



Take Post April 2022



Newsletter of the 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Assoc'n Inc

A WW2 Australian 2/3rd Gunner of Japanese Descent: VX37123 Sgt Mario (Murray) "Tak" Takasuka



Editor's Note: Mario Takasuka's name will be familiar to members of the Association as parts of his story appeared in earlier editions of Take Post. We are indebted to our Research Officer, David McDonald, for the following detailed narrative relating to Mario and the Takasuka family.

This year, 2022, is the 80th anniversary of Australia's involvement in the initial South-West Pacific campaigns of World War 2. One of the members of the 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment who served in the unit throughout the War, was VX37123, Mario Takasuka, the only member of the Regiment of Japanese descent. Although his story has been told in several places in the past, the Committee of the Regiment Association thought it worth presenting this overview, putting Takasuka's service into a broader context.

Sgt Takasuka was known to his mates in the Regiment, both during the War and in subsequent decades, as 'Tak' and, more frequently, 'Murray'. Here, we will refer to him by his registered forename, Mario, to clearly differentiate him from the other Takasuka family members.

MARIO'S WAR SERVICE

The bare bones of Mario's service record are as follows. He was born at Swan Hill, Vic., on 15 Nov 1910 and, at 29 years of age, enlisted in the 2nd AIF at Royal Park, Vic., on 11 Jul 1940; occupation labourer, religion Methodist, next of kin his older brother Shō Takasuka from Bendigo. He was posted to the 2/3rd LAA Regt at Werribee on 26 Aug 1940, and was allocated to the Regiment's 7 Battery. He embarked, with the rest of the Regiment, in December 1940, sailed to the Middle East, and then proceeded with the other 7 Battery men to Crete. During the German inva-

sion of Crete, he was part of a gun crew manning a Vickers gun on the mole (the causeway/breakwater) at Heraklion. Once the enemy reached the quay, cutting the Australians off from the mainland, under heavy fire the men escaped by sea in rowing boats and were subsequently picked up by the Australian Destroyer 'Kingston'. The gunners provided valuable support to the crew of 'Kingston' as the German invasion continued, and were eventually landed at Alexandria, Egypt, at the end of May. 2/7 Battery (as it had become) returned to Australia with the rest of the Regiment, arriving home in March 1942. Following the disbandment of the Regiment in July 1943, the Battery became part of 2/2nd Composite AA Regiment. Mario's promotion to Sergeant was confirmed in Sep. 1943. The unit (including Mario, contrary to what has been published elsewhere) moved to Oro Bay (Papua) in October 1943, providing AA defences for the port there. They moved to Buna in February 1944 and, the following month, Mario and WO2 John Campbell (2/8 Bty) flew to Sydney for training to convert their batteries to airborne units—something that never occurred. They remained in Australia until their units returned there in May. Mario was discharged on 22 Aug 1945, with the final rank of Sergeant.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Mario's family must have been wonderful people! His father, Jō Takasuka, was born in Japan in 1865. He studied at university in Japan and subsequently in the USA where he graduated with a BA degree in 1896. He returned to Japan, was elected to Parliament, and in 1898 married Mario's mother, Ichiko. It is recorded that 'Accompanied by his wife and two infant children, [Jō] Takasuka arrived in Melbourne on 14 March 1905 ... on a 12 months' "Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test" granted for the purpose of engaging in the export and import trade' (Sissons 2016, pp. 231-2). Australia's racist White Australia policy was in full swing! Following representations to the Victorian Government, Jō Takasuka was granted 200 acres of land subject to annual inundation on the Murray River to experiment with rice growing. (His father back in Japan had a large-scale rice growing business.)

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2/3rd Remembrance Group

The Remembrance Group, comprised of direct descendants of original members, was formally established in 2008 and today numbers almost 100 members.

If you are the son or daughter of an original member and/or have children who would like to participate in the activities of the Remembrance Group, please contact Malcolm Wrigglesworth, Honorary Secretary on 03 9726 0803 or send us a message through the "Contact Us" section of the Association's website: www.antiaircraft.org.au/Contact Us. It is not an onerous role and currently costs only \$25.00 per year to participate. Your support is important if the men and the deeds of the 2/3rd are to continue to be remembered and promoted into the future.



We Will Remember Them

John Selby Campbell, WO2 VX38276

8 Battery

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
And in the morning
We will remember them.

Lest we forget!

In 2014, the Association made a submission to the Australian War Memorial in partnership with the National Library of Australia, to include our web site in PANDORA, Australia's Web Archive. PANDORA was established by the National Library in 1996 to enable archiving and provision of long term access to on-line Australian publications. As a PANDORA partner, the AWM identifies, assesses, selects and catalogues sites of relevance to Australian military history. Based on our submission, the AWM assessed our web site to be of relevant military history, and authorised the National Library to add it to the PANDORA Archive.

2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association Incorporated

Take Post is published by the 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association Incorporated for the benefit of members and friends of the Association.

The 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was raised in Melbourne in 1940 and served with distinction in World War II, with Theatre Honours from Crete, Tobruk, the Western Desert, Syria, Port Moresby, Milne Bay, Lae, Buna and Borneo. The Regiment experienced a high number of battle casualties through deaths, wounded and prisoners of war.

Formed in 1945, the Regiment Association has been active in commemorating and celebrating the history of the 2nd/3rd ever since.

In 2008, the Association's Constitution was amended to allow descendants of the original 1,935 members of the Regiment to become members of the Association and to provide for the future carriage of the Association.

The Association was incorporated on Anzac Day, 25 April 2021.

The 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association Incorporated is an Incorporated Association managed by a voluntary Committee of Management.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT— 2022 AGM



In November last year we learnt of the passing of John Campbell (VX 38276, 8 Battery), at the age of 100. He was the last surviving member of the 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. John lived a full and wonderful life, and was a true gentleman. He was also was a great contributor to our Association as a committee member from 1994 to 2008, and the Secretary from 1995 to 2008. John regularly attended the Association's Annual Reunion and AGM and with his partner Joyce, generously shared his memories of his war time experiences with us. We will miss him greatly.

2021 again saw disruptions to our activities due to COVID-19. Members of the Association did not attend the annual Melbourne ANZAC Day March due to restrictions on numbers permitted to attend. However, the 2/3rd banner accompanied John Campbell at the Mentone ANZAC Day march, carried by John's family.

We were able to successfully hold the 2021 AGM and reunion at the RACV. Over 50 people attended and enjoyed the comradeship and food, as well as learning a little more about the history, and remembering fathers, uncles, grandfathers and great-grandfathers who served in the Regiment. We assisted John in celebrating his 100th birthday with a cake, candle and a round of "Happy Birthday to You".

2021 saw the change-over of some of the Committee. Thanks to both Matt Heddle (grandson of Charles Heddle, VX 35877, 9 Battery) - past Vice President and to Graeme Heddle (son of Charles Heddle) - past Committee member, for their work on the Committee since the original members asked us to take the reins of the Association as the Remembrance Group in 2008. Both Graeme and Matt have been committed to supporting the men of the 2/3rd through attending the annual reunions for many years.

I know that my late father really appreciated their involvement. In 2003 Graeme arranged for a plaque to be placed at the Werribee racecourse commemorating the 2/3rd ALAAR's time in training there. He obtained sponsorship and organised the ceremony and reunion. The surviving men really treasured the opportunity to go to the racecourse with their mates, to remember those who were not so fortunate. It was a wonderful achievement by Graeme and a testament to his commitment to the men of the 2/3rd. Matt has also been very active in providing displays for the Association reunions each year, sourcing articles, film clips and items of interest and sharing his knowledge. Matt also donates his

time to educating the next generations about the history, clothing and equipment used during World War 2.

