

"Sitrep, Over!"



Official Newsletter of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

Editor - David Laing 0407 791 822

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Inside this issue:

Injustice in WW1 continued	2
Editorial	3
Private Gomad reckons.....	4
Members List	5
Remembrance Day 1955	6
February Luncheon and Guest Speaker	7
Australian Women's Land Army	8/9
2016 EOY BBQ	10 12

An apple a day is OK, unless you're a greengrocer.

*The RSAR Association still has 20 members without email access, and for those we send out hard copies for their perusal. The hard copies of this newsletter are kindly printed by the Murray Bridge office of **Tony Pasin MP, Federal Member for Barker**. The Association thanks Mr Pasin and his staff for their generous support.*

Injustice in WW1



As our Federal Government Health Services are only just learning how to treat PTSD, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, it's apparent this illness has been with our fighting forces for hundreds of years. In the First World War it was called "Shell Shock." If you suffered from any type of battle-related confusion in WW2, you were "Bomb Happy!"

My father told me of his time in the North African desert during WW2, when he saw his own mates suffering from strange afflictions that no one could explain. Some were "shipped home in a basket" some were left to themselves. Others suffered the consequences of their actions by being imprisoned, or even worse, executed.

*This is the story of one such sad soul, who was unable to carry out his duties due to what we now know as PTSD. **Editor.***

Eric Poole was born in Nova Scotia, Canada on 20 January 1885. His service record in WO 339/35077 shows that he gained his first military experience in the 63rd Regiment of the Halifax (Canada) Rifles, with whom he served for two years between 1903 and 1905. The Poole family arrived in England at some stage between 1905 and the outbreak of the First World War, settling in Guildford, Surrey.

Injustice..... continued

In October 1914, Poole joined the Honourable Artillery Company, where he worked as a driver (in 'B Battery') for the next seven months. His Territorial Force attestation form reveals that he earned a commission as a temporary second lieutenant in the 14th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment in May 1915. A year later, Poole was transferred to serve in

France with the 11th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment, shortly before it was due to go into action at the Battle of the Somme.

According to the medical history sheet compiled for Poole's general court martial in November 1916 (WO 71/1027), he suffered 'shell shock' after being hit by clods of earth distributed by an enemy shell during fighting on the Somme on 7 July 1916. After a period of recuperation, Poole was returned to duty with his battalion at the end of August. He was soon placed in charge of 'C Company' platoon at Martinpuich near Albert.

According to his own testimony at his trial, the shell-shock injury caused Poole to 'at times get confused and... have great difficulty in making up my mind'. It was in this condition that he wandered away from his platoon on 5 October 1916, during a move into the frontline trenches at Flers.

Poole was apprehended by the military police two days later and arrested on 10 October. In early November, it was decided to try Poole by general court martial for deserting 'when on active service'.



Eric Skeffington Poole

If Deceased Cause <u>Killed</u> Place _____ Date <u>10.12.16</u> Regl. No. <u>559</u>	
Surname (In block letters) <u>POOLE</u>	(If Deceased), the name of N/K _____
Christian Names (In full) <u>Eric Skeffington</u>	Permanent Home Address _____
<u>1914 D.V. RES 3TY.</u> <u>1915. GAZ 2/KT.</u> <u>21st Bn W. Yorks. R.</u> <u>Killed Dec 10th 1916</u>	
Date of Joining _____ Rank and Unit in U.K. _____ Date Overseas _____ Rank and Unit _____	
H. A. C. <u>2 1014</u> OTHER REGIMENTS <u>2 575</u> Date Commissioned or Transferred _____ Rank and Unit <u>14 Bn W Yorks R.</u> Date Overseas <u>1st Dec 1914</u> Rank and Unit _____ If Wounded or Gassed _____ If taken Prisoner _____ Place _____ Date _____ Fronts served on _____	
Highest Rank and Unit in which held _____ Special Appointments, Allied Decorations, Mentions in Despatches, etc. <u>per May.</u>	
<u>SECRET (R.F.)</u>	

The Court Martial

At Poole's trial, held in the town of Poperinghe on 24 November 1916, the prosecution called six witnesses. It was variously noted that Poole's 'nerves seemed rather shaken' and that he had confessed to feeling 'damned bad' on the morning of 5 October.

