



Take Post

April 2015

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

THE FORGOTTEN FLOTILLA OF TANK LANDING CRAFT

Editor's Note: We became aware of "The Forgotten Flotilla" via an email from the Joint Committee for the Commemoration of the Battle of Crete & The Greek Campaign in May 2014. We subsequently contacted Dr. Michael Bendon, who kindly agreed to prepare the following article for "Take Post". The full version of Michael's article may be viewed on our website.

This search began with a simple question about a rusting hulk out from a small beach. The beach was adjacent to the coastal archaeological site of Ancient Phalasarna in Western Crete. Dr Michael Bendon was working there with his colleague, Dr Elpida Hadjidaki, in the northern summer of 2008. A lunchtime swim to wash off the dust brought Bendon to snorkel over a submerged craft lying in the shallow, crystal clear waters. And as it later turned out, another of the same vessel type was found not too far away.

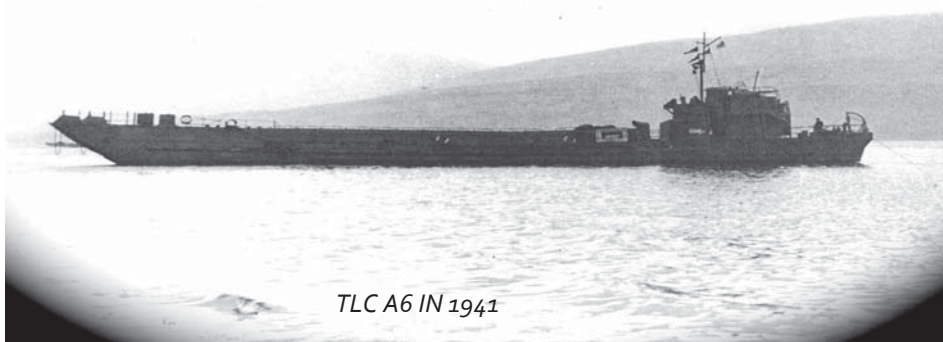
However, nobody seemed to know anything at all about these wrecks other than they were from the period of World War Two, and rumour had it they were somehow connected to the Battle of Crete in May of 1941. This was

strange as the existence of the one closer to shore was indeed common knowledge.

Considering the part played by the courageous Greek and Cretan people during the Mediterranean campaigns, Bendon decided to delve into the records to see what could be discovered. With the help of his colleague Elpida and her daughter Nike further enquiries were made around the area. There was definitely more to the story and the local

his response. "Well, don't go there at night. Two German backpackers tried to spend the night inside and were chased out by the ghost of the captain of the wreck." "You mean this captain?" offering up an interview on his iPad.

The interview with John Digby Sutton, the skipper of the ill-fated vessel out in the bay, had been recorded only weeks earlier. John, 96 years old, is alive, well and living in England, yet here in Crete "our brave Captain" was supposedly



TLC A6 IN 1941

people were always ready to sit down over a coffee or an ouzo and chat.

Skipper- John Digby Sutton (DSO)

Known around the village as the "Australian working on the wrecks", all types of anecdotes and clues would come Bendon's way. "Do you know the "Captain's Cave?" asked the son of the owner of a *taverna* directly overlooking the first wreck site. "No I don't," came

long deceased at the hands of the invading Germans. The reaction was immediate. "Oh well, guess we better find a new legend." Then in keeping with the Cretan hospitality, "Please bring him here for a party, we'd all love to meet him."

In the third year of the investigation, a question posted on an internet forum
(Continued on Page 6)

2nd / 3rd Remembrance Group

The Remembrance Group, comprised of direct descendants of original members, was formally established in 2008 and today numbers over 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 2nd/3rd are to continue to be remembered and promoted into the future.



We Will Remember Them

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

VALE

PG (Pat) Delves (VX57208)
TP (Terry) Gleeson (NX58765)
FA (Frank) Hands (VX52835)
HC (Bert) Langley (VX148044)
DN (Norm) McPherson (VX87852)
KA (Bushy) Read (VX25157)
GI (Ian) Rutter (VX47927)

SUB-Unit

7th Battery
Signals Section
8th Battery
9th Battery
9th Battery
9th Battery
7th 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!

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

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

The 2nd/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was raised in Melbourne in 1940 and served with distinction in World War II, with Battle 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 2nd/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association is an Unincorporated Association managed by a voluntary Committee of Management.

Website

www.antiaircraft.org.au

Office Bearers 2014/15

President

Anne Rae
45 Darebin Street
Heidelberg Vic 3084
Telephone: 03 9459 9439
Email: arae26@hotmail.com

Honorary Secretary

Malcolm Wrigglesworth
31 Savanna Drive
Mooroolbark Vic 3138
Telephone: 03 9726 0803
Email: msmtwrigg@hotmail.com

Vice President

Matthew Heddle

Honorary Treasurer

Colin Bragg
Unit 2 / 81 Well Street
Brighton VIC 3186

Committee

Ann Bragg
Graham Heddle
David McDonald
Lynton Rose

Newsletter Editors

Malcolm Wrigglesworth
Colin Bragg

Association Research Officer

David McDonald

Keeper of the Banner

Matthew Heddle

Take Post has been printed by Bizworks and Freeman & Read Printing, Shop 1 (Rear), 72 Church Street, Brighton, Victoria, 3186. Telephone 03 9592 9093

PRESIDENTS REPORT- 2015 AGM



Profile of new President – Anne Rae

Elected as President at the 2014 AGM, Anne is the daughter of the late Cec Rae (9th Battery). Cec served on the Regimental Association from 1949, was the Honorary Secretary from 1969 to 1996 and President from 1996 to 1999. He was awarded life membership of the Association in 1987. With Les Harris (7th Battery) and Ron Bryant (8th Battery) he co-authored "On Target", the history of the Regiment.

Anne was brought up in Mentone with her sister Pat (Thurlbeck) and brothers Jim and Ian and was educated at Firbank Grammar School, Monash and Melbourne Universities. She was a secondary teacher and school Principal, later working as a senior education officer and most recently a senior advisor in the North Western Victoria Region of the Department of Education and Training. Anne lives with her partner and having both retired in 2014, they spend half of the year in at their home in Heidelberg and the remainder on Flinders Island, Tasmania.

The changing of the guard

In 2008 the 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association revised its Constitution to enable relatives and descendants of the original members of the Regiment to be full members and office bearers of the Association. The foresight and initiative - and trust - shown by the original members to keep alive the history and ideals of the Association as their numbers dwindled, has proved to be well founded. Our previ-

ous President, Lynton Rose, wrote in *Take Post* 2008 "We cannot promise to do the job as well as the 'originals' but we can promise to give it our best shot, working together to keep the 2/3rd flame burning." Lynton, as well as previous Honorary Secretary Colin Bragg and previous Treasurer Ann Bragg and Matt Heddle Vice President, Research Officer David McDonald and committee member Graeme Heddle have all played a most significant role in continuing the work of the association through building a unique organisation and utilising current communications technology.