This year's *Take Post* commences with the story of Mario or Murray "Taka" Takasuka, VX 37123 (7 Battery), who was Australian-born of Japanese parents. He was rejected from enlisting several times due to his origin but eventually succeeded by coming to Melbourne where he was not known. Mario made a significant contribution to the Regiment, and, along with his parents, to the Australian way of life.

A very "helpful" exposé follows, which describes the different ranks of Officer and concludes with Commanding Officers: *After the war they usually become members of exclusive clubs and are attacked by gout.*

Reprinted articles from earlier editions of *Take Post*, in *A Walk Down Memory Lane*, reveal the ingenuity and skill of the men in battle and also their resourcefulness at using whatever was at hand (and "sourcing" things from elsewhere) including recipes from Tobruk, the *Tobruk Truth* daily newspaper and useful items of clothing. George the magpie mascot even gets a mention.

Graeme Hawkins' request for information regarding his father's service prompted information about the Commemorative Greek Campaign Medal and the story of Raleigh Hawkins, VX35192, 7 Battery.

Eighty years ago, in February 1942, most of the Regiment departed the Middle East for Australia. Approximately 130 men of the Regiment had been captured in Crete, Libya and Tobruk and were Prisoners of War in Europe. In the same month the Japanese captured Singapore and also commenced air raids on Darwin.

The Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin had insisted that the Australian troops come home due to the Japanese bombing of northern Australia. Regimental Head Quarters, Signals Section Head Quarters, 7 and 8 Batteries were then situated in Western Australia, 9 Battery went to Townsville, then to Port Moresby and Milne Bay. Other members of Signals Section and Workshops Section provided detachments to each of the three gun batteries.

As I write, the situation in Ukraine is looking very dire. There are many parallels that can be drawn between this conflict and the commencement of World War II. Our fathers and grandfathers fought against tyranny and oppression, and for freedom. I fervently hope that this current situation can be quickly resolved peacefully.



An example of the displays provided by Graeme, Matt and Emma Heddle

The Sentry's Log



Sentry's Log By David McDonald

As the Association's Research Officer I have the pleasure of responding to requests for information about the Regiment and its members. Many of these are quite straightforward, with descendants seeking information about relatives who served in the Regiment or in other anti-aircraft units. I am usually able to provide them with information about how to find out what they are looking for, particularly through accessing the person's service record at the Australian Archives.

<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/SearchScreens/BasicSearch.aspx>

Another option is to review the relevant sections of the Regiment's history, "*On Target*"

<http://www.anti aircraft.org.au/about-us/on-target/on-target>.

A useful source for interpreting the service record abbreviations is the National Archives web page 'Common abbreviations found on service records' at

<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/Explore/defence/abbreviations.aspx>.

Another is the Australian War Memorial's online 'Search for abbreviation or acronym':

<https://www.awm.gov.au/glossary/>

Their encyclopedia also helps:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia>

Please contact me at:

info@anti aircraft.org.au if you need further assistance in understanding the service records.

The following are examples of the enquiries received from members and interested persons through our web site:

Michael Bendon

Author of *The Forgotten Flotilla*. He is researching aspects of the Greece/Crete campaigns and plans to feature 7 Bty's VX37123 Sgt Mario 'Murray' 'Tak' Takasuka in it. Biographical information on Sgt Takasuka and his family provided.

Ray Windlow, Descendants of Rats of Tobruk Assoc

Correspondence with the Descendants of Rats of Tobruk Assoc requesting them to include *On Target* at the unit histories page in their website

<https://>

www.ratsoftobrukdescendants.org.au/reference-books-units. They did so and promoted *On Target* on their Facebook page as well.

Grahame Kingston

Military History Research Centre (Aust.)

Asks, for a client, was the 2/3rd Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment 'a part of the Artillery Regiment of a particular Division (6th, 7th, 9th) or did it serve under independent command?'. Replied that 1 Corps Artillery throughout, though attached to 9 Infantry Division for the Morotai & Labuan campaigns.

Denis Francis

Wrote to advise us that NX17017 Albert Hood, 2/3 LAA Bty, is missing from our nominal roll. I advised him that the Battery was part of 2/1 LAA Regt, not 2/3 LAA Regt.

Ken Steel

Requested any information we may have on his father, Leslie Steel, who was an artist during the war; a New Zealander. Advised him that we cannot assist as we do not hold anything about him.

Graeme Hawkins

A few months ago, I noticed an advertisement in an RSL magazine concerning the further, and last, issue of medals by the Greek Government for soldiers who had served in the various Greek battles in the 2WW – including Crete where my father served. I need to obtain the relevant documentation from the National Archives Centre – where I am encountering problems.

See Pages 12–13 of this issue of Take Post for our response.

Graeme McIlveen

His father was NX23382 Gnr Gordon McIlveen. 'As a starting point, I suspect that dad is one of the gunners in the often used photo of the Bofors gun crew at the air strip at Milne Bay used on this website.

'In addition, I have a copy of the book about Milne Bay, with original annotations by one of dad's mates, which I think would be of great interest historically. The notes describe as an eyewitness, the Japanese naval shelling over (and not at!) the hospital ship at anchor.' Malcolm sent info on the Association, incl. membership.

Roderick Besier

Seeking information on his uncle Gunner Patrick Olsen NX36896, 2/3 LAA Battery. I advised him that the battery was part of the 2/1 LAA Regt, not the 2/3rd, and provided a source of information on the unit's service.

Andrew Hordern

Re his grandfather NX381 Lt Col Alexander Roy Morris GIBSON, CO 2/1 LAA Regt. There is a memorial in Alice Springs with a large gun (possibly a 3.7" HAA gun?) and a photo which may be Lt Col Gibson. Andrew will investigate with Council, etc., when he next visits and let us know what he discovers.

Bob Moysey

Re his father NX76255 Lt J S Moysey. Sought information on his service, incl. in Darwin. Also interested in accessing *On Target*. Info provided.

Ray Windlow

Ray is one of the members of the Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc who prepares Tributes for the Australian Rats of Tobruk. He has prepared one to commemorate the late John Campbell's service, for use by John's family, and by our Association. We proffered the Association's thanks for this.

Re VX27093 Bottomley, WW: was he one of the Rats of Tobruk? We agreed that he was not as he joined the Regt on 22.04.41 from 2 AA Reinforcements, and 8 Bty was evacuated from Tobruk on the 26th. It seems impossible that he would have transferred from RHQ in Palestine to Tobruk just days before the Battery was evacuated.

...and the Secretary's Desk

Skye Gibson

Skye wrote to Anne Rae. She is re-searching POWs from the WW2 2/15th Inf Bn. She is aligned with the Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Association. Has seen our material on POWs in *Take Post* and seeks contact with Lew Potter whose father was an 8 Bty 2/3 LAA Regt POW captured in the 'Benghazi handicap'.

Joe Landigran

Re his grandfather, VX21851 Garrett Martin Landigran, 2/2 Heavy Anti-aircraft Regiment then 2/1 Comp AA Regt. Joe has identified his grandfather in the video 'The roamings of the regiment' – advised him of the version with commentary: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1195322>

Murray Coyle

Trying to locate a friend Ron Roberts, a national service man in the 1967 call up. He served in 110 Battery, training at Woodside in South Australia and Butterworth Malaysia'. Advised that we do not have such records.

Connections, Connections.....

In April 2014, I was copied a letter from the late Alan "Bushy" Read (VX25157) to the Swan Hill Veterans' Information Centre., which referenced material from "On Target" regarding Murray Takasuka.

Alan's letter also referred to being taught by Miss Aiko Takasuka when he was in the Swan Hill State School Infants Class in 1925, and he enclosed a copy of a hand written letter he received from Aiko in 1937, congratulating him on winning "The Age" Coronation Scout Award to attend the Coronation of King George VI in 1937.



Swan Hill State School Infants—1920's.
SLV Accession Number H92.400/100, Image No. b34802



Welcome to members and guests to the 2022 AGM and Reunion Luncheon. On Anzac Day 2021, we become an Incorporated Association under the auspices of Consumer Affairs Victoria.