Two men spoke in Poole's defence, including an RAMC officer who argued that the 'mental condition' of the accused had precluded him from intentionally deserting his company. In his own testimony, Poole outlined his recent medical problems and confessed that he had been unaware of 'the seriousness of not going to the front line on Oct 5th'.

Despite defence pleas, however, the five-man court found Poole guilty of desertion and sentenced him to 'death by being shot'. This verdict was confirmed by Sir Douglas Haig on 6 December 1916, three days after a medical board sent to examine Poole concluded that 'he was of sound mind and capable of appreciating the nature and quality of his actions'.

Poole was executed by firing squad in Poperinghe town hall on 10 December 1916. He was buried in the town's military cemetery.

First Officer to be executed

Eric Poole was the first British army officer to be sentenced to death and executed during the First World War. Despite the abundant evidence that he was medically unfit to command a platoon as a result of the shell shock, Poole seems to have been at least partially a victim of a political decision. In his diary entry of 6 December 1914 (in WO 256/14), Haig wrote disingenuously that 'it is... highly important that all ranks should realise the law is the same for an officer as a private'.

Poole's fate aroused little fuss back in Britain, where his family were understandably anxious to avoid publicity - particularly because his father was seriously ill at the time. The War Office, equally wary of adverse publicity, agreed that Poole's name would not appear in the casualty lists published in British newspapers, and that no information about the circumstances of his death would be made public.

EDITORIAL

by David Laing

Eric Skeffington Poole was only one of over 300 Commonwealth officers, NCOs and other ranks who were tried before a court martial and executed for cowardice in the face of the enemy during that terrible period of WW1. I imagine none of those men had signed up knowing the horrors that awaited them on the battlefields of Europe.

Such executions, for crimes such as desertion and cowardice, remain a source of controversy with some believing that many of those executed should be pardoned as they were suffering from what was then called shell shock, and we know as PTSD. The executions, primarily of non-commissioned ranks, included 25 Canadians, 22 Irishmen and 5 New Zealanders.

Between 1914 and 1918, the British Army identified 80,000 men with what would now be defined as the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. There were those who suffered from severe shell shock. They could not stand the thought of being on the front line any longer and deserted. Once caught, they received a court martial and, if sentenced to death, shot by a twelve man firing squad.

The horrors that men from all sides endured while on the front line can only be imagined.

How much have we learned, as an emerging nation in the 100 years since the Great War? How many advances in research have identified the failings of our society to identify what our soldiers go through on the battlefield?

We were "asleep at the wheel" when our boys came home from Europe, Africa, the Pacific and Asia. We were "asleep at the wheel" again when the Battalions returned from South Vietnam, and we are only now starting to wake up.

We allow our men and women to go off to battle to defend our way of life, and yet we offer very little support when they return, their minds full of the horrors of conflict.

We MUST support our troops like they support us. Now is the time to put the wrong-doings of past societies behind us, and treat our returning personnel like the heroes they really are.

Young people forget that we old people had a career before we retired.....

Charlie, a new retiree-greeter at Bunnings, just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day he was 5, 10, 15 minutes late. But he was a good worker, really tidy, clean-shaven, sharp-minded and a real credit to the company and obviously demonstrating their "Older Person Friendly" policies.

One day the boss called him into the office for a talk.

"Charlie, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic, you do a bang-up job when you finally get here; but your being late so often is quite bothersome."

"Yes, I know boss, and I am sorry and am working on it."

"Well good, you are a team player. That's what I like to hear."

"Yes sir, I understand your concern and I will try harder."

