



Take Post

April 2016

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

ANZACS OF CRETE : ARCHIPELAGO OF SOULS



German Paratroopers Over Suda Bay, Crete, May 1941

*We are indebted to Nick Andriotakis, Secretary, Joint Committee for the Commemoration of the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign for alerting us to the **Archipelago Of Souls** by author Gregory Day—an award winning novelist, poet and musician based in Victoria, who travelled to Crete when he was 21 and was impressed by the philoxenia (hospitality) given to him by the Cretan people and more so because he was an Australian. They continually talked to him about the Battle of Crete and the role of the Anzacs and this left on him a burning impression and a desire that one day he must write a novel on this story. About twenty years later, his new novel "ARCHIPELAGO OF SOULS" is the result. The review below, dated 4 July 2015, was written by Jane Sullivan of the Sydney Morning Herald. The photo above is from the Australian War Memorial.*

Gregory Day looks out the window of the Pier Restaurant at Lorne, towards a stunning view of the Southern Ocean and headlands marching off to the east. He's been writing about this coast, his home turf, for three novels. Now he's moved further afield, to two far apart islands.

One is the Mediterranean island of Crete, home of the labyrinth and the Minotaur, Daedalus and Icarus and the ancient Minoan civilisation. "This coast is a little bit similar," he says, waving at the view. "But it lacks the mythological history." Because of the genocide of indigenous people, "it's been taken away from us".

The other island is about 64 kilometres south from where we sit, windswept King Island in the Bass Strait. Day loves the

place and goes there as often as he can, but it's not an easy island to get around. Once he was driving in a storm so intense that he had to stop the car and wait for the wind and rain to pass.

Who can unite these very different places? An Australian soldier in World War II, Wesley Cress, who finds himself left behind in Crete after the Germans have invaded and Allied troops have evacuated. At the end of the war, a hero of the resistance, he returns to King Island to lick his psychological wounds and feel his way cautiously towards love and redemption.

Continued on page 9

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

John (Jack) Leaker SX056304
Earle "Slim" Webster (VX44594)
Clifford John Cullen (NX95625)
Rex Nelson Emmett (VX50407)
Thomas "Tom" Dusting (VX 147399)
William Alfred Sutherland (VX46280)

SUB-Unit

8 Battery
7 Battery
9 Battery
7 Battery
9 Battery
7 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 2015/16

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— 2016 AGM



President – Anne Rae

2016 marks the 75th anniversary of the departure of the 2nd/3rd Australian Light Anti -Aircraft Regiment from Fremantle and its arrival in Haifa, Palestine.

The Regiment embarked on HMT Mauretania at Port Melbourne on 29 December 1940. The convoy arrived at Fremantle on 3 January 1941, reaching Colombo on the 14th January where the Regiment transferred to HMT Devonshire. On 30 January the Regiment arrived at Haifa, Egypt, and on the following day disembarked and moved by train and bus to Kassa Camp, where the 2nd/16th Infantry Battalion had erected tents and had an evening meal waiting for them. On 6 February 1941, 8th Battery moved out for Libya; this Battery had not been issued with any guns and on arrival at Tobruk had to make do with captured Italian 20mm Breda Lt A.A. Guns.

On 11 April 1941, 7th and 9th Batteries moved out of Kassa (with Bofors guns) to join Lustre Force to defend Greece. Due to the rapid change in events in Greece, 7th Battery was ordered to Crete to defend British air bases on the island, and 9th Battery was ordered to the Western Desert to defend air bases in that area.

Thus we also mark the 75th anniversary of:

- the Battle for Crete and subsequent evacuation which began in May 1941 and involved 7th Battery

- the Siege of Tobruk from April 1941 involving 8th Battery and

Operation Battleaxe in June 1941 (to raise the siege of Tobruk) involving 9th Battery.

This year's Take Post contains a wonderful mix of poignant, informative and humorous articles.

Our cover story is a book review of *Archipelago of Souls* by Gregory Day (2015 Picador Australia). I was sitting in my island paradise on Flinders Island in Bass Strait late last year when a friend recommended this novel due to the references to King Island and its similarities to Flinders. I immediately ordered the book when I also discovered that its fictional character is an Australian soldier on German occupied Crete during the war. Like Gregory Day, when I visited Crete in 1985, I found the Cretan people very warm and hospitable particularly when I mentioned that my father's regimental mates had served on Crete during the war. A fascinating read. I recommend it to you. Incidentally, I am currently reading Magda Szubanski's *Reckoning* (2015 The Text Publishing Co. Australia). One of the issues she explores is coming to terms with the deeds committed in war time and the notion of bravery, specifically the deeds of her father in the Polish Resistance and of her relationship with him. Another good read.

There's news from the Honorary Secretary and also Research Officer including enquires and information from family members about members of the regiment.

Other stories include a return to Borneo of eight WW2 veterans last year to commemorate the 70th anniversary of their contribution to the Oboe campaign—the landings of Australian troops on Borneo to liberate the island from Japanese occupation. Our 9th Battery contributed to

Operation Oboe in June- July 1945.

The Australian Mint has minted a new coin paying tribute to the Australian World War 2 soldiers and commemorating the battle for Crete as part of its *Australia at War* series. I do think that the anti-aircraft gun on the coin looks like a stylised version of a Bofors and the gunner in the foreground has a cunning resemblance to one I've seen in photos of a regimental gun crew.

The article on aircraft recognition and bomb types, originally published in 1943, would have been somewhat less helpful than the disciplinary antics of "Spotter George" the white cockatoo who was the mascot of the New Guinea Air Warning Wireless Company, or "Gunner" the kelpie in alerting the troops of impending air raids in the Northern Territory!

Sadly we also read of the passing of six more of our "boys" including a Vale to Earle Webster who became known to us through his attendance at the annual reunion and AGM. He will be greatly missed.

Each year our numbers at the Anzac Day march are increasing and I encourage family members to come and join us. Our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers, the original members of the Association, were keen for us to continue in their memory and in the memory of their mates who didn't return and to meet together to enjoy each other's company. Attendance at the AGM and Reunion and at the march on Anzac Day enables us to do this.

Anne Rae



TOBRUK HARBOUR—AWM DIARAMA

From the Secretary's Desk



Secretary - Malcolm Wrigglesworth

Welcome and hearty greetings to all members to the 2016 2nd / 3rd LAA Regt Association AGM and the Regiment's Annual Luncheon.

Another year has flown by so quickly, and once again my thoughts turn to the preparation for this years AGM, annual reunion arrangements and Anzac Day March, and preparation and production of "Take Post" and what information I have for the Secretary's Report. Well , it turns out from my notes over the past 12 months there is plenty!

From the Secretary's Desk.