Due to our on-line enquiry function, and the FAQ page on our web site, I receive very little direct correspondence (i.e. letters / phone calls), but one was received from Graeme McIlveen, son of Gordon McIlveen, NX23382, 9 Battery –see Sentry's Log for details - an article in next year's *Take Post*??.

Another recent enquiry came from Don Malcolm in Northern Queensland, whose property was an army training ground (including the 2/3rd 9 Battery) during WW2. Using a metal detector, he has found several 2/3rd service tags. Don has been referred to Research Officer David McDonald to follow up—more to come!

We have recently provided updated contact details to RSL Victoria as part of our membership (one of 207 members) of the Kindred Organisations & Unit Associations, which operates under RSL auspices—it is the primary link between the RSL Anzac Commemoration Council (ACC) and individual Unit Associations.

As a consequence of becoming incorporated, we are now required to submit an Annual Statement and Financial Report to Consumer Affairs Victoria for the financial year ending 31 December 2021.

It is interesting to note that despite Covid the Association incurred a very small (\$20) loss in 2020 and a small (\$510) surplus in 2021.

For the fifth year in succession, annual subscriptions are being held at \$25.00 per member.

The passing of John Campbell in November 2021 represented the end of an era—John was the last (known) surviving original member of the 1,935 men of the 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

With the election of new Committee members Gaye Berry (Vice President), Ian Campbell (Treasurer) and Alisdair Crooke at the 2021 AGM, the Committee is taking the opportunity to examine our processes, particularly in regard to the organization of the AGM, our member data base and communications with members.

Donations

The Association is again appreciative of the generous donations received from members. They enable us to continue to underwrite the cost of the AGM / Reunion, to maintain/improve our website, to fund any unscheduled / technical enhancements to the website and to produce, print and distribute *Take Post*.

Thank you to all members who have made donations, but in particular to Foster & Cathy Crooke, Dot Harris, Doreen Bryant, Jeanette Tilney and Alan Donelly.

The Web Site

The Association's website is closely monitored by Colin Bragg and David McDonald. As a consequence of the Association becoming incorporated in 2021, the Association has been able to register all three domain name suffixes—that is .org.au, .net.au and .com.au

We may need to consider replacing the Open Source Language we use (Joomla 3) with Joomla 4 in 2023 or 2024, or move to another Content Management System (CMS) such as WordPress, HubSpot, Magento or others.

We continue to receive excellent technical support from Designsenseweb and its principal, Malcolm Romano

The Remembrance Group

We continue to have approximately 90 active financial members. It was particularly pleasing that 57 members and guests attended the 2021 AGM / Reunion Lunch. It was particularly opportune we were able to celebrate the late John Campbell's 100th birthday with him.

Regards to all—Malcolm

Mario Takasuka VX37123 (Continued from Page 1)

The Commonwealth Government extended his Certificate of Exemption to permit him to establish the experimental farm, rather than be deported at the end of his initial, 12 months, exemption period.

In 1914 Jō harvested his first successful crop of rice which was sold to the NSW Department of Agriculture which started experimental rice growing at its Yanco (NSW) Experimental farm. Subsequent crops, over the years, were successful but, in 1939, he returned to Japan following his father's death, where he (Jō) died the following year. His wife (Ichi/Ichiko Takasuka 1876-1956) and children (Mario, Mario's older brother Shō (1900-1972) and older sister Aiko (1903-1970, married in 1933) remained in Victoria, with Ichi and her sons running a successful tomato and fruit production business at Nyah. Following the outbreak of World War 2, the family's agricultural work was acknowledged by the authorities as being significant to the war effort.

Jō Takasuka is known as the father of the Australian rice industry, and the company Sunrise Rice acknowledges this: <https://sunricesushi.com/our-heritage>.

'The policy of War Cabinet is to intern all Japanese nationals in Australia'

Japan entered the war in December 1941. Sissons (2016) records that 'Shō was immediately interned at Tatura Camp [Vic.] pursuant to the Cabinet decision that all Japanese over the age of 16 years should be taken into custody. But so numerous and unconditional were the representations by his neighbours insisting on his complete loyalty that he was released within six months ... These feelings of respect, acceptance and goodwill appear to have extended to the whole family—to both generations' (*op. cit.*, p. 244). (Shō and Mario's sister, Aiko, was free from internment as she was married to an Australian citizen.)

Given that 'The policy of War Cabinet is to intern all Japanese nationals in Australia' (correspondence in Mario's Army service record, p. 17), Mario's mother, Ichi Takasuka, was slated for internment. Representations were made, however, for her not be interned, with the Major General, Base Commandant, Southern Command, writing to Army Headquarters: 'Subject [i.e. Ichi Takasuka] is at present residing at Fosterville Bendigo where she is endeavouring to carry on a tomato plantation in the absence of her two sons. She is hard-working, highly respected, has never been heard to express any political views and is given an excellent character [*sic*] by the local police.' As a consequence, in Dec. 1941 the Secretary for the Army wrote to the Minister:

In accordance with the policy laid down by War Cabinet, all Japanese women in Australia were interned at the outbreak of war with Japan.

*A recommendation has been received from Southern Command to the effect that an exception be made in favour of Mrs. Takasuka who, although a Japanese by birth and the widow of a Japanese national, is 65 years of age and has lived in the Bendigo district for a number of years, where she is highly spoken of. One of her sons [Mario] is Australian-born and joined the Royal Australian Air Force [*sic*]. The other son has been interned as a Japanese national ...*

Your direction is sought. If you approve of an exception being made in this case, Southern Command will be informed that no action need be taken against this woman' (Mario's service record, p. 14).

On 27 Mar. 1943 the Minister for the Army replied to the

Secretary in the following terms:

I am unable, on account of War Cabinet's decision that all Japanese females are to be interned until they could be transferred out of the country, to direct that Mrs. Takasuka is to be left at liberty.

It is, however, open to Southern Command, if they feel quite assured that she represents no security risk, to delay her internment for the time being ...

I consider that Military Intelligence, as an elementary security measure, should give some attention to the bonafides of her son who is said to be serving in the A.I.F. abroad.

Her internment was 'delayed' until the end of the war, and she continued to be a valued member of her community until her death in 1956, aged 80 years.

An Australian Army gunner of Japanese descent

One source indicates that a total of 17 men of Japanese descent served in the Australian military during WW2, one of whom was Mario Takasuka (Whiley 2018, p. 3. Another source says 28: Steains & Whiley 2020). Having been born in Australia, Murray was an Australian citizen, unlike his parents and siblings who were born in Japan and were therefore, not eligible to be granted Australian citizenship.

It is recorded that 'In 1940, Mario volunteered locally to join the AIF. After being rejected twice, he was eventually accepted by enlisting in Melbourne, where his background was unknown and the recruiting officer was also unaware of the military regulations regarding race ...' (Whiley 2018, p. 10). Another source states that 'He had let his hair grow longer than usual to increase his height by half an inch to the five feet six inches minimum required in the AIF' (Sissons 2016, p. 245, and see Australian War Memorial n.d., *Enlistment standards*).

Whiley (2018, p. 10) provides a nice summary of key documents included in Mario's service record:

When Japan entered the war at the end of 1941, military authorities made strong efforts to remove him. An enquiry was ordered when "the presence of a full-blooded Japanese in the Australian army came to the attention of the Minister" ... Mario was a well-regarded member of his unit, and his commanding officer [Maj. JA Hipworth, OC 7 Bty] successfully argued for his continued deployment, stating: "His record as a soldier both in and out of action has been exemplary and in consideration of his outstanding service in Crete, I selected him for promotion as a bombardier. He is most popular with the men in his [battery] and the recent declaration of war against Japan has in no way affected his popularity or his ambition to serve" ... Mario remained with his unit and went on to serve in Palestine (where he received a written commendation from his general for his efforts in a train crash rescue), and in New Guinea, after being promoted to gun sergeant. Mario returned from the war in 1945 and continued to live in Australia until his death in 1999, aged 89 ...