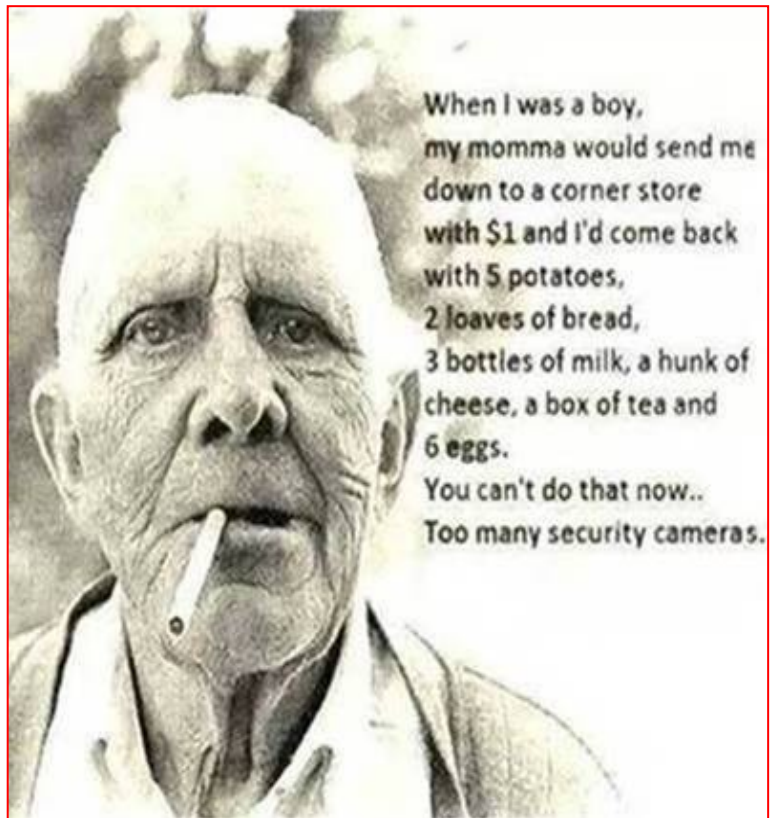
Seeming puzzled, the manager went on to comment,

"I know you're retired from the Armed Forces. What did they say to you there if you showed up in the morning late so often?"

The old man looked down at the floor, then smiled. He chuckled quietly, then said with a grin, "They usually saluted and said, Good morning, Colonel, can I get your coffee, sir?"



Private Gomad reckons.....



Welcome to 2017

We're on the Internet

www.rsara.asn.au



Find us on
Facebook

CONTACT US!-

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Abareh, Wadi **SM**
Abel, Colin
Acton, Chris
Adams, Aaron **SM**
Apostolides, Chris
Attenborough, Geoff
Ayles, Jeff
Baldwin, Bob
Bampton, Michael **BAND**
Barnaart, Philip
Bates, Allan
Beames, Rod **CoM**
Beckett, David **LM SM**
Bennet, Graham
Benveniste, Sam **SM**
Bilsborow, Jason **SM**
Blackmore, William
Blake, Sam **SM**
Blondell, Mark **SM CoM**
Bloomfield, Max
Bourne, Ian **SM**
Boath, Ian
Boothroyd, Lincoln **SM**
Boscence, Bob
Bras, Riley **SM**
Broadbent, Robert **SM**
Brookes, Phil
Brown, Bruce
Brown, Harry
Burnard, Trent **SM CO**
Burton, Ray
Buttars, Erik
Campbell, Wenona **BAND**
Carnachan, Ian
Chittleborough, Jeff
Clyne, Lachlan **SM**
Cooke, Nat **CoM**
Contibas, Nikolaus **SM**
Cotton, Bob
Cram, Kevin
Dart, John
Davey, John (Jack)
Davey, Trevor
Dawson, Trevor **BAND**
Del Vecchio, Victor

