



Take Post April 2023



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

The War Diaries of Cecil John Eric "Cec" Rae - VX48132, 9 Battery

Editor's Note: Many members of the Regiment kept diaries relating to the places where they served, the people with whom they served and the day-to-day exposure to battle conditions. In the past we have printed extracts of these diaries, but without a doubt, the war diaries of Cec Rae are in a league of their own. Transcribed into digital format, they total more than 200 pages of meticulous detail, often supported with photos of the event and/or the personnel being described—the 2/3rd's very own Samuel Pepys!

Cec was a member of the Committee from 1949 to 2008, the Association Secretary from 1969 to 1996 and President from 1996 to 1999.



What follows is a very small extract from Cec's diaries.

Sunday 29 December 1940—Port Melbourne

Up at 01.00 hrs emptied our palliasses etc & had breakfast at 03.00. Entrained at 06.00 & arrived at Spencer Street at 6.45 where we had two pies & a cup of tea. We got on board about 8 o'clock & went to our quarters which are fairly good – we have bunks – but some chaps got cabins holding about 8 men. We are on A deck. As we were in Ink Troop the very last of 9 Battery, we ended up in bunks in the Forward Cinema. The rest of the Battery were accommodated in cabins

We had to stop on the uppermost deck all day until we left Port Melbourne at 5 o'clock [to the tune of 'Now is the hour when we must say goodbye' - the Maori Farewell.]

Although our movement was supposed to be a secret operation many cars lined the foreshore and a great number of small boats and yachts circled the end of the pier.



30 December 1940—Dromana

The next morning through the Heads to join the Queen Mary, Aquitania (four funnels), Dominion Monarch, Awatea and the naval escort H.M.A.S. Canberra. I think everyone was hoping they would wake and find it was all a bad dream.

13 January 1941—Colombo

We left the ship in motor launches & marched up to the Galle Face Green, where we hired a car to take us to Mt. Lavinia about 8 miles out. We continually passed through native villages & saw some beautiful mansions, which are known as bungalows. Took rickshaw to Galle Face Hotel & had dinner there—see page 14 for menu. Cost 3 rupees. (very good). *(Editor's Note: We have a silver table number (91) from the Galle Face Hotel, which was souvenired by my father-in-law and former Association President Jim Paton, who was a great mate of Cec — Cec may have souvenired one too!)*

27/28 January 1941—Port Suez

Arrived at Port Suez about 21.00. Very cold sleeping on deck, Jim (Paton) & I finished up in the sergeants' quarters. We weighed anchor about 14.00 hrs. & entered the Canal (constructed 1854-69) [Suez]. At dusk we entered the Bitter Lakes. A large aerodrome on the left. We anchored in the Lakes. Another cold night – three blankets on top.

30 January 1941

Arrived at Haifa which seems a good, modern & clean city. There is a ship in the harbour upside down – it is rumoured that a time bomb sent her down. She was to go through the Suez Canal, but was delayed a day – nice work.

Continued on Page 6

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.



**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.

In 2022 the Association prepared and lodged a funding application under the DVA's Saluting Their Service program to enable us to migrate the website to a new and easier to maintain content management system. Our application was approved and the Association was allocated a \$10,000 grant to undertake the website upgrade.

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.

Website

www.antiaircraft.org.au

Office Bearers 2022/23

President

Anne Rae

Email: arae26@hotmail.com

539 Killiekrankie Road

Killiekrankie Tasmania 7255

Honorary Secretary

Malcolm Wrigglesworth

31 Savanna Drive

Mooroolbark Vic 3138

Telephone: 03 9726 0803

Email:

msmtwrigg@hotmail.com

Vice President

Gaye Berry

Honorary Treasurer

Ian Campbell

Committee

Ann Bragg

Colin Bragg

Alisdair Crooke

David McDonald

John MacMillan

Lynton Rose

Newsletter Editor

Colin Bragg

Research Officer

David McDonald

Keeper of the Banner

Alisdair Crooke

Take Post has been printed by Bizworks Printing & Copy Services, 748 Hampton Street, Brighton, Victoria, 3186. Telephone 03 9592 9093

PRESIDENT'S REPORT— 2023 AGM



The current war in Ukraine reminds us of the extreme costs to those involved in conflict, as well as those left behind and the associated long-term trauma for many. We honour the memory the men of 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, their sacrifice and their mateship.

Each year this publication, *Take Post*, illustrates that sacrifice and mateship, and our Editor Colin Bragg has again done a wonderful job in collecting some very interesting material. These stories indicate the diverse personal and environmental situations in which the men found themselves.

This year's cover story is an excerpt from the war diaries of Cec Rae which gives us a glimpse through a gunner's eyes of the good times and the not so good times; of leaving Melbourne, of Egypt, Palestine, the Western Desert, New Guinea and of coming home.

"A Lorry by any other Name" on page 8 describes the dilemmas faced by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) to create an historically accurate display of 8 Battery 2/3rd ALAA Regiment use of Chevrolet lorries at Tobruk, balanced against the need to maintain the integrity of the Australian War Memorial's existing collection.

"The Greek and Cretan Nominal Roll - An 18,000 Piece Jigsaw" on page 10 contains an interview with Dr Michael Bendon about his research and his book *Dust and Shadows* which includes letters, photos and stories of those Australians serving in the Greek and Cretan campaigns of 1941.

"Nino Bixio And A Chapel At Campo 57" on page 12 describes the events leading up to the arrival of Australian

POWs, some from 7 Battery 2/3rd ALAA, and the chapel built at the camp. The former Campo 57 site and the chapel is a place that all descendants of Campo 57 veterans can visit by arrangement.

Award of the Commander in Chief's Card to VX25419 Gunner Maxwell Albert Ampt, on page 13, describes a previously overlooked award for one of our original members. It is important to acknowledge the extreme bravery of Gunner Ampt but also to learn about the relatively rare award of Commander in Chief's Card.

It is heartening to see the pride with which the Prideaux family commemorate the service of their grandfather and great grandfather during Anzac Day, shown on page 14. By encouraging our younger generations to participate we can ensure that the Regimental banner continues to be carried on Anzac Day into the future by descendants of the members of the Regiment.

On page 15, Arthur Turner's (RHQ) story illustrates the movements of individuals and the transfers that occurred between regiments that can make family research that bit more complex.

Our Research Officer, David McDonald presents us with food for thought in describing the ineffectiveness of Bofors guns and heavy anti-aircraft guns between 7000 and 15000 feet resulting in the men operating Bofors, and indeed the personnel and infrastructure they were protecting, being unprotected from aircraft flying at this level.

Eighty years ago in April, the Regimental Headquarters was at Berkshire Valley Camp, Moora, WA.

7 Battery was providing AA defences at the Geraldton RAAF station, WA, while over 100 men of the Battery were POWs in Europe.

8 Battery was providing AA defences at Pearce Aerodrome near Perth, the Catalina bases on the Swan River, Geraldton, Onslow and the US Navy's

submarine base at Exmouth Gulf. 9 Battery was providing AA defences at Milne Bay, Territory of Papua. On 12 July 1943, the Regiment was disbanded, with 2/7, 2/8 & 2/9 Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries becoming Independent Batteries. Much of RHQ, Signals Section and Workshop Section transferred to the newly-raised 102 Australian Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment which was initially commanded by Lt Col J W Rhoden and based in WA.

Returning to the present - thanks to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for a "Saluting their Service" grant, we now have sufficient funds to upgrade our website software. Congratulations to Colin Bragg for a well-crafted and successful grant application to secure the funding. Colin and Research Officer, David McDonald will continue to work with our software developer on the new functionality.

We have continued to email an occasional newsletter to members to keep abreast of current developments.

This year committee member Alasdair Crooke assumed the responsibility of the Keeper of the Regimental Banner. We welcomed a new committee member, John Macmillan who is representing the Regiment at the annual commemorative service held by the Rats of Tobruk Association in April. 2023 is the 82nd anniversary of the commencement of the siege of Tobruk. I thank the committee for their diligence and work throughout the year.