CONCLUSION

In this brief article I have sought to summarise Mario Takasuka's war service, and place that into the broader context of his family in Australia and, in particular, the responses of Australian society to Japanese people in this nation between the beginning of the 20th century and the end of World War 2. The Takasuka family's experiences illustrate so many different themes: immigration, racism against people of

Asian descent, the apparent conundrum of Mario being an Australian soldier in the war against Japan, and the remarkable contributions of immigrants to many aspects of Australian society, to name a few.

As one commentary put it: 'It wasn't possible to form an Asian Australian community response to racist attitudes during the second world war. It isn't entirely clear if that is possible today. However, Mario Takasuka's story does show us that Australians of different backgrounds can band together to defy racism and support each other in hardship' (Steains & Whiley 2020).

The President of the 2/3rd Aust LAA Regiment Association, Anne Rae, put it well, on reading about the Takasuka family: 'What a fascinating story. An amazing family and Mario's distinguished service was obviously born of a family tradition of service to others, and hard work.'

Author: David McDonald, Research Officer, 2/3rd Aust LAA Regt Association

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Note: a search of the State Library of Victoria's collection, using the keyword 'Takasuka', returns many photos of the Takasuka family, and related matters: <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/search-discover>. Other valuable material is available at the website of Museums Victoria: <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/search>



At the Goornong Church of England is a beautiful stained glass window which includes an image of Sho holding a spray of wattle and surrounded by various local wildflowers including "Running Postman", Fringe Lily, Greenhood Orchids and "Drumsticks", for amongst other pursuits, Mario's brother Sho, was a member of the Bendigo Field Naturalists.



Mario on leave in Cairo in 1941

ABOUT OFFICERS



Editor's Note: The following item was sourced from "Jungle Warfare – With The Australian Army In The South West Pacific". Unsurprisingly, this item was anonymous.

All characters mentioned herein are fictitious and any similarity between characters and persons living is purely coincidental, and has no relation to anyone in particular – I hope.

All officers are gentlemen. This is prescribed by the good book, but it does not necessarily follow that all gentlemen are officers.

To be an officer you have to be fearless, a born leader of men, have some special qualities, know someone, or just be lucky. When you are an officer, you are "commissioned". It is not stated what you are commissioned to do, and a certain degree of mystery surrounds this commission.

The number of officers who may be commissioned on the strength of any one unit is laid down by the powers that be in what is known as the War Establishment. This also lays down the number of men who may not be commissioned. These are known as other ranks.

In some units there is a great number of other ranks and a few officers. In other units there is a great number of officers and a few other ranks.

In the latter case it is usual to see officers creeping around furtively in search of other ranks to find someone to whom to give an order. It is, however, unusual to find an other rank.

Other ranks start from gunners, privates, troopers, sappers, etc. and go up to warrant officers. This latter are horribly close to being officers, but just miss out.

The lowest ranking officer is a lieutenant, or subaltern. Subaltern is derived from the Latin word *subalternus*, *sub* meaning under, and *alternus* meaning another. This is what he is – under another, or rather others. His chief job is passing down to the other ranks kicks in the pants which he has received from his superior officers.

He can be recognised with his shirt on by the fact that he wears two things like bottle tops on each shoulder strap. These are known as pips. If he has not got his shirt on, he can usually be recognised by the fact that the species frequently sports a small moustache of the toothbrush variety.

This ruling is not foolproof, as some lieutenants have been unable to cultivate a moustache, but I give it to you merely as a general rule.

The next step up is the captain. This gentleman - all officers are gentlemen – is usually distinguished by a slightly bigger

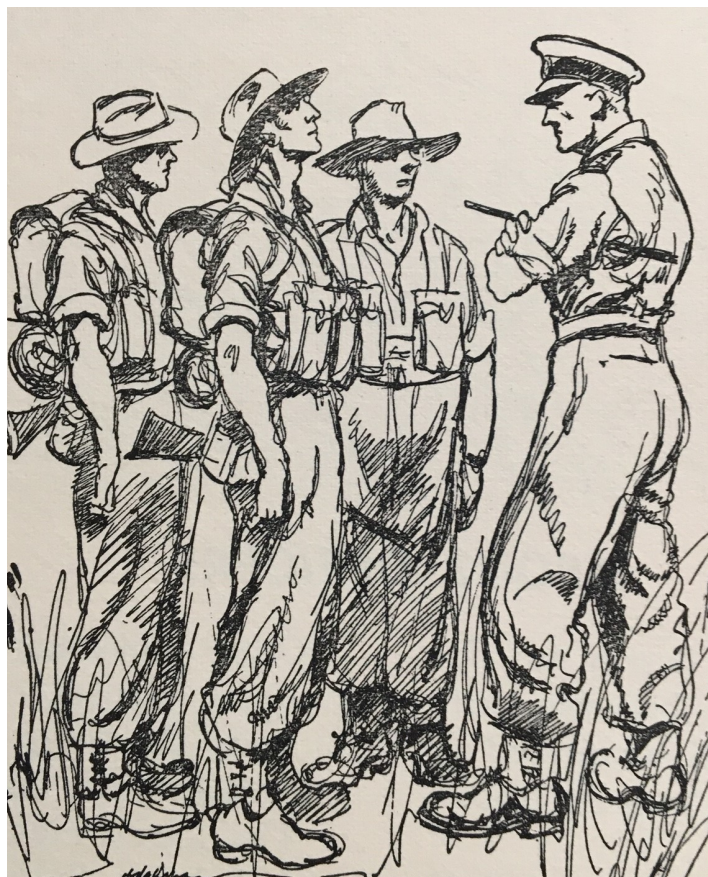
moustache and the addition of one pip to the shoulder, making a total of three pips.

This word is also borrowed from the Latin and comes from the word *capus*, the head. This makes him the head of a company of soldiers.

This company of soldiers may be big or small or non-existent depending on the terms of the War Establishment hereinbefore mentioned. One of the chief jobs given to a captain is that of Waiting Member on a Court Martial. What he is waiting on, or for, has not been defined, and the captain himself is left in the dark along with the rest of us.

This waiting seems to prey on his mind and weigh down heavily upon his shoulders as do the three metal pips. He gets very morose. At a certain age a captain is either (a) retired, (b) made a major, or (c) left as he is. The last is because of certain special qualifications of which he is in possession. The number of captains with special qualifications is truly amazing.

After a captain comes a major. There is not a great deal of difference in these ranks and captains and majors usually call each other by their Christian names. A major is distinguished by the fact that he wears a crown on his shoulder. This, I think, is in lieu of four pips which would be a bit heavy to carry around. They usually go to extremes with the moustache, and to all intents and purposes this takes the form of a swipe across the mouth with a tar brush



A major, on being made such, is said to have attained his majority. I personally do not know what this means, but think it has something to do with being over twenty-one years of age.

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ABOUT OFFICERS (From Page 8)

The major is the general utility man in the army. He is most useful as the President of a District Court Martial.

He can usually be employed as the Officer Commanding a sub-unit. If he should be lucky enough to command a number of sub-units, he becomes a Commanding Officer.

That is the chief difference between an Officer Commanding and a Commanding Officer – they both command, but the Commanding Officer commands the Officer Commanding. This is all rather confusing, and unless a detailed study is made of the subject, the average layman will not understand it. Personally, I have never been able to fathom it myself, but I have only been in the Army for four years.

Other duties which are entrusted to a major are: Draft Inspecting Officer, Mess President, and O.C. of Troop Trains. This last tours the country at the Army's expense and has what is technically called a roving commission.