Demasi, Nathan **SM**
Demosani, Tony
Dew, Trevor
Domanski, Glenn
Dubsky, Eddie
Dunn, Peter
Dunn, Bob
Dunn, Jeff
Durdin, Russell
Durrant, Chris
Edson, Roger
Elliott, Graham
Elliss, Scott **SM**
Eva, Keith
Ewens, Mimi **SM**
Ferguson, Shane **BAND**
Field, Don
Flanagan, Ted
Fortune, Nigel **BAND**
Gaborit, Lyndon **LM**
Gallagher, Erin **BAND**
Genovese, John
Gibson, Lindsay
Giles, John
Gill, Graham
Gilmore, Graham
Goodwin, Graham **SM**
Gordon, Frank
Hardy, Robert **SM**
Harley, Peter
Harrington, Malcolm
Harrison, John
Hawking, Don
Hawkins, Des
Heath, Jonathon **BAND**
Haynes, Malcolm **SM 2IC**
Haynes, Scott
Hewitt, Emily **BAND**
Hogan, Mark **LM**
Hook, Alan **LM CoM**
Hope, David **CoM**
Horseman, Ian **LM**
Hudson, Mick
Hudson, Rick
Humphrys, Jesse **SM CoM**
James, Grant **SM**
Jeffrey, Scott **SM**
Johnson, Barry **LM**
Jolly, David
Jones, Brett
Keenan, Alan
Kilford, Brian
Klopf, Alex **LM**
Klopf, Paul
Koop, Joshua **BAND**
Laing, David **LM CoM**
Lakin, Bruce
Lampard, Ross
Lee, Bob
Lee, Pat
Lloyd, Elmer

Longstaff, Paul
Loveder, Peter
Main, Brian
Marcus, Ray
Marlin, Robin **LM**
Martin, Bob
Matchett, Bill
Mau, Mark
McCulloch, Don
McGree, Barry
McLachlan, Joshua **SM**
McMahon, Tyler **SM**
McMullin, Jim
Meissner, Terry **SM**
Milde, Peter **SM**
Mitchell, Barry
Mitchell, David
Morony, Frank
Moore, Jeffrey
Moore, Terry **LM**
Moschis, James **SM**
Munro, Ron
Oliver, Peter
Orrock, Alan
Ockenden, Marc
Oswald, John
Pach, Chol **SM**
Paul, John
Perkins, Bob
Pollard, Barry
Portakiewicz, Anthony **BAND**
Portakiewicz, David **BAND CoM**
Phillips, Colin
Phillips, Trevor
Payne, Bob
Parslow, Howard
Parsonage, James
Preece, Brian
Rado, Stephen
Ranger, Denis
Rathmann, John
Rathmann, Norm **CoM**
Rijken, Paul
Ramm, Hank
Robertson, Jim
Rorie, Graham **SM**
Rossetti, Lee
Sage, Andrew
Salamon, Peter
Sanders, Ashley **SM**
Sanderson, Max
Sands, Mike
Sexton, Mark **SM**
Slater, Ian
Slattery, Kimberly **BAND**
Sniedze, Julie **BAND**
Sprigg, Rob
Staker, Cameron **SM**
Standing, Michael **CoM**
Stone, Eddie
Strain, Doug

Steer, Phil
Stewart, Rob **LM**
Stewien, Peter **LM**
Stuart, Matthew **SM**
Tiller, Garth
Thomson, Jim
Tolotta, Tarrant **SM**
Tompkins, Ian
Tregenza, Norm **CoM**
Trezise, George
Tucker, Belinda **BAND**
Ullrich, Andreas **SM**
Vella, Joe
Wake, Stephen
Waters, Ian **LM**
Weepers, Nicole **BAND**
Weightman, Aidan **SM**
Westover, Rhys
Wheeler, Chris
Williams, Darrian **SM**
Wilson, Graham **LM**
Wilson, Neil
Wood, George
Woore, Phillip
Yorke-Simpkin Reg **LM**
Zurowski, Paul **SM**

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Abel, Karen
Ayles, Denise
Beames, Cheryl
Carnachan, Dom
Dart, Caroline
Demosani, Gail
Elliott, Julie
Eva, Gail
Field, Shirley
Gatley, Graeme
Gill, Maureen
Gilmour, Helen
Hawking, Lorraine
Hook, Phillipa
Hudson, Margaret
Jolly, Sandra
Klopf, Josie
Laing, June
Lampard, Kay
Main, Raelene
Marcus, Yvonne
Lee, Anne
Mitchell, Roma
Parkin, Audrey
Phillips, Heather
Sanderson, Lorraine
Tregenza, Lyn
Winger, Kathleen

HONORARY MEMBERS

T. Burnard CO 10/27 RSAR
J. Moulton ADJT 10/27 RSAR
B. Lipman RSM 10/27 RSAR

Would it happen in this day and age?

