noon until 4.30 pm., lunch and drinks provided. The subscription this year is **\$20** (again subsidised by the Association).

The venue is the same as last year — the **Air Force Convention Centre, 4 Cromwell Rd, South Yarra**. (Access to the car park is from Cromwell Road).

*Cec Rae, Hon Secretary.*

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

The **Annual General Meeting** will be held at the **Air Force Convention Centre, 4 Cromwell Road, South Yarra** at 11.45 am., April 24, 1995 (just prior to the Anzac reunion).

Members are reminded that nominations for Committee must be lodged with the Honorary Secretary 14 days before the meeting.

*Cec Rae, Hon Secretary.*

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On the 19th July 1940, I was seconded from a Field Artillery Regiment to join Lt Col J W Rhoden, ED, and three other artillery officers to commence the procedure of the formation of our Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Now, fifty-five years later, those of us who are left, join together at a reunion to pay homage to those who were killed or have died since. I sincerely hope that all our remaining members have kept in good health, and in respect of those who passed away during the year I send my heartfelt sympathy to their families and friends in the unit.

It is amazing how time passes — my eldest son, nine months old when the unit was formed, is now fifty-six.

You would be aware that this year all Australians are asked to commemorate the end, fifty years ago, of World War 2. A big turn-up is expected for the Anzac Day March. The general public enthusiastically supports this pilgrimage — many who attend are widows, children and new Australians.

We would like all our Regiment's men who can march to join behind our proud banner on April 25th. This call applies to not only original members of the Regiment but also to those who joined in Palestine and later. We are all equal in our right and responsibility to march because each one volunteered for whatever service was demanded of us.

By marching we assist the people's commemoration of our friends who served but are no longer with us.

### **Our Treasurer: John Hepworth.**

The first treasurer of the Association was John Morgan who was appointed in 1945 on the formation of the Association but John had to resign shortly after as he had been transferred to the country in his banking position.

The second treasurer was John Hilliard, appointed on John Morgan's resignation, until in 1948 a new treasurer was appointed. John then became auditor of the Association's Welfare Fund until it was transferred to Legacy and RSL Welfare.

The third treasurer appointed was another John — John Hepworth, who has continued in the position to this date. John has been of considerable assistance to the committee, and the Association generally, with his knowledge of the commercial world as a partner in the accounting firm of Deloitte's. Thanks John for your 48 years of service and may it continue.

### **Banner Bearers: Dave Thomson & Tiger Armitage.**

Our thanks go to Dave and Tiger for carrying our banner in the Anzac Day March each year, supported by their assistants on the ropes. May they be given the strength to continue for many years to come.

### **Australia Remembers, 1945-1995.**

The Federal Government has in hand a program to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War 2.

continued next column: —

## 2/3rd AUSTRALIAN LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT REGIMENT ASSOCIATION.

**President:** BERT BAGLIN.

**Hon Secretary:** CEC RAE,  
Tal Tal, Tucks Road, Shoreham, Vic.3916.

**Assistant Secretary:** BRUCE TULLOCH

**Hon Treasurer:** JOHN HEPWORTH.

**Newsletter Editor:** RON BRYANT.

### **Committee:**

LES HARRIS,  
CLIVE ROSE, DICK HAWTING,  
DAVE THOMSON, ROY THOMSON,  
JACK CRITTENDEN, JOHN CAMPBELL.

**W.A. Contact:** GORDON CONNOR.  
6 Exton Place, Spearwood, WA 6163.

**PLEASE ADVISE OF YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS.**

This program includes:-

- \$10 million to restore war memorials in Australia.
- A collector coin release featuring Sir Edward Dunlop.
- An Australian flag for use by Associations.
- Grants for the writing of unit histories.

### **The Association is 50 years old this year.**

Quoting from the committee's report for the period 6th August 1945 to 31st March 1946:

*In June 1945 Lt Col J W Rhoden, in conjunction with members of the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Welfare Association, instigated the formation of a Regiment Association. A preliminary meeting was called on 9th July, 1945 per medium of advertisements in the Press.*

*At this meeting the objects of the Association were discussed and a Provisional Committee, consisting of Messrs W W Gilbert, N C Haines, A G Margetts, C R Speeding and H Slatterie was appointed to draft the Constitution of the Association.*

Let us keep soldiering on, to retain the comradeship forged during the war, as long as possible.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all members of our Committee and indeed all members of the Association for your support during my two years as President. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our Reunion and at the Anzac March.

**Bert Baglin.**

## ORDER OF THE ANZAC MARCH

Please note that 1 Aust Corps will assemble at Flinders Street on the east side of Swanston Street. It is estimated that 2/3rd LAA Regiment will move off about 9.45am.

## Members Celebrate Anzac Day 1994



*Les Harris (7), Bill Carson (8), Dave Humphreys (7).*



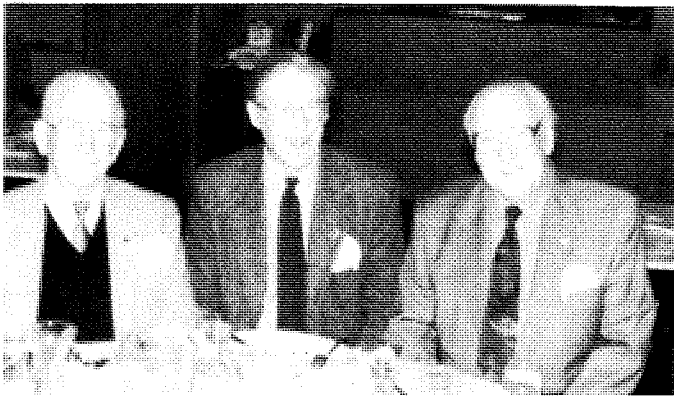
*Clarrie Cuttriss (8), Les Stephens (8), Jim Bourke (8).*