The next higher than a major is a lieutenant-colonel. He wears on his shoulder the crown of a major plus one pip. This entitles him to award other ranks up to twenty-eight days detention and fine them up to five pounds.

He tells the other officers what to do and they do it. He is continually signing letters written by other officers on his behalf. He is held in respect by majors, awe by captains, fear by lieutenants and fear and trembling by other ranks. Most lieutenant-colonels are Commanding Officers.

After the war they usually become members of exclusive clubs and are attacked by gout.

Other officers are more scarce, and run from colonels up to generals. The latter are most scarce, and due to the lack of personal experience I will conclude this treatise.

These notes are not to be taken as complete, but rather to be looked upon as broadly outlining the various ranks and their duties, and may be elaborated through personal contact and experience.



At the Beaumaris RSL 1987, from the left: Frank Hands, Tom Dawson?, John Campbell, ?, Jim Paton, Cec Rae, Clive Rose, Les Harris, ?, ?, John Hepworth, Ron Bryant—at least seven of whom were Presidents, Secretaries or Treasurers of the Association.

A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

Editor's Note: When the Remembrance Group assumed responsibility for the conduct of the Association at the 2008 Annual General Meeting, one of the tasks we inherited was the production of the Association's annual newsletter, Take Post. Former President Ron Bryant initiated Take Post in 1988 and produced it until 2008.

For the past fourteen years, we have been fortunate to have ample material by way of war diaries, reports from members who had visited the theatres of war where the Regiment had served, German and Japanese versions of significant battles, articles about Tobruk, individual stories of Regiment members, a lot of Vales, extracts from books involving the actions and personnel of the 2/3rd, poetry and many photos taken at Reunions and Anzac Day marches. By way of a trip down memory lane, we are pleased to reprint excerpts from the early 1988 to 2008 issues.

1988 A NOTE FROM PRESIDENT JIM PATON

Publication of "On Target" stimulated many observations and responses. It recorded the deeds of ordinary boys and men who did their best when extraordinary demands were made upon them.

Incidentally we learned of what became of many of our mates in other Batteries or Sections over the years, and a little of those men who were captured.

Widows of our men who have passed on are better informed about their men. There is a proud record to leave for descendants who may become interested.

We have outreached to regain contact with old comrades, some of whom are interstate or overseas. In our remaining years, it is surely important to retain the contact between men who have a strong bond of service with our old Regiment, the first Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment to be formed in Australia for overseas service.

So we are resuming, after many years, a Newsletter. It will pass on stories which missed "On Target" but which should be recorded. It will rely on the readers for news items – of yourselves and of your old mates.

1988 BOFORS AT BEAUMARIS

On 24th June, several members of the 2nd/3rd Aust. Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association gathered at the Beaumaris Sub-branch of the RSL to "take post" at a Bofors 40mm anti-aircraft gun which had been acquired and sited in the attractive grounds of the RSL in Balcombe Road, Beaumaris.

President Jim Paton presented Kevin Harris with a plaque showing the Regiment's colour patch and also a copy of the Regiment's history, *On Target*.

1989 A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As time goes on and memories fade, it seems important not to allow the sacrifices which have been made by servicemen to be forgotten. Tens of thousands of men, women and children, including numerous new Australians believe this and attend the Anzac march to assure us they do.

I saw several inspiring placards held by children like the one that stated "It was your courage which enables us to live safely here".

As we march and approach the Shrine, it's then uphill, but we straighten our backs, hold our head high, put our chest

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Editor's Note: Some of you will recall a small article in the 2016 issue of Take Post entitled "George On The Spot"- The article told of the exploits of George, a white cockatoo, who was the mascot of the New Guinea Air Warning Wireless Company. Well, it appears George had a distant relative, also called George, who attached himself to an Orderly Room of a unit based in NSW. This is the other George's story, which first appeared in "Jungle Warfare - With The Australian Army In The South West Pacific", published for the Australian Military Forces by The Australian War Memorial in 1944.

GEORGE

It was an early Spring day that George arrived. There was still a cold nip in the air and the Orderly Room was not the warmest place. We were congregated around a perforated oil drum in which the previous day's waste paper was being burned.

A heavy step on the threshold and the crash of the opening door drew our attention. A Corporal stood there, a fluffy bundle enfolded in his arms. "Say, fellows, look at him - ain't he the goods?"

He deposited his burden on the table. It flopped helplessly on its side and emitted a frightening squawk. The boys gazed in amazement at the young magpie which opened its mouth and spat in defiance.

"He must have fallen out of the tree and done 'is leg," volunteered the proud owner. "Maybe Doctor Death can fix him up - he'll make a good pet."

"Maybe," we agreed.

Doctor Death - the Medical Orderly to you - took charge of the strange casualty and placed the injured limb in splints. Spring gave way to Summer, and George, as the bird was called (after the Corporal who had introduced him to the Unit), considered himself "on strength".

His injury healed, he refused to go away. He never missed a meal parade, and would battle for his tucker with the battalion of cats that lived around the kitchen.

His days were spent in lengthy recco trips up and down the extensive area that made up the camp site of our M.T. Unit. He would spend an hour talking to a lonely sentry, sitting on a fence or fossicking under the sentry box for grubs.

A driver carrying out routine maintenance on his vehicle would find himself no longer alone as George casually strolled by on his purposeless meander.

Elsewhere, a lad lying in the shade unobserved by the sergeant-major would find himself committed to the task of excavating grubs for an insistent bird.

At sundown George was to be found at one spot. Invariably he would appear on the roof over the Orderly Room door, there to warble a few notes of farewell to the dying day.

The night picquet on the telephone found him a constant companion perched on a rafter over his head.

The Summer passed and George was considered a personal friend by everyone from the O.C. downward.

He would carol in the early morn and in the evening. In between times he would amuse the mob with his droll antics. He liked to have his back scratched and would come to your

feet with an almost human request for service. He hated to be picked up or otherwise mauled.

The day came when the show was to move - back to town. Puzzled by the wholesale activity George sat on the roof of the Orderly Room and surveyed the scene shouting an occasional protest at the unusual scene.

The advance party moved off, then the main body. Only the rear party remained to clean up the area. A disconsolate magpie followed the C.S.M. around for most of the day.

The meal parade was a dismal affair. The kittens were gone - the dogs too. George went around to the Sergeants' mess and picked at some morsels offered by the sympathetic W.O. The last vehicles were loading.

The area had been handed over to the Area Commandant's representative. The C.S.M. made a final appeal to George:



"Y' cranky cow! Are y' coming - or are y' stayin'?"

George hesitated. Then he walked up to the C.S.M., climbed on to his hand and suffered himself to be placed in the truck. George had decided to come! A halt was made for the evening meal by a picturesque river setting north of Sydney. George strolled around the vehicles and climbed on to the loads.

Somewhere in the nearby trees other magpies carolled. George gurgled and warbled in a low tone. Faint memories stirred within his fluffy breast. He flew to a low tree nearby.

The trucks started up. The C.S.M. called impatiently to George. "Come on if you're coming - or you'll be A.W.O.L."

George flew down from the tree and approached the truck. A burst of song from the bush caused him to hesitate. He cocked his head on one side and listened to the song. Then he flew back into the tree.

The C.S.M. entered the truck and slammed the door. The convoy moved off. George flew around in a wide circle and dipped in a farewell salute, then headed into the trees whence came the cacophony of song.

A deserter! What matter, anyway. We're on our way to a pool for disposal! George was the first to march off strength - that's all!

A TRIP BOWN MEMORY LANE (From Page 9)

out further than our waist, the band music stirring us, the wonderful people cheering and the kids waving flags. We right dress, march to attention, and for a few moments we are young again, being carried back to nearly 50 years ago.

1989 GETTING YOUR GOAT

During their recent visit to the Middle East, Dave and Helen Humphreys met with a touring group of South Africans. The South Africans were interested to learn Dave had served in Crete with 7 Battery during the war and was returning to retrace his steps.