This year I am not renominating for the position of President of this wonderful organisation. It has been a great privilege and I have enjoyed the support, professionalism and hard work of an amazing group of office bearers and committee members.

However, after 9 years I feel it is time for a change both for the Association and myself. I look forward to seeing the Association continue to prosper into the future.

Anne Rae
President

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.antiaircraft.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@antiaircraft.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:

Troy Norgrove

Advised that he has 'purchased a large number of ww2 photos taken in the middle east. Most aren't identifiable but there is one with the unit's name present and a few of men with visible colour patches. If you can confirm that they are indeed from the 2/3 AA I would be happy to contribute to the website.'

Dr Leanne Rowe

Re Henry Whelan's story on our website: her husband's grandfather, WX14267 Enos (Jim) Dyer, 2/4 LAA Regt, is mentioned in the story as the man who wrote the four poems recorded there. Her family 'would really like to know if there are more poems recorded in Henry Whelan's diary, on which his story is based.' An extract of Colin's reply follows:.

"It is over ten years since Les Whelan contacted me by email and provided his father's story, based on his diaries -unfortunately, I no longer have Les's email details. I searched the Service Records of Enos Dyer (WX14267) and Henry Michael Whelan (QX11914).

Enos Dyer (note the spelling of his given name) was born on 17 January 1900 at Pingelly in Western Australia. On his discharge on 25 October 1945, he was posted to the Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers.

Henry Michael Whelan was born on 25 October 1914 at Einasleigh in Queensland. On his discharge on 9 November 1945, he was posted to the 2/4 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment RAA."

Ross Williamson

Re his grandfather NX24699 Gnr Herbert Williamson not shown on our nominal roll. However, he served in the 2/3rd LAA Bty of the 2/1st LAA Regt, not in the 2/3rd LAA Regt.

Rebecca Hatfield

Assistant Curator, Private Records, Aust War Memorial

Correspondence re the Private Records index entry for NX16573 McLennan, R H, incorrectly shown as being a member of the 2/3rd Aust LAA Regt. He was actually in the 2/3rd Aust LAA Battery, 2/1st LAA Regt. The 2/3rd LAA Battery and the 2/3rd LAA Regiment are not-infrequently confused.

Gary Welsh

Has found photographs taken by his father VX34038 Kenneth Charles Welsh 7 Bty (POW) while serving overseas that he thought we may be interested in seeing. Some of the men depicted were identified on the photos. Followed-up by Colin for the website. Over fifty photos were received from Gary for uploading to the website. Some of these are on Page 14 of this issue.

Maurie Turner

Wondering whether we had any information on his father Arthur Turner VX35567.

In our records we have him holding the rank of Gunner, serving in the Regiment's 7th Battery, and as a driver at Regimental Headquarters in the Middle East. More on this and subsequent exchanges of emails is included on Page 15.

Andrew Humphreys

Andrew contacted us in November 2022 after discovering our website, which he thought was 'marvellous'. Andrew is the son of Lt. David Humphreys, whose story was featured in the 2018 issue of Take Post. He was also seeking to purchase a copy of On Target, which we advised was out of print but could be down loaded from our website at no cost. Andrew subsequently became a member of the Association.

Ben Cox

Contacted us after browsing through his grandfather's (Geoffrey Norman Hunter) history. Explained that his grandfather was in the 2/3rd Australian Anti-Aircraft Regiment, but NOT the Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. We also provided Ben with the website address of the National Archives, where it would be possible for him to download his grandfather's service record.

Peter Cates, President, Largs Bay, RSL

We were contacted by Peter who wrote: "I met with the wife of Alan Henstridge yesterday, who is 100 years old and very spritely. We chatted about her husband and his service. She said he always mentioned the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regt. I am trying to find out more about him to put with donated memorabilia and to post it on the Virtual Memorial. I was

...and the Secretary's Desk

wondering if you had any information about him."

Peter was advised that Alan enlisted in 6 August 1940 and was posted to Workshop Section. Alan was discharged on 27 July 1944. We also advised the Alan's complete Service History (20 pages) had been digitized and could be down loaded from the National Archives.

Ian Boetcher, Edenhope RSL Sub Branch

Ian emailed us requesting assistance in identifying a gun located in a memorial garden in Wolseley, SA. We were unable to assist Ian apart from suggesting it appeared to be a naval gun. We were astounded that the gun, in a very poor condition, was located in a children's playground.



SECRETARY'S DESK

The Highlight for the Association these past few months was the successful application for funding under the Saluting Their Service Commonwealth Grants Program 2022-23, to enable the Association to migrate our web site from the existing Content Management System, which will not be supported beyond August 2023. In October 2022, Colin Bragg and David McDonald prepared and lodged an application for \$10,000 with the Community Grants Hub.

Our application was approved by the Hon Matt Keogh MP (Minister for Vet-

erans' Affairs Minister for Defence Personnel), and the grant of \$10,000 was deposited in our bank account in February 2023.

Due to our on-line enquiry function, and the FAQ page on our web site, I receive very little direct correspondence, but one was received from my Cousin (Sally Bertram) in Horsham who is involved with the local RSL as a Researcher/Newsletter editor. Sally was researching one of our veterans (Eric William Ampt) on behalf of his daughter for the Horsham RSL newsletter. Sally enquired about his WW2 Army deployment and history with the 8th Battery. Research Officer David McDonald provided the information to Sally, but arising from his research, David identified a cousin (Gnr Maxwell Albert Ampt, VX25419) who was also in the Regiment—with a remarkable story. See Page 13.

As a consequence of Incorporation we are required to submit an Annual Statement and Financial Report to Consumer Affairs Victoria for the financial year ending 31 December, 2022. This will be provided online by the 30/6/2023, after the AGM and two Committee members have signed the relevant declaration.

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

With the election of new Committee members Gaye Berry (Vice President), Ian Campbell (Treasurer) and Alisdair Crooke at the 2021 AGM, the Committee took the opportunity to examine our processes, particularly in regard to the organization of the AGM, our member data base and communications with members. Apart from a few teething problems, this has worked well.

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 print and distribute Take Post. Thank you to all members who



have made donations during the year.

The Website

We had been aware for some time that in 2023 we would need to replace the Joomla 3 Content Management System (CMS) which we presently use, with either Joomla 4 or another CMS such as Wordpress, Hubspot or Magento, Wordpress being the favoured option. The Saluting Their Service grant for \$10,000 provides us with the great majority of the funds required to change from Joomla 3 to Wordpress. This work, expected to be completed by mid-year, will be under the guidance of our external technical support provider, Designsenseweb, and its principal, Malcolm Romano. It is expected that our current web site managers (Colin and David) will be involved in the transfer to Wordpress. During the transition our web site will NOT be off line .

Remembrance Group

We continue to remain around the same number of approximately 90 active members. It was pleasing that 42 members and guests attended the 2022 AGM / Reunion Lunch, down a few compared to the previous year when we had 57 members in attendance.

Please remember to advise myself or Treasurer Ian Campbell of any changes to your address, email and phone numbers, so we can keep in touch with developments or events that maybe forthcoming later in the year.

Take Post

This year's Take Post feature article is taken from the War Diaries of "Cec" Rae, 9 Battery. I am confident you will find this and other articles in Take Post will provide an interesting and informative read.

Thank you and kind regards to all.
Malcolm Wigglesworth,
Honorary Secretary.

Cec Rae War Diaries (continued from Page 1)

We got all our kit on the Promenade Deck at 9.30. The kit consisted of three blankets, great coat, water bottle, haversack, respirator, steel helmet, sea kit & universal kit & rifle. At 11.00 we were told that Port Said was heavily bombed last night and that we passed over an unexploded bomb in the Canal yesterday. Jerusalem was bombed last night. We have been lucky so far – I wonder how we will go tonight.

1 February 1941 - Khassa

I was on guard this morning when Mr. R. G. Menzies came round on a tour of inspection at 10.30. We lined up at the entrance to the camp & turned on a nice "Present" as he rode past with all his attachments.