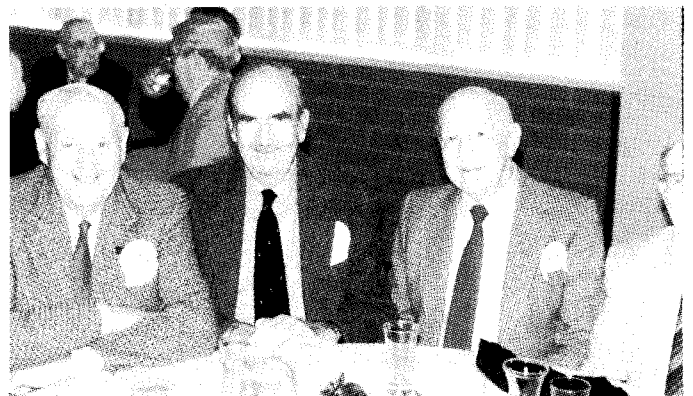
*Roy Thompson (7), Bill Dellar (7), Allen Martin (9).*



*Blue Page (8), Runner Williams (8), Eric Harrower (8).*



*Geoff George (9), Grif Weatherly (9), Bert Baglin (7).*



*Phil Bishop (RHQ/7), Eric Allpress (7), Alex Hough (7)  
— and a glimpse of Jim Hawley on the right*



*Members of the Regiment assemble for the March.*



*Col McNaughton, Les Harris, Ron Bryant, Col Reilly.*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF CRETE

*Extracts from a letter written by the late Raleigh Hawkins to his nephews in 1985.*

On our first view of Crete, we all said "this will do us!" mountain roads, lined with grape vines and olive groves, looking out to sea on one side and snow-capped mountains in the distance, every square yard of land cultivated, running mountain streams, nice old-fashioned people going to their little white chapels to pray. Stuka bombers commenced raiding the harbour — I thought we're in for some worries now!

On 25th April 1941 we were told that 50,000 or more troops were coming in. I realized that the evacuation of Greece was on. Men in their thousands came in off the ships. They were tired New Zealanders and Aussies, dirty, hungry and belted, but not beaten — still cheerful. We fed them bully beef, biscuits and hot tea which they were pleased to get. There were sailors, some from boats which had been sunk, and airmen who had had to leave their equipment in Greece. Most of the infantry still had their rifles which they had taken on to destroyers which had ferried them to cruisers.

On the 27th April with 20 others, we went to Heraklion by truck. After a terrific ride we all abused the Tommy driver for the rough and dangerous way in which he had raced down the mountain roads. He replied "I couldn't help it choom - I got no brakes!"

By the 29th April we were back overlooking Suda Bay on our first gun position with a 40mm Bofors gun on St John's Hill. Our only training on Bofors, (beautiful guns), had been in Palestine for three weeks using dummy rounds. Our first shots with live ammunition were in action with an excited and confused crew. We couldn't hit a hay-stack let alone a plane firing at us. About 10 minutes after our first shots, we were into it again.

We were lucky and were credited with being the first Australians to bring down a German plane with a Bofors. (The Tommies of course had been using them in France and at Dover).

After about 7 days, we returned to Heraklion harbour to take over a Vickers 2-pounder. Without tracer ammunition, it wasn't much good, but we banged away and gave the troops some moral support.

By the time we moved up to the aerodrome to a Bofors, the heat was on — we were belted by low-flying fighters, high-level bombers and dive-bombers. On the 19th or thereabouts, a long line of planes came in with paratroopers. Their fighters had left, climbing high to protect them. There had been dust, smoke and burning buildings; but things were quieter with the fighters gone. We discovered later that the Germans thought we were wiped out and the only danger would be from the air, but in fact we had no planes. We manned the guns and waited — our gun was the first to open up as they approached the drome. We let them have it, with other guns following suit, surprising the German paratroops who were dropping everywhere. The infantry worked efficiently but the Germans were shrewd and good fighters.

As the planes were being shot down, the Tommies and 4th Battalion infantry could hardly believe their eyes — many cheered as they thought, because we had been so quiet, that we had been wiped out.

Well as history tells we finally had to pull out of Crete. I left on the *Hereward* which was sunk, and transferred to the *Dido* which was bombed; but many of us got back to Alexandria in Egypt.



**CRETE — May 1941.  
7 Battery at Maleme  
Aerodrome.**

(left to right)  
*Gnr Stan Watkin,*  
*Bdr Les Harris,*  
*Gnr Ron Selleck,*  
*Gnr Norman McDonald*  
*Gnr Jack Ecker (seated),*  
*Gnr Rupert Charles,*  
*Gnr Gordon Hewitt.*

## SIDI BARRANI — Retrospection

by Harry Corneliusen.

Dumps of foodstuffs were abandoned by Mussolini's warriors. Strict Middle East HQ orders stated — "BEWARE! These foods may well be poisoned." After gazing hungrily at the heaps of food, a member of our crew decided to give it a go. He cut open a tin of minestrone soup with his bayonet and nervously polished off the soup. We watched him expectantly for some hours. No problems eventuated so we hopped into soups, canned tomatoes and fruits — a welcome diversion from our bullybeef, biscuits and herrings.

Our first encounter with Stukas was an unexpected frightening raid; we struggled to remove the camouflage net from our gun and, to our shame, failed to get a shot away. The accursed netting was never used again. One of the other Bofors managed to get into action, but to their horror it was realized that the leather muzzle cover hadn't been removed from the end of the barrel. Fortunately the 2-pound shell was not activated to explode until it reached a certain distance into the air. We lived — we learned — fast.