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

This year a lot of the correspondence from members and relatives of members has been attended to by David McDonald via email or telephone conversation, which has made the Secretary's job a lot easier.

There has on occasions been via phone calls or email direct to myself, and so I will pass on some of the 'happenings'.

We heard from Elaine Hurst daughter of **Philip Hurst** to advise that Philip is now living in a nursing home and being 96 and quite frail is unable to attend meetings or reunions. Thank you for all the news that you have sent him of the Regiment over the years.

Jan Fitzhardinge (Daughter of **Rosalie Fitzhardinge**) ringing to advise that her mother Rosalie died November, 2010 and informed the Association of change of address for future copies of Take Post and any correspondence to be forward to herself at this address. Her brother maybe also interested as a member of the Association.

Jan's father was stationed in Papua New Guinea in the Militia and died in 1999 aged 83 years.

Joe Farrugia President of Springvale RSL Sub-Branch telephone to advise that **Tom David Dusting's** mailing address had changed and he was now residing at Greenwood Manor, Dingley. Tom looks forward to past and present annual issues of Take Post.

Maureen Welsh rang to advise that **William Patrick Sexton VX53091** has been deceased for over 15 years. He was with the 9th Battery. Thank you Maureen for this information.

I have received a number of enquiries from relatives and family members requesting information about the Regiment and whether a relative would have been a serving member of the 2nd/3rd LAA Regiment. These enquiries are often regarding the 2nd/4th LAA Regt , to which 56 2nd/3rd members were transferred when it was established in 1941.

Enquiries were received from :-

Michael Young from Newcastle enquiring on 2nd/3rd Pioneers attached to the 9th Battery

Val Date (Niece) rang to inform that she would be sending a photo of her Uncle Adam John Stanley Gregson (Digger) VX44271 POW Stalag 13 B / 13A Apparently Digger was a larrikin and

failed to comply with a German Court order according to Val. Val is researching more information on his war activities and will forward when to hand.

I received a phone call from Howard Combes and later from his brother Warren regarding their father in the 2nd /4th LAA Regt (transferred from the 2/2 HAA) seeking information on his service and the unit.

The Combes enquiry came from researching our Web site. Howard and Warren were directed to the Association's Research Officer, David McDonald for any further information they required.

Another enquiry came from a Probus Club in Central NSW requesting contact details for Michael Bendon and whether he was willing to give a talk on THE FORGOTTEN FLOTILLA TANK LANDING CRAFT (Take Post April 2015 front page article). Apparently they had discovered the Forgotten Flotilla article on the 2nd / 3rd web site.

These enquiries were attended to with the best of my knowledge. More specific or technical information or details that relatives and members were seeking have been passed onto Research Officer David McDonald for a more comprehensive response.

The Year In Review

I have on a couple of 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 the following servicemen:-

John (Jack) Leaker (SX056304)

Earle Webster (VX44594) (7th)

Clifford John Cullen from NSW NX95625 transferred to 9th after serving with the 114th LAA Regt when in Queensland.

.....and the Sentry's Log

Rex Nelson Emmett (VX50407 (7th)
Tom David Dusting (VX147399)
William Alfred Sutherland (VX46280)

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 inspiration for future generations.

Donations

The Association has again received donations from members, which enables us to continue to do what we do, and to provide for unscheduled technical maintenance of our web site. Specifically, we were required to upgrade our web site software in January to combat the increasing risk of the site being deliberately hacked or accidentally corrupted.

I would like to thank all members who have made donations throughout the year, and in particular Foster Croke, Esme Curtis, Dorothy Harris, Anne Rae and Rosemary Weatherly.

2nd / 3rd Website

Over the past 12 months Malcolm Romano has finished making changes to the home page of our web site, which now includes a separate link for Prisoners of War (POWs).

Under this link we now have the following:-

- Katrina Kittel's research relating to those members of the Regiment who were held as POWs, and to the 2nd/3rd POWs in Italy following their escape from camps in 1943..

- The list of 2nd /3rd members who escaped into Switzerland from Italy

If any Remembrance Group members have other information / stories / relevant material which you think could or should be located under POWs please let myself or the committee know.

The decision to establish the web site in 2008 has clearly satisfied its initial aims and objectives which were:

1. To establish a permanent location for the records, photos, memorabilia and history of the Regiment before the march of time meant these important records were lost forever
2. To provide a source of information for descendants of original members of the Regiment
3. To provide a data bank of material for researchers and historians
4. To provide links to relevant associated web sites

Analysis of visits to the web site reveals we have had up to almost 2,500 page views in any given month, with approximately 90% of these views being from new visitors.

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.

Remembrance Group

The Remembrance Group continues to grow and currently numbers approximately 100 members, of whom 46 and 3 originals attended the 2015 AGM and Reunion Lunch — a very satisfying number in the end, as earlier on in April acceptance numbers were down compared with 2014. I know the new committee and the original members were very pleased with the excellent number who attended a very excellent and entertaining reunion.

Please remember to advise me or Colin Bragg (Treasurer) of changes to your address, email and phone numbers, so we can keep in touch with further developments or events that maybe forthcoming later in the year.

Sentry's Log By David McDonald

As the Association's Research Officer I have the pleasure of responding to requests (mostly by email) 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.anti-aircraft.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 service 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@anti-aircraft.org.au if you need further assistance in understanding the service records.

Sentry's Log (continued)

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

James Goddard sought information for his forthcoming visit to Crete regarding his father Jim Goddard 7 Battery, POW. Information provided included GPS co-ordinates for locations on Crete.

John Carter, son of Maurice Elliott Carter of 2/3 Comp AA Regt, also served in the 2/17th LAA Battery (Airborne) and sought information on colour patches. John became a member of the Association.

Diane Barker sought information regarding her father, Stanley Richard Davies, who served with the 235th LAA Battery.

Colin Menger enquired regarding Gunner Roy Spencer ADDISON - NX22056 – family member. In 2/3 Battery, 2/1 LAA Regt, wondered why not listed in our nominal roll.

Alex Vukovich requested a high quality image of the Royal Yugoslav Army PoWs standing with the Australian and French PoWs on our website as part of his research of a POW camp at Osnabruck where Yugoslav PoWs were held.

Jed Rowan contacted us with an offer of photographs.

Katrina Kittel, a researcher of WW2 POWs in Italy etc, offered to provide information for our web site. Katrina's information has now been added to our website links and placed under the POW section of the web site.

Taylor Carvolth contacted us seeking information on her grandfather WX39368 Gunner Cyril CARVOLTH of the '2/3 AUST A A REGT S/L BTY', as the AWM Nominal Roll has it. Not one of our members. Suggested he might be 2/3 Composite AA Regt, and provided details on accessing his service record.