Keeping the 2/3rd flame burning has included:

In order to further the interests of the Association and to assist younger generations to understand the history of the regiment, the development and maintenance of the website of the Association <http://www.anti-aircraft.org.au> provides a repository for information, records, stories, historical facts and photos, sourced from the diaries and photo albums taken by original members, and from the War diaries and Australian War Memorial.

The continuation of the annual reunion and AGM which brings together our remaining original members, descendants and new members and provides both social and educative functions.

The continuation of the annual publication of *Take Post*, the newsletter of the Association. The publication offers interesting articles about original members, their wives and widows, their descendants as well as items of a more general but related nature.

The digitisation of *On Target The story of the 2/3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment* and inclusion on the website has made the Regiment's official story accessible to our remaining members, their descendants and the general public.

The timely and accurate responses to descendants and the general public's requests for information regarding the Regiment and its members, has greatly assisted those with personal or academic interests.

During October 2014 we were successful in organising for The Australian War Memorial to archive the Association website through the PANDORA Archive. This

permits the National Library to retain and provide public online access to the website in perpetuity and allows the National Library to make reproductions or communications of the website to preserve it and make it available to the public. In providing permission on behalf of the Committee and members, I wrote to the Australian War Memorial saying "We believe that archiving the website will ensure that the sacrifices and achievements of the members of the Regiment, our fathers and grandfathers, will be preserved for those who come after."

It is now seventy years since the end of World War 2 and the disbanding of the final Batteries of the Regiment. The men of the Regiment saw active service in many of the theatres of war in Tobruk, Crete, the Western Desert, Syria, Port Moresby, Milne Bay, Lae, Buna and Borneo. Some of these battles have yet to gain recognition in the public mind as to their importance in Australia's history. The Association continues to inform those descendants of the original members and the public at large through our website, *Take Post* and our AGM and Reunion.

I believe that the Association owes a huge debt of gratitude to our two outgoing office bearers—Past President Lynton Rose and Past Honorary Secretary Colin Bragg for their work in realising the Associations achievements.

Lynton embodies the qualities for which the Regiment stood - integrity, leadership, sense of responsibility, generosity of spirit and genuine friendship.

Colin's tireless commitment, many discussions with original members, the conversion of hundreds of photos into digital form, and day to day attention to the organisation, have ensured that 2/3rd flame continues to burn brightly.

We shouldn't have to wait until people leave their positions before acknowledging the wonderful work they do. Research Officer David McDonald's wide range of contacts, his incredible knowledge of the Regiment's history and his ability to respond to very specific and occasionally "left field" enquiries is an integral component of the modern day Association.

I am privileged and honoured to continue this work along with the Committee.

From the Secretary's Desk



Profile of new Secretary - Malcolm Wrigglesworth

Malcolm was elected as the new secretary at 2014 AGM replacing Colin Bragg who has taken on the role as Treasurer. Malcolm is the eldest son of the late William (Bill) Wrigglesworth 7th Battery of 2nd / 3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. He has a younger brother Graeme Wrigglesworth who resides at Stratford in East Gippsland. Malcolm is married to Margaret and they have three daughters, Sarah, Amy and Jane, all of whom live in Mooroolbark, since 1984 an outer Eastern suburb of Melbourne.

Malcolm was raised on a sheep and cattle grazing farm property of 600 acres 3 kilometres east of Stratford on the Airly Road, until the age of 16, where due to ill health of his father Bill Wrigglesworth the property was sold and the family moved into the town of Stratford in 1972.

After completing schooling at Sale Gippsland Grammar and a final year at Maffra High in 1972, Malcolm commenced a professional career in banking with formerly the Commercial Bank of Australia, (now called Westpac) initially at Sale, then transferred to Traralgon, Morwell and Melbourne and interstate within a 5 year period.

He has held a number of positions, progressing from teller, International Import and Exports, Foreign Currency Document, to Legal Administration, commercial lending and Senior Management over career spanning 24 years, with movements to a number of coun-

try suburban and interstate branches and later years at Head office in Collins Street, Melbourne.

In May, 1996 Malcolm took up the option of a retrenchment package from Westpac and in June later that year commenced a position with Apollo Gas Products, a family owned wholesale company in Bayswater North, progressing to position of Inventory stock controller dealing with Australian and mainly European suppliers of LPG gas components for the Automotive industry.

He is a lifelong member of the Melbourne Cricket Club, and supporter of Collingwood Football Club, and is actively involved as a tennis player twice a week and holds committee positions at Manchester Heights Tennis Club of Senior and Night convenor, over summer and winter seasons, held by Eastern Region District Tennis in the Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne and the Lilydale District Night Tennis Association.

Malcolm looks forward to being a valuable contributor to the 2nd / 3rd Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association as a descendent and continuing the commitment and dedication of past veterans and fellow committee descendants and office bearers.

From the Secretary's Desk.

At last year's Annual General meeting of the Association held in April at the RACV, I was elected the New Honorary Secretary for the committee, taking over from the then Secretary Colin Bragg who had held this position for some six years. In that six year period a great deal has been achieved with the support of the former committee and members of the Association.

Taking on the role as Secretary is a little daunting at first and you do not realise just how much is involved in preparation of Take Post, arranging for the forthcoming AGM and Reunion and ANZAC day commemorations, until you learn and work with Colin and read the previous Secretary's reports and the amount of work involved in this Secretary's position. It provides you with a better perspective of what is required to immerse yourself into this

role.

It is certainly a challenge, and one I am looking forward to with the support of current committee and the descendant's / members of the Association. Last year's Secretary's report mentioned a couple of significant matters, and I hope members have had time to reflect on some of the fundamental issues that need to be addressed for the future of this long standing Association.

1. Should we be putting a Committee Succession Plan in place?
2. What is the level of interest from the members in assuming roles on the Committee?
3. Who will take on the responsibility of maintaining / updating and responding to queries received via the website into the future?

These questions are for general discussion and the present Committee would welcome your feedback, so we can establish criteria and/or guidelines in providing a future direction for the current Committee.

We would appreciate your suggestions and feedback.

The Year In Review

As has been the case in recent years, most of the enquiries are received electronically through our website or direct to past Secretary Colin Bragg or Association Research Officer David McDonald.

I have on a couple occasions received telephone calls and also photo memorabilia from family members who no longer have a need to hold onto these items. Such group Battery photos are researched for identification of former war veterans when time permits.