It was in this action that a bomb fragment accounted for our driver, Dick Todd, who was minding his own business asleep in the cabin of our gun tractor. It was also the scene of the demise of two British 2nd Lieutenants who, un-tin-hatted, were admonishing their troops: "Get down. Take shelter!" when they sustained a direct hit with a bomb.

Our daily ration of fresh water was a water-bottle a day for all purposes (ablutions, teeth cleaning and drinking). We welcomed the daily truck transport to the Mediterranean where we proved the inadequacy of the issued salt-water soap.

An enterprising gun crew carried out a successful raid on the Suez docklands and was able to fill a layer of sandbags around their gun-pit with revolutionary new cans of American beer which kept the crew happy for weeks. Oh well — there were good days and bad.



The Flag that was flown over Major Hipworth's 7th Battery Headquarters at Heraklion, Crete, in May 1941; given to the late Harry Brimacombe by "Hippy's" widow and retained by Harry's family.

A good read:—

## The Crucible of War. Western Desert, 1941

by **Barrie Pitt.**

This is the first of three books narrating the story of the Desert Wars for the three years from June 1940. This volume takes the story up to the relief of Tobruk. The second book covers the epic battles of El Alamein to the borders of Tunisia and the third deals with the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa and the eventual capitulation of the *Afrika Korps*.

The books contain more recently released material which includes information and comments from generals, officers and men of both sides.

Whilst we think of Australians playing a key role in the Middle East, this first book, although giving full credit to the special qualities of the Australians and New Zealanders, does put into perspective the major effort, by way of sheer numbers of men, armour, ships and planes of the British particularly, also Indians and South Africans in *Operations "Compass"*, *"Battleaxe"* and *"Crusader"* apart from campaigns in Italian Somaliland, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Syria and the Balkans.

The *Crucible of War* is readable and brings to life the complex and often confusing battles in the desert.

Our copy came from the municipal library, so try your local library first if you have an interest in the desert campaigns.

### Annual Confidential Reports — Officers.

"The only reason soldiers would follow this officer is idle curiosity".

"This officer has failed to reach the low standard he set himself".

"Leads well but his men despise him".

"Did well as Father Christmas".

"Makes an erudite attempt to appear erudite".

with acknowledgements to a Legacy Bulletin.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Last year, we asked for an annual subscription of \$5 from members of the Association who were not attending the Annual Reunion.

(Those attending the reunion pay their subscription which is included with the cost of lunch and drinks).

Our thanks go to all those who forwarded their \$5 contribution last year and for the many welcome accompanying letters.

A remittance slip for \$5 subscription is enclosed again for those members who will **not** be attending the Reunion.

Please note that all copies of the Regiment's history "*On Target*" have been sold.

## A GUNNER'S LIGHT HORSE DAYS

Alf Brisbane of 9 Battery was one of the authors of the book *"The Dirty Thirteen"* which was compiled from letters to friends at home written by thirteen members of our Regiment, all from Central Victoria. Alf is now 90 years of age. He told us of some episodes when he and his friends joined the 20th Light Horse Regiment in about 1936:-

"We were in the Murchison Troop which combined with the Shepparton group to form a Vickers machine-gun troop. We owned our own horses and travelled to camps in special trains which carried both horses and men. In a Divisional Camp at Torquay, at the beginning of World War 2, our troop competed in the Lord Forster Cup competition for Light Horse Regiments. The Troop was required to form up, four troopers in line, followed by two other troopers mounted and each leading a pack-horse. One pack-horse had a saddle to which was lashed a Vickers-Gun with a tripod, whilst the other carried ammunition and a can of water for cooling the gun when in action.

"The action consisted of the four troopers followed by the two others leading the two pack-horses all keeping formation, jumping two hurdles, then wheeling around to dismount to hand over our horses to horse handlers. The guns, ammunition, and tripods would be removed, got into action and thirty rounds would be fired at a distant target. The horseholders who had retired to a rear position would be called up, all equipment replaced on the horses, and we would gallop back to the starting point. Points were awarded for horsemanship at the gallop, control of the horses while jumping and in formation, marksmanship with the guns, and for the time taken.

"In another camp at Broadmeadows in a wet year, the horses had been on the lines for a few days without exercise. Someone had the bright idea to let them loose on a hundred acres of land across the road belonging to the Army. All troopers were to take their horses at the one time to get them some exercise. About 100 horses were released together. Away they went. They galloped in a frenzied bolt; some falling over, others jumping fences. Some had to be put down; others were not found for several days; but our troop had held on to their horses while watching this incredible sight.

"After our years in the Light Horse, eleven of us plus a couple of other mates joined the AIF and finished up in our 9th Battery under Lieutenant S J Staughton, so leading to the experiences recorded in the book *"The Dirty Thirteen"*. The survivors of the Dirty Thirteen still meet occasionally to discuss old times."

## BENDIGO ARTILLERY MUSEUM

This museum displays artillery, vehicles, uniforms, equipment and memorabilia from the 1850's to the present day. The Light AA display is based on the 2/3rd Light Anti-aircraft Regiment, using reproductions of a large number of photographs which gunners made available. Items of equipment and uniforms are displayed around a 40mm Bofors gun. → → →

## DUTY STILL CALLED

Six members of our Regiment have held the position of President of the Mildura Legacy Club:—

Roly Tonkin	1951-52
Alan Rice	1952-53
Phil Hauser	1955-56
Jack Clift	1959-60
Frank Cavanagh	1964-65
Arthur Spiller	1965-66

Sadly, the first five have passed on.



**Jim Dennis** (8) who died on November 13, 1994 returned to work on his dairy farm after World War 2 and gave great public service in his district. He was President and a Life Member of the Benalla RSL, and Trustee of the Benalla RSL Memorial Hall and Public Library. He also served Benalla Legacy for 20 years in many capacities and was President in 1981. Jim was a foundation member of the Rats of Tobruk Association and became a Life Member of the Goulburn Valley North-East Branch.