They invited Dave and Helen to travel with them on their trek across the mountains to the south coast - a track Dave had covered during the evacuation. As the party travelled down through the rugged Samaria Gorge towards Agia Roumeli, Dave mentioned among his experiences of the events during those hectic days of 1941 that he had consumed half-raw goatmeat near that place.

One of the South Africans related this story to the inn-keeper of the only establishment providing for the comfort of visitors to Agia Roumeli and that gentleman presented Dave with a bill for 251,000 drachma and an accompanying note which read:

"Dear Sir,

We like to remind you in 1941 you have killed one goat for your hunger. That will cost you 250,000 drachma. Normally it is not so expensive one goat but you have stop the life of this for bringing new ones. This is the reason for being expensive. This is your receipt Thank you

Oct. 10/9/87

signed Georgia Tzaturtake

Agia Roume Hotel, Sfakia."

Incidentally Dave was able to settle the account by handing over an Australian Rising Sun badge he had providently taken with him.

1990 A FORTUNATE COOK

On 20th February 1941, shortly after arriving at Tobruk with 8 Battery, before the Siege commenced, Harry Reid was told by Major Phillip Stokes that he was wanted by the Tobruk bakery to assist with making bread for the troops.

To Harry's disappointment at the time, the good Major was too fond of his tucker to release such a good "babbling brook" and appointed Harry as cook for the officers at Wadi Ouda.

Just four days later, enemy planes bombed the Harbour, and a destroyer, and bombed the bakery, killing and wounding some of the bakers. So Harry missed those bombs and survived to see out the Siege as a cook and relieving gun crew member despite suffering from sandfly fever, boils, dysentery and a good deal of plain ordinary homesickness.

1990 JERKING THOSE JERKINS

It was said that when the Italians first saw the Australian infantry in those leather, waist length jerkins in the Western Desert, they thought the Aussies were wearing bullet proof armour. The jerkins were good for the cold night winds of the desert.

Q.M. Sergeant Scott and Gunner George Howat were driving through the Tobruk clothing dump to obtain some clothes when their truck just happened to stop alongside a large quantity of those jerkins.

A good supply was smartly picked up, covered up and the normal clothing issues collected. Many of the 8 Battery gunners were soon sporting these jerkins.

The "Ring Master" of Stokes Travelling Circus was so upset that he didn't get one that the truck crew was despatched back to the dump with instructions to obtain a jerkin especially for him, of a colour to match his desert boots!

1991 FROM A 1941 NEWSCUTTING A.A. CREWS' BRILLIANT RECORD

This war's most extraordinary anti-aircraft battery, and one that has destroyed enemy aircraft worth hundreds of thousands of pounds is described in a despatch received today at Army headquarters.

Cabled on Wednesday from Cairo by Lieut. Roy Macartney, of the Military History and Information Section in the Middle East, it says:-

"In addition to the recent announcement that R.A.A.F. had destroyed 140 enemy planes in Europe and Middle East, may be added those shot down by a light anti-aircraft battery.

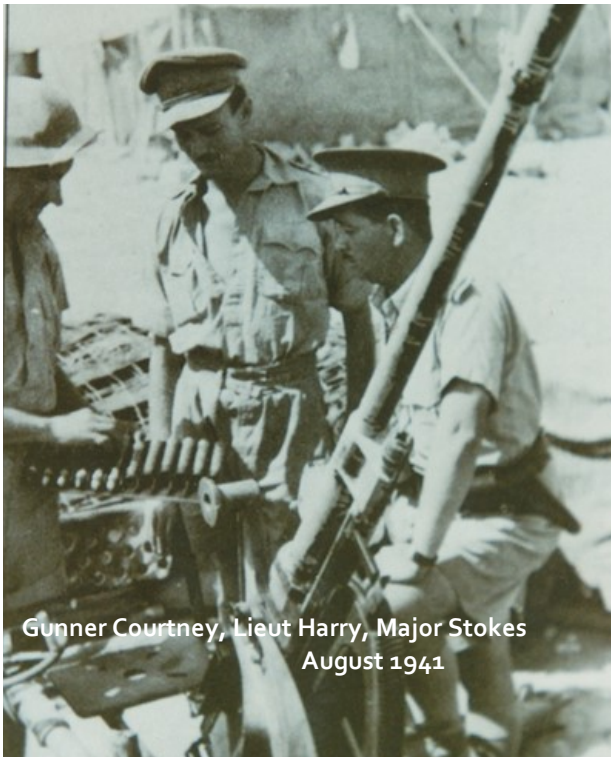
"Arriving in Palestine in January under Major P. W. Stokes, of Melbourne, the battery was sent into the Western Desert within a week. At Tobruk they captured a number of Italian 20 mm guns which they set in order and readjusted themselves. Moving on to Benghazi, they shot down their first machine, a low flying Dornier, on March 5.

"During the following months the battery, while covering the withdrawal to Tobruk, and during its siege, shot down another 23 enemy machines. In addition to these confirmed successes, 14 more were probably destroyed, 60 were badly damaged, and 100 hit.

'Their work is all the more magnificent when it is realised the Battery was firing without sights on the Italian guns.

"They claim to be the most economical unit operating with the A.I.F. because, in addition to the captured Italian guns, they are using an almost limitless supply of Italian ammunition."

Gunner E. J. Courtney, of Melbourne, a member of this unusual battery, who was recently awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry during a dive-bombing attack on Tobruk, was the first Australian anti-aircraft gunner to be decorated during this war



Gunner Courtney, Lieut Harry, Major Stokes
August 1941

Commemorative Greek Campaign Medal WWII 1940-41



Editor's Note: In December 2021, we received an email from Graeme Hawkins (son of Raleigh Hawkins, 7 Battery, VX35192), asking for our assistance regarding an application to the Greek Government for the Commemorative Greek Campaign Medal 1940-41. A subsequent email and a telephone conversation with Graeme suggested we should provide the "back story" to the medal.

The Greek Commemorative War Medal was instituted by Royal Decree on 19 Aug 1947. It was awarded for service from the outbreak of war in Greece 1940 to the fall of Crete in 1941. It was also awarded to allied foreign troops who saw service as per the areas covered on the reverse of the medal.

The front of the medal in the centre is a relief of King George II of Greece. Around the outside is a laurel wreath joined at the top by a crown. The ribbon has a centre light blue stripe with a dark blue stripe each side. On the edges of the ribbon is a thin light blue stripe.

The rear of the medal has a thin raised edge on the outside of the medal. The inscription in the centre is raised. The wording is in Greek except for the date.

The inscription reads: 1940 - 41, Epirus, Albania, Macedonia, Thrace, Crete.

Graeme had noticed an advertisement in the Department of Veterans Affairs Magazine (<https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/vetaffairs/vetaffairs-vol-37-no3-december-2021>) inviting veterans and families of deceased veterans to apply for the medal. The medal is not a new medal as it was originally introduced in the early 1970's for Australian servicemen who had served in Greece in WWII – including Crete where Raleigh had served.

Raleigh's WWII Service Record discloses that he was born on 14 April 1903, enlisted in the 2/3rd at Royal Park on 26 July 1940 and was discharged with the rank of Sergeant on 8 April 1945. At the date of his discharge, he was posted to the 657 Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Battery in New South Wales.

Like so many men of the 2/3rd, Raleigh embarked on the Mauretania on 29 December 1940, and arrived in the Middle East on 31 January 1941. He was stationed in Palestine until 22 April 1941 when 7 Battery was sent to Crete - Raleigh's gun crew was stationed at Heraklion Aerodrome.

For the record, 252 men of 7 Battery participated in the Battle of Crete.