James Sanderson, a former reservist with 23 Field Regiment artillery, the successor to 2/3 Field Regiment AIF, advised of his web site <http://www.sandysbooks.com.au/>. James is writing a book on his experiences *Weekend Warriors*, and sought information on links between us and them. Excerpts from *On Target* provided, he said they are helpful.

Howard Coombs phoned me re his father in the 2/4th LAA Regiment ex 2/2 Heavy. Sought information on his service and the unit.

Paul West sought information regarding his great uncle VX44958 TURNER, LP. Pointed out that we have him as a gunner but he was a sergeant. Actually he was a gunner in our 9 Battery, then a Sergeant at discharge in the 2/3 Anti-tank Regt.

Maggie 'I found this on my wiki tree how can I find out if you have a photo or if he still alive' Re N211323 Gunner George FEAR, 52 Australian Anti Aircraft Regiment.

Mark Ryan sought information about his father (VX59221 Cpl K.J. Ryan) who was a member of the 2/2 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment - Mark was particularly interested in information regarding war diaries and other matters.

Drina Jones contacted us regarding her father QX42889 Stanley Charles Noel CUTLACK, 2/1 Comp AA Regt, specifically regarding his post-WW2 CMF service. Referred to CARO: Central Army Records Office, Defence Archive Centre - Fort Queenscliff (DAC-FQ)

GPO Box 1932, Melbourne VIC 3001

email adf.persrecordenquiries@defence.gov.au

Warren Smith Re QX50692 Gunner David Darcy JENKINS, 9 Battery, 2/3 Comp AA Regt: 'Please find attached records of my father in law serving in your regiment. I am not sure how much service and or action he saw in NG but it would appear he was a bit of a ratbag. I would be very interested in hearing

any news about Davey Jenkins.'

Adam Elliot contacted us regarding a visit to Milne Bay. His grandfather Lance Bombardier John 'Jack' Malone VX35250 was there, and Adam wanted information about locating where they were at Gili Gili. He subsequently sent us photos and information that was passed on to Secretary Malcolm Wigglesworth for consideration for *Take Post*.

Phil Darlow requested information on his grandfather Ernest LAMBOURN who served at Milne bay as a Gunner during 1942/43. Not in our Unit. Advised re getting his records.

Mat Teffer's screenplay about our men on Crete and subsequently, *The High Ground*, reached the quarter-finals in the 2015 global screenplay competition Scriptapalooza: <http://scriptapalooza.com/winners/index.php> but apparently went no further.

A recent episode of Radio National's The Body Sphere related to 'Human medical experiments' <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bodysphere/human-medical-experiments/7221784>.

It details experiments by a German doctor on five Australian soldiers captured on Crete. I will follow-up with the speaker to see if any were from the 2/3rd.

A Gunner To The Moon

BY VX87177, Louis Herbert Clark, 5 Australian Infantry Battalion

Editor's Note: Originally published by the Australian War Memorial in 1944 in Jungle Warfare, which was comprised of contributions from serving members of the Australian Army in the south west Pacific.

O hide your eyes—draw close your fine spun veil;
Behind that smile of phantom passion leers
Horribly splendid wisdom, fed of years
So mighty that I think, and thinking pale;
Smile on, you witch, o'er hill and dale,
Across your face the sullen bomber veers,
And flits through stars (remorse grants you these tears).

Pregnant with doom it comes—the siren's wail.
I scan its course—the shrieking heavens hurl
My little kiss of death—afar the slow,
Sweet flush of dawn seeps up, the stale fumes curl,
Forgive me, fading moon, like you I whirl,
In glory's blaze and know not where I go.

VX87177



Return to Borneo *(The following is an extract from the DVA publication Vet Affairs, Volume 31, No. 3, Spring 2015)*

Eight WW2 veterans returned to former battlefields in June to commemorate the 70th anniversary of their contribution to the Oboe campaign— amphibious landings of Australian troops on Borneo to liberate the island's people from Japanese occupation.

Aged 89 to 96, the veterans represented the three Australian services and each of the three *Oboe* landings which took place from May to July 1945. The group was accompanied by members of Australia's Federation Guard, who provided ceremonial support for the trip.

Over nine days in early June, the veterans travelled to Singapore before visiting significant wartime locations on Borneo. For many of the veterans it was their first trip to Borneo since the war and an opportunity to honour lost mates and share their stories.



They participated in Commemorative ceremonies at the Kranji Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Singapore, the Balikpapan Memorial, the Tarakan Memorial, the Labuan Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Malaysia and the Brunei– Australia Memorial.

They also visited the landing sites of *Oboe 1* at Tarakan and *Oboe 2* at Balikpapan, the surrender Point Memorial on Labuan and attended the opening of a multimedia exhibition depicting the shared wartime experiences of the people of Australia and Brunei.

The then Minister for Veteran's Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of Anzac, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, joined the veterans on Labuan and Brunei and said he was privileged to share this important journey with such fine men.

More than 75,000 Australians served in or supported the *Oboe* landings on Borneo—the final major Australian campaign of the Second World War. The more than 590 who lost their lives are commemorated at the Labuan Commonwealth War

Graves Cemetery and the Memorial to the missing.

Our 9th Battery, then part of the 2/3rd Australian Composite Anti-Aircraft Regiment, made a significant contribution to Operation Oboe in June- July 1945.

The Crete 50 Cent Coin—Australia At War Series

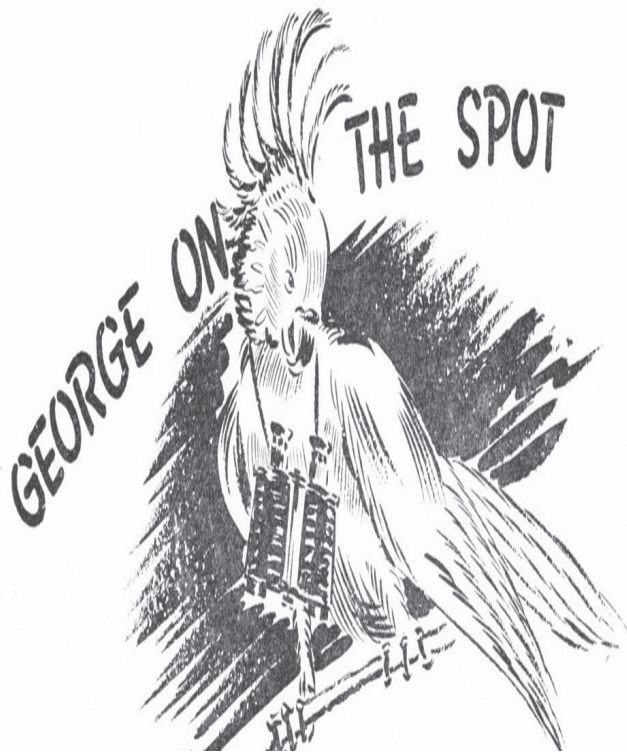
Editor's Note: In recent years, the Australian Mint has produced a series of 50 cent coins commemorating significant battles involving Australian troops during WW2. The coins are uncirculated, generally produced in batches of 50,000, and may be purchased from the Mint for \$10.00.