12 April 1941 - Suez Canal

Easter Saturday. Revielle at 03.00 hrs. and still a beautiful moonlight night. Breakfast 03.15 – watches put back one hour (2.15). Broke camp at 3.30. The sun came up with a red glow & the full moon was low in the west. At 06.00 we passed over the border into Egypt at El Abn Aweijla. Arrived at the Suez Canal at 13.15 & crossed on a pontoon bridge.

14 April 1941 - Mena & Amariya

Crossed the Nile which is a good stretch of water. Camped at Mena right beside the Pyramids, but did not see much of them [close up]. Had tea at 8 o'clock in the canteen. Remarkable the number of gum trees we have seen.

21–23 April 1941

Told that we would not be going over the blue [sea] but into the Blue [name for Western Desert]. All very disappointed as we were expecting Greece. [our trucks had been readied to go to Greece, but, thank goodness we did not go. We were still left with long-johns, woollen singlets and mosquito nets for Desert wear.

Left Amariya at 10.30 – there must be about 50 trucks in our convoy. Sgt. Boothby, Bdr. [Bruce] Paton, M. Bird, H. Bird, J. Paton, W. Webb, R. Goldfinch, & myself in tractor. Bdr. Gray, F. Crees, W. Wright in 3-ton. [truck]. The road follows very close to the Mediterranean (which is very blue, blue), while on the left the desert stretches away to a low escarpment. Finished our drive at 9.00 o'clock having done about 150 miles. We are camped near an aerodrome & saw several bombers leave on raids. After lunch moved 5 miles up to Bagush Satellite aerodrome, which is right out in the "blue" & everything very dispersed. We are protecting No. 55 Blenheim Bomber Squadron.

12 May 1941

Where we were camped there were many disabled enemy vehicles. Reg Goldfinch, an excellent mechanic, managed to repair an enemy tractor from which we had much amusement. Jim Paton took his turn at driving this monster and soon disappeared over a slight rise near our camp. Over the rise was a Pommie outfit on parade and Jim was headed for

it. "Get that bloody thing out of here ", yelled the Pommie officer in charge.

6 June 1941 - Bir El Malla

Up at 5.30 a.m. and left at 9.30 Only two guns 9th and 12th Detachments, with two Chevrolet 3-tonners containing rations and ammunition [under command of Lt. Dale Crooke]. After travelling a short way we got more or less lost, but we sighted a small convoy on our right, so we all turned right and chased them. They thought we were Gerry [Germans] Shortly after we arrived at our destination (7HQ-Gen.) The Englishmen were surprised to see us arrive from a certain direction as that area was mined.

16 June 1941 - Halfaya

Moved forward with convoy taking supplies to front. [Wal Webb, who was on the back of the tractor in order to spot planes, called out that some planes were approaching very low. Our sergeant, Brin Boothby, was in a quandary as he had been ordered to keep up with the convoy and not to stop under any circumstances, so he decided to keep going. Jim Paton, who was sitting next to me near the door looked out and yelled something like this; "Hell Brin, the bastards are right on us – you'd better stop!"]

Editor's Note: Cec Rae has written a detailed description of Operation Battleaxe and the action they saw which took place between 15 June and 17 June 1941, and was intended to lift the siege of Tobruk. Whilst "Battleaxe" was an unsuccessful campaign, for the next five months the Germans were unable to advance or carry out any offensive operations except at Tobruk.

23 to 24 July 1941—Cairo

Left Amariya 6.30 & soon afterwards passed the drome where Col. Rogers is stationed. We camped at Beni Youssef Camp which is in the desert right beside the Nile delta. We arrived in Cairo at 6.45 & booked in at the King's Hotel. Not a good room - 20 acres.

Met the rest of the boys at the Empire then went out to Mena House & had lunch. Afterwards we went to the swim-



Mena Hotel Swimming Pool

ming pool & had a great time all the afternoon.

July to September 1941 - Beirut

All packed up & ready to leave at 9 o'clock & very sorry to go. We are not going back to the drome but out on a mole. [part of the harbour to protect it from the sea & to provide areas for ships to load & unload their freight] .

22 August 1941

Jim & Wal went out with the fishermen & came back with some nice fish, which were given to our cook.

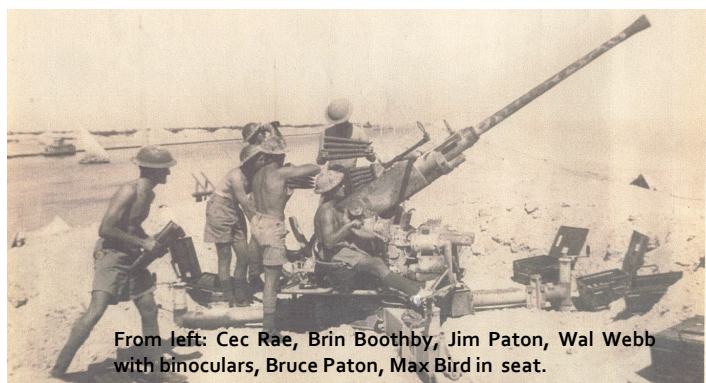
10 October 1941—Suez Canal

Set up my one-man tent close to the Canal so that I can see the shipping pass. The weather is quite good here with a



Italian Tractor - Jim Paton In Driver's Seat

cool breeze & plenty of sun. An oil tanker is sunk about one mile away from us.



From left: Cec Rae, Brin Boothby, Jim Paton, Wal Webb with binoculars, Bruce Paton, Max Bird in seat.

24 October 1941

Went for an early morning row. Bruce Paton has to leave our detachment and we are getting Ossie Coghlan.

8 February 1942—Good Bye Middle East

6 a.m left Port Said and moved quietly down the Canal. At 1600 hrs we anchored in Suez Harbour for the night so we had to mount guards in case of an alarm.

Editor's Note: For the next four months 9 Battery was based in Townsville to provide anti-aircraft cover at Garbutt Airfield. On 12 June 1942, 9 Battery embarked on the MV Macdhui for Port Moresby, arriving on 15 June 1942.

17 June 1942 - Port Moresby

18 bombers escorted by fighters flew over Moresby and dropped several bombs around the Karsik & MacDhui which was hit amidships causing some casualties. The Karsik was later pulled into the wharf. Our loading was suspended.

27 June 1942 - Milne Bay

Manned our gun near the wharf during the morning also did some maintenance. After lunch moved our gun round near the Gili Gli jetty. The road there was in a bad state, but with the aid of caterpillar tractors we managed to reach our destination after a few hours. Got the gun into action and left 3 men with it for the night. Had talk with native "boy" who wanted to know why we were fighting the Japs.

6—10 July 1942

At midnight Bill Gilbert [Troop Sergeant-Major] came over & told us we were wanted for a loading party. Went on to the Cochow at 1.00 a.m. and started unloading the steel [matting] for the runway at the drome. Relieved at 7.00 a.m. Bruce Paton, Jim Paton and Scottie Quin left on a ketch. They are going round the coast and coming back over the mountains. [The object of the exercise was to ascertain whether the Japs could come overland to our position at Milne Bay]. After lunch we all had to get on to road making. A road is being made from the pontoon wharf round to the Gilli Gilli jetty by following the beach round. We can now do the following jobs: Anti-Aircraft, Infantry, Coastal Artillery, Stevedoring, Road Making.

17 July 1942 - Lau Lau Island

Major Margetts came round today and told us we are to move across to the small island off the pontoon wharf. The gun went over on a large raft and the rest of the gear by launch.

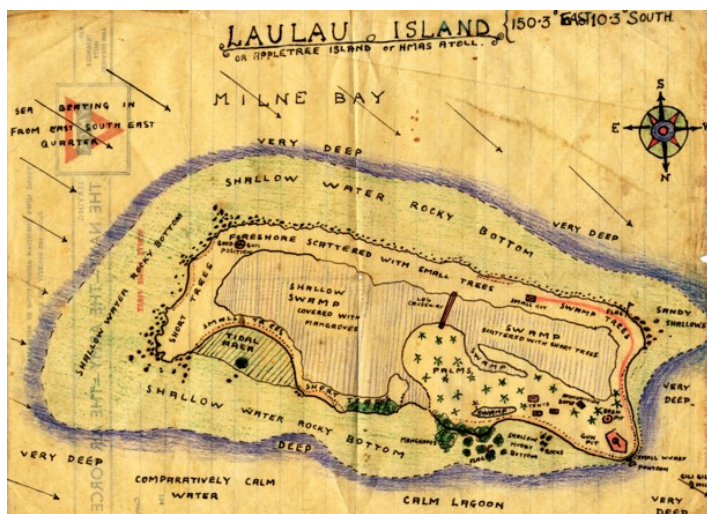
4 August 1942

Busy constructing the latrine. [As we could not dig down because of the height of the water table we constructed the latrine on a jetty over the water. It was most interesting

looking down and watching the multi-coloured fish having their lunch.]