Throughout the year, we received the advice of the passing of original service members. We learnt of the passing of **Pat Delves (7th), Terry Gleeson (Signals), Keith Alan (Bushy) Read (9th), Frank Hands (8th), Ian Rutter (7th), Bert Langley (9th) and Duncan (Norm) McPherson (9th).**

These are sad and regrettable events and we should be grateful that these men returned home to their families to live and lead long lives, and provide

.....and the Sentry's Log

inspiration for future generations.

Donations

The Association has again received donations from members, which enables us to continue to do what we do. I would like to thank all members who have made a contribution throughout the year, and in particular Phyl Phillips, Rosemary Weatherly and Dot Harris.

Website

The web site is very much in maintenance mode now, and has had unique visits numbering 7964 over a 12-month period, and return visits for the same period of 559. Definitely the web site is creating a lot of interest for those family members or researchers seeking information on relatives or the history of the 2nd/3rd LAA Regt Association in particular and/or anti-aircraft units in general.

Sentry's Log By David McDonald

As the Association's Research Officer I have the pleasure of responding to a couple of request each month for information about the Regiment and its members. Many of these are quite straightforward, with descendants seeking information about their relative 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/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/SearchScreens/BasicSearch.aspx> and/or reviewing the relevant sections of the Regiment's history, *On Target* <http://www.antiaircraft.org.au/about-us/on-target/on-target>. Pleasingly, a number of the enquirers have already accessed these resources before contacting the Association, and write seeking further details.

If you have accessed online service records at the National Archives website you will have seen that most of the contents are handwritten—and sometimes close to illegible—and all contain many abbreviations. Indeed, much of the ser-

vice records' contents convey little to today's readers unless they can decipher those 70 year old abbreviations.

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.

It was good to hear from **Joan Chambers**, the wife of Maj John Chambers (9 Bty), and her niece **Cath Beaumont**, both keen to gain access to copies of *On Target*. Having it available in full text at the Association's website is a real boon! The strength and generosity of the ex-service movement is illustrated by the fact that Joan advertised in the DVA *Vetaffairs* newspaper <http://www.dva.gov.au/about-dva/publications/vetaffairs> seeking information on how she could obtain a copy of *On Target*. She received a number of responses, including a copy on disc and a (now rather valuable) printed copy!

Another welcome enquiry was from as far away as California, from where **Sara-Jayne Kerr** wrote inquiring about her grandfather Lt WE Kerr (8 Bty). The Association has been pleased to be in contact with **Mary Gleeson**, the daughter of the late Sig Terry Gleeson. Mary passed on to the Association Terry's memoirs, excerpts from which are included in this issue of *Take Post*.

A number of researchers have been in contact. **Sean Carwardine** is researching the history of airfield defence and sought information on the role of AA units to complement his own knowledge, as a RAAF Airfield Defence serviceman, and his academic research.

We heard from **Matt Teffer**, a senior journalist, who is writing a feature-length screenplay. Part of the action takes place in Crete in 1941, with one

of the key characters being a gunner in the Regiment's 7 Battery, and another a *fallschirmjaeger*—a German paratrooper there.

Peter Dunn, who maintains the best website on Australia in WW II <http://www.ozatwar.com>, has been in touch about the structure (establishment) of WW II light anti-aircraft regiments. He advises that he found the information on this at our website to be particularly helpful. **Michael Musumeci**, who is researching WW II aeroplane crashes in Queensland, sought information about the American B26 bomber that crashed on take-off at Townsville in April 1943, very close to where the Regiment's 9 Battery was encamped en route to Milne Bay.

We also heard from American WW II Gunnery Sergeant **Dan Silkiss** who is interested in some of vessels that conveyed 9 Battery to and from the SW Pacific theatre, particularly SS Karsik and MV Janssens. He wrote 'We helped decommission [SS Karsik] in Adelaide. I was also in charge of the gun crew on the Janssens which was also decommissioned'. Images of these vessels are at the Australian War Memorial's website, and of the SS Karsik at our website.

ADVERSITY

Gone was all the strength
And hope had fled,
Even self respect was dead.
The passing world had no caress
To comfort all these comfortless.

The prisoner stirred, and looked around
On careless men that care had found,
And then in deep humility
He asked "Dear God, what use are we?"

In troubled ground the Gardener knew
The seeds of understanding grew;
And the Gardener smiled, then whispered He,
"My Son, I still have need of thee."

*George Ian Rutter
Prisoner of War, Hammelburg,
Germany, 1943*

THE FORGOTTEN FLOTILLA (continued)

had led to "someone who knew someone who lived next door to someone who was aboard a landing craft in the Mediterranean". This connection allowed a meeting with John Digby Sutton, DSO (Distinguished Service Order), and by sheer coinci-

John Sutton, then a Sub-Lieutenant of 22 years who had joined the Navy rather accidentally. Having signed up to the Royal Navy Volunteer Wireless Reserve more for the social aspects, he was somewhat surprised to find himself a sailor at the outbreak of the war in



Azo Lifting Components With Bubbles

dence, the skipper of the very vessel that Bendon had drifted over that late July morning.

Bendon made his way over to meet with the skipper in the UK, and it prompted him to make this story known. Sitting and listening to John's stories made everything that had been discovered, so far, more 'real'. There was suddenly a personal side to all this, a face to put with a name. Bendon had already read about the bravery of this particular man in the reports and how his craft and crew had carried thousands to safety.

TLC A6 was among the first Tank Landing Craft to reach in Egypt and so was able to assist in the evacuation of Greece in April 1941. The vessel was placed under the command of

1939. Still, he embraced the challenge and was assigned to Combined Operations. John tells of his 'adventures', as he calls them, in Dr Bendon's recent book, *The Forgotten Flotilla*. He describes training in England, his 'cruise' around Africa and up the Suez Canal on the way to his assignment as skipper of a newly developed Tank

Landing Craft. He also speaks of the operations he carried out with his craft and his crew during the evacuation of Greece and the Battle of Crete. For his actions in these operations, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, a medal usually reserved for the higher ranks. Of course, John was not the only hero. So many unsung heroes put their own safety at risk to help with the evacuation of Commonwealth troops from Greece and Crete.

Tank Landing Craft Mk1

"She's not exactly a thing of beauty. Then, he added: Keep it under your hat but it's on the cards that the first batch of these things will be going out to the Middle East."

(Heckstall-Smith & Baillie-Grohman 1961, p. 69)

The Tank Landing Craft (TLC) Mk1 were prototype vessels, constructed in the

latter half of 1940 by the British for Combined Operations. Churchill was keen to avoid another episode like Dunkirk where the retreating British armies had to leave behind all heavy equipment on the seashore. The Prime Minister saw these new vessels as forming the central element for amphibious operations in the Mediterranean.