To quote the Mint "The popular *Australia at War* series continues with this uncirculated coin, paying tribute to the Australian Second World War soldiers who persisted against insurmountable odds at Crete. This coin will be cherished by military historians, coin collectors and those whose families have served in conflict. During the Second World War in 1941, as Australian and Allied troops began withdrawing from Greece, many were relocated to the island of Crete to sustain the Royal Navy's garrison. While German forces were initially engaged in other battles, they sought to capture the island's three main airfields, launching an assault on Crete on 20 May. "

The battle, involving the 7th Battery of the 2nd/3rd ALAA Regiment, began on 20 May 1941, when Germany launched a largely airborne invasion of the island – at that point, the largest of its kind in the history of warfare. The Allies initially held firm, and inflicted significant losses upon the invaders. Germany's capture of Crete's Maleme airfield was decisive, however, as they were able to fly in reinforcements and overwhelm the Allied defenders. Both sides suffered significant casualties, with the number of German paratroopers killed leading Adolf Hitler to ban further large-scale airborne missions.

Similar coins are available relating to El Alamein and Tobruk. For more information see www.ramint.gov.au and then go to **Shopping and Uncirculated Coins**.





Editor's Note: *The following story first appeared in "Signals: story of the Australian Corps of Signals", published in 1944 and reprinted in 1954. Australia, Army, Corps of Signals 1944.*

Whether George was a white parrot or a cockatoo, no one was ever able to decide. George himself was silent on the subject although very voluble on most other matters.

"Spotter George" was a mascot of the New Guinea Air Warning Wireless Company. When he first marched in, George attached himself to the cipher section at Company HQ. After a too enthusiastic effort to digest the contents of a code book, he was forcibly ejected from the section by the clerk who had the unenviable task of reassembling the torn pages.

Changing to the W/T operating section, it was not long before George was taking charge of a "watch". A strict disciplinarian, George was insistent on punctuality at the mess parades. When the whistle blew for the operators' mess, he would fly to the door of the control room till the men came and lined up.

Criticising the parade with a sergeant-major's eye from the cook-house roof until they moved off, he would then fall in line and go through to his meal perched on somebody's shoulder.

On one occasion, during a slack moment in the Spotter Room, one of the operators wrote out in a flash: "Two unidentified hawks flying south. Height 500 feet", and gave it to the runner with the instruction "Give this to George".

It was the runner's first day on duty, and having no idea who George was and thinking that "hawks" was a code word for some type of enemy aircraft, he phoned the flash through to 5th U.S. Air Force before someone put him wise.

On the boat trip from Moresby to Lae, George was as seasick as the next man, but soon recovered and was given the run of the rigging. Shortly after his arrival at Nadzab, George disappeared and it is strongly suspected that he was an unwilling guest at a mess parade of some of the local natives. However, if he proved as tough as his character, full revenge for his death was exacted.

THE LAST POST

We have all heard the haunting tune, 'The Last Post', which gives us the lump in our throats and often tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind The Last Post?

In military tradition, the Last Post is the bugle call that signifies the end of the day's activities. It is also sounded at military funerals to indicate that the soldier has gone to his final rest and at commemorative services such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

The Last Post is one of a number of bugle calls in military tradition that mark the phases of the day. While Reveille signals the start of a soldier's day, the Last Post signals its end.

The call is believed to have originally been part of a more elaborate routine, known in the British Army as "tattoo", that began in the 17th century. In the evening, a duty officer had to do the rounds of his unit's position, checking that the sentry posts were manned and rounding up the off-duty soldiers and packing them off to their beds or billets. The officer would be accompanied by one or more musicians. The "first post" was sounded when he started his rounds and, as the party went from post to post, a drum was played. The drum beats told off-duty soldiers it was time to rest; if the soldiers were in a town, the beats told them it was time to leave the pubs. (The word "tattoo" comes from the Dutch for "turn off the taps" of beer kegs; Americans call this "taps" or "drum taps".) Another bugle call was sounded when the officer's party completed its rounds, reaching the "last post" – this signaled that the night sentries were alert at their posts and gave one last warning to the other soldiers.

The Last Post was eventually incorporated into funeral and memorial services as a final farewell, and symbolises the duty of the dead is over and they can rest in peace.

Its origins are described at the website of the Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs/last-post/> and in Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>



The battalion bugler of the 27th playing the Last Post at sun-down (Frank Hurley). Photo courtesy AWM 010451

There is also an urban myth that The Last Post originated during the American Civil War when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe rescued a wounded Confederate soldier, only to discover the soldier, who had died, was his son. Out of respect for the father, a bugler was purported to have played a series of musical notes Captain Ellicombe had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of his son's uniform. The story actually relates to 'Taps', a U.S. bugle piece played at Military Funerals. Somewhere along the line 'Taps' was replaced with 'The Last Post'.

Continued from Page 1

Day is an author, poet, artist, songwriter and musician who came to prominence as the author of *The Patron Saint of Eels*, winner of the 2006 Australian Literature Society Gold Medal. His next two books were *Ron McCoy's Sea of Diamonds* and *The Grand Hotel*. He describes his fourth novel, *Archipelago of Souls*, 10 years in the making, as "the prelude to a hero".

He wanted to write about the war on Crete, but not a book about war, battles or heroic exploits.

What interested me more was the Australian male psyche in relation to trauma and war... what brings a person to the point they can commit heroic acts. It's not something inbuilt or instinctive.

"It was about Wes discovering what a real culture was, what he was fighting for. He had proof the campaign was a disaster. He had to find a reason to fight, and he had to find it internally. He did find it. But it was a hard lesson."

Day's fascination with Crete goes back to a six-week walking holiday there with a friend when he was in his early 20s. "I have Sicilian blood and I was really into the Mediterranean thing, but I knew very little about what had gone on there. As we walked on, into village after village, it became more and more apparent."

On the walls of the cafes were pictures of Australian soldiers. When the Cretans found out he was Australian, they were extremely warm and welcoming. (But not so much to his friend, who came from Berlin.) Day fell in love with the island and its people and was intrigued by its wartime history.

Decades later, when he began work on *Archipelago of Souls*, he read history books, travelled back to Crete and interviewed many people. He was looking for a trigger for Wes' trauma.

There was no lack of incident: Mussolini's invasion of the island against Hitler's wishes; the retreat of Allied forces from Greece to Crete; the surprise invasion of Crete, not by sea but from the skies, with a huge flock of German paratroopers.

