



# "Sitrep, Over!"



Official Newsletter of the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

OCTOBER 2014



## Points of interest

- 100 years ago, on the 20th October 1914, men of the 10th Battalion marched out of Adelaide to fight in the First World War. Many never returned. A Special Church Service is to be held to commemorate this event. Full details on Page 2.
- The RSARA Christmas BBQ is to be held at the Keswick Barracks Sergeants Mess. See Page 8.
- Lots of new dates for your calendar. See Pages 2,5 & 8

## Inside this issue:

An Experience of War Part 8	1
Special Church Service	2
Just Soldiers Final Part	3
VC WINNERS Part 4	4
Odd WW2 Facts	4
A new ADDITION to our numbers	4
Members List	6
Private Gomad	7
Christmas BBQ	8

## An Experience of War

## Part 8

As C Company medic I played no part in the battle of Long Tan. It was a D company show with A Company and elements of B Company reinforcing Delta.

The battle was fought over three hours on 18 August 1966 in a rubber plantation in a deluge of monsoonal rain. Delta Company fought for their lives, outnumbered 25 to 1. Had they not fought so gallantly the way was open for the enemy to overrun the Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat, then only lightly defended by my company, C Company.

Over 3,000 artillery rounds were fired during the battle and a courageous ammunition resupply was flown by RAAF helicopter at the height of the action. D Company lost 17 men killed in action and 24 wounded. An APC crew commander, transporting A Company, later died of his wounds. Corporal Phil Dobson was the D Company Medic and he was Mentioned-in-Dispatches for his outstanding work during the fierce fighting. Phil became my hero as did A Coy's Peter Short who was later to become RSM of the School of Army Health at Healesville and Portsea. They are my heroes to this day.



Cpl Phil Dobson MID, D Coy Medic

The enemy broke contact as darkness fell leaving 245 of their dead littering the battlefield. Many other dead and wounded were dragged away during and after the battle. The Australians withdrew to a secure harbour some distance from the carnage to evacuate their wounded and it was here at first light the next day that C Company married up with D Company.

We advanced into the battlefield in a high state of alert and not a little trepidation. D and C Companies led the battalion assault to destroy the remaining enemy and to search for two Australian soldiers missing in action. The enemy had long gone and miraculously the two D Coy men were found, both seriously wounded and overjoyed to be rescued.

The battlefield was like a charnel house. The force of high explosive and flechette fire had blown off the crowns of rubber trees, and tree trunks everywhere were weeping rubber sap. As we approached I saw a figure seated with his back to a rubber tree his hand raised as if waving. As we drew closer I could see it was an enemy soldier – or his remains at least - his head and left shoulder and arm were scythed off, a victim of one or more of the artillery rounds that blew him and his mates to kingdom come. Within a few metres were more, and yet more bodies; most grossly disfigured from shrapnel and machine gun fire. Strangely, they looked like oversized porcelain dolls, white and waxy, washed of blood by the raging monsoonal storm.

D Coy's 'Sting' Hornet pointed out to me a dead enemy sniper hanging upside down in a rubber tree. He told me that he had shot the sniper when the VC had shot and killed Maxy Wales moments before. "The bastard was a medic" Sting said. Sure enough, at the base of the tree was a tin, much like a biscuit tin, containing a few medical instruments and bandages, the contents stained with blood.

*Continues next month*



## The Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

Invites you to  
A Special Church Service to commemorate the  
100 year anniversary of the departure of  
10th Battalion, 1st AIF soldiers from Adelaide  
to the Battlefields of World War 1.

**St Peters Cathedral**  
**King William Rd**  
**North Adelaide**

**1800 hrs**  
**Monday 20th October 2014**

RSARA members, serving and ex-serving  
members are asked to wear Full Medals

Light refreshments will be served after the service at the  
Cathedral Hotel, King William Street.

## Just Soldiers

## Sergeant William Wass MM

## Final Part

The doctors were amazed that the sergeant had carried on for so long with his injury, as closer examination revealed that Wass had a badly fractured skull.

He remained in hospital for the next four months, returning to the battalion after its evacuation from Gallipoli.

Moves were afoot to expand the AIF. The 3rd Division was being raised in Australia while the 4th and 5th Divisions were formed by breaking up the existing units. Thus the 2nd Battalion gave up some of its own to form the 54th Battalion, 14th Brigade of the 5th Division. Sergeant William Wass was one of those chosen to form the nucleus of the new battalion. It was at this time that he learned he was one of the first to be awarded the new Military Medal for his actions at Gallipoli.



Men of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion waiting to don their equipment for the attack at Fromelles

In June 1916, the Division moved to France. Its first major action was at a place called Fromelles. The 54<sup>th</sup> Battalion formed part of the assault force against a feature known as 'Sugar Loaf Salient'. As the battalions moved forward, with so many troops massed in one place, the Diggers thought they were in for an easy time.