The TLC Mk1s ('A' lighter) were developed and manufactured secretly with orders issued that forbade the taking of photographs of the vessels while under construction. At this stage of the war, Germany had yet to develop anything similar to these craft and apparently Britain hoped to keep it that way just a little longer. Readers may remember that, during the invasion of Crete, German seaborne reinforcements had to be carried in an assortment of commandeered fishing vessels only.

The crafts' real, and often unexpected, battle capabilities had yet to be tested. A Sub-Lieutenant from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR), or perhaps only a Royal Navy (RN) Boatswain, skippered these 'experimental' vessels into the struggle in the Middle East. In fact, other than the crews of the TLCs themselves, very few armed forces personnel had previously seen such vessels. "Indeed, not even aboard the flagship was there anyone who recognized them for what they were" (Heckstall-Smith & Baillie-Grohman 1961, p. 55).

The new TLCs were the largest vessels of the landing craft types at that time. They were able to operate under their own power across long distances (900

nautical miles) and could carry up to six tanks or other heavy equipment. Built like a floating dock with sides, and two very powerful V8 engines, the craft were virtually unsinkable but were also very difficult to manoeuvre even in the slightest of seas. This led some aboard to speak of them as "Large Crude Targets".

The first twenty Tank Landing Craft arrived in Egypt on cargo transports in early 1941 and immediately after reassembly took part in operations. The first five TLCs to be completed (TLC A1, A5, A6, A16 and A19) were sent from Alexandria on a supply run to the besieged town of Tobruk in early April. Upon arrival, they were immediately redirected to Suda Bay on Crete, where they were joined by two more TLCs (A15 and A20) sent from Alexandria. The TLCs were to be prepared to assist in the evacuation of Greece.

Only weeks earlier, Commonwealth troops had been sent into Greece to deter Italian and German forces from invading. However, the German assault proved too strong, and when the Greek military crumbled, there was no option for the British but evacuation. The harbour of Piraeus and the majority of other piers and wharves had been destroyed by the Luftwaffe. This meant that the withdrawing troops had to be picked up directly from beaches. This necessitated the use of small ship-borne landing craft as well as large TLCs, with their carrying capacity

of 900 men, to ferry troops from beaches to the ships waiting further offshore. Greek fishermen also assisted in the dangerous task of ferrying the exhausted troops.

In total, six TLCs were involved in this operation, codenamed *Demon*, yet only one of them made it back to Crete. Fortunately, none of the crew of the two TLCs lost in the dive bombing attacks that sent them to the bottom died, but all were eventually taken prisoner by German troops after being sheltered, at great risk, by many of the local villagers. They were then sent to Germany. There they were to remain in a prisoner of war camp until the end of the war. The people of Greece and Crete continued their struggle against the occupation by Germany. The remainder of the TLC Mk1s, *The Forgotten Flotilla*, remained stationed on the North African coast after being reassembled.

Assigned to the *Spud Run*, the supply run to Tobruk, they were incorporated into the WDLF (which likely stood for *Western Desert Lighter Flotilla*).

Since the slow, unwieldy and poorly armed TLCs were often subjected to enemy attacks and sustained continual losses, the men assigned to them resolved the acronym in a slightly more grim fashion: "We Die Like Flies".

Towards the end of the war, there seem to have been only three TLC Mk1s still

in action, namely A4, A9 and A17. Although as yet unconfirmed, they may have been sent to Italy towards the end of the war. If we had been able to speak to more Mediterranean veterans, many of them would likely include an



View Of A20 Ramp

encounter of some sort with a noisy, under-armed, flat-bottomed, slow-moving TLC and its hard-working crew. There would also be mention of the relief the craft carried and the solace the vessels brought.

Dr. Michael James Bendon holds post-graduate qualifications in Archaeology, History, Linguistics, Maritime Archaeology, Education and Cultural Heritage. He has worked as an archaeologist on numerous sites around the Mediterranean and Europe including Israel, Portugal, Germany and Greece. More recently, he has been assisting a colleague in investigations on Phalasarna, a large Classical/Hellenistic maritime city in Western Crete, as well as working on the excavation of the first Minoan shipwreck to be discovered.

His most recent research has revolved around two British WWII wrecks located off shore from the ancient Phalasarna site. After some five years of research, Michael has found out some amazing stories of the involvement of these craft in the Mediterranean campaigns of 1941. Stories of secretly developed vessels and the part they played in not only supporting ANZAC troops in North Africa and Crete but also in saving many thousands of troops from the hands of the invading German forces. Until the publication of "The Forgotten Flotilla", little was known of these craft and their work. For further information, visit Michael's website at:

www.forgottenflotilla.com



Diving On The Wreck

A daughter's mission to Crete

Editor's Note: The following article, dated 14 October 2014, was provided by Nick Andriotakis, Secretary, Joint Committee for the Commemoration of the Battle of Crete & The Greek Campaign.

Melburnian Janet Derrick (73) headed to Greece this week to realise a life-long ambition to visit the place where the father she never knew was killed in World War II.



Janet's odyssey will see her head to Souda Bay in Crete to lay a wreath on the water where her father Donald Haddow, a shipwright on HMAS Perth, was killed in a German bombing raid on 22 April 1941.

"I was less than two years old when my father died so I never had a chance to get to know him," Janet told Neos Kosmos. "For me this is a way to connect with him. I want to go back and experience being close to where he was."

While Janet's children have visited Crete before this was her first trip to Greece.

"I've been thinking about doing this trip for as long as I can remember. For me it's about recognising that I did have a father, because I've only ever had photos."

One of the first casualties in the battle for Crete, Donald McEachern Haddow - known as 'Bingle' to his shipmates - was born in Glasgow in 1904.



Enlisted in the RAN originally as a joiner in 1925, the proud Scot who had a thistle tattooed on his right arm joined the Perth in 1939.

On loan to the cruiser HMS York in April 1941 (which had been beached after an Italian attack in the bay a month before by Italian motor launches), Haddow's death occurred while he was diving on the stricken warship.

On 22 April, a German air raid caught the 37-year-old Haddow having just resurfaced in a small tender alongside the York's half-submerged hull.

In his heavy diver's suit and lead boots, he had just removed the copper helmet when a bomb exploded in the water nearby, swamping the work boat and sending the heavily weighed-down diver plummeting to the depths.

Just three weeks before he had written to Janet's mother Esther. The letter he sent to their Hastings home has faded slightly with age, but its content is still vivid and achingly poignant

"We're still pretty busy over here," wrote Donald. "Until we wipe them right out of the Med we can expect no relief ...shall be glad to get away from the dive bombers..."

"I hope there will be more snaps for me, Janet is lovely to see. What a lot I am missing by not being home with her now..."

As this paper goes to press, Janet's long-awaited pilgrimage to Crete, accompanied by her husband Bryan,

has begun.