"It was 10 days of terrible chaos for both sides," Day says of the invasion. The Allies lost the battle and had to retreat from Heraklion harbour, but some Australian, New Zealand and British soldiers were left behind. They were hidden in caves, secretly helped by Cretan families, and worked with the British Special Operations Executive to resist the German occupation.

The Cretans were old hands at resistance because they had a history of occupation by the Venetians and Turks, Day says. "That independent fighting spirit they displayed was very important. They put themselves in incredible danger because the reprisals were so savage. The Germans wiped out whole villages."

Day finally found the trigger for his character's extreme anguish and bitterness in one sentence in the historian Antony Beevor's book *Crete: The Battle and the Resistance*.

Beevor mentioned that one evacuation ship, the HMS Imperial, had steering trouble and had to be abandoned. When the soldiers had jumped ship, the Hotspur torpedoed it to prevent it falling into enemy hands, and it sank.

Unfortunately, several "insensibly drunk Australians" went down with the ship. "It took my breath away," Day says. He wrote to Beevor asking

for more information, but the historian couldn't recall his source for certain. Day can't say what happened on that ship, but it fitted into some British officers' prejudice against the Australian troops as undisciplined drunken larrikins.

Then a couple of years ago, Day was at a conference where an elderly uniformed digger in the audience asked what had happened to the wreck of the Imperial. He said he had been on the ship and thought some of his mates had gone down with it. "It's a story that should be told," Day says. Moreover, it gave him his narrative hook: suppose someone dear to Wes was on the Imperial and had been drowned by his own team?

Wes' ordeal on Crete is a gruelling external and internal journey where he is forced to make tough decisions, to confront the violence in himself, and is driven to kill. Day was concerned when writing it that he might be too dark. "In early drafts Wes might have been more bitter, more visceral."

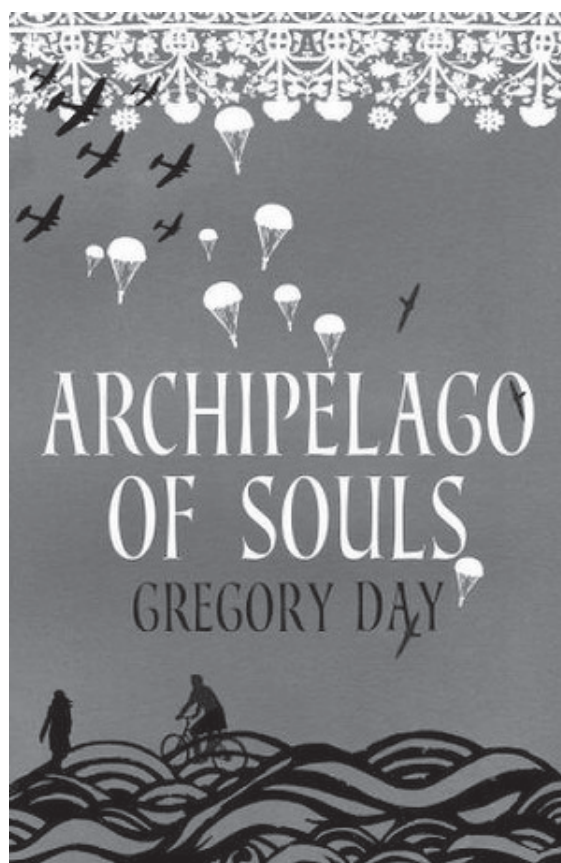
But after three novels it becomes incredibly important that what you write is true. Not life as art, but life as it is. One important thing is darkness and how to portray it so the reader doesn't throw the book away."

What helped, he says, is the beauty of Crete and King Island "I always hope that sustains the reader through difficulty and darkness."

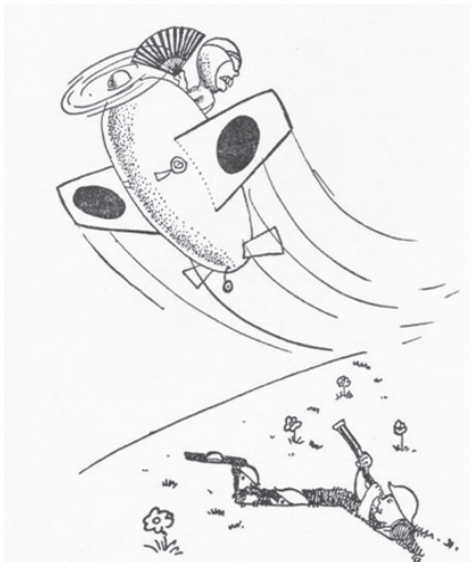
The story is told in alternate chapters: Wes' time on Crete, and his recovery and tentative courtship of Leonie, another damaged soul, on King Island. "There's nothing more novelistic than an island, that almost generic metaphor of individual solitude."

For Wes to process what he was doing on Crete, it felt like he ought to have a mirror space, another side of the coin. Another island."

Wes writes accounts of his wartime experiences and sends them to Leonie, terrified of what she will make of them but also hoping she will read and understand.



AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION The Zero



Editor's Note: Thanks go to Matt Heddle for the following extract from Khaki and Green. Khaki and Green was published by the AWM in 1943 for Australian military forces. The speech is either an extract from a formal address by an air force officer explaining aircraft identification, or a tongue-in-cheek version provided by VX116124, Brian Louis Murray. We will leave it to you to determine the correct explanation!

Broadly speaking, there are two types of aircraft – ours and theirs. In theory these are again divided into various groups; fighter, fighter-bomber, dive-bomber, torpedo-bomber, light-bomber, attack-bomber, medium-bomber, heavy-bomber and recce plane. In practice, they are known as hostile aircraft. In fact, some of them are very hostile. You can have no idea just how hostile aircraft can be until you come to our area.

I shall deal briefly with the problems of aircraft identification. From experiences during air raids, the following points are observed:

Aircraft that strafe or bomb your positions should be regarded with suspicion, if not deep mistrust.

Aircraft that bomb and strafe your positions and wear a red circle should certainly be regarded with deep mistrust. In fact, the deeper, the better.

A six feet deep slit trench is an ideal place from which to mistrust them.

A good idea is to empty a few magazines at the intruder. A bellyful of lead often acts as a gentle hint that the fellow is intruding. Unless he is an absolute cad and bounder, no further hint is necessary.

Newcomers may find difficulty in distinguishing the Zero from the "Wirra". An easy method is as follows:

Zeros fly in formations of twelve upwards. Wirraways fly singly.

This is to demonstrate our air superiority.

You have only to read articles written by War Correspondents serving in Melbourne to learn that Tojo's air force is negligible.

These War Correspondents agree that the Nip dive-bomber has a very poor performance. That is so. In order to hit targets in our area, it bombs from three hundred feet.