19 August 1942

Jim Paton sent a message over with evening meal asking me to join with his section in a little spot of drinking, so after the meal Bert Runnalls and I rowed over in the little dinghy.



Very rough trip. Had a good sing and chat and then returned to the Island at 10.

22 August 1942

Mr. Ramsden of the ketch "Elevala" sent over gifts of fruit and vegetables, also a hen and a rooster to be eaten when we so desire. He left another hen and mate with us as he has to do a trip up the coast. It feels quite homely with the roosters crowing and the hens scratching about.

25 August - 7 September 1942 Battle Of Milne Bay

Editor's Note: The Battle of Milne Bay is described in detail in the 2018 issue of Take Post, following the visit by Cec's daughter President Anne Rae and son Ian Rae to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Milne Bay.

5 November 1942

Very busy making a new fireplace from a 44-gallon drum. Great news tonight over the wireless.

German forces in the Desert are retreating. We have captured 9000 prisoners including one General. The General who took Rommel's place whilst he was in Germany has been killed. We have destroyed 260 tanks captured or destroyed 250 guns, shot down or destroyed 300 planes. Naval forces have sunk 50,000 tons of enemy shipping.

6 October 1943 - Lae

Rained early this morning & most of us on deck got wet. Waited off Buna while one of the LSTs went in. Picked up escort of 3 destroyers & two sub chasers. Arrived at Lae 23.00 hrs.- very dark but we were allowed lights to disembark. Slept near tractor & gun on beach for night.

7 October 1943

Two ships & several barges sunk around the coast & the drome is littered with smashed Jap aircraft. Bomb craters everywhere – the town of Lae does not exist. Moved to gun position near E & we are to protect the Heavies there. Not a very good site.

13 November 1943

Up at 04.15 & left Transit Camp per truck & went to wharf where we embarked on Dutch ship. All went very smoothly. Received our breakfast, dinner & tea in the ship of bully [canned beef] & biscuits. Arrived in Buna harbour about 10. Stopping on board for the night. — continued on Page 8

28 November 1943

Aboard Duntroon – good cabin & mess. At 2 a.m. woke with a start – the ship felt as though she had run aground. Woke up again to hear American voices – they are survivors from an American destroyer (USS Perkins) we rammed & sunk. Went on deck about 3.30 & saw the life-boats returning from their last look round. About 4.30 we were again under weigh. Bows are damaged & some water coming in. Off duty at 6. Just before lunch anchored in Milne Bay. The survivors disembarked, but we did not take on any more troops.



MV Duntroon in Lae Harbour, 1943

12 December 1943

Cec's Comment: The excitement must have been too great to write up the diary. From memory we kept sailing until we reached Sydney where repairs could be effected. Here we were placed on a special train for Melbourne; it was said because we were survivors of a wreck, or something to that effect.

I can always remember the roses as we passed through the Essendon area – such a relief from jungle.

Editor's Note: In January 1944, Cec was transferred to Strathpine, about 11 miles from Brisbane

27 January 1944 - Strathpine

It is about 11 miles from Brisbane, 3 miles from the railway & pub (which has just been burnt down). A hole of a place. [the story was the Yanks burnt it down because of some disagreement with the land lord. The temporary erection put up to dispense beer was part of an old stable. After rain there was mud everywhere, which some drinkers fell into].

1 July 1944

Reported Chermside with Jack McLean [2/2 Heavy A/A] & Lt. Watson. With about twenty others went to Canungra for [jungle] training.

10 November 1944—Seymour (Victoria)

Arrived Seymour 7.30 & taken to camp about 3½ miles out. 2 Aust. Army Junior Leaders School. It was here I was to instruct, with other sergeants, young soldiers in the art of the Bofors gun. Young soldiers were of the age of 18.

19 November 1944

Had a quiet day at home but very enjoyable. I wish this damned war was over.

27 November 1944—Greta (NSW)

Sent to Greta to train 'Young Soldiers', those of 18 years who were at that time not being sent out of Australia, in 40 mm Bofors gun drill

Editor's Note: Cec Rae's diaries and personal recollections were major contributors to the 9th Battery section in the Regiment history "On Target" when published in 1987.

A LORRY BY ANY OTHER NAME

Editor's Note: In the 2011 edition of *Take Post* we told the story of the mobile Breda, aka "Stokes' Travelling Circus", and the mounting of the mobile Breda exhibition at the AWM in the refurbished WW2 Gallery. Not only were we able to provide the AWM with the original plans prepared by Major Philip Stokes (OIC 8 Battery), but then President Ron Bryant and Research Officer David McDonald provided Dr. Karl James from the AWM with detailed information regarding the development and operation of the mobile Bredas. More recently, Laura Kennedy from the AWM and Alison Wain from the ANU produced a paper exploring the research behind the selection of the vehicle in the exhibition. Kennedy, L & Wain, A 2010, A lorry by any other name, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, <https://bigstuffheritage.org/a-lorry-by-any-other-name>
A summary of this paper is reproduced below:

Introduction

This paper reviews a conflict: the need to meet the requirements of historically accurate display, balanced against the need to maintain the integrity of the Australian War Memorial's collection. The Memorial wished to display a Chevrolet 3-ton lorry in the sand colour appropriate to a vehicle that had served in the North African campaigns of 1941–42; however, the Chevrolet lorry already in its collection was green.

Should it be displayed in green with a text panel explaining the colour disparity, or should it be overpainted in the sand colour? An alternative approach was to purchase a lorry of a similar type without historical significance, which staff had no ethical qualms about painting. However, this vehicle had not actually served in North Africa.

How does the presentation style (conserved as found, repainted to look new, or repainted to look used) affect the visitor experience?

How does displaying an object that "wasn't really there" have an effect on the visitor experience?

Does it produce a short-term collection that has good display potential now but little historic value for the future?



Exhibition Development

The design brief (*of the Second World War Galleries*) was to fill the first of the four galleries with large technology objects (LTOs) used in North Africa and the Mediterranean in 1940–41. The layout of the stories and the visitor flow within the gallery necessitated a complete overhaul, as the existing displays were considered to provide a broken narrative.

LTOs were chosen for three reasons: to represent stories of

Continued on Page 9

Australian experiences in war, to direct visitor traffic, and to keep visitors in the gallery longer.

Finding a story

The exhibition curator needed to find stories for Gallery 1 that placed the lorry in the North African campaigns.

An unusual story about Australia's 8 Battery, Light Anti-Aircraft (LAA) Regiment using Chevrolet lorries at Tobruk was unearthed via the Memorial's Photographs collection. The capture of the Libyan port of Tobruk from the Italians had brought victory and also provided supplementary equipment for the Australians, including artillery and ammunition.

An Australian, Major Philip Stokes, developed a system of attaching a captured Breda anti-aircraft gun to a vehicle to increase his troops' mobility. This combination had the gunner operating the Breda, while two men, one on either side, fed ammunition through it from feed trays.

This setup presented two dangers: men could fall off the moving vehicle, and on the open lorry they were completely exposed to attack. These soldiers were exposed to the blast zone that they would have been protected from, had they been operating the gun from a bunker.

Stokes' men's use of captured equipment led to his troops being nicknamed "Stokes' Travelling Circus". It was an example of Australian ingenuity in a time of need, and it also provided the theme of "mobility in the desert war".

Technology curators confirmed that the Chevrolet lorry type in general was relevant to the Middle East and North Africa from mid-1941, and it could legitimately be used in the role with a Breda LAA gun (which the Memorial possessed) mounted onto the open rear tray.