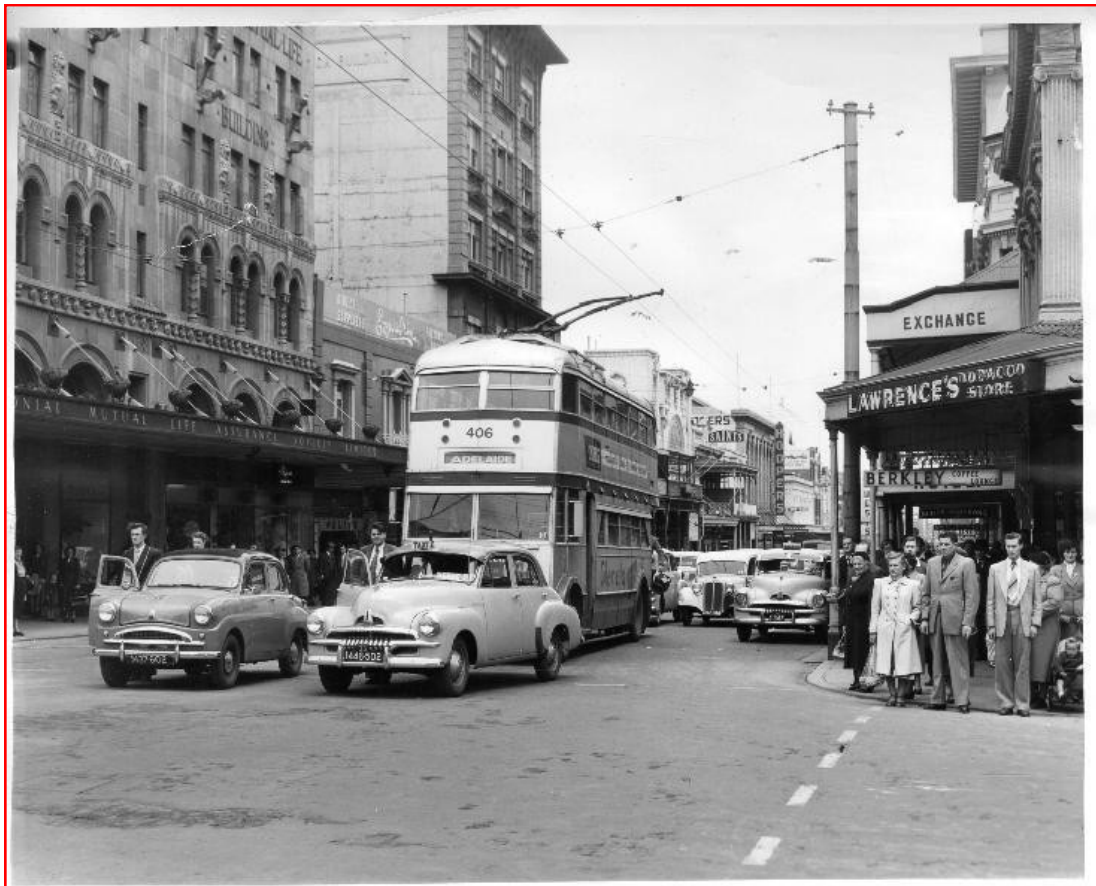


These photos were taken in Adelaide by an Advertiser photographer at 11am on the 11th of November 1955, Remembrance Day.

People step out of their cars, some halfway across the intersection, others stop mid-way while crossing the road, and stand in complete silence to honour the fallen.

The photos convey the significance of the day back then and how solemn an occasion it was to both the city and to a nation, still with memories lingering from World War 2.

Left. Corner King William and Currie Street



Right. Corner King William Street and Rundle Street.

Royal South Australia Regiment Association

26th February Luncheon



The first luncheon for this year will be conducted on Sunday 26th Feb 2017 at the Hackney Hotel at midday.

The Special Guest Speaker for the function is to be **Mr Rob Manton**, Director of Veterans SA.