They will arrive, so fittingly, on the overnight ferry to Souda from Pireaus, disembarking close to the spot where Donald Haddow lost his life. After a day's rest they will find a boat to take them out onto the water "We'll get there and see the harbour and try and work out where the York might have been. But like my eldest son said, 'you'll just know'," said Janet.

Based in Chania for their 10-day stay, Janet and Bryan are hoping local people and the Nautical Museum of Crete may be able to help in their very special mission.

HMS York

HMS YORK

HMS York was badly damaged on 26 March 1941 by two Italian explosive motor boats in a dawn attack at Souda Bay. The motorboats, each packed with 300 kg charges in the bows, impacted her amidships, flooding both boiler rooms and one engine room, causing her to settle on the bottom in shallow water.

The British submarine HMS Rover was dispatched from Alexandria to supply electrical power, but on 24 April the submarine was severely damaged by an air attack and the decision was taken to abandon any attempt at salvage.

York was wrecked by demolition charges on 22 May 1941, and scrapped in 1952.

Bofors On Sydney Harbour Bridge??



2nd Light Anti-aircraft Regiment, Sydney 1942. Richard Ashton. Although Sydney never suffered a Japanese air-raid, preparations were made to defend it against such an event. (236518)

Mr Norman Bradshaw, Team Leader, Climb Operations, Bridge Climb, Sydney contacted us requesting help in his research relating to the defence of the Sydney Harbour Bridge during WW2.

Norman had found a reference to Bofors guns situated on the South East and North West pylons, but was unable to establish which units manned these installations.

Research Officer David McDonald was able to provide the following information to Norman:

"Our unit, equipped with 40mm Bofors guns (when available) served in the Middle East, WA and the Pacific Islands, but not in Sydney. The following may help you find an answer.

A Google search reveals this page http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/docs/070220_charles-amiel-100th-flyer.pdf which states: '...Charles Amiel was posted to the 101st Anti-aircraft Battery. His 40 mm Bofors gun was on top of the southeastern pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Charles may have not had the best view on the war but certainly would have had one of the best views in the war, overlooking Sydney Cove, Bennelong Point and Australia's largest naval base beyond'. This may or may not be correct. I cannot find any record of a WW2 101 Anti-Aircraft Battery, but the WW2 nominal role shows some men serving in the '101 Anti-Aircraft Regiment'.

This book may be helpful: Oppenheim, Peter. 2004, *The Fragile Forts: the fixed defences of Sydney Harbour 1788-1963* / by Peter Oppenheim, Army History Unit,

Dept. of Defence, Canberra, A.C.T., http://www.army.gov.au/ahu/Fragile_Forts.asp.

I have read his WW2 Service Records. He was posted to Sydney in 1942-43 as a Lieutenant in the 108 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment (not 101 AA Battery as above; the Regiment comprised 147, 148 & 149 Batteries).

The unit history of that Regiment is Buttery, Ray.1992, *Legion of the lost: 'home defence': factual experiences of a select*

group of soldiers in Australia during World War II, R. Buttery, Marden, S.Aust. It states that '147 Bty went to Port Kembla before being broken up when some members went to New Guinea and some guarded Sydney Harbour Bridge' (Bty means Battery).

I then read the War Diary for 108 Lt AA Regt covering the full period of its deployment in Sydney 25 Feb 1942 to 20 July 1943 when it was disbanded. A war diary is a day-by-day record of what happened in the unit.

- Lt Amiel was posted on ships in Sydney Harbour, providing anti-aircraft support.

- The Regiment's 40mm Bofors AA guns were dug in around the harbour protecting Cockatoo Docks.

- But there is no mention of manning guns on Sydney Harbour Bridge.

I cannot find any record of a 101 Lt AA Regiment but the War Memorial's Roll of Honour records two men as being members of '101 AA Regiment, but the Roll contains many errors. Nor can I find any record of 101 AA Battery. There was a 101 Composite AA Regiment in the NT.

The Oppenheim book on Sydney's defences does not

mention guns on the Bridge, despite going into great detail about guns placed in other parts of the harbour.

I have a few possible additional leads that I'll follow up.

Question: Are you sure that there were AA guns on the pylons? I have seen mentions of this in two books, plus those cited above. I've searched various photo archives of the Bridge during the war, but none has a photo of guns on the pylons. Could it been an urban myth?"

Committee member Matthew Heddle (grandson of Charles Heddle, 9th) subsequently carried out his own exploration and advised:

"our members weren't on the bridge itself but around the harbour from 1943 onwards when members from 9th Battery started to form the 2nd/3rd 9th Composite they were posted there before heading up North."

I have found this article that might answer some of our questions:

http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/docs/070220_charles-amiel-100th-flyer.pdf

The last paragraph on page 1 refers to the 101st L.T.A.A being posted on the Bofors guns on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. More recently I've also learnt that one of my relatives from the 2nd/3rd was around the Harbour itself but I don't know the dates."



Both paintings on this page are by Richard Ashton (1913-2001), a member of the renowned Ashton family, which founded the Sydney Art School in 1890. Ashton enlisted in the AIF in December 1941 and was appointed as an official war artist in May 1942. In 1975, the AWM purchased over 160 of his drawings and oil paintings.

(Continued on Page 13)

THE ANZAC ON THE WALL



Editor's Note: I found this poem whilst browsing a magazine. It was written by former TV journalist Jim Brown, and it won him 1st prize for best 'original performance' at the Victorian Bush Poetry Championship in 2005.

For more information about the poem and Jim Brown, go to:

www.theanzaconthewall.com.au, OR

http://iwvpa.net/brownj/the_anzac_1.php

I wandered thru a country town, 'cos I had some time to spare,
And went into an Antique Shop to see what was in there.
Old Bikes and Pumps and Kero lamps, but hidden by it all,
A photo of a soldier boy ... An Anzac on the Wall.

'The Anzac have a name?' I asked. The old man answered 'No',
The ones who could have told you mate, have passed on long ago.

The old man kept on talking and, according to his tale,
The photo was unwanted junk, bought from a clearance sale.

'I asked around,' the old man said, 'But no one knows his face,
He's been on that wall twenty years ... deserves a better place.
For someone must have loved him, so it seems a shame somehow.'

I nodded in agreement and then said ... 'I'll take him now.'

My nameless digger's photo, well it was a sorry sight
A cracked glass pane and a broken frame ... I had to make it right

To prise the photo from its frame I took care just in case,
Cause only sticky paper held the cardboard back in place.

I peeled away the faded screed, and much to my surprise,
Two letters and a telegram, appeared before my eyes
The first reveals my Anzac's name, and regiment of course
John Mathew Francis Stuart ... of Australia's own Light Horse.