Our lorry doesn't match the story

The Memorial's green lorry was a 1941 model, but a detailed examination revealed that the green lorry had different mudguards to the lorry in the photographs: they were squared at the rim, not rounded, and bigger, having been modified in accordance with Australian Military Force (AMF) requirements to clear the AMF standardised 10:50x18 tyres that were mounted on two-piece combat wheels.

The Memorial's green lorry also had an Australian-manufactured cabin and a rear timber body with fixed sides. In order to get the lorry into the configuration seen in the images:

- the rear body sides would need to be dismantled and removed;
- the whole lorry would need repainting, including the wheels;
- additional components would need to be fabricated and fitted: e.g., TAC plate [tactical sign] holders, front and rear number plates, and mounts for the front bumper.

If this were to be done, Conservation recommended that:

- The original rear tray body and canopy bows be removed in a single piece from the chassis, and a new flat tray body be manufactured to replace it, thus preserving the integrity of the original body tray with fixed sides. Removal of the tray could, however, possibly damage or destroy the original bolts, timber and paintwork.
- The original paintwork and camouflage pattern underneath would require the application of an untested barrier layer, extensive infilling, and overpainting in sand colour. However, staff had limited experience in the use and effi-

ciency of barrier layers, and such layers require extensive testing to confirm their effectiveness and reversibility before use.

- A physical barrier should be placed around the object for open display

Another lorry

In a serendipitous set of circumstances, Large Technology Conservation staff found a lorry on eBay that fulfilled some of the exhibition requirements. The potential benefits of



purchasing the eBay lorry would be:

The curators, conservators, Exhibitions section and management all agreed that the purchase of the eBay lorry would alleviate the practical concerns: the original paint layer on the provenanced lorry would not be overpainted, hundreds of treatment hours would be avoided, and the resulting vehicle would be visually closer to the vehicle in the photograph. The vehicle was accordingly purchased, prepared and placed on display in time to meet the exhibition deadline.

As a general rule, the Memorial does not provide information in its display text about how objects have been prepared for display, except for occasional presentations by museum staff. Due to the time constraints of most exhibition development projects, the process of confirming original paint colour, the placement and type of markings, the preservation of the original surface, and the ethics involved in this process are not generally discussed with anyone outside the exhibition team.

The text panel for the lorry is as follows:

Chevrolet lorry The desert war was one of movement. During 1941, this was fast and fluid as the battle front moved back and forth along the coast of North Africa. The combatants used a variety of vehicles to move troops as well as to carry supplies and equipment. This Chevrolet was the type of general service lorry that saw extensive service with Australian forces in the Middle East.

This tale of two lorries goes to the heart of one of the challenges that LTOs present: they are too large and expensive to have one of every type, colour, period and use, and inevitably there will come a time when the object you have does not closely represent the story you wish to tell. In this case, the choices made eased practical dilemmas, preserved the physical and historic integrity of an important object (the green lorry) for the future, and provided a display which is visually well themed and clear— all the large objects exhibited share the same colour scheme, and the lorry on display reflects the equipment configuration seen in the photographs that form the basis of the story that is being told.

The Greek and Cretan Nominal Roll - An 18,000 Piece Jigsaw

Editor's Note: The 2015 edition of Take Post told the story of "The Forgotten Flotilla", a book, by Dr. Michael Bendon, about the Tank Landing Craft (TLC) used by British forces in Egypt and Crete, and in particular TLC A6, the rusting hulk situated near the coastal archaeological site of Phalasana in Western Crete. Michael, who has worked on archaeological sites in Crete and Greece for some fifteen years, is nearing completion of his new book about the compilation of the first ever Nominal Roll of the Greek and Cretan campaigns. The book is provisionally entitled "Dust & Shadows An Australian Nominal Roll – Greece & Crete 1941". Michael gave us permission to use excerpts from his interviews with the Greek Herald about his research for the book.

Dr Michael Bendon compiles first ever Nominal Roll for 1941 Greek and Cretan campaigns, Andriana Simos, Greek Herald, 24/06/2022. <https://greekherald.com.au>

Michael, in a few words, could you introduce our readers to the theme of your newest book?

The passing of years after the war did little to shake loose from their very souls the dust of the past or in allowing some to ignore those far-reaching shadows of sacrifice, horror and loss. So, as World War Two stands on the verge of tumbling from memory into myth, Dust and Shadows attempts to commemorate, in some way, the Australian component of the lesser-known 2nd Anzacs and their commitment to the Greek and Cretan campaigns of 1941.



How would you summarise the work you've undertaken over the past four years putting this all together? Likely some of the readers are fans of jigsaw puzzles as I am. However, would any of you ever consider undertaking a puzzle with an unlimited, unspecified number of pieces, and even more concerning, no picture on the box?

When I decided to undertake the compilation of the first ever Nominal Roll for the Greek and Cretan campaigns of 1941, I believed that somewhere each and every fragment would be simply available, albeit with a bit of digging. I can tell you, this has proved not to be the case. I tend to approach a jigsaw by finding and connecting all the edge pieces for an idea of the scope and size of the puzzle. So, in looking for the boundaries, I sought out those army units sent to Greece in April of 1941.

With these in hand, I was able to lay out what I believed would be the clearly defined numerical border for 17,125 individuals, the figure so often supplied in the literature. As time wore on though, it suddenly dawned on me that I had

far more leftover pieces, almost a battalion and a half more. I had to look beyond the obvious research avenues. Most would think that a huge jigsaw, where each and every piece is marked with a unique identifying number, would be simple, if not perhaps a time consuming matter, to successfully re-assemble. An Army Service Number inextricably bound to an individual should provide an obvious and direct pathway for the answer to whether or not a particular person embarked for Greece to take part in the operation there. Well, or so it would seem

What was the greatest motivator behind you beginning work on this mammoth undertaking?

The mention of Gallipoli, Kokoda, or Tobruk, in most cases, brings a nod of recognition here, whereas the fact that Australians were involved in the Grecian campaigns is often greeted as something of surprise revelation. I came to realise many people today do not even know that members of their family participated in these Mediterranean theatres, their overseas service largely forgotten.

In the early stages of the research, I used to say to myself, 'why don't they just look up the service record? Sounds simple enough.' Unfortunately, a great many service records are incomplete for a variety of reasons.

Thus, one of the main aims of the nominal roll contained within Dust and Shadows is to provide readily available confirmation that particular Australian personnel did actually take part in the campaigns of Greece and Crete. I hope then people will begin to seek further information to understand the importance of a family member's story of service.

You mentioned that Dust & Shadows is much more than just a list of names. Isn't it a nominal roll?

For the past 10 years I have been giving presentations here in Australia, in New Zealand and in the UK in an attempt to gain recognition for the often overlooked campaigns of Greece and Crete. Audience members would come up at the conclusion of a talk to say that they believed a family member had been in the Mediterranean but with this came so often, something like 'dad never spoke about the war'.

I have included glimpses from war diaries, service records and stories from the troops themselves while in Greece and Crete, hoping to provide a similar 'research experience' to that which I underwent in working on this project. Certainly, I have composed and written sections of the book as well as compiling and setting out the Nominal Roll, yet there is far more. It would be misleading to refer to myself as the 'author' of these stories of peoples' lives. Even as 'narrator', it would be an overstatement. These are their stories, their life experiences and I am just setting them within a context. This is not a novel nor a textbook to impart historical knowledge. There are no conclusions. It is simply curtailed snapshots of junctures in just a few tumultuous months of 1941 as felt and told by those who were actually there.

5. How has this research for Dust & Shadows impacted upon you personally?

As the work progressed, certain names became possessed of a personality. When I was fortunate enough to come upon a photograph there was always something about the grin, or the glint in the eye, that provided an insight into those subjects captured in that instance of their service.

Through the diaries and other documents came further hints of an individual's strengths and weaknesses and, at times, a deep sadness and sense of loss virtually lifted from the page to encircle and tightly hold me. Yet, this was always accompanied by a profound sense of admiration.