Other areas of service included Vice-President 9th Division Association SW Riverina Northern-Victoria Branch, President of the Dairy Farmers' Association (Benalla Branch), and President of the Benalla Branch of the National Party.

Undoubtedly, Jim was so committed to the welfare of individuals and the community across such a wide spectrum of interests, that he will be sadly missed.

*(Legatee Laurie Carswell kindly provided this information about our old comrade Jim.)*

*Look Up - Not Down.*

Each year — the Hill gets steeper,  
Our footsteps, they, are slow,  
And, memories grow deeper —  
Life's road is hard to hoe —  
Yet, still, we glimpse, before us  
A Brighter, Shining Way!  
We cling to it, for comfort —  
Because — *"It's Anzac Day"*.

By Constance Little, Swan Reach,  
widow of Charlie Little, 7th Bty.

The museum is situated on the western outskirts of Bendigo, adjacent to the Wallaby Reef goldfields of the 1860's — ten minutes from Kangaroo Flat and Bendigo; on the Newbridge Road, Woodstock on Loddon.

For further information contact Bendigo Artillery Museum, RSD T5, Newbridge Road, Woodstock on Loddon, Vic 3539. Telephone (054) 35 3652.

## A RE-UNION IN ITALY

**Mal Webster** of 7 Battery, was evacuated from Heraklion, Crete, on HMS *Hereward*, which was bombed and sunk on 29th May, 1941. Mal was picked up from the water by an Italian motor torpedo boat and was taken to Scarpento Island, then to Rhodes, and eventually to Italy as a POW.

After 40 years of silence, Malcolm renewed communication with many Italian families who befriended and assisted him to survive when "on the loose" with his companion, **Bill Wrigglesworth**. In 1989 he returned, together with his wife, Ellen, to the Pre-Alpi area of northern Piedmont where he and Bill had served as members of the Italian Resistance Forces that were spawned by the collapse of Mussolini's Fascist Regime during 1943.

They stayed mainly with one particular family - Mario and Daria Zampese, who lived at Pratrivero, north of Vercelli and not far from Biella in the heart of Italy's textile industries. The hospitality given was most generous and in fact somewhat overwhelming at times. Amongst the many 'festas' was the occasion of being entertained royally by the local branch of the Italian Communist Party. Despite Mal's own political outlook he always believed that when in Rome do as the Roman's do! At this gathering it was obvious the winds of political change were already blowing in Europe, as the local membership had dropped from 48% to 24% — a fall of 50%.

Many old acquaintances were renewed, villages visited where billets were maintained in his Partisan Detachment area of influence 1944-45. In keeping with the Movement's policy both Malcolm and Bill adopted, as "nome di battaglia", Sydney and Melbourne respectively. Malcolm recounts that it was a warm and spontaneous feeling when being greeted by the villagers as "Sydney."

Whilst there, although there were many happy moments, there were those sad ones as Malcolm paid homage either at the grave sites or erected memorial stones where the Partisans lost their lives, fighting the Nazi/Fascist Regimes. One particular memorial plaque, erected by grateful villagers, commemorated the execution, near a place called Piancone, on the Sessera stream, of five Australian soldiers and one Englishman. The five Australians, all captured in north Africa, had been with Malcolm in the major Concentration Camp No 57 at Gruppignano. The victims were all unarmed and were summarily executed on the spot by their Fascist captors. Malcolm placed remembrance poppies, whilst his Italian friends gathered a posy of wild flowers to place as well. He admits he was completely overcome by emotion as he stood in silence, contemplating that unnecessary and violent act in such an idyllic spot high up in the scenic Italian Alps.

One highlight recorded in his diary was travelling by cable cars to the Mt Rosa Plateau, 3500 metres above sea level, where **Bill Waller's** party, which included **Ern Preiser** and **Tom Russell**, was left by Italian guides to finish, alone, their miraculous journey into Switzerland, October 1943.

Meeting up again with two of the female couriers used

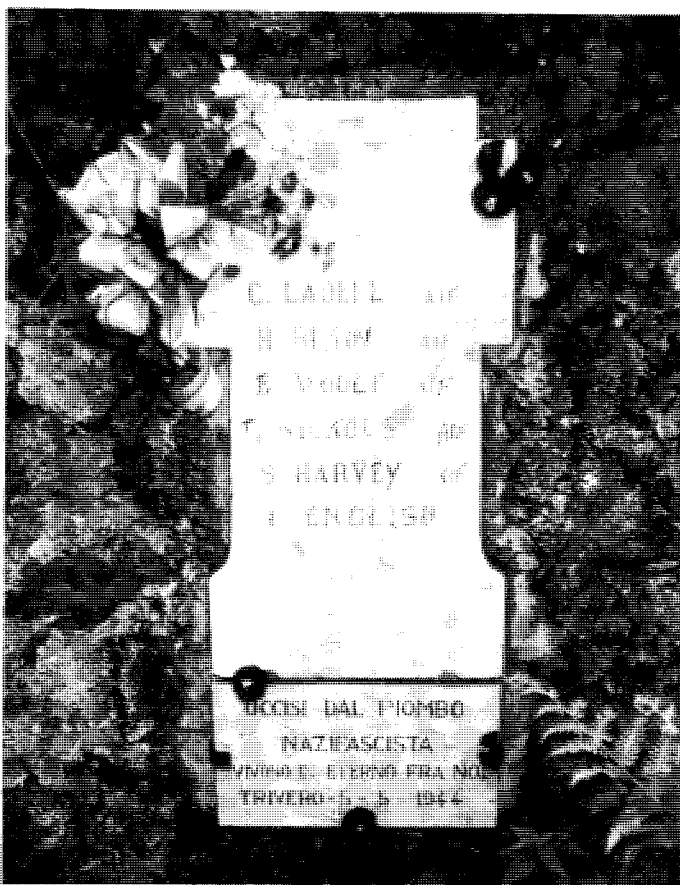
by the Partisans had Malcolm's wife Ellen stating: "They still love you."

