



"Sitrep, Over!"



Official Newsletter of The Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

WELCOME TO JANUARY 2013

Editor - David Laing 0407 791 822

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UPCOMING LUNCH & CoM DATES

LUNCHES

- 22nd February
- 25th April (ANZAC)
- 28th June
- 25th October
- 15th December

CoM MEETINGS

- 25th January
- 24th May
- 27th September

The location and timings of all events will be published in the monthly newsletter.

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery easier to live with.

Some cause happiness wherever they go. Others whenever they go.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

The 10th Battalion AIF

The 10th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. The battalion was recruited in South Australia, and together with the 9th, 11th and 12th Battalions, formed the 3rd Brigade.

The battalion was raised within weeks of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked for overseas just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving in early December.

The 3rd Brigade was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 and so was the first ashore at around 4:30 am. Two soldiers of the 10th Battalion, Lance Corporal Philip Robin and Private Arthur Blackburn, are believed to have penetrated further inland than any other Australians at ANZAC. Robin was killed later on 25 April and Blackburn soldiered on to be commissioned as an officer and awarded the Victoria Cross at Pozières, the battalion's first major battle in France. The 10th Battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line of the ANZAC position, and served there until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the 10th Battalion returned to Egypt and, in March 1916, sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918, the battalion took part in bitter trench warfare. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozières in the Somme valley in July. After Pozières the battalion fought at Ypres in Flanders before returning to the Somme for winter. In 1917, the battalion returned to Belgium to take part in the major British offensive of that year - the Third Battle of Ypres. For his valorous actions at Polygon Wood east of Ypres in September 1917, Private Roy Inwood was awarded the Victoria Cross. His brother Robert had been killed at Pozières and another brother, Harold, had been badly wounded and invalided to Australia in November 1917.

In March and April 1918 the 10th Battalion helped stop the German spring offensive and was then involved in the operations leading up to the Allied counter-stroke. In June, during an attack near Merris in France,

Corporal Phillip Davey became the third member of the battalion to be awarded the Victoria Cross. Davey had been awarded the Military Medal for bravery near Messines in January. His brothers Claude and Richard were also members of the battalion and both had been awarded Military Medals in 1917.

The battalion participated in the great allied offensive of 1918, fighting near Amiens on 8 August 1918. This advance by British and empire troops was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as "the blackest day of the German Army in this war".

The battalion continued operations until late September 1918. At 11 am on 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent. In November 1918, members of the AIF began returning to Australia. At 8 am on 5 September 1919, the final detachment of the 10th Battalion arrived at Adelaide, aboard the transport Takada.

Sourced from www.awm.gov.au

"Many a man has fallen in love with a girl in a light so dim he would not have chosen a suit by it!" Stewy Stewart CLARE SA



He boldly faced his firing squad

Cpl Rod Breavington



CORPORAL Rod Breavington was a Northcote policeman when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in 1941. He resigned immediately to join the army, aged 38, ending up in a workshops engineering unit of the 8th Division in Singapore. Then all hell broke loose – Singapore fell to the Japanese - and an extraordinary series of events led to Breavington becoming the first Australian executed by the Japanese in World War II. Acts of courage and strength characterised his last months. In his old neighbourhood he's remembered for these things. In Fairfield, where he lived with his wife Margaret, there's a place called Breavington Park, with a playground, a memorial fountain and a plaque saying he was "described by his commanding officer as the bravest man he had ever seen".

Every September, Northcote police give a Breavington award for bravery. When he was captured in Singapore, along with about 1000 other Australian Army Ordnance Corps men, he was sent to Bukit Timah prison camp, but escaped with young New South Welshman Victor Gale, a private. They found a rowing boat on the coast – and started



rowing. This is where stories differ. According to Japanese accounts, the pair were captured about 1000 kilometres away near Sri Lanka. But according to Breavington's mate Les Chance, 93, they got a rowing boat all right but only made it to Sumatra. "They suffered severe sunburn on their legs and feet," he says.

"They went on to a small island hoping for relief but instead they were dobbed in to the Japs by the islanders." Chance was in the same unit as Breavington. He was a car mechanic from East Coburg when he enlisted but when they were captured he was sent to work on the Thai-Burma railway, one of the most horrific prisoner-of-war episodes of the war - forced labour building a railway through mountainous tropical jungle. Chance got dysentery, malaria and beriberi and lost many friends to disease and starvation but he survived, living

quietly now with his wife Thelma, 91, in Horsham. Breavington has no known relatives. His wife remarried and has died; they had no children. "I am honoured to have the opportunity to talk about him publicly," Chance told *The Saturday Age*. "He was a brave man and a very good soldier."