In a separate interview with the Greek Herald, on 13 May 2022, Michael was asked about the stories he had been told by local people, some of which are incorporated in Dust & Shadows. He replied:

I have worked in Crete as an archaeologist now for more than 15 years and have fortunately been able to access some of these untold stories through family members and descendants of the participants in the Greek and Cretan campaigns of 1941. Rather than those oft-told tales of the 'gods and magicians' of war, most of these stories come from the ORs, the other ranks who are usually grouped nameless in the war diaries.

Private letters and photographs sketch vivid snapshots of what people went through, while even a postcard, 'a tweet from the front', in its limited writing space, echoes fears and dreams. Personal diaries and unit histories provide a more 'boots on the ground' approach, detailing particular courageous feats or humorous adventures. However, the present reader is unlikely to realise just how many 'Snows', 'Slims' and 'Blueys' served in the Mediterranean or how complicated it can be to trace one particular 'Gus,' the nickname given by a grave searcher unit to their local interpreter.

Yet, if we are to consider over 18,000 Australians embarked for Greece, with many continuing on the fight in Crete, there is so much more out there waiting for us to ensure these brave souls are never overlooked or forgotten. And then what of those untold stories of the Greek and Cretan people who fought alongside the Allies against the German onslaught?

Once a person's name is teamed with details, a basic storyline can be established. Opportunity is then provided to relate a story of service in Greece and Crete, the anecdote gaining personality, significance and a more tangible context. Suddenly a medal, a photograph, a postcard or a letter takes on a new intrinsic, as opposed to extrinsic value. This, in turn, can create a meaningful and enduring legacy for all people involved.

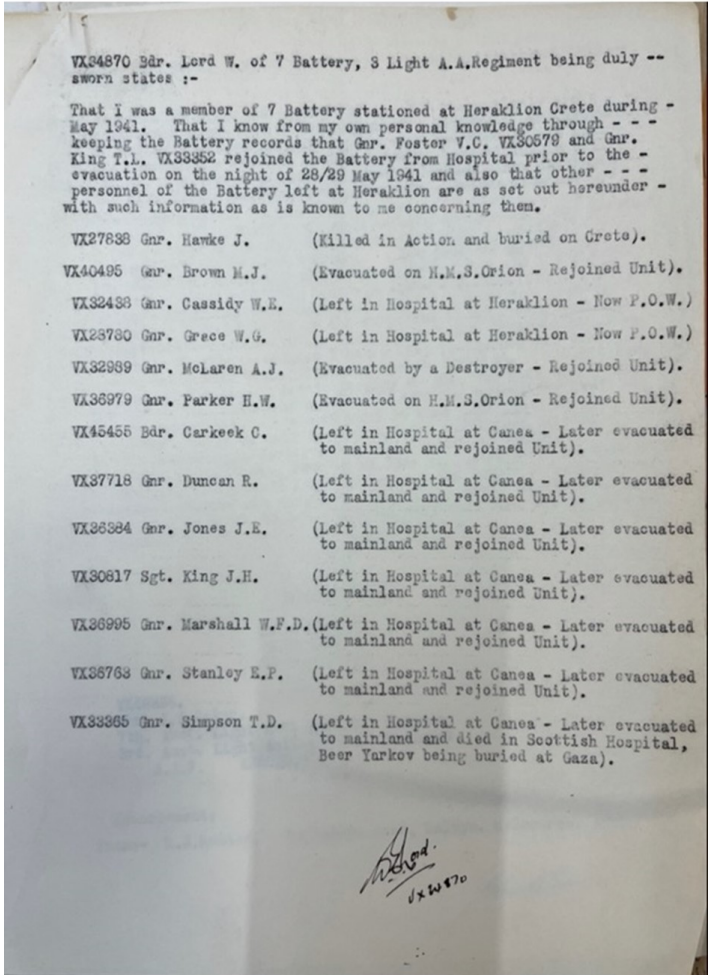
A Kookaburra At A Cretan Cemetery.



Michael has recently been awarded honorary citizenship of Kissamos, which is close to Phalasama (and the remains of TLC A6).

A Mystery For Our Readers

Editor's Note: Amongst the communications between myself and Michael, I received a challenge relating to two documents Michael had sent me. One was a list of personnel left at Heraklion and the other a German Prisoner of War record. The challenge is to identify the mistake (fairly straightforward) and then to try to explain it (challenging).



Gefangenenlager:		Staatsangehörigkeit:		Nr. der Liste:	
Gefangenen-Nr.:		England		Seite der Liste:	
Name:		Hawke		Beruf:	
Vorname:		T		Religion:	
Geburtsdag u. Geburtsort:		Truppenteil:		Dienstgrad: Kanonier	
Vorname des Vaters:		Komp. ufw. 7. Div. 24. Inf. Div.		Mater. Nr. 27838	
Familiennamen der Mutter:		Ort und Tag der Gefangennahme oder Internierung:		Verwundungen, Verletzungen oder Tod:	
Name u. Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person:		wann und von wo jugesangen:		Mf	
Aufenthalt u. Veränderungen: 1. 24. 5. 41 Kreta Heraklion					

National Archives of Australia NAA: B883, VX27838

Nino Bixio And A Chapel At Campo 57

Editor's Note: In the 2014 issue of Take Post we told Kaye Huggins' (daughter of Cec Donnelly, VX46836, 7 Battery) story following her visit to Campo 57—Gruppignano where her father had been held as a prisoner of war. Kaye's story was complemented by a broader history of Italian POW camps derived from the substantial work undertaken by the late Bill Rudd (VX39694, 2/7 Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers, and also a Campo 57 prisoner). Subsequently, Bill (aged 96) returned to Campo 57 for the dedication of a plaque commemorating the 157 Anzacs who perished when the Italian vessel Nino Bixio, carrying Allied POWs, was torpedoed. Bill's close friend and historian Katrina Kittel has given us permission to reprint her account of Bill's experiences of the Nino Bixio and Campo 57.

Katrina Kittel is currently working on a book about Campo 57. Contact Katrina by email: katrinakittel9@gmail.com

In very late 1942, resident Campo 57 POWs witnessed the camp swelling with the arrival of more Allied POWs including the July 1942 veterans of Alamein. A visiting legation in that month reported that Campo 57 held 1797 Australians and 1685 New Zealander POWs, as well as lesser numbers for other nationals. (2)

Taken prisoner of war following the 26/27 July 1942 battle at Ruin Ridge, Alamein, Australian Sapper Bill Rudd embarked on an Italian vessel, Nino Bixio, on 16 August 1942, heading for Italian captivity. The two-ship convoy left Benghazi bound for Brindisi in Italy, escorted by two Italian destroyers and two motor torpedo boats. At 3:17 in the afternoon the following day, Monday 17 August, British submarine Turbulent had plotted its course to intercept the convoy and seized its opportunity. It took bearings and fired four torpedoes...The near-new Nino Bixio suffered direct hits to Hold Number One containing Anzac, South African and British POWs and to the engine room, disabling both the vessel's propulsion and power supplies. Bill Rudd, who lived to almost 102 years of age, could never forget his first-hand experience of the chaos and carnage of Hold Number Two, and the "whoompf" of the torpedo bursting into the hold.

'The water was also rising rapidly and the smell of cordite hung thickly in the foetid air,' Bill recalled.

'On deck it was a scene of complete confusion. Those on the deck immediately above the hold, mainly guards, had been blown to bits. There were remains of humans hanging in the rigging and body parts littered the bloody deck. An anti-aircraft gun was a mangled twisted piece of steel, crushed under steel deck beams which had been hurled upwards by the force of the explosion and then crashed back onto the ship.' (3)

Nino Bixio was taken in tow and was beached off the naval port of Navarino in Greece. As Bill and other survivors would remember, unwounded New Zealanders and Australians were put to work cleaning up the ship. Bill later learnt that the casualties from Hold Number One were at least 116 New Zealanders, 41 Australians, 16 British and 11 South Africans, more than one-third of all prisoners in the hold and over half of the 309 Anzacs on board. Bill's post-war research informed him that some 4,500 Allied POWs were loaded on to Sestriere (POWs with surnames beginning A-M) and Nino Bixio (POWs with surnames beginning N-Z). Subsequent research revealed this surname split applied to the majority, as some POWs swapped boarding passes or for other rea-

sons boarded without fitting this demarcation. Most of the Australians were from West Australia. (4,5)

Bill Rudd and many of the other surviving POWs eventually moved on to Campo 57. Alamein veterans like Bill Rudd who dragged their feet into camp in late 1942 were malnourished and wearing insufficient clothing for the approaching intensely cold winter of north-east Italy.