After four weeks, as guests of the Zampese family, they journeyed to Greece, Crete and Rhode Island.

Malcolm and Ellen went back to Italy for two weeks in July 1994. This time Malcolm visited Cascina Oschiena, near where he worked in the ricefields, as a prisoner of war. Much to his surprise he was advised by the owner that he was the only Australian ex-POW who had come back to the workcamp area since the war. He was made most welcome and was given two bottles of good Italian red wine to drink back in Australia.

With the help of his good friend, Mario Zampese, Malcolm was able to obtain permission from the public archives of Biella for material used in his book, titled "An Italian Experience." The book, of approximately 200,000 words, plus over a hundred illustrations is being produced at his own cost in A4 size with a soft cover. Besides Malcolm and Bill Wrigglesworth's personal experiences, it also features contributions from **Bill Waller**, **Peter MacGeorge**, **Len Woolcock**, **Bill Dellar**, **Roger Wettenhall**, **Phil Bannister**, **John Nicholson**, **Jimmy George**, **Jack Henry**, **Alf Sutherland**, **Bert Baglin** and others. Included is an article from 'Esca Riordan' of the 2/4th Australian Infantry Battalion.

If interested, please contact **Mal Webster**, phone (03) 560 9674 or write to 3 Bramley Crescent, Wheelers Hill, Victoria, 3150.



The plaque, erected by friendly Italian villagers, marking the execution by Fascists of five Australian soldiers and an Englishman, near Piancone — The words on the plaque, when translated say: "Shot and killed by the Nazi Fascist. They now live with us forever. Trivero 5-5-1944".

A good read:—

## The Eavesdroppers

by Jack Bleakley.

A book to keep you engrossed — *The Eavesdroppers* — the story of the men and women whose skill in intercepting coded Japanese transmissions and decoding them, provided vital advance information about enemy operations in the South-West Pacific area. These secret operations were not disclosed until nearly 50 years after the war.

Almost every Japanese move was anticipated thus enabling the Allies to use their limited resources to meet the threat to the best advantage. Undoubtedly the *Eavesdroppers* helped shorten the war and could be described as *silent heroes*.

(The book is available in paper-back — a convenient "mass" to hold when reading in bed!)

Another good read:—

## Those Ragged Bloody Heroes

by Peter Brune.

During July to September 1942, the Japanese set out to capture Port Moresby by an overland crossing of the Owen Stanley Range and the landing at Milne Bay. To oppose the force of 10,000 enemy troops on the Kokoda Trail, the Allies committed one under-trained and poorly equipped unit, the 39th Battalion, later reinforced by veterans of the 21st Brigade, 7th Division, AIF. These were the men of *Maroubra Force*.

The Australians fought desperately, forcing the Japanese to fight for every inch of ground. Finally the enemy was turned away, beaten and exhausted. Our Australian soldiers' reward for their remarkable achievement was denigration by the High Command, through General Blamey.

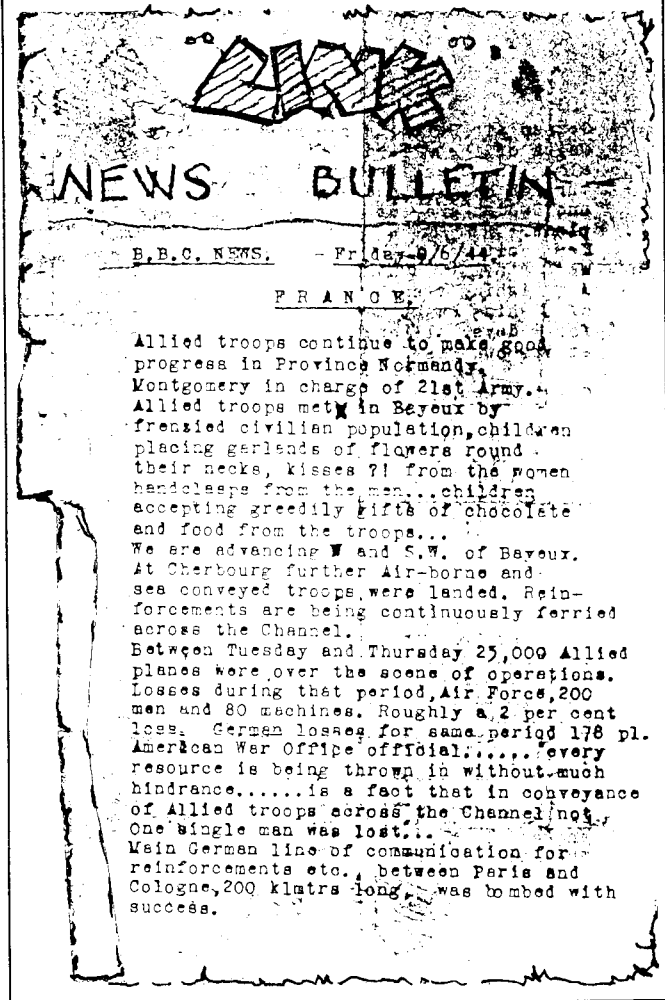
In December 1942, the former, or remaining, members of *Maroubra Force* captured Gona after heavy fighting and at tragic cost. This book raises interesting, but serious questions about the planning and high command of the Kokoda and Gona campaigns.