Official instructions in regard to the Nips are to ignore them. As the Nips do not appear affected by such snubs, some difficulty may be experienced in ignoring them. However, this attitude is to be emulated as far as possible, although it is generally conceded that it is easier to ignore them from a distance than it is here.

High Level Bombing

Here is the low down on high level bombing. Usually in these circumstances, Nip pattern bombs. This means that he drops bombs all around the target, just to show what he could do if he had air superiority. A good way to identify hostile high level bombers is to observe if our Ack-Ack is firing on them. Unless it is a practice shoot, one may reasonably assume that said high level bombers are hostile.

Bombs

In theory, Nip's bombs fall into several classifications – incendiary, High Explosive, Anti-Personnel and odds and sods. Their size varies from small to big.

In practice, all hostile bombs are very big. They fall into two classes – Direct Hits and Near Misses. Direct Hits are to be avoided if possible. If a Direct Hit is avoided, it becomes a Near Miss. It should be remembered that all bombs are hostile.

It is reliably reported that all Nipponese bomb aimers are cross eyed, thereby accounting for the large number of Near Misses scored.

It is expected that, in time, owing to the increasing shortage of cross eyed Nipponese bomb aimers, Direct Hits will be scored. At present, it is not known what steps will be taken by Imperial Nipponese Headquarters to avoid this.

Bomb Damage

Study of bomb damage may, to the inexperienced, seem simple enough. Not so. After raids, it is often impossible to see any damage caused by the raiders. Not until one listens to Tokyo Radio does one learn of the smashing raids, the huge casualties, and the terrible damage. And the Nips works very silently. One day when he wrecked the railway line and blew up a troop train, not a single raider was seen or heard. Not until we heard Tokyo Radio did we learn of this disaster. Newcomers to "Somewhere In Australia" will see no sign of a railway line or troop trains. Presumably Nip has obliterated all trace of them. And the day, months ago, when the bulk of the garrison was smashed, seemed singularly quiet. No trace of the unfortunate 30,000 killed was ever seen. It disheartened us considerably.

In conclusion the following points of interest are made on "after the raid".

Contact bombs are those that explode on contact, or a fraction of a second later. Besides these, there are delayed action and duds. A "delayed action bomb" is one that lands near you and does explode. A "dud" is one that lands elsewhere and does not go off.

This brings us to the question of bomb disposal. The safest method is to remove yourself as quickly as possible from proximity with the bomb, and summon the bomb disposal squad. This method is practically fool proof as far as you are concerned. If however, there is no bomb disposal squad available – and bomb disposal squads have a habit of disappearing – you must deal with the bomb yourself.

In this case, fix the position of the bomb as accurately as possible from a distance of two hundred yards, and then go away for a couple of months. Upon your return, if the bomb is still there, pack a couple of sandbags upon it, plant a red flag, and go on your way – rejoicing.

The Dirty Thirteen

Siebrand, J (ed.) 1991, Tatura, Vic : Dirty Thirteen Committee 1991

Memoirs of thirteen members of the 2nd/3rd Light Anti Aircraft Regiment during the 2nd World War.

The book comprises personal narratives from the Middle East and New Guinea campaigns collected and edited by Jenny Siebrand, and includes letters to and from friends and loved ones of thirteen members of the Regiment.

The thirteen men, who became known as "The Dirty Thirteen", all grew up or spent their latter youth in the Murchison area of the Goulburn Valley in Central Victoria.

The book had a limited print run and it is difficult to acquire a copy.

The Dirty Thirteen were Neil Anderson (VX44529), Alfred James Brisbane (VX44526), Ernest Edward Cassidy (VX44525), John Barron Cassidy (VX44515), Bernard Richard Cheong (VX44493), Arthur Clarence McClintock (VX44516), William Hilliard Dunbar (VX44513), Thomas Keith Gregory (VX44524), Geoffrey Richard Butler George (44507), John Andrew Keane (VX44502), Leo James Kennedy (VX44509), Alexander Thomas Poole (VX44522) and David John Russell (VX44519).

The book, of 104 pages, comprises the following sections:

Introduction: Details the men's backgrounds, particularly as members of the 20th Light Horse Regiment, their joining the AIF, the voyage to the Middle East, and their arrival in Palestine. This section, as do all sections of the book, contains excerpts from letters to and from the Dirty Thirteen.

Crete: Primarily extracts from Alexander Poole's diary, who was transferred from 9 Battery to 7 Battery with Bill Dunbar, both of whom were killed during the evacuation from Crete.

Western Desert: Letters and diary extracts relating to the desert life around Mersa Matru, Sidi Barrani and East Safaffi.

Operation Battle Axe: Details the unsuccessful Operation Battle Axe.

Cairo: Recollections of time in and around Cairo. Also descriptions of the convoy bringing the troops back to Australia after Darwin was bombed.

After The Middle East: Accounts of the journey from Adelaide to Townsville and the subsequent movement of the Regiment to Port Moresby, Gili Gili and Milne Bay.

Milne Bay: Detailed accounts of activities and events at Milne Bay

After The War: Summaries of the post war activities and lives of the eleven members of The Dirty Thirteen who survived the war.

The diary extracts and recollections contained in the book are at times colourful!!



Front row: Gnr. E. Cassidy, A. Poole, W. Dunbar, J. Cassidy, A. McClintock, J. Keane, G. George, D. Russell,
Sitting: Gnr. K. Gregory, L. Kennedy, Sgt. J. Wilkinson, Lieut. T. Staughton, Bdr. A. Brisbane and N. Anderson, Gnr. B. Cheong.



This year is a particularly important one for the Regiment Association, and for the veterans' community more broadly, because it is the 75th anniversary of a number of important battles, including the Siege of Tobruk and the Battle of Crete.

The Association was invited to participate in the 75th Anniversary Remembrance Service for the Anzac Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign which was held at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney on Saturday 16 April 2016. David McDonald, Association Research Officer, represented the Association at the ceremony.

David laid a wreath in memory of the men of the Regiment's 7th Battery who served with such valour, and with such a high level of casualties, in the May 1941 Battle of Crete.

In memory of the men of 7th Battery, 2/3rd Aust. Light Anti-aircraft Regiment, who fought with such valour, and experienced such heavy casualties, during the Battle of Crete, May 1941

Remembering Tobruk in 2016

The service of all Australians who took part in the battles for Tobruk in 1941 will be commemorated. This includes those who took part in the capture of Tobruk in January and the Siege of Tobruk between April and December, and those who played a vital support role on the sea and in the air.

The 75th anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk will be commemorated at a national service to be held at 11.00 am on Sunday 10 April 2016, at the Rats of Tobruk Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra. Veterans of the campaign who wish to attend the national service and who are experiencing difficulties in making arrangements can contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs on 02 6289 6146.



airmen. A few minutes later a wave of Japanese raiders appeared in the skies above Darwin and began bombing and strafing the town.