As Breavington faced a firing squad of Sikh Indians who were to shoot then bury him and Gale as well as two British escapees on Selarang Beach, he pleaded unsuccessfully with the Japanese commander to spare 23-year-old Gale. He then refused a blindfold, opting to hold a photograph of his wife. The first shot hit him in the arm. He fell to the ground, and then saluted Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick "Black Jack" Galleghan, the most senior Australian soldier present, saying "Goodbye Sir, and good luck".

He was shot eight more times and was buried at Singapore's Kranji War Cemetery. Word spread of the executions among Australians imprisoned in Singapore. By this time Chance was at Changi jail and he knew his mate had escaped and been recaptured but no one thought they would be executed because no one ever had been before. When they found out, the prisoners refused to sign forms the Japanese had given them attesting to the good conditions they lived in. A mass protest of 17,000 men followed that came to be known as the Selarang Barracks Incident.

"He stood up to the Japs on that firing squad," says Chance. "What he did took a lot of strength and lest we forget him because of that."

Author Chris Johnson



BREAVINGTON PARK



RSL Blue Lake Highland Pipe Band at the Menin Gate

You will recall a story published in "Sitrep, Over!" in June 2011 about the RSL Blue Lake Highland Pipe Band who were seeking donations to support their visit to the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres, Belgium. The site commemorates the sacrifice of 54,000 Commonwealth soldiers during WW1, including 6,200 Australians who were killed in the Ypres Salient and have no known grave.

The Pipe Band played at the Last Post Ceremony over 2 consecutive nights, and members of the band accompanied Major General Brian Dawson, AM, CSC, Australian Military Representative to NATO and EU, who laid wreaths to commemorate the sacrifice of the fallen soldiers.

The Last Post Ceremony has been held every evening since 1928, and when the Axis powers occupied most of Europe during WW2, the ceremony was held in England.

The Royal South Australia Regiment Association (Metro) donated \$200 to this worthy cause, and was included in a Memorial Book presented to the Last Post Association by the band. (See below)

The RSAR Association Inc (Metro) has received a letter from Bernard Reid, Secretary of the Mount Gambier RSL Blue Lake Highland Pipe thanking us for our support of this venture, and have included a copy of the certificate duplicated in the Memorial Book. Well done, to all concerned.





Chaplain Alfred Goller

The insubordinate padre

Soldiers fight wars in many different ways, using a variety of weapons. Some use a rifle or a machine-gun, while many are part of a team such as those operating the large field guns. Others serve as nurses or stretcher-bearers armed with medicine and compassion. But a padre's weapon is faith—faith in his God, faith in the cause for which the soldiers to whom he ministers are fighting, and faith in his fellow man. This is the story of one such 'soldier of the cross'.

Alfred Ernest Goller was born in Bannockburn, Victoria in July 1883. His parents were simple people with strong religious convictions, who had raised their son with the same set of values. Alfred did well at school and continued tertiary studies at Melbourne University. A keen footballer, he was awarded a coveted 'blue' for his skill on the field. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours and was ordained as a Presbyterian minister in March of 1908. Until the outbreak of war in 1914, he served the church in the Victorian country areas of Birchip and Mia Mia.



Chaplain Alfred Goller. (Photograph courtesy Mr W Connell)

Australians from all walks of life had flocked to join the newly formed Australian Imperial Force and it was not long before many of them were engaged in the battles on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

A duty that befell members of the clergy in every city and town across the nation was the delivery of news from the Front. Ministers of all denominations were called upon to deliver the telegrams advising families that a loved one had been killed, wounded or was missing in action. It was not long before the sight of an approaching clergyman caused people to cringe in fear, lest they be the ones to receive the dreaded piece of paper detailing the death of a husband, a son, a brother or a father. After years of being welcome in the homes of his parishioners, Alfred Goller tired of being a 'messenger of death' and the fear his presence brought to the local people. Despite the fact that it meant leaving behind a loving family, Goller decided that he would be more useful at the Front.

On 16 January 1917, he enlisted in the AIF and, a month later, Padre Goller climbed the gangplank of the troopship Ballarat. As the ship pulled away from the quay, he bid farewell to his beloved wife and three young children. The Padre was extremely active during the long voyage. To maintain morale, he organised concerts, sports events and a newspaper to entertain and occupy the sixteen hundred troops. As the Ballarat steamed through the English Channel and the troops on board commemorated the second anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, without warning, a German torpedo slammed into the side of the ship. There were some 1792 aboard the ship when the torpedo hit, but there was little panic as the Diggers collected their equipment and assembled on the decks. Padre Goller scurried through the lower decks, checking to ensure that no-one had been left behind. Back on the main deck, he moved casually through the ranks, lighting cigarettes and reassuring the troops—he was an inspiration to all. Within 15 minutes of the torpedo strike, destroyers of