Like many of our unit histories, it is a book that should be read by those responsible for our armed forces so that we can learn from history. Unfortunately, it seems we rarely do.

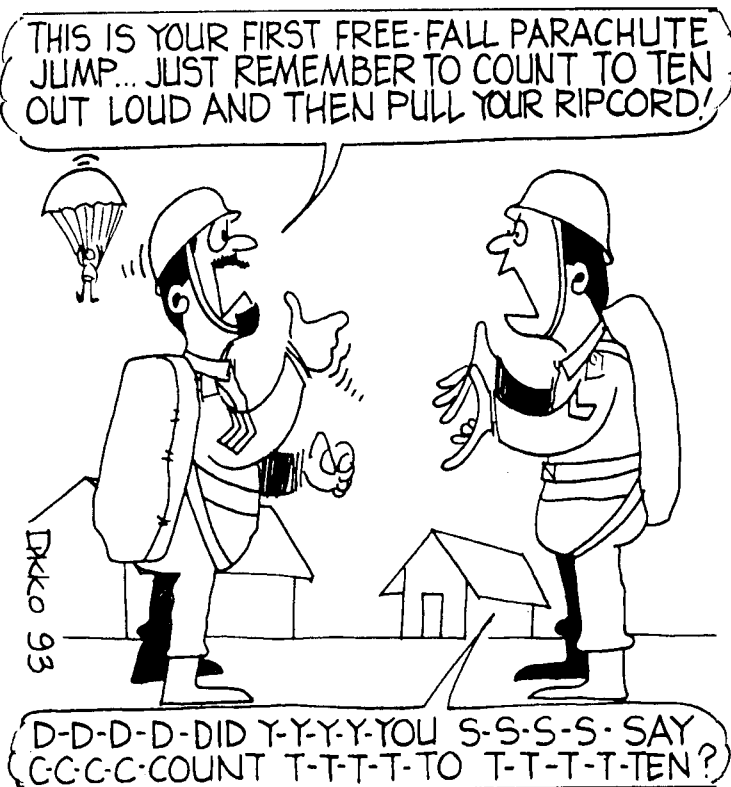
### GOOD NEWS AT LAST!

John Nicholson (7) was one of a work party from POW Camp 20, Zwittau, Poland. One of his group went to get medical attention and returned with this news-sheet: "*LINK*", dated 9/6/1944 — it was the first indication to the POWs of D Day progress.

(This is a reduced photo-copy reduction of the original screed — warts and all!)



**Remember the Anzac Reunion  
is at Noon, Monday April 24th.**





## THE SENTRY'S LOG

**Alex Barnett** (8) is still going reasonably well at Port Macquarie. He is compiling a history which includes stories on the prisoners-of-war of 7 and 8 batteries.

Our WA boys still get together occasionally with their ladies for social outings. Although no longer a formal association, over the years, they have become a close-knit group.

**Bob Little** (8) has been very ill as an in-patient at Perth, but has returned home to Albany.

**Allan Lowe** (8), who only recently made contact with our WA group, was pleased to find so many of his comrades-in-arms still on deck in Perth. Allan had surgery last year but his last report was good.

**Les Harris** (8) with his wife Win and daughter Dorothy visited Perth and were welcomed by **Gordon Connor**, **Norm Anderson**, **George Howat**, **Jack (Nap) Croft**, **Bill Fitzhardinge**, **Gordon Fellows**, **Keith Walton**, **Gwen Connor** and **Bunny Timmens** with traditional WA hospitality. **Keith Wallace** also visited Perth and met some of the troops. We are hoping that some of the West Australians might get to our Anzac Re-union this year.

**Reg Dickson** M.L., (degree of *Master-in-Life* gained at the Oxford Hotel, down Leederville way) holds court with his mate and veteran of Korea—**Billy Harrison**, at the Oxford and is always prepared to comment on civic affairs.

**Murray Takasuka** is still living at Peterhead, South Australia. The *Sunday Herald Sun*, May 1 last, had an interesting full-page story about his Japanese father Jo's pioneering efforts with growing rice in Australia in 1906. Much of this story was covered in our 1989 "Take Post". Murray is now in his 80's and both he and his wife have been having health problems.

In the 1992 "Take Post", advice was given that bilateral cataracts had been accepted by the Department of Veterans Affairs in the particular circumstances of a veteran who had significant operational service in tropical areas and was subjected to bright sunlight. Since that report, at least two of our gunners have been successful with applications to the DVA that their crystalline lens opacities were war-caused. Anti-aircraft gunners would have had a particularly hazardous vocation, staring into bright sunny skies, looking for aircraft.

We had some optimists on our side — at Milne Bay, one of our men was firing his Tommy-gun at an attacking Zero, which was at 2,000 feet! Then there was the bloke at Tobruk who was seen firing his Bren at a Stuka together with about a hundred other guns ranging from 20mm Bredas up to 3.7inch guns. As the Stuka dived into ground, bombs and all, the Bren gunner shouted:— "I got him, that's fixed him!"

**Ron Walsh** is in Montrose, Tasmania, and would be glad to see any old friends passing by. (R J Walsh, telephone 002 728 522) He is a lover of the sport of harness racing. Ron says Tassie has it all.

It has been rewarding to receive many letters expressing thanks for "On Target" and "Take Post" from old comrades, some of whom don't feel able to get to re-unions, because of distance or ill-health. We have also received letters from widows and relatives of our old mates, some of course bearing bad news. The letters have been most appreciated and have encouraged us to keep the Association and Newsletters going as long as we can. Some of these old comrades and widows of old mates have mentioned that they have not been so well. To them especially, we express our very best wishes and better health.

**Constance Little**, widow of Charles Little, is well known by name to all of us through her pithy comments in letters to the press. We send her our love too.