This letter written from the front ... my interest now was keen,
This note was dated August 7th, 1917

'Dear Mum, I'm at Khalasa Springs, not far from the Red Sea
They say it's in the Bible ... looks like a Billabong to me.'

'My Kathy wrote, I'm in her prayers ... she's still my bride to be,
I just can't wait to see you both; you're all the world to me.
And Mum you'll soon meet Bluey, last month they shipped him out
I told him to call on you, when he's up and about.'

'That Bluey is a larrikin, and we all thought it funny,
He lobbed a Turkish hand grenade into the Co's dunny.
I told you how he dragged me wounded; in from no man's land
He stopped the bleeding, closed the wound, with only his bare hand.'

'Then he copped it at the front, from some stray shrapnel blast,
It was my turn to drag him in, and I thought he wouldn't last.
He woke up in hospital, and nearly lost his mind
Cause out there on the battlefield, he'd left one leg behind.'

'He's been in a bad way Mum, he knows he'll ride no more
Like me he loves a horse's back, he was a champ before.
So Please Mum can you take him in, he's been like my own brother
Raised in a Queensland orphanage he's never known a mother.'

But Struth, I miss Australia Mum, and in my mind each day
I am a mountain cattleman, on the high plains far away.
I'm mustering white-faced cattle, with no camel's hump in sight,

And I waltz my Matilda, by a campfire every night
I wonder who rides Billy!! I heard the pub burnt down!!
I'll always love you and please say Hooroo to all in town'.
The second letter I could see, was in a lady's hand,
An answer to her soldier son there in a foreign land.

Her copperplate was perfect, the pages neat and clean
It bore the date, November 3rd 1917.
'Twas hard enough to lose your Dad, without you at the war
I'd hoped you would be home by now ... each day I miss you more'

'Your Kathy calls around a lot, since you have been away,



THE ANZAC ON THE WALL (cont)

To share with hopes, her dreams, about your wedding day and me.

And Bluey has arrived ... and what a godsend he has been
We talked and laughed for days, about the things you've done and seen'

'He really is a comfort, and works hard around the farm,
I read the same hope in his eyes that you won't come to harm.
Mc Connell's kids rode Billy, but suddenly that has changed.

We had a violent lightning storm, and it was really strange.'
'Last Wednesday, just on midnight, not a single cloud in sight,
It raged for several minutes, it gave us all a fright.
It really spooked your Billy ... and he screamed and bucked and reared,
And then he rushed the slip rail fence, which by a foot he cleared'

'They brought him back next afternoon, but something's changed I fear,
It's like the day you brought him home, for no one can get near.
Remember when you caught him, with his black and flowing mane?
Now horse breakers fear the beast, that only you can tame,'
'That's why we need you home son Then the flow of ink went dry
This letter was unfinished ... and I couldn't work out why.
Until I started reading, the letter, number three
A yellow telegram delivered news of a tragedy.

Her son killed in action ... Oh! What pain that must have been,
The same date as her letter ... 3rd November 1917
This letter, which was never sent, became then one of three.
She sealed behind the photo's face ... the face she longed to see.

And John's home town's children, when he went to war,
Would say no greater cattleman, had left the town before.
They knew his widowed mother well, and with respect did tell,
How when she lost her only boy ... she lost her mind as well.

She could not face the awful truth; to strangers she would speak
"My Johnny's at the war you know ... he's coming home next week."
They all remembered Bluey; he stayed on to the end.
A young man with wooden leg became her closest friend.

And he would go and find her when she wandered, old and weak,
And always softly say ... 'Yes dear ... John will be coming home next week.'
Then when she died, Bluey moved on ... to Queensland some did say.
I tried to find out where he went, but don't know to this day.

And Kathy never wed, a lonely spinster... some found odd.
She wouldn't set foot in a church ... she'd turned her back on God.
John's mother left no Will, I learned, on my detective trail.
This explains my photo's journey, of that clearance sale.

So I continued digging, cause, I wanted to know more.

I found John's name with thousands, in the records of the war.
His last ride proved his courage... a ride you will acclaim
The Light Horse Charge at Beersheba of everlasting fame.

That last day in October back in 1917,
At 4pm our brave boys fell ... that sad fact I did glean.
That's when John's life was sacrificed; the record's crystal-clear.
But 4pm in Beersheba is midnight over here....

So as John's gallant sprit rose, to cross the great divide,
Were lightning bolts back home, a signal from the other side?
Is that why Billy bolted, and went racing as in pain?
Because he'd never feel his master, on his back again!

Was it coincidental? Same time ... same day ... same date!
Some proof of numerology ... or just a quirk of fate?
I think it's more than that you know, as I've heard wiser men,
Acknowledge there are many things that go beyond our ken

Where craggy peaks guard secrets, neath dark skies torn asunder,
Where hoof beats are companions, to the rolling waves of thunder
Where lightning cracks like 303's, and ricochets again,
Where howling moaning gusts of wind, sound just like dying men.

Some Mountain cattlemen have sworn, on lonely alpine track,
They've glimpsed a huge black stallion ...with Light Horseman on his back.
Yes skeptics say, it's swirling clouds, just forming apparitions.
Oh No, my friend you can't dismiss all this as just superstition.

The desert of Beersheba ... or a windswept Aussie range,
John Stuart rides on forever there ... I don't find that at all strange.

Now some gaze upon this photo, and they often question me,
And I tell them a small white lie, and say he's family.
'You must be proud of him.' they say ... and I tell them, one and all,
That's why he takes ... the pride of place ... The Anzac on the Wall.

@Copyright circa 2005 by Jim Brown



Vale KA (Alan) "Bushy" Read (VX25157)

26 January 1920— 5 August 2014



Alan "Bushy" Read (centre) on top of a pyramid in Egypt

Born on Australia Day, 1920, Alan "Bushy" Read had a long and interesting life.

Those close to him knew him as a true gentleman with a great sense of humour and a wonderful generosity.

Christened Keith, he was Alan to his friends, Bussy to his family, and "Bushy" to his army mates.

He grew up in the Swan Hill / Lake Boga region of Victoria and joined the Department of Supply on leaving school.

He enlisted in June 1940, initially serving with the 2nd/2nd Heavy A-A Regiment before transferring to the 2nd/3rd Light A-A Regt. Alan was one of 56 members of the 2nd/3rd transferred to the 2nd/4th Light A-A Regt, when raised in the Middle East in 1943.

Alan embarked for overseas service with the 2/3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment in December 1940, celebrating his 21st birthday on the ship by losing his and his mate's money in a two-up game.

He served in the Western Desert, Suez, El Alamein, Milne Bay and finished his war service in Townsville.

In between the Middle East and New Guinea, he married his childhood sweetheart, Raymonde.