the Royal Navy arrived at the scene and pulled alongside the stricken vessel to transfer the troops and crew. The intrepid padre was one of the last to leave and was an observer of the final moments of the Ballarat—offering a silent prayer as the ship slowly slipped beneath the icy waters of the channel. He was later commended for his composure and support at the time of the sinking. On his arrival in England, Padre Goller was attached to a number of training battalions. He pestered his commanders to send him closer to the Front, for this was where he felt he could do the most good. Finally his persistence was rewarded and, in September 1917, he set sail for France. Initially he was attached to the 2nd Australian General Hospital, where he witnessed first-hand some of the worst carnage brought about by war—men with horrific wounds, amputated limbs, gassed, blinded and most likely maimed for life. Again he felt that he could do more and pleaded to be attached to a front-line unit. His request was granted and Chaplain Alfred Goller was posted as padre of the 37th Battalion, 10th Brigade.

The padre's presence produced immediate results. Although he could have exercised his privilege to remain in the transport lines, he chose to be permanently attached to the battalion's medical officer during times of action. The battalion was in the thick of the fighting, in such places as Ypres, Messines, Mondicourt, Warneton, Marrett Wood and Dernancourt. The dauntless padre was ever-present, scouring the battlefields for wounded—both Allied and enemy.

Part 2 next month



ANIMALS AT WAR

PART 2

CPL Knuckles says.....

DOGS were used by the ancient Greeks for war purposes, and they were undoubtedly used much earlier in history. During their conquest of Latin America, Spanish conquistadors used Mastiffs to kill warriors in the Caribbean, Mexico and Peru. Mastiffs, as well as Great Danes, were used in England during the Middle Ages, where their large size was used to scare horses to throw off their riders or to pounce on knights on horseback, disabling them until their master delivered the final blow. More recently, canines with explosives strapped to their backs saw use during World War II in the Soviet Army as anti-tank weapons. In all armies, they were used for detecting mines. They were trained to spot trip wires, as well as mines and other booby traps. They were also employed for sentry duty, and to spot snipers or hidden enemy forces. Some dogs also saw use as messenger.



Pliny the Elder wrote about the use of **PIGS** against elephants. As he relates it, elephants became scared by the squeal of a pig and would panic, bringing disaster to any soldiers who stood in their path of flight.

As living bombs, the Soviets used **DOGS** to carry explosives to tanks and armoured vehicles. During World War II, Project Pigeon (later Project Orcon, for "organic control") was American behaviourist B. F. Skinner's attempt to develop a pigeon-guided missile.

Continued next month.



* Ya know, sometimes when I reflect back on all the wine I drink I feel shame. Then I look into the glass and think about the workers in the vineyards and all of their hopes and dreams. If I didn't drink this wine, they might be out of work and their dreams would be shattered. Then I say to myself, "It is better that I drink this wine and let their dreams come true than be selfish and worry about my liver."

* and when I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading."

* and when we drink, we get drunk. When we get drunk, we fall asleep. When we fall asleep, we commit no sin. When we commit no sin, we go to heaven. So, let's all get drunk and go to heaven!

Hehehe!

See youse next month!!

The TEN Shortest Wars in History

NEW

Starting in next month's issue of "Sitrep, Over!" will be the stories and details of the 10 Shortest Wars in History. Most wars last years, some even decades, but there are conflicts between aggressors that have lasted months, weeks, and in the case of the Anglo/Zanzibar War, only 45 minutes! Since Biblical times and before, man has been constantly fighting. It seems that never a year goes by without one war or another starting or finishing. Some of these wars take many years and have very high death tolls, but there have also been some extraordinarily short wars. This is a list of the ten shortest wars since 1800. I have not included wars that ended in ceasefire, wars of revolution or independence, or wars that occurred during the First or Second World Wars.

In the February Newsletter we will start with Number 10, the Falklands War of 1982 which lasted 42 days and ended with the surrender of all Argentinean forces on the Falkland Islands, and the return of British Rule. (Las Malvinas was recently in the news again, during the 30th anniversary of the war.)



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Hudson, Margaret
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Lampard, Kay
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Main, Raelene
Marcus, Yvonne
McCullagh, Anne
Mitchell, Roma
Sanderson, Lorraine
Tregenza, Lyn
Denotes New Member
LM denotes LIFE MEMBER
SM denotes SERVING MEMBER
CoM denotes Member of COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT
127 members as at 30/12/12

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We now have our own website, which conveys our existence to the world. You can visit us by going to:

www.rsara.asn.au



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