Suddenly there was mayhem.

The British brigade covering the right flank bogged down, enabling the German forces to concentrate most of their firepower on the ANZAC line. As the Diggers advanced, enemy machine-guns on their flanks launched a massive barrage and with deadly accuracy, cut a swathe of carnage throughout the ranks. The Diggers tried in vain to return fire, but the Germans held the high

ground and their machine-guns continued their relentless bombardment of the Australians.

The 54th Battalion's command post consisted of a shell hole. Communications were non-existent as many of the reels lay in the hands of the dead signallers who now littered the battlefield. The commanding officer needed information and his only option was to use a runner. He turned to William. 'Wass, get a message to Brigade. Tell them we're pinned down and we need some support, and we need it in a hurry.' Grabbing his rifle, Wass ran, crawled and scurried towards the rear, jumping from shell hole to shell hole, soon disappearing into the cordite haze.

Under cover of darkness, the remnants of the shattered units withdrew from the Salient. The beating suffered by the 5th Division was severe enough to keep it out of the war for months.

Many weeks later, the German Red Cross delivered a sandbag full of personal effects and dog tags to the Swiss authorities. They had been collected from the dead of the Fromelles battlefields. Amongst the identification discs was one that read 239 W. Wass.



WW1 Aluminium identity disc on a leather thong to wear around the neck. Stamped on the front were the owner's details. This disc belonged to John Simpson (the man with the donkey)

## INSPIRATIONAL BRAVERY

## VC WINNERS

## Part 4

Jacka's breakdown came after he was awfully wounded at Pozières where he had led a small group of men in a counter-attack. In the action Jacka was shot a number of times, each time he was knocked to the ground,

and still he threw himself with rifle and bayonet against the enemy, inspiring all those around him. At times during his long recovery he experienced "physical shaking that would continue for hours at a stretch". Still, after a rest, this remarkable man would later earn another Military Cross to add to that awarded for the Pozières action.

Training and discipline helped in mastering fear. Experience in battle also helped, although at its extreme it could result in war weariness and this would have its own serious affect on morale as the AIF found by 1918. There were other positive factors too, like good leadership and mateship; in battle men drew strength from each other. At such times cool control and example were invaluable. Rest was also vital for troops before and after action. This was noted by Charles Bean. "Most troops, so long as they were well rested", he said, referring to the Australians, "preferred an offensive role to the wearing, endless hardship suffered, for example, by the German trench divisions." Hope could feed fear. In this war the loss of life among front-line troops was immense, and soldiers were always confronted by



Charles Wheeler, *Bullecourt battlefield.*

their mortality. Many were fatalistic. Mitchell's advice had been to: "Throw overboard all faraway things you hold so dear – the thought of some girl, your civil life ambitions, all

thoughts of gain. Those things are bridges with the past, a past which is far beyond your reach. But they are bridges over which fear can and will travel all too easily." Little wonder then that men who had done this greeted the news of the armistice when it came in 1918 with as much

bewilderment as celebration.

Among those acknowledged as heroes were some who would motivate others and spur them on; they could even affect the course of an action. There are repeated examples in the Australian citations for bravery awards where some officer or another soldier provided inspiration or leadership to their group. Inspirational soldiers were always held in high esteem within their units for these men gave the leadership that others were seeking. At least a dozen Victoria Cross citations refer to the hero's ability to inspire others.

**Concludes next month**

## ODD WW2 FACTS

It was a common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. This was a big mistake. Tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet tracers instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction. Worst of all was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you that you were out of ammo. This was definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy. Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.

When allied armies reached the Rhine, the first thing men did was pee in it. This was pretty universal from the lowest private to Winston Churchill (who made a big show of it) and Gen. Patton (who had himself photographed in the act).

The last marine killed in WW2 was killed by a can of spam. He was on the ground as a POW in Japan when rescue flights dropping food and supplies came over, the package came apart in the air and a stray can of spam hit him and killed him.

**More Odd WW2 facts next month**

**A NEW ADDITION.** It isn't often that we announce the birth of a newborn to a members wife, so we are extremely proud to announce the arrival of baby girl Quinn Humphrys 8lbs 5ozs on the last day in August 2014. Dad Jesse, mum Kim & baby Quinn all doing well. **WELL DONE GUYS!!**



10th/27th Battalion  
The Royal South Australia Regiment

# Centenary Parade & *Gala Ball*

Saturday 22nd November 2014

Centenary Parade: Torrens Parade Ground – 1500

Gala Ball: Torrens Drill Hall – 1900 to 2300



\$50 per ticket for Gala Ball

Entry includes cocktail food and live music

Dress: Military- Mess dress white jacket

Civilian- Black tie/formal

10/27 RSAR is a proud  
sponsor of Ward 17

*Fundraising throughout  
the Evening*

Visit [www.ticketebo.com.au/1027RSARball](http://www.ticketebo.com.au/1027RSARball) to purchase tickets