Mr Manton served in the Australian Defence Force for 30 years, where he reached the rank of Colonel. He has received five commendations including the Bronze Star for high order leadership skills and outstanding performance of duty in Iraq, the Chief of Army's Commendation for exemplary leadership and management skills, along with a Meritorious Service Medal from the Commanding General of the US Command and General Staff College for excellence in delivering training.

Mr Manton is a strategic thinker and highly capable leader. As a former adviser to the Australian Ambassador to the United Nations, he led Australian delegations to a variety of UN committees involving the 192 Member States.



Mr Rob Manton

He was instrumental in developing a plan for Australia's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council.

As an independent consultant Mr Manton also led an international campaign to progress the issue of protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping missions.

He previously held the position of Assistant Chief Of Staff of the Multi-National Force in Iraq, and was responsible for coordinating the strategic planning and operational efforts of over 850 military staff.

Mr Manton was Guest Speaker at the Murray Bridge RSL 2016 Annual Dinner, and guests were very impressed with his presentation.

Seating is limited, so BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL to Norm Tregenza on normlyn@bigpond.com or his mobile of 0412 804 779

**You don't have to be a member to attend. All Welcome
RSVP Not Later Than Friday 17th February. LIMITED SEATS**

VETERANS SA THINK PIECE

This month's Think Piece has been contributed by **Rachel Harris**.

The Home Front's Forgotten Women

Rachel Harris holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Queensland and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours in History) from the University of Adelaide. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide. Her thesis considers the lives of civilian women in South Australia during World War II. She was the recipient of the 2015 Wakefield Companion to S.A. History Prize for her research on the experiences of female munition workers and members of the Australian Women's Land Army in South Australia between 1940-1945. She is currently undertaking an oral history project in conjunction with the State Library of South Australia.



When thinking of women's contribution to the home front during World War II, it is munition workers, housewives and women's auxiliaries that frequently come to mind. However, across Australia there was another band of women who literally braved rain, hail and shine to do their bit for the war effort – those employed in the Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA).

Modelled on the British Women's Land Army, the AWLA was formally established by the Federal Government in July 1942 to counteract the rural labour shortage generated by men who left to enlist or take up employment in expanding wartime industries in the cities. However, the process of replacing these male workers was not straightforward, especially in South Australia.

The establishment of large-scale munitions production in Adelaide meant fixing the deficit in the State's rural labour supplies received little attention in comparison to the urgent need to

staff facilities such as Salisbury Explosives Factory and Hendon Small Arms Ammunition Factory, which both employed more than 2000 women at the height of production in 1943. In comparison, the AWLA in South Australia peaked at 320 full-time members – just 14% of the peak national AWLA workforce.

However, in addition to the demands of wartime industry, there were other reasons for this surprisingly small membership. While there was nation-wide resistance to using female rural labour, it seems in South Australia this feeling had been particularly acute. 'Unofficial' land armies in other states had been formed as early as 1939, but South Australia did not organise any system of female recruitment until August 1941 – the last state to do so. Even then, farmers remained unremittingly skeptical, arguing that women would "find no glamour in farm work" and "would be stopping work all the time to powder their noses".

Others commented that they would not trust women to treat their farm machinery with care, with one asserting that "farm work required strength as well as brains" and that he "did not believe women possessed enough of either to do a job on a farm" (News, 19 Sept. 1941, page 8). While some farmers who eventually took the plunge to employ AWLA members reported to be very pleased with the work provided, statistics indicate that such opinions were never fully quashed. Unlike in Victoria, where half of AWLA members took part in individual long-term employment on farms and stations, only 57 South Australian women were employed in these positions during 1943. Instead, the majority were employed as seasonal workers, sent to different districts each year to pick and package fruit, can vegetables, dehydrate potatoes and spread flax. Main locations included Berri, Hectorville, Laura, Loxton, Morphett Vale and Renmark; however women were located all over the State in orchards, factories, vegetable gardens and vineyards.