## Oh Rats!

*from Millington's Diary, the Age, 25/8/1994*

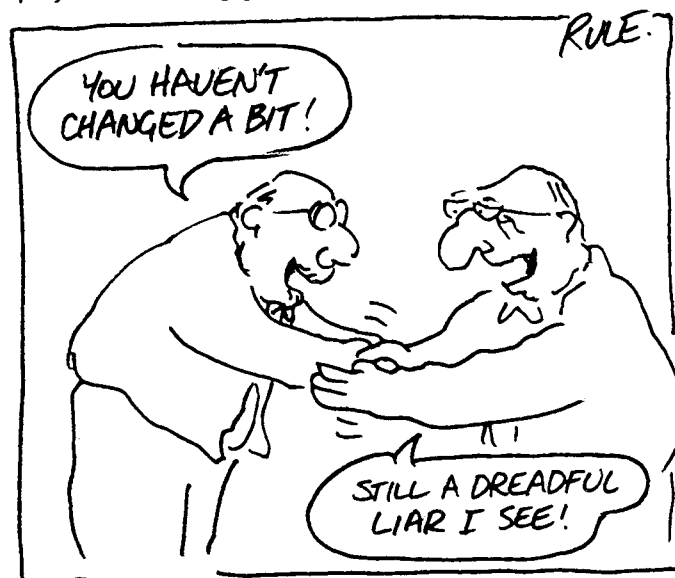
A history teacher who told a year-eight student that the famed Rats of Tobruk never existed has spurred the Victorian RSL's push for a war museum. The student was given nought for a project he did on the Rats of Tobruk, the garrison that became famous in WW2 for saving the North African town from a seven-month siege by Italians and Germans.

Brigadier Keith Rossi, the RSL's senior vice-president, said yesterday that the teacher had handed the boy's project back to him and, believing the garrison's nickname "Rats" referred to rodents, said they "couldn't have existed there because of the noise of the battle".

Brigadier Rossi said he had been told of the incident when the mother of the pupil rang him, "The boy's mother was appalled, and so was I, to hear about it. This just shows how important it is to have a proper military museum."

Brigadier Rossi said that while he "fully supported" the Victorian Government's proposals for a Koori and an immigrants' museum, a military museum should also be set up.

He said the teacher eventually re-marked the student's project after being given a book on the Rats of Tobruk.



## THE ODE

Laurence Binyon who wrote *The Ode to The Fallen* was a stretcher bearer in France during the First World War. Born in England in 1869 he died in 1943. Laurence Binyon was a poet, a keeper of paintings and drawings of the British Museum and he was an authority on Oriental art.

His experiences as a stretcher bearer moved him to write his *Ode to The Fallen*, one verse of which has become a universal eulogy for the ex-servicemen and women when they meet and remember departed comrades.

The reciting of the Ode each day in ex-service clubs affects people in different ways. To some it is probably only a routine to be endured, but to others it does stir up a feeling of reverence and possibly memories of comrades and events of years gone by, but do we stop to think of the meaning of the words as Binyon wrote them?

***They Shall Grow Not Old, as We that are Left Grow Old*** — we remember people as we saw them last and those, who died so young and so many years ago, we remember as young and virile, while friends who have grown old with us, we shall remember after they are gone, as old and less active than when we first met them.

***Age Shall Not Weary Them Nor the Years (Contemn) Condemn*** — the trials and tribulations of life can no longer sicken or pall them. They are remembered in high esteem and with respect for the cause for which they died. They will never be despised or scorned.

(NOTE: As originally written by Laurence Binyon the word was *Contemn*, a word very little used these days — the word *Condemn* has, by general usage, taken its place.

*Contemn*:- Despise, scorn, disdain, hold cheap or unworthy.

*Condemn*:- Blame, censure, reprove.)

***At the Going Down of the Sun, and In the Morning We Will Remember Them*** — they will be remembered somewhere by someone each minute of the day. They are enshrined in our memory forever.

*Thanks to Legatee Ian McDonald for the article "The Ode".*

### WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

*It is with sincere regret that we report the passing of former comrades:*

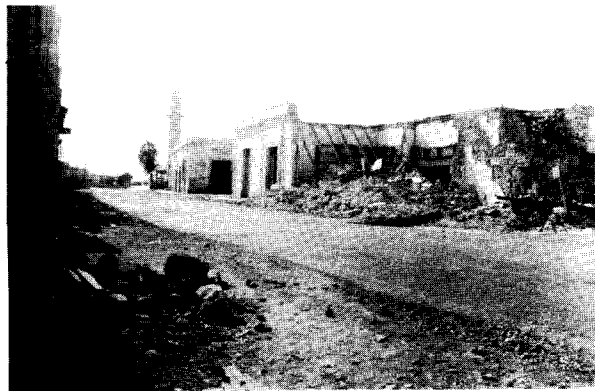
Bob Frankling	7 Bty
Jack (J.R.J.) Macaullay	7 Bty
Laurie (L.F.) Eager	7 Bty
Fred (F.G.) Dicker	7 Bty
Jim (J.T.) Bell	8 Bty
W. F. Jamieson	7 Bty
V. E. Maxwell	8 Bty
Jack (N.J.) Pickett	7 Bty
Ron (R.A.) Selleck	7 Bty
Magnus Cormack	RHQ
F. Spooner	
H. W. Hallett	8 Bty
Jim (J.N.) Coghlan	9 Bty
Jim Dennis	8 Bty
Bill (W.H.) Guy	9 Bty