Discharged from the Army in March 1945 as a Lieutenant, he re-joined the Department of Supply. Over the ensuing years he served as an administrator on Nauru, in Adelaide, at Maralinga, Woomera and was responsible for Aboriginal mission stations in South Australia. He eventually returned to Canberra where he was the Commissioner for Housing.

Alan then spent about 10 years in the mining industry, followed by a period in Sydney as the Secretary of the NSW Real Estate Institute before retiring to Queensland to grow avocados, lychees and custard apples. His final years were spent in Buderim on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

"Bushy" was a staunch supporter of the Association and contributed anecdotes and stories, and/or explanations about the Regiment on a regular basis.

He wholeheartedly supported the proposal to transfer management of the Association to the descendants of the original service members – he wrote "*Thank you and other younger fry for taking over the Management of the 2nd/3rd*"

Alan was one of the selected interviewees (No. 1291) who contributed to the "Australians At War" film archive.

In 2012, he was one of a small group of Second World War veterans who returned to Egypt to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein and the North Africa campaigns.

To Gympie's 4GY radio announcer Warren Read, Alan was simply Dad - and the man who supplied him with a dash of humour every Saturday morning at 7.30 with the presentation of "My Dad's Joke of the Week."

Bushy lived quietly at his home in Buderim on the Sunshine Coast, sourcing new and old jokes for his radio spot - "Hi. This is Warren's dad, and here's my Joke of the Week, at Classic Hits 4GY".



Radio Gympie 4GY's Warren Read with his Dad, Alan "Bushy" Read

Vale GI (Ian) Rutter (VX47927)

13 August 1916 – 19 September 2014

Editor's Note: I first met Ian Rutter in 2008, when as part of the "Remembrance Group" transfer, I became the Secretary of the Association. I had many conversations with Ian over the ensuing years, appreciated his contributions, welcomed his comments and enjoyed his company — Colin Bragg

Ian was 22 when he joined the 7th Battery of the 2nd/3rd ALAAR - a Bofors Regiment with no Bofors.

He trained at Caulfield and Werribee Race Courses prior to embarkation to the Middle East in December 1940.

In April 1941, the 7th Battery was shipped to Suda Bay in Crete to combat the German drive through the Balkans to Greece.

Ian had his first look at a Bofors gun at Suda Bay, and spent his time practising gun drills. The Battery was then moved to Maleme to defend the airfield, where up to seven air raid warnings in a day was not unusual.

The strafing and bombing lasted approx. a month before the Germans launched the largest air borne invasion in history on 20 May 1941.

The Battle of Crete lasted 10 days, before the island was taken.

Sadly many of the 7th Battery, including Ian, were captured and spent the next four years as POWs.

Ian was initially held captive on Crete, and then Greece before being transported to Hammelberg in Germany.

As a result of pretending to be French, Francois (Ian) was able to attend a German operetta, which began his life long love of operetta.

Ian's wartime memoirs, entitled "Run Rabbit, Run" sets down in great detail his POW experiences.

In 2001, Ian was one of 20 veterans from Australia to visit Greece and Crete to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the battles fought on their soil in 1941.

As part of the celebrations, there was a re-enactment of the parachute invasion.

During this occasion, Ian met the Duke of Kent and the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clarke.

The Crete Anniversary Commemorations rekindled Ian's interest in the Association and he was a staunch supporter of the creation of the "Remembrance Group"

Ian would ring me occasionally, usually not long after the Association's annual newsletter had been posted out, to congratulate us on the newsletter, to comment on one or more of the stories, and/or to add to our pool of knowledge.

When Ian was contacted to see if he would like to represent the 7th Battery at an Air Defence Luncheon in May 2012, his initial response was "I have nothing to contribute" – how wrong he was!

Subsequent to the lunch, Ian rang me to express his

appreciation of being invited and to say how much he had enjoyed talking to the young Air Defence Officers.

After the war, Ian resumed his NAB banking career, primarily stationed in country Victoria, before moving to Head Office as an accountant, until his early retirement in the mid-1950's.

Ian had a long and close relationship with Legacy through the East Ringwood Branch, but still found time to pursue his great love of golf (until 89 years), continue with his writing and poetry, follow current affairs and sport with a keen interest, and establish the Tooronga Book Mart, from which he finally retired in 2000.



Captain Mike Squire in discussion with Ian Rutter.

Bofors On Sydney Harbour Bridge?? (cont)

PINCHGUT

When in Sydney recently, Honorary Treasurer Colin Bragg ventured out to Fort Denison (known as "Pinchgut" to the convicts who were consigned to the island in the early colonial days) in the middle of Sydney Harbour.

Colin discovered a ten-sided concrete base on which a 3 inch, 20 hundred weight (1,016 kg) anti-aircraft gun had been mounted during WW2 as part of Sydney's wartime defence against Japanese attack. Apparently, the gun could be lowered to fire at enemy ships approaching the harbour.



Ten sided concrete base of anti-aircraft gun emplacement on Fort Denison in Sydney Harbour.

Vale Terry Gleeson – Signals (NX58765) 3 September 1921 - 11 July 2014

Editor's Note: Terry Gleeson was the last surviving member of the Signals Section attached to the 2/3 Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. He had a close relationship with the Association's Research Officer, David McDonald, whose father Robert McDonald, was also a member of Signals. Soon after Terry passed away, his daughter Mary Gleeson provided the Association with a copy of Terry's recollections of his "Early Years", which covers his time with the 2nd/3rd. The following is an extract of Terry's "Early Years". The full version (some 20 pages) may be accessed on, and/or down loaded from our web site.

War broke out on my 18th birthday and in January 1940, I won the N.S.W. State Senior Mile Championship. Recruitment for the Armed Services was in full swing, and I tried to join up, but was knocked back because of my age. 21 years was the enlistment age, and I looked about 16 years old. Eventually, in July 1940, stating that my age was 23, I was accepted into the 2nd A.I.F. My last Will and Testament was witnessed by a Lieutenant Cutler, later Sir Roden Cutler, V.C. and the Governor of New South Wales.

On 30th November 1940, I lined up in the 880 yards Championship, against a chap named McDonald, Australian Professional Champion over 880 yards and the Mile, and Gerald Backhouse, Australian Amateur Champion, among other very good athletes. I won the race in record time from McDonald and Backhouse. Less than 12 months later, Backhouse lost his life in a bombing raid over Germany. He was a wonderful friend to me and gave me invaluable advice relative to athletics. (My prize for winning the Fighting Forces Championship was a mantel clock presented by Sir Robert Menzies. We had it in our home for many years.)