Two days later, Gunner began whimpering and jumping again and not long afterwards came another air attack. This set the pattern for the months that followed. Long before the sirens sounded, Gunner would get agitated and head for shelter.

Gunner's hearing was so acute he was able to warn air force personnel of approaching Japanese aircraft up to 20 minutes before they arrived and before they showed up on the radar.

Gunner never performed when he heard the allied planes taking off or landing; only when he heard enemy aircraft as he could differentiate the sounds of allied from enemy aircraft.

Gunner was so reliable that Wing Commander McFarlane gave approval for Westcott to sound a portable air raid siren whenever Gunner's whining or jumping alerted him. Before long, there were a number of stray dogs roaming the base. McFarlane gave the order that all dogs be shot, with the exception of Gunner.

Gunner became such a part of the air force that he slept under Westcott's bunk, showered with the men in the shower block, sat with the men at the outdoor movie pictures, and went up with the pilots during practice take-off and landings. When Westcott was posted to Melbourne 18 months later, Gunner stayed in Darwin, looked after by the RAAF butcher. Gunner's fate is undocumented.

Editor's Note: The following story was sourced from a special edition of the Northern Territory News on 21 April 2011 entitled "The Territory At War" and a Wikipedia article entitled "Gunner (dog)". The story was originally documented in a book entitled "Animal Heroes" by Anthony Hill, published by Penguin in 2005.

The six-month-old black and white male kelpie was found whimpering, having suffered a broken front leg, under a destroyed mess hut at Darwin Air Base on 19 February 1942, following the first wave of Japanese attacks on Darwin. Air Force personnel took him to a field hospital, but the doctor insisted he couldn't fix a "man" with a broken leg without knowing his name and serial number. The doctor repaired and plastered his leg after the air force personnel replied that his name was "Gunner" and his number was "0000". Gunner entered the air force on that day.

Leading Aircraftman Percy Westcott, one of the two airmen who found Gunner, took ownership of him and became his master and handler. At first, the dog was badly shaken after the bombing, but being only six months old he quickly responded to the men's attention. About a week after, Gunner first demonstrated his remarkable hearing skills.

While the men were working on the airfield, Gunner became agitated and started to whine and jump. Not long afterwards, the sound of approaching aeroplane engines was heard by the



Photo: Australian War Memorial 044608

A Digger Died Today

Editor's Note: The following poem was provided by Mrs. Patricia Phillips, wife of Doug Phillips RAA. We do not know the author or the original publication details

He was getting old and paunchy, and his hair was falling fast
And he sat around the RSL, telling stories of the past
Of a war that he once fought in and the deeds that he had done

In his exploits with his mates; they were heroes, every one

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbours his tales became a joke

All his mates listened quietly for they knew where of he spoke

But we'll hear his tales no longer, for old Jack has passed away

And the world's a little poorer for a Digger died today

He won't be mourned by many, just his children and his wife
For he lived an ordinary, very quiet sort of life

He held a job and raised a family, going quietly on his way
And the world won't note his passing, 'tho a Digger died to-day.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state
While thousands note their passing, and proclaim that they were great

The Media tell of their life stories from the time that they were young

But the passing of a Digger goes unnoticed and unsung

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land
Some smoothie who breaks his promise and cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow who in times of war and strife
Goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?

The politician's stipend and the style in which they live
Are often disproportionate to the service that they give
While the ordinary Digger who offered up his all
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps a pension, small

It is not the politicians with their compromise and ploys
Who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys
Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand
Would you really want some cop-out, with his ever-waffling stand?

Or would you want a Digger his home, his country, his kin
Just a common Digger, who would fight until the end?
He was just a common Digger, and his ranks are growing thin
But his presence should remind us we may need his likes again

For when countries are in conflict, we find the Digger's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start
If we cannot do him honour while he's here to hear the praise

Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days

Perhaps just a simple headline in the paper that might say:
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING, A DIGGER DIED TODAY."

VALE EARLE "SLIM" WEBSTER (7TH) VX44594



"Slim" Webster was born in Corryong in the Snowy Mountains on St Patricks Day 1920, which was allegedly a close run thing, having been imported "in dam" from England, where his parents had met and married while his father was recovering from wounds sustained on the Somme. "Slim" left school as soon as he was able, started work on a dairy farm. His move to working on a sawmill began a life long association with woodworking. "Slim" enlisted in 1940 and having come from a small country town was astounded by some of the "big city" trappings such as trams and the abundance of motor cars. He was also pleasantly delighted by watering holes such as Young and Jacksons. "Slim" was very proud to serve his country, and often spoke fondly of his time with the 2nd/3rd, and the men that he served with.

After the war, following many years of correspondence and dating, "Slim" married the love of his life, a girl called Florence, whom he had met in Ballarat in 1940, and they raised three children together. They loved to travel throughout Australia until settling in Ballarat, where Slim started a floor sanding business which is now in its third generation of family ownership. Florence and Slim were together for more than 65 years until Florence passed away in 2011.

Following the death of Florence, Slim was reunited with 2nd/3rd Association, and was a much needed positive experience for him as he struggled with the grief of losing his best friend. He could not speak highly enough of the work the committee had done, and was humbled by the kindness shown to himself and his fellow veterans at the reunion lunches. Undoubtedly one of the proudest moments of his life was when he was able to lead the 2nd/3rd contingent in the 2014 ANZAC Day Parade in Melbourne.

There is no doubt that being part of the 2nd/3rd Association made Slim's final years much more enjoyable and purposeful and it gave him something to look forward to and talk about. A keen fisherman all his life, Slim loved fly-fishing in his beloved Swampy Plains River, and while his feet may have been elsewhere, his heart was firmly in Corryong and his beloved High Country. I would like to think that he is back there now..

RIP Earle 'Slim' Webster

With thanks to Mark Harse, grandson-in-law.

THE VICTORIAN FARM NAMED "KALAMATA"



A young Catherine Bell with her sister standing next to the farm gate.

Editor's Note: Once again, we thank Nick Andriotakis for bringing this interesting story to our attention, which in turn was directed to him by Phil Evans of the United Kingdom based The Brotherhood Of Veterans Of The Greek Campaign 1940-1941

"At various times in my life while I was growing up, people would turn up at the farm not knowing us but having been driving past and seen the sign saying "Kalamata" on the front gate, realising it was soldier settlement property, and so they would come in" - Catherine Bell.

Driving along the dirt roads of rural Victoria is the last place you'd expect find a slice of the Peloponnese, but that's exactly what you'll uncover a little way out from Warnambool.

A farm gate adorned with a wonky sign saying 'Kalamata' marks the old family home and farmland of the Grant family.