***8th Battery equipped themselves with captured Italian Anti-Aircraft guns in Tobruk.***

# TOBRUK

54 Years Ago!



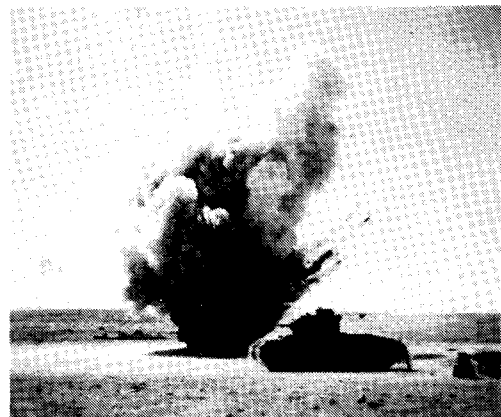
*Tobruk Street Scene*



*8 Battery using captured Italian 20mm Bredas in action at Tobruk*



*A Tranquil view of the Tobruk coastline.*



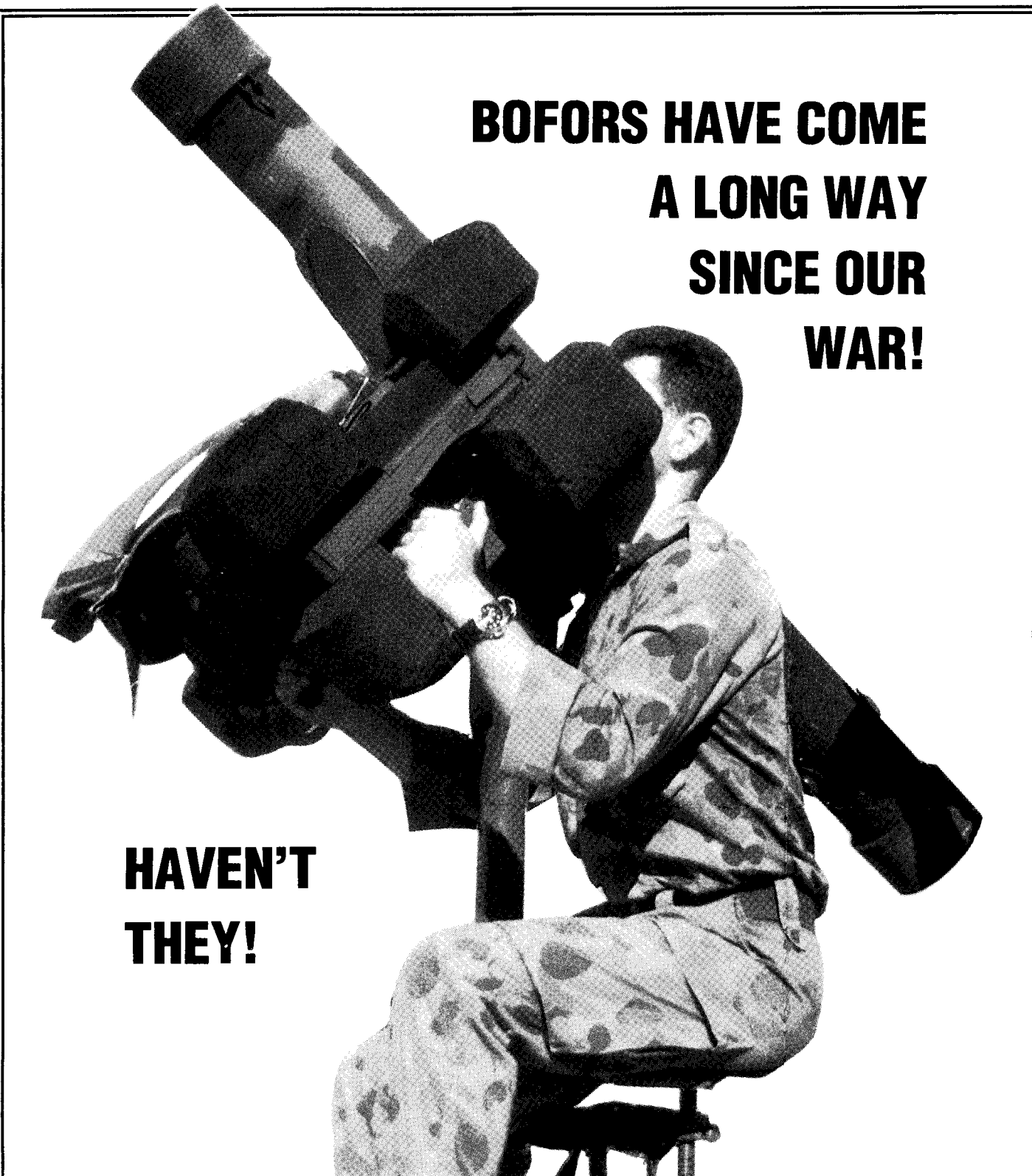
*A Near Miss!*



*Tobruk Church — unscathed!*



*8th Battery ready, willing and waiting for the next Stuka raid.*

A black and white photograph of a soldier in camouflage uniform operating the RBS 70 missile system. The soldier is seated and looking through the optical sight of the missile launcher. The missile is mounted on a gyro-stabilised optical system. The background is plain white.

**BOFORS HAVE COME  
A LONG WAY  
SINCE OUR  
WAR!**

**HAVEN'T  
THEY!**

### **RBS 70 MISSILE SYSTEM**

Manufactured by Bofors of Sweden the RBS 70 has been in service with the Australian Army since July 1987. The laser-beam riding air-defence missile can be assembled in 30 seconds and is capable of downing aircraft travelling at more than 800 knots and at altitudes up to 10,000 feet with a range of 5 km.

The weapon is intended to engage visually-detected targets with the operator tracking the target optically with the aid of a fine-aim joystick to operate a gyro-stabilised optical system. Upgrades expected in 1995 will include a new Mk II missile, an alerting and cueing radar and night sight.

RBS 70's saw operational service during the Gulf War.