Of the 252 men of 7 Battery:

- 55 were killed in action
- 90 were evacuated
- 107 were captured

Of the 107 men of 7 Battery captured:

- 2 died of wounds
- 5 were repatriated
- 10 escaped (from Italian prisoner of war camps)
- 90 were recovered

Raleigh was one of the 90 members of the Battery who were safely evacuated – on HMS Dido.

In a summary of a family holiday in Europe, Graeme wrote:

"There is one other aspect of my father's army service on Crete. When the Australian and other forces were being evacuated, some were marched onto one ship, the Hereward, and then to a second ship – the Dido - moored alongside it. As a young child of about 7 or 8, my father told me that they had stopped the "line" (of those boarding the Dido) immediately after my father. It was one of the few things he told me about his war service.

The ship he left on, the Dido, safely reached Alexandria in Egypt. The other (Hereward) was sunk by German aircraft – with a great loss of life. That was how close I came to losing my father in the war!"



It seems that Raleigh was not always an "angel" as on 21 November 1941, he was charged with the offence of "Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline" and was severely reprimanded by the OIC.

His Service Record does not go into detail of the offence, but with a height of only 164 centimetres, Raleigh Hawkins must have been a feisty character.

Nevertheless, the offending incident does not appear to have had much of an impact on his progression through the ranks as he was promoted from Private on enlistment, to Gun Layer on 31 March 1941, to Lance Bombardier on 8 July 1941, to Bombardier on 29 October 1941, to Acting Sergeant on 18 January 1942 and finally to Sergeant on 27 September 1942.

In order to lodge his application for the Commemorative Greek Medal, Graeme needed to obtain relevant documentation from the National Archives of Australia – where he was encountering problems as a consequence of the

Continued on Page 13

Commemorative Greek Medal (from Page 12)

Archives being in the process of upgrading and changing the methods of storing and accessing records and, with the Archives' closure anticipated in the December-January holiday period, was concerned he may not be able to obtain the information before the last date for submission to the Greek Consulate.

In his email to the Association, Graeme commented "While I was only a year old when my father was shipped to Crete with the rest of his section and he was always reluctant to talk very much about his service there – as were so many returned soldiers – I have always maintained a huge pride in his commitment to his country and his fellow man."

Before we could respond to Graeme's request, we received a second email from Graeme advising "In case you are following up on my request from last Friday – it is all now in hand."

The National Archives Centre took action to find all my father's records, scan them and send them to me today, and they have been sent on to the contact person for the Greek Consulate. I have now been advised that they have all the records they need, and the final issue of Greek Campaign medals will occur in about 12 months."

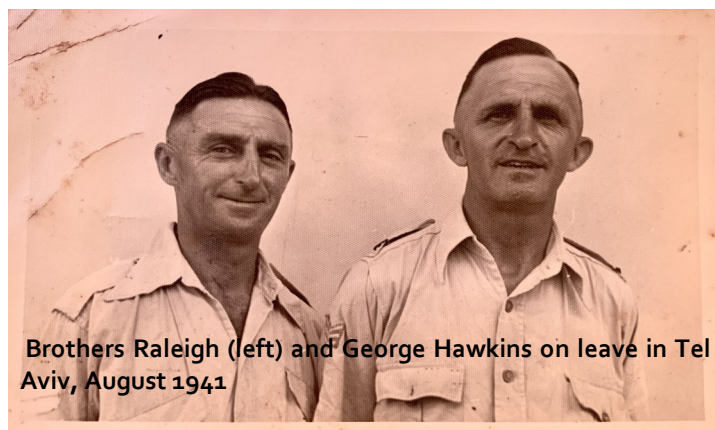
Extracts of a letter written by Raleigh to his nephews in 1985 were printed in the 1995 issue of *Take Post* and an interesting article relating to the evolution of air defence from Major Simon Hawkins, grandson of Raleigh Hawkins, was included in the 2006 issue of *Take Post* – both these issues can be viewed on our web site.

Raleigh's younger brother Sergeant George Hawkins, NX16138, was a member of the 2/1 Survey Regiment RAA.

Any members of the Association, whose fathers served in Crete with 7 Battery, who wish to apply for the medal should not delay as we understand the medal will no longer be issued after December 2022.

Members who may wish to submit an application should contact Steve Kyritsis OAM at the Hellenic RSL Sub-Branch on 0418 571 800 or 03 9589 3403 or by email at steve.kyrsitsis@hotmail.com

Editor's Note: The Greek Medal is classified by the Australian authorities as an unofficial medal. This means that it is not worn on the left breast with the official medals and decorations, and is more appropriately worn on the right breast



RECIPES FROM TOBRUK

Editor's Note: Amongst a bunch of photos and papers I received from the late John Campbell around the occasion of his 100th birthday, were several very yellowed pages of recipes produced by the 14th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (RA) during the siege of Tobruk.

A selection of these recipes is produced below. If anyone knows the meaning of "M & V", which may be an abbreviation of 'Meat & Vegetables', could you please advise me.

DEFIANCE PIE (for 8 persons)

One tin bacon, two tins M & V, two tins Bully Beef, six to eight potatoes, boiled before being added to above, two onions sliced into small pieces, ¼ tin margarine, 2 pints of water.

First of all, put layer of pastry in dish (probably top of tea dixe). If no flour to make pastry, good results can be obtained by crushing 2 ½ packets of biscuits to powder to which is added a little margarine. Mix well before adding ½ pint water. On layer of pastry spread half of the bacon, then a layer of M & V, then a layer of Bully. On top of this spread rest of bacon, the sliced onions and the potatoes cut in small pieces. Cover with margarine. Whole is then covered with final layer of pastry and bake in oven.

TOBRUK MARROW

Peel and hollow out marrow. Fill it with a mixture of cooked rice (2 parts) and Bully Beef (1 part). Add a little salt. Roast in a dixe with margarine as fat.

FIG TREE HAMBURGER

Ingredients: 2 tins Bully Beef, 1 tin bacon, 2 handfuls flour, 3 onions.

Chop Bully Beef, bacon and onions finely. Mix two thirds of the flour with a little water to form a thick paste. Mix Bully Beef, bacon and onion into this paste and mould into small rissoles. Roll each rissole in dry flour. Fry in boiling margarine. Serve hot with potato chips.

RISSOLES A LA TOBRUK

Ingredients: Potatoes, onions, flour, baking powder, salt, pepper and salmon.

Boil potatoes and onions and mash. Add flour to dry mixture and mix in salmon. Fry in suitable sizes in butter.

LIBYAN FLAPJACKS

Ingredients: 3 cups of flour, ½ cup oatmeal.

Mix with enough water to make a thick liquid. Add ¼ cup milk, ½ teaspoon Marmite, 2 oz grated cheese. Mix and fry as a pancake in margarine.

CHEESE AND OATMEAL SCONES (Sufficient for 12)

Ingredients: 1 ½ large mugs flour, ½ large mug oatmeal, 12 portions cheese, ½ pint tinned milk (unsweetened), 1 teaspoon baking powder.

Mix flour and oatmeal with baking powder. Mix cheese and milk into a batter then add flour and oatmeal. Add sufficient water to mix into a soft dough. Roll out and cut into squares or sizes required.

MARMALADE STEAM PUDDING

Ingredients: 2 lbs flour, 1 spoonful baking powder, salt, ¼ tin margarine, ½ tin jam.

Mix ingredients to resemble bread crumbs, then mix with water or milk to a stiff dough. Place in a greased tin or basin, cover with greased paper and boil 3 ½ to 4 hours.

TOBRUK August 1941

The Descendants Of The Rats Of Tobruk Australia Association Inc Tribute

For some years, Association Research Officer David McDonald has been corresponding with Ray Windlow from the Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc, and other members of their Committee, over various matters concerning 8 Battery and the Rats of Tobruk. They have a major project in hand developing what they call Tributes for each Australian Rat of Tobruk.