Sydney Grant dedicated his soldier settlement property to the Greek people of Messinia who helped save his life in 1941 during WWII.

The soldier in the 2nd/8th Battalion of the 6th Division managed to flee to safety thanks to the generosity of the Greeks who kept him safe and fed him.

As the British and the Anzacs were being evacuated from Greece at Kalamata port after the Germans took over Greece, Syd was one of a number of soldiers left behind.

Escaping from the prisoner of war camp on the Kalamata beachfront, Syd and a few others scabbled along the shoreline of the city and fled to the small village of Trachila. Tragically, only a small number of these soldiers made it to safety.

"We hid in the ruins of the old stone church on the hillside above the village and amongst the olive groves nearby," he

said, recounting the story on tape years later.

"We were at Trachila for a day or so and being fed bread and water by the very kind local people. Then during the night, some villagers came and told us that they had seen water coming in on the wash that meant there were big ships going close by along the coast."

Rushing down to the harbour, Syd used a flashlight to signal SOS, hoping desperately to catch the attention of an allied ship. Worst case scenario, he could be signaling to an incoming German vessel.

Thankfully they were picked up by the British Royal Navy onboard the HMS 'Hero' destroyer.

"The only way the skipper of the Hero would let us onboard was by asking us 'who are you?'," Syd remembers.

"We said 'we're Australians!' and he said, 'How do I know?' And we said 'Of course we bloody well are!' So he asked 'can you sing Waltzing Matilda?'. It was quite a funny sight in the pitch dark, soaking wet, dressed in old Greek clothes and bits and pieces and some blokes with almost nothing on at all, and there we were standing up and singing Waltzing Matilda!"

After returning to his reformed 2nd/8th Battalion in the Middle East, he came back to his native Victoria and set up a sheep farm in the Western District.

The decision to name the property Kalamata was a simple yet poignant gesture.

The sentiment was passed on to his four children, who have fond memories growing up on the property.

"The name Kalamata has such an emotional tug on my heart," Syd's daughter Catherine Bell tells Neos Kosmos. "It's a name that I've grown up with all my life." She remembers helping her father during lambing season, bottle-feeding the little lambs and taking care of the baby ducklings. An idyllic childhood. Amazingly, the farm's name brought with it some chance encounters

"At various times in my life while I was growing up, people would turn up at the farm not knowing us but having been driving past and seen the sign saying 'Kalamata' on the front gate, and realising it was a soldier settlement property, would come in and it was a soldier who had been there in Kalamata all those years ago," she says.

Catherine describes her father as a "character", a friendly and funny man who went out of his way to help his fellow man. "He had a big personality, he was a very jovial, funny person," she says.

"What's interesting, when he used to talk to us children about his war experiences, he didn't want to frighten us or upset us, so he would tell us the funny side of life during the war."

The connection to Greece wasn't far off. Catherine remembers her father's huge love of Kalamata olives, eating around 30 olives a night with his glass of whiskey.

He returned to Kalamata in 1977, 36 years after leaving the shores in the chaos of war.

"It's amazing here with the Greek people," he said. "A couple of old ladies were very intrigued by the photos that I'd taken in

1941. I think I am the only Australian so far who has come back to Trachila. There were only 69 of us who got away from here after a big mob of us had started out from Kalamata."

Feeling like the story of Kalamata belonged to her father, she avoided travelling to Greece during his lifetime.

Only in 2013 did Catherine visit Kalamata for the first time to retrace her father's steps. It was an emotional experience.

"I met a couple of people there whose parents were in their 80s, and who remembered the Australian soldiers in Kalamata," she says.

"One old man said he remembered the kindness of the Australian soldiers, when as a little boy the soldiers had given him sweets."

She hopes to visit Kalamata again next year at the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Kalamata.

Former MP John Pandazopoulos hopes to organise a special commemorative service in Kalamata to mark the Anzac connection. The Messinia community of Melbourne will also join in the commemorations.

Messinia community member Paul Sougleris says it's important to mark the occasion to give some recognition to the Battle of Kalamata.

"Of all the campaigns that were fought in WWII

"Kalamata is one of the forgotten historical campaigns," he says.

"It was earlier on in the war, it was before the Kokoda Trail, and a lot of the families' relatives were captured and ended up as prisoners of war in camps."

Fifty-thousand Allied soldiers were evacuated out of Greece by 1941 at Kalamata. The Germans captured around 8,000 British and Anzac troops who didn't make it onto the ship.

Sydney Grant died in 1990. The family held onto the farm for another seven years until it was sold to the current owners. The farm still holds the name 'Kalamata'.



The fishing village of Trachila (population approximately 200) in Laconia in the Peloponnese region of Greece

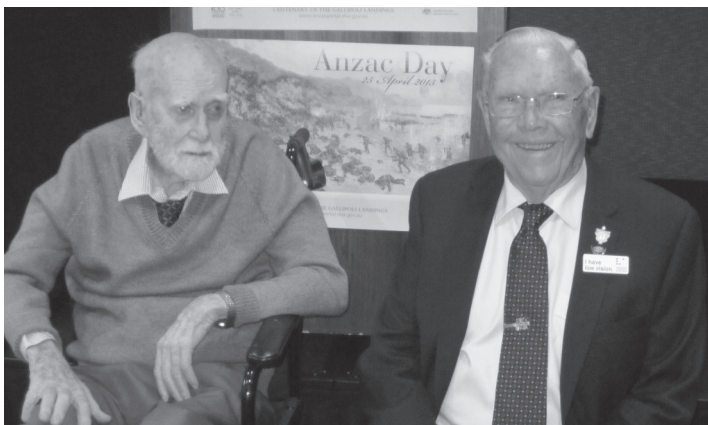
More Photos From The AGM and Annual Reunion Lunch



An attentive audience during the formal proceedings



Barry and Bill Stokes and Heather Beasley, sons and daughter of Major Phil Stokes (8th)



The late Earle "Slim" Webster (7th) and John Campbell (8th)



Graeme Heddle and Emma Heddle, son and great granddaughter of Charles Heddle (9th).

Candid Camera at the 2015 AGM and 2015 Anzac Day March



A somewhat bedraggled Remembrance Group after marching through the rain at the 2015 Anzac Day march.



Association Research Officer, David McDonald during his talk about the 2nd/3rd operations at Milne Bay, New Guinea.



The late Earle Webster (7th) with grand-daughter Ruth Harvey and grandson-in-law, Mark Harse.



Rhonda Rose, daughter-in-law of Clive Rose (RHQ) with Doreen Bryant (wife of late President Ro Bryant) and Russell Luckcock, (son of Charles Luckcock, 9th) browsing the hot off the press 2015 issue of Take Post.



Ian Rae, President Anne Rae, Pat Thurbbeck and Jim Rae—sons and daughters of the late Cec Rae (9th).