Once employed as a seasonal AWLA worker, it was a mixed experience. The wages set by the Manpower Directorate after July 1942 (£3 per week less £1 board) were considerably less than those on offer to women in other industries, and as AWLA membership was restricted to women not already occupied with rural labour, these low wages impacted on the extent to which metropolitan women could be enticed to take up land work. The unpredictable nature of seasonal employment also meant pay was unstable – workers were not paid between postings and could lose wages due to weather and climate-related illnesses.

The Home Front's Forgotten Womencontinued

Working conditions were similarly variable. Due to the widespread location of AWLA postings, the Manpower Directorate rarely undertook a proper assessment of postings before members were relocated, meaning the women often had minimal protection from substandard employer practices. Such practices included working for more than the eight and a half hours set per day, doing heavy tasks other than those prescribed in the official AWLA handbook, and being provided with poor-quality living quarters (visualise mattresses made of chaff, mice infestations, leaking roofs, no running water, and windows without glass).

But despite these conditions, the testimonies of AWLA workers reveal a deep sense of personal liberation. Of the 15 South Australian AWLA members whose testimonies are held by the Australian War Memorial, many recall that the opportunity to work so far from home had been their favourite aspect of AWLA service (see interviews S02694 to S02709). Freedom from parental constraints instilled a newfound sense of maturity. One member recalled that the “very fact of having free open life” had made up for economic deficiencies, while another believed that AWLA had been “special” for so many members because it allowed them “to stand on [their] own two feet” (AWM S02694 and S02695).

Women also seemed to thoroughly enjoy the social side of service, developing a strong sense of camaraderie that often led to life-long friendships. Many recall that such connections helped them cope with the inadequate working conditions and exhausting tasks they encountered. A song, invented by the women, captures this spirit:

*The Land Army girls are happy, the Land Army girls are free,
The Land girls are happy when out upon the spree,
They never never quarrel, they never disagree,
Three loud cheers for the Land Army and three for liberty. (AWM S02704)*

However, this freedom was short-lived. Upon the war's conclusion it was announced that the AWLA would be disbanded by 31 December 1945. Metropolitan women were not invited to stay on the land and did not receive access to post-war training or deferred pay, unlike women in the auxiliary services. Instead, they were ushered back to the city with little fanfare, not being invited to march in Anzac Day parades until the mid-1980s. In 1997 members became eligible to receive a Civilian Service Medal, while in 2012 the Federal Government held a ceremony for some surviving members at Parliament House in Canberra.

However, I still believe there has not been a proper effort to acknowledge and collect the experiences these women – regardless of the fact they are few in number – particularly in South Australia, but also elsewhere. Having spoken with former South Australian members myself, as well as my own grandmother serving in the British Women's Land Army, I recognise the special place AWLA service has in their memories. It's already been more than 70 years since the end of the war; I think it's time we heard more of these memories before it is too late.



Australian Women's Land Army Camp at
Atherton, November 1943

The final RSAR Association function for 2016 was conducted at the Kibby VC Club at Keswick Barracks on Sunday 18th December. With over 40 members and their families enjoying a relaxing end to the year, a sumptuous BBQ was cooked up by Norm Tregenza and Graham Elliott. It was good to see so many new faces, with a number of serving members helping out behind the bar and attending to enjoy the camaraderie.

Rod Beames and David Laing both thanked members for their support throughout the year, and also thanked CPL Mark Blondell for organizing the function at the Kibby VC Club.

With all the excellent facilities, it's hard to beat the Kibby VC Club, and it's planned to keep having the End Of year BBQs there while we can well into the future.



Norm Tregenza and Graham Elliott carrying out their usual duties as BBQ Experts, and they kept the food coming for about an hour to feed the hungry hordes.



Members tuck into the sumptuous food provided by the Association for the day, while Howard Parslow talks to his Stock Broker to sell his shares in Poseidon.



An hour later, and Howard's STILL on the phone.



Never let it be said Committee Member Mark Blondell doesn't do his bit! Taking valuable time out from ice skating with his kids, Mark cleans the Kibby Club BBQ after the lunch.



I wonder what Julie and Dave are doing?

Give me a hug while Graham isn't looking!

Give us a hug while your hubby isn't looking!