On arriving in the Middle East, we had our first experience of War - there were wounded soldiers from the desert, evacuees from Crete and Greece, enemy planes in the sky - it seemed so unreal. Later we crossed into Palestine to a place called Hill 69, where we did our training for the desert. I thought that I was going to die, chlorinated water and dreadful food, the heat and flies, plus the hard training, after such a long sea journey was very tough. We went back to Egypt into the desert where our Unit, the 2/3 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment provided protection for the fighter planes used to strafe enemy positions.

The Signal Unit had to provide a telephone connection between gun positions, which were often damaged by trucks running over them, or by enemy action. A Wireless signal post would be set up well in front of the airfield to give warning of approaching enemy aircraft. This was usually the first casualty. Our Unit was in bad shape at this time, one of the Batteries was captured in Crete, one was besieged at Tobruk, and the remainder were using captured Italian guns instead of Bofors.

Eventually, we moved from Egypt to Hill 95 Palestine, where we had a great time. We did all the tourist trips to Bethlehem, Dead Sea, The River Jordan, Garden of Gethsemane, Mosque of Omar, Way of the Cross and Jerusalem. We were able to play cricket, rugby and there was a movie theatre.

Also the Battery from Tobruk rejoined us. It was so moving when they marched in, many of them walking wounded. Many had lost their lives, some had won medals, and some were captured.

Back In Australia—After leaving Perth, we headed east and berthed at Adelaide, but I have no memory of that. We disembarked and went by troop train to Adelaide, the date being St. Patrick's Day, 17th March 1942.

A massive crowd of Army, Navy and Air Force personnel was present and a number of military bands. We were overwhelmed at the reception,

and felt quite humble until a Sergeant Major roared out to us "Clear off the station you scruffy lot, General MacArthur has arrived." Unknown to us, the famous General was on our train, and the reception committee was for him.

I spent Christmas Day 1943 at Berkshire Valley, inland from Moora, WA, and it was a very happy experience. Trips to New Norcia and playing cricket and Rugby against various Army Units. We had a very talented cricket team, and we suffered our first defeat at Berkshire Valley by a N.S.W. Army Unit. Next day, six of the team who beat us were killed by a premature mortar explosion. Several other soldiers were also killed, and a Memorial has been erected in their honour by the Moora RSL, on the Berkshire Valley Road.

April 1945—There was no great drama leaving Sydney Harbour. The people of Sydney had become quite used to troopships on their way to War after 5 years of hostilities. Eventually, we arrived at Hollandia, which was the capital of Dutch New Guinea - it is now controlled by Indonesia, and is known as Irian Jaya. It was the headquarters of General Douglas MacArthur. The troops couldn't believe the scenery- huge volcanic mountains and impenetrable jungle; it was our first experience of that sort of terrain and it was awe-inspiring. We were in and out of various Islands to avoid Japanese submarines, and at one stage we berthed at Biak, which was a giant harbour for warships. We had no idea where we were going, and one day there was great excitement on the ship - the War in Europe had ended.

We had a Sergeant whose nickname was "Jojo the dog-faced boy". He was the one who had to climb the coconut tree and secure the cable. He was wearing steel calipers on his legs which were used for climbing trees. He went up the tree and secured the cable and climbed down, crossed the creek and prepared to climb the other tree. He was moaning about the mosquitoes biting him, so someone poured a bottle of army insect repellent over his head and shoulders. Up the tree went Jojo, and three-quarters up the tree he let out a blood-curdling scream and dropped the pliers he was carrying. They landed on the head of the soldier who was steadying the coconut tree, as it was coming adrift. Then he lost his balance and fell in the creek. Next down came the coconut tree with Jojo still attached, and landed in the creek. It was pandemonium, as we thought Jojo had been shot. When we realized that it was the insect repellent that had travelled down to his back passage that had caused him to scream, we all fell about laughing.

On the morning of 2nd September 1945, my 24th birthday, we received news that the formal surrender had been signed in Japan, and a week later I witnessed one of the most memorable events in my Army life. It was the surrender of the 14th Japanese Army, which was held on a Sports Field at Morotai on the 9th September, 1945..



Terry Gleeson is the young man sitting at the front of the group.

At The 2014 AGM



Emma Heddle, with some of the equipment used by her great grandfather, Charles Heddle, 9 Battery.

At The 2014 March



Amy and April Rose, great granddaughters of Clive Rowe, RHQ, with their home made miniature Regimental banners.

Vale Frank Hands (VX52835) 4 June 1919 — 11 September 2014

8th Battery member, character and regular attendee at AGMs and Annual Reunions, Frank Hands passed away on 11 September 2014.

Frank led a charmed life during his time with the 2nd/3rd LA-A Regiment- he arrived in the Middle East too late to be sent to Crete, was diverted to Adelaide en route to Java, was sent to Buna long after the Battle of Buna was fought and won, and spent the rest of the war in either Western Australia or Queensland defending American air bases.

He often stated he had "never fired a shot in anger"

He was a regular at the Anzac Day march in Melbourne, although the last two times Frank "marched", he was in the front seat of a vintage car.

Frank was an accomplished jeweller and many members are fortunate to be the proud possessor of one of his miniature silver Bofors lapel badges.

An inveterate traveler, Frank drove his big red Mercedes van some 400,000 miles all over Australia.

A great raconteur, with a wicked sense of humour, Frank will be sadly missed.

Frank's full story was featured in the 2012 issue of "Take Post", available on the Association web site.

Editor's Note: I have fond memories of marching with Frank down St Kilda Road on Anzac Day. I had to hold on to him as he had a tendency to follow the tram tracks to South Melbourne rather than to the Shrine.



Tom Loughnan, grandson of Griff Weatherly, 9th, and Matthew Heddle, grandson of Charles Heddle, 9th, carry the Regimental banner. Earl Webster, 7th, had pride of place at the head of those who marched.



2nd/3rd ALA-A Regiment Association members, including David McDonald, Malcolm Wigglesworth, Ruth Harvey, Oliver Pope, Ben Pope, Margaret Wigglesworth, Lynton Rose and Ann Bragg assemble prior to the Anzac Day march.



Frank Hands "marching" on Anzac Day 2013

Candid Camera at the 2014 AGM and 2014 Anzac Day March



View across the room prior to commencement of formalities



Incumbent Secretary Malcolm Wigglesworth with Margaret Wigglesworth with outgoing Secretary Colin Bragg.



President Anne Rae with the late Frank Hands (8th)



Alan Gorman (son of Frederick Gorman (9th) with Gary Spry (son-in-law of David C Bell 8th) and Robin Spry, daughter of David C Bell



Earle Webster (7th), John Marshall (7th) John Campbell (8th) and the late Frank Hands (8th)



An example of the memorabilia provided for the reunion by Graeme and Matthew Heddle and Foster Crooke



Left: Foster Crooke (Son of JD Crooke (9th) in deep discussions with Robin Spry (daughter of David C Bell , 8th)