For prisoners of war, the availability of and access to spaces for commemoration of the dead, for solace and faith worship may have offered a lift to morale. Behind barbed wire at Campo 57, work began on a chapel. Prisoners who worked on the chapel would be eligible for extra rations. Post-war, the chapel was adopted in 1990 by members of the Udine chapter of ANGET, Associazione Nazionale Genieri e Trasmettitori (the National Association of Engineers and Signallers), a non-political, not-for-profit brotherhood of retired Italian military engineers.

Bill Rudd's memories of the horror of the Nino Bixio tragedy and Campo 57 never left him. As an ex-POW and a Nino Bixio survivor, Bill thought about options for commemoration at the Campo 57 site. He reasoned that the chapel built within the confines of an Anzac POW camp, albeit a camp mostly confined to non-commissioned ranks, could house a commemorative plaque that lifted its significance. In 2013, plans were well underway for a memorial plaque that listed the names of those 157 Anzacs who perished as a result of the attack on Nino Bixio. This request was accepted by ANGET.

In 2014, when all was ready for the plaque installation, Bill Rudd at age 96 returned to Udine in north-east Italy. He sat inside a packed chapel, 72 years to the day of the torpedoing of the Nino Bixio. A lengthy Catholic service ensued with attendant priests, and distinguished officials. Bill read aloud the names of the veterans listed on the plaque while poppies were placed in corresponding niches.

In September 2013, my husband and I visited the site. The intertwined iconography of crucifixion and captivity depicted in the altar, artwork and artefacts is a stark and solemn welcome mat. I met with the Regional Delegate for ANGET Friuli, Giuseppe Munno, but with a language barrier I could not stretch my Italian to inquire about his understanding of the camp's history. I wondered whether he'd learnt from visitors, particularly POWs' descendants, of the camp's notoriety among the Anzac POWs as detailed in their first-hand accounts. But what is clear to me is that the chapel has become a place of remembrance and commemoration decades after the Second World War ended. The former Campo 57 site and the chapel is a place that all descendants of Campo 57 veterans can visit by arrangement.

NOTES:

1. Katrina Kittel, B.Arts/B.Sc (History/Geography). Katrina is working on a book about Campo 57.
2. Swiss legation report number 8, visit to Campo 57 on 28 December 1942 (sourced Bill Rudd's collection).
3. Bill Rudd's Campo 57 site, <<http://campo57.com/products.html>> accessed 21 September 2021.
4. Bill Rudd's Campo 57 site; research communications with Kittel; subsequent collaborative and independent research by Katrina Kittel and Bill Rudd.
5. Research by Katrina Kittel for 'Shooting Through'. Correspondence, Bill Rudd and Kristina Kittel; Bill Rudd document collection.

Pigeons At The Australian War Memorial

Editor's Note: I am indebted to my next door neighbour who discovered this little item, and knowing my connection with the Association and Take Post, emailed it to me in case I needed a filler. Considering the vital role played by pigeons during the First World War, it is probably appropriate they have an intimate connection with the Memorial.

In the Australian War Memorial, a pigeon sets its nest up high in the Hall of Memory. It has been stealing poppies from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for its nest on the ledge, below a stained glass window.



Award of the Commander in Chief's Card to VX25419 Gunner Maxwell Albert Ampt

The Association's website has a page at which we have documented the members who received various awards and decorations: <https://www.antiaircraft.org.au/regiment-members/gallantry-and-distinguished-service>. It has recently been updated with an award of the Commander in Chief's Card that was previously overlooked.

VX25419 Gnr Maxwell Albert Ampt served in the Regiment, allocated to RHQ, from the unit's inception in 1940 to its disbandment in July 1943. With many other RHQ men based in Western Australia, he was then transferred to the 109 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment for a short period, and then to the 102 Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment (AIF). While serving in that unit, which was providing AA defences for the Guilford, Perth, airport, on the recommendation of Lt. Col. JR Rhoden, the Commanding Officer of 102 Comp AA Regt, he was awarded the Commander-in-Chief's Card for gallantry, with the award authorised personally by Lt. Gen. H. Gordon Bennett, Commander, 3 Aust. Corps, on 13 Dec. 1943. The citation reads:

'At Guilford West Australia 2 Oct 43 after Boomerang Aircraft A 46-22 had crashed and was burning fiercely Gnr. AMPT with the assistance of an unidentified person, dragged the body of the pilot the late Flight Sgt McDONALD from the burning aircraft, thereby exposing himself to a grave risk of being burnt and injured by exploding ammunition.'

Interestingly, the Card was mailed to Gnr Ampt's wife, Elsie May Ampt, on 8 Feb. 1944, 'for safe-keeping'. One source states that only 1,400 C-in-C's Cards were awarded in WW2, compared with 6,200 Mentions in Despatches (MID).

The pilot who was killed in the crash was 20-year-old 420031 Flight Sergeant Archie McDonald, 85 Squadron RAAF. Some information on the crash is at <https://www.ozatwar.com/ozcrashes/wa25.htm>. The aircraft was an Australian-designed and -manufactured CAC Boomerang CA-12, serial no. A46-22; see <https://www.aarg.com.au/cac-boomerang-a46-25.html>. The crash was caused by a structural failure in the tailplane.

David McDonald, Research Officer, 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association



A CAC Boomerang aircraft

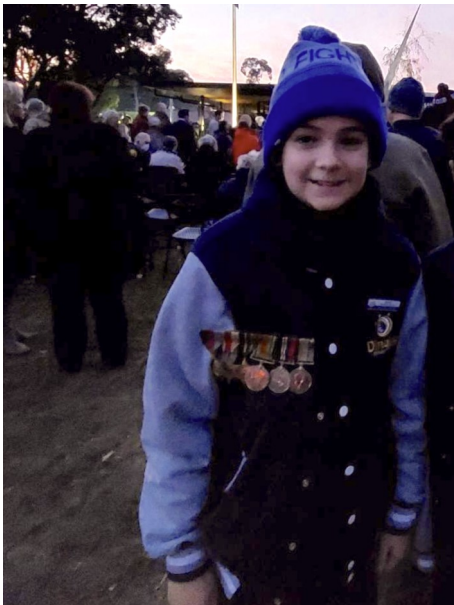
ANZAC DAY 2022

Rob Prideaux has kindly shared photos of his grandchildren Imogen and Jake taken on Anzac Day 2022.

Imogen and Jake are the great grandchildren of Sergeant RM Prideaux (9 Battery)

Jake wore his great grandfather's medals when he laid a wreath on behalf of Dingley PS, where he was the school captain.

Imogen wore a miniature set of her great grandfather's medals when she represented the Patterson River Fire Brigade at the dawn service at the Chelsea Longbeach RSL.



Battle Of Tobruk

By C. P. Lesina

It was up at Tobruk in the sand and the muck
Where our first little battle began
We were told we must stick, we were due for a lick
At our enemy the Iti and Hun.

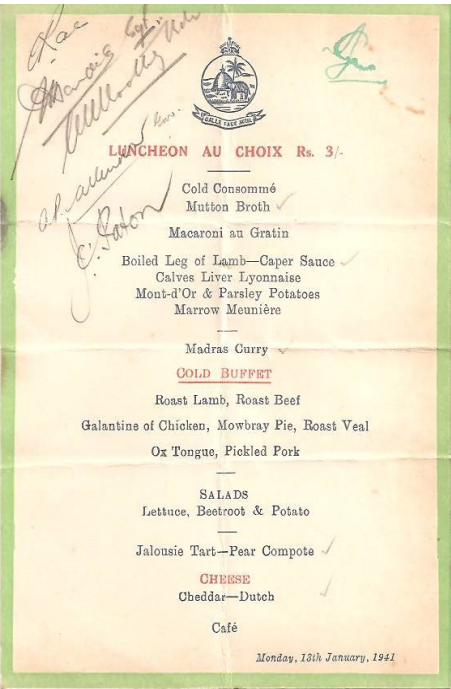
It was just breaking day when the Hun made his play
But we were all ready, you bet
We were waiting our chance to make Jerry dance
And pay off an oversized debt.