Ray and his colleagues are very happy our Regimental Association to use this Tribute in any way that we see fit, including in our newsletter, website, et cetera. Ray kindly provided John's Tribute without the usual Descendants Association watermark and has also offered to send us a further 13 Tributes they are preparing for other Rats.



The Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Association Inc Tribute to the late John Campbell

VALE John Selby Campbell, VX38276, 8 Battery, Rat of Tobruk



John Campbell at the 2021 Annual General Meeting and Reunion Luncheon of the Association

Sadly, on 30 November 2021, the Association lost its last surviving original Service member of the Regiment—John Selby Campbell.

John was a Rat of Tobruk and a former Secretary of the Association and was instrumental in the handover of the stewardship of the Association in 2008.

His life story (based heavily on his own autobiography *"To Cut A Long Story Short—a memoir"*) was featured in the 2019 issue of *Take Post* and extracts from his war diaries were featured in the 2020 issue of *Take Post*.

An overflow crowd attended John's funeral service at the Southern Community Church of Christ on 9 December 2021.

Symbols of John's life were on display at his Service including a candle and photograph, his war medals, sand and rock from Tobruk where he served in the siege from April to September 1941, his war diary and the New Testament he carried (gifted by his friends from the Charman Road Methodist Church on his enlistment), measuring tape and tailoring shears representing his post war trade, a black bow tie recalling his Dress Circle days, his autobiography and a gold scissors charm, which he always wore in his later years.

An extract from Page 209 of his book, reproduced on the back page of the Order of Service, reads:

"There are lots of things you do in your life that you forget. The good things stay with you, the funny things, the sad things. Mistakes, achievements, frustrations. Certain moments that stand out for one reason or another. It has all made for an interesting life. The good march continues"
John Selby Campbell, *To Cut A Long Story Short—a memoir*, 2013

Editor's Note: I stumbled across this article from the Mudjee Guardian of 5 October 2018 when I was seeking some additional issues of the Tobruk Truth from which I could include excerpts for Take Post. Roy, who died in January 2021, was a former Coolah Shire General Manager, a well known and respected local historian and a long time contributor to the Mudjee Guardian. We can only trust that Roy found someone to retype his copies of the Tobruk Truth.

Mudgee History | Tobruk Truth

Roy Cameron OAM

Rats of Tobruk daily newspaper 'The Tobruk Truth' – The Dinkum Oil' always appears

Australian troops, during World War 11, in besieged Tobruk started the printing of two daily newspapers, the Tobruk Truth and the Libyan News Bulletin.

The Tobruk Truth printed on a clapped out duplicator, gave BBC news and occasional local items.

It rushed out a special edition announcing Hess's flight. Its boast, that it "always appears," was proved by coming out after a 1500lb bomb landed on the building where it was produced.

The only casualties were six persons who received scratches. The editor and publisher of the Tobruk Truth was Sergeant Bill Williams, who prior to enlistment worked for the "Oakleigh Times" in Victoria.

He brought out 243 issues of the Tobruk Truth from February 16, 1941 to October 20, 1941.

Bill recorded by shorthand the daily BBC news and then typed it on to a wax stencil and copies were printed slowly as mentioned on a dilapidated office duplicator.

Copies were issued to units in Tobruk, with their rations, on the basis of one copy to each 50 men.

When the second issue came out they had no paper, so copies were printed on the back of old Italian army forms.

The Tobruk Truth was so popular with the men that copies reached places, outside Tobruk, as far away as the Egyptian frontier and one base, some 200 miles south of Benghazi.

The newspaper was produced in one of the shattered buildings that fronted Tobruk harbour.

Equipment consisted of a typewriter, and despite the dust, the typewriter generally worked well with a duplicator, a supply of wax stencils, limited paper and ink.

The battered duplicator often had to be rejuvenated with old car springs and tied up with string and wire.

Almost all copies of the 243 issues of the Tobruk Truth were exhibited at the "Rats of Tobruk" Display held at the Pandora Gallery, Coolah, on Saturday, October 15, 2011 to Wednesday, November 9, 2011.

I still hold all issues of the Tobruk Truth and am anxious for a volunteer to retype these issues as some pages have deteriorated overtime.

When retyped and reprinted copies could be handed onto appropriate organisations.

Many lads from Mudgee and Coolah served in the siege of Tobruk and no doubt were ardent readers of the "Truth". My uncle Alexander John Cameron of Maclean served in the 2/1st Pioneers Battalion in Tobruk.

Following is a summary of an officially recorded exploit of three members of the Battalion.

Murray, Simmons and Cameron were engaged during the

siege to proceed beyond the holding defence line, capture a German tank and bring back prisoners.

They advanced 400 yards into the enemy lines without coming into contact with any German tanks, so they decided to advance another 200 yards.

They then sighted a German tank with its two-pounder gun pointing towards Tobruk.

Around the gun were the tank crew, eight in number, in sleeping positions.

Simmons sneaked up and prodded one of them in the back-side with his bayonet.

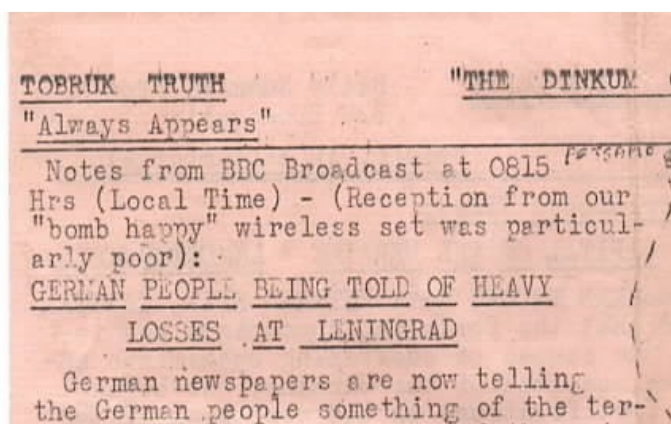
Nothing happened so he prodded a bit harder.

It soon became apparent to the three Aussies that all the tank crew were dead.

Thus, the Aussies had no hope of bringing back German prisoners.

However, they did manage to get some papers from the dead German officer, plus an anti-tank rifle and all enemy ammunition they could carry.

Roy Cameron OAM



Editor's Note: Those who attended the 2021 AGM may recall the risqué poem Graeme Heddle recited. For those who don't and for those not at the AGM, we repeat it for your amusement.

MIDDLE EAST POEM

Oh they took us out to Egypt, that God-forsaken land,
It's filled with bloody nothing, and covered up with sand.
They fed us on stale biscuits, camel piss and stew,
And we wandered round in circles with bugger-all to do.

The Generals that they sent us had not a bloody clue,
They ought to round the bastards up and put them in a zoo.
They said "Keep your eye on Rommel, don't let the bastard pass",
But he'd sneak around behind them and kick them in the arse.

Then out came Montgomery, his prayer book in his hand,
He said "Now men, the time has come to make a bloody stand.
We've got the Lord on our side and Rommel's cupboard's bare.
Now then men, down on your knees and say a bloody prayer!"

And we prayed, "Oh Jesus save us, 'tis not the Hun we fear,
Save us from the crazy bastards Churchill sends out here!"

ANONYMOUS

Candid Camera



An engraved Bofors shell in the possession of James Coghlan, son of Oswald Coghlan, VX32354, 9 Battery. James brought a collection of memorabilia collected by his father to the AGM—see adjacent photos



A shot across the Bourke Room at the 2021 AGM / Reunion Lunch. From the left, Ian Rae, David McDonald, Ann Bragg Rhonda Rose and Jim Rae



The Association's Regimental Banner proudly displayed during Anzac Day 2021 activities organized by the Mentone RSL, where the late John Campbell was a member.



Peter Campbell carrying the Australian flag, Bruce Campbell "driving" John Campbell in the wheelchair and Ian Campbell carrying the Regimental Banner, during the 2021 Anzac Day activities organized by the Mentone RSL.