The tanks came up fast and tried to get past
But were met with an issue of shell
From the artillery boys, who made a big noise
And blew half their unit to hell.

The rest of their mob wouldn't finish the job
And started for home on the run
But out of our lot not one fired a shot
Still, that's one battle we've won.

Charles Patrick Lesina (QX2396)
2/15th Battalion
KIA 01/09/42
Buried in the El Alamein War Cemetery

Received from Sue Trewartha (Descendants Of The Rats of Tobruk), from Francene Margaret Thompson from a notebook of poems her uncle collected from other Rats of Tobruk.



Galle Face Hotel Menu

Photos From Gary Welsh



Back row left to right: CS Gillingham, S Whitney, W Hansen, E Birch
Front row left to right: Ken Welsh, H Dickinsen, Peter Garner, Howard Tom Carlyon.



Ken and his mates (names unknown) taken outside their tent.



Ken Welsh in Stalag (German POW camp)

Arthur Turner, VX35567, 7 Battery & RHQ

Further to the email we received from Maurie Turner seeking information regarding his father Arthur Turner, Research Officer David McDonald exchanged a series of emails with Maurie. The following summarises the exchanges:

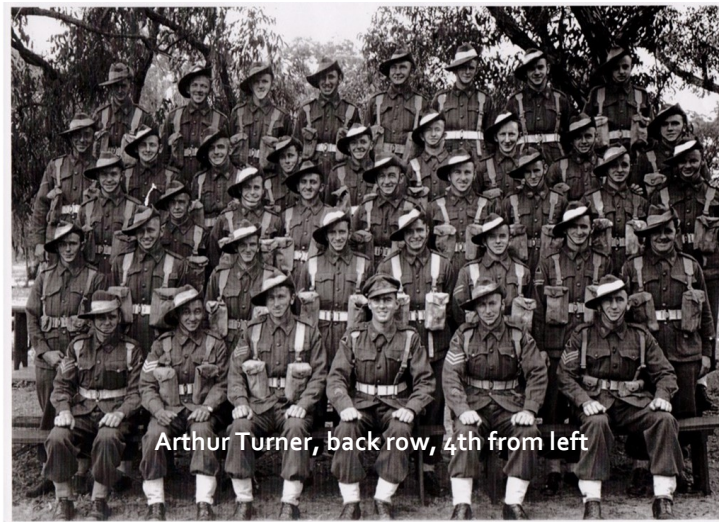
Maurie told us "my father had a terrible childhood with a step father that hated him and also spent time at Mittagong Home for Wayward Boys. Most of his stories he told me were of those days, usually when he was drunk. The few stories from being in the army didn't talk of battles but being a driver and passing the ammunition and being strafed. I know he came home bomb happy as we lived in Brunswick under the flight path to Essendon Airport. "

Maurie sent us his father's Service Record and a service summary provided to him by Neil Smith's *Mostly Unsung* organization - mostlyunsung.com.au

David subsequently provided Maurie with the following information:

"Neil Smith's summary of his service record is very useful. A few comments and additions to what Neil provided, from our records:

- In Feb 1941 he embarked on the *HMT Mauritania* (HMT = His Majesty's Troopship) in Melbourne, pre-war it was a luxury steamship. 'HMT MX3' was its codename.
- He arrived in the Middle East on 14 March 1941, and proceeded to the Khassa Camp, as Neil said. Khassa is in Palestine, then a colony of Britain.
- At the time he travelled to the Middle East he was in the 2nd/2nd Aust Anti-Aircraft Regiment (as a driver), not the 2nd/3rd Aust AA Regiment. They were not in Egypt providing AA defences on the Suez Canal at that stage.
- The following month, still at the Khassa camp, he was transferred to the HQ of the 2nd/3rd Aust Light AA Regiment as a driver.
- When Neil wrote 'Operations North Africa and Egypt including Derna and later Crete and Greece' he was referring to the service of the Regiment as a whole, not to Gnr Turner's own service. So far as our records indicate, he remained based at Regt HQ, as a driver. That fits with his telling you about delivering ammunition and other supplies under fire from German warplanes. This would have been in the period April to July 1941.
- On 14 April 1941 the Regt received orders for movement to Alexandria in Egypt to join 'Lustre Force' for the defence of Greece, but the orders were cancelled on 19.04.41. At this stage he would have been at El Amiriya in Egypt.
- In late July 1941, as part of Regt HQ he would have travelled from the combat zone in Egypt back to Palestine – the Hill 95 Camp there, in Gaza.
- Following return to Australia, the 2/3rd Light AA Regt was abolished (July 1943) and he was transferred to the 2nd/2nd Aust Light AA Regt – he was in the Regiment's 7 Battery. In Aug 1943 they moved to Helidon in Qld (near Toowoomba). The following month he was moved to 117th Aust General Hospital, as Neil says. This was at Toowoomba.
- He was discharged on 2 Jan 1944, in Melbourne, classi-



Arthur Turner, back row, 4th from left

fied as 'medically unfit' with a pre-pyloric gastric ulcer His unit on discharge was 7 Battery, 2/2nd Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

Maurie has since become a member of the Association.

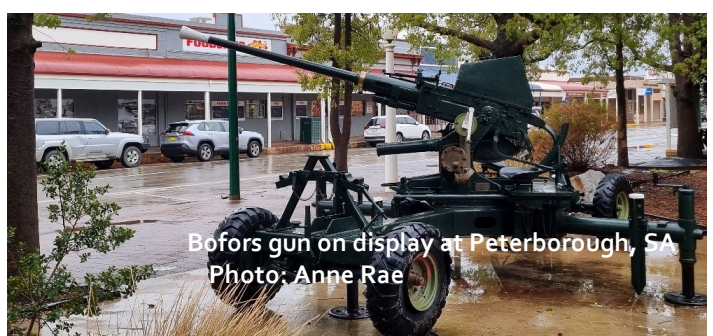
Interesting Facts About The Bofors 40 mm Anti-Aircraft Gun

Research Officer David McDonald discovered this little gem in a much cited book re the history of artillery (Hogg, IV 1974, A History of Artillery, Hamlyn, London)

Although the Bofors gun could send a projectile up to 20,000 feet it was not effective at this height, for a number of reasons. In the first place much of the Bofors shooting was done by the unaided human eye, and it takes hawk like vision to determine the effect of shells four miles up in the sky. But principally the restriction was due to the ammunition....which was dismissed rather lightly in 1910...the danger of shells coming back down to earth after missing their target.

In order to guard against this, all Bofors shells had a "self-destructing" device built in which burst the shell in the air should it have failed to strike a target in its flight. This occurred at seven seconds after leaving the muzzle, which restricted the maximum ceiling to 7,200 feet.

A byproduct of this was that there was a belt of sky relatively undefended. The light weapon such as a Bofors were limited by their self destruction to about 7,000 feet, while the heavy weapons did not come into their own until about 15,000 feet. Below this they could shoot, but the angular rate of movement of a target was too fast for the traverse speed, and they could not deal effectively with low flying aircraft. In view of this, efforts were made to close the gap by the development of what became known as "intermediate" AA guns. The war ended before a suitable solution was found.



Bofors gun on display at Peterborough, SA
Photo: Anne Rae

Candid Camera



Griff Loughnan, Simon and James Coghlan with the 2022 issue of *Take Post*



Research Officer David McDonald with Lynne Chitts, President Anne Rae and Alison Rate



Association members inspecting the Regiment Plaque after the Anzac Day march.



The Regiment Plaque under the Japanese Chestnut Oak (*Quercus acutissima*)



Alisdair Crooke and Malcolm Wrigglesworth carry the Regiment Banner on Anzac Day 2022.



Association members after the march