Centenary Merchandise for sale including a commemorative 'Pro Patria Centenary of the Great War Edition' hardcover book – Purchase early to avoid missing out

Contact: Major Richard Bennett on 0417 827 386

## MEMBERS LIST

Abareh, Wadi **SM**  
 Acton, Chris  
 Adams, Aaron **SM**  
 Apostolides, Chris  
 Attenborough, Geoff  
 Ayles, Jeff  
 Baldwin, Bob  
 Barrass, Mark  
 Bates, Allan  
 Beames, Rod **CoM**  
 Beckett, David **LM SM**  
 Bennet, Graham  
 Bilsborow, Jason **SM**  
 #Blackmore, William  
 Blake, Sam **SM**  
 Blondell, Mark **SM**  
 Bloomfield, Max  
 Bourne, Ian **SM**  
 Boath, Ian  
 Boothroyd, Lincoln **SM**  
 Boscence, Bob  
 Bras, Riley **SM**  
 Broadbent, Robert **SM**  
 Brookes, Phil  
 Brown, Bruce  
 Brown, Harry  
 Burton, Ray  
 Carnachan, Ian  
 Chittleborough, Jeff  
 Clyne, Lachlan **SM**  
 Cooke, Nat **CoM**  
 Contibas, Nikolaus **SM**  
 Cotton, Bob  
 Cram, Kevin  
 Dart, John  
 Davey, John  
 Davey, Trevor  
 Davey, Jack  
 Del Vecchio, Victor  
 Demasi, Nathan **SM**  
 Demosani, Tony  
 #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**  
 Field, Don  
 Flanagan, Ted  
 Fridday, Ross  
 Gaborit, Lyndon **LM**  
 Genovese, John  
 Gibson, Lindsay  
 Giles, John

#Gill, Graham  
 Gilmore, Graham **CoM**  
 Gordon, Frank  
 Hardy, Robert **SM**  
 Harrington, Malcolm  
 Harrison, John  
 Hawking, Don  
 Hawkins, Des  
 Haynes, Scott  
 Hogan, Mark **LM**  
 Hook, Alan **LM CoM**  
 Hope, David  
 Hudson, Mick  
 Hudson, Rick  
 Humphrys, Jesse **SM CoM**  
 James, Grant **SM CoM**  
 Jeffrey, Scott **SM**  
 Johnson, Barry **LM**  
 Jolly, David  
 Jones, Brett  
 Keenan, Alan  
 Kilford, Brian  
 Klopff, Alex **LM**  
 Klopff, Paul  
 Laing, David **LM CoM**  
 Lampard, Ross  
 Lee, Bob  
 Lee, Pat  
 Lloyd, Elmer  
 Lockett, John  
 Longstaff, Paul  
 Loveder, Peter  
 Main, Brian  
 Marcus, Ray  
 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 **CoM**  
 Moore, Jeffrey  
 Moore, Terry **LM**  
 Moschis, James **SM**  
 Munro, Ron  
 Oliver, Peter  
 Orrock, Alan **CoM**  
 Ockenden, Marc  
 Oswald, John  
 Pach, Chol **SM**  
 Paul, John  
 Perkins, Bob  
 Pollard, Barry

Phillips, Don  
 Phillips, Trevor  
 Payne, Bob  
 Parslow, Howard  
 Preece, Brian  
 Ranger, Denis  
 Rathmann, John  
 Rathmann, Norm **CoM**  
 Ramm, Hank  
 Robertson, Jim  
 Rorie, Graham **SM**  
 Rossetti, Lee  
 Sage, Andrew  
 Salamon, Peter  
 Sanders, Ashley **SM**  
 Sanderson, Max  
 Sands, Mike  
 Sexton, Mark **SM**  
 Sprigg, Rob  
 Staker, Cameron **SM**  
 Standing, Michael **CoM**  
 Stone, Eddie  
 Strain, Doug  
 Steer, Phil  
 Stewart, Rob **LM**  
 Stuart, Matthew **SM**  
 Tiller, Garth  
 Thomson, Jim  
 Tolotta, Tarrant **SM**  
 Tregenza, Norm **CoM**  
 Trezise, George  
 Ullrich, Andreas **SM**  
 Vella, Joe  
 Wake, Stephen  
 Waters, Ian **LM**  
 Weightman, Aidan **SM**  
 Westover, Rhys  
 Wheeler, Chris  
 Williams, Darrian **SM**  
 Wilson, Graham **LM**  
 Wilson, Neil  
 Wood, George  
 Woore, Phillip  
 Yorke-Simpkin Reg **LM**  
 Zuromski, Paul **SM**

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Hawking, Lorraine  
 Hook, Phillipa  
 Hudson, Margaret  
 Jolly, Sandra  
 Klopff, Josie  
 Laing, June  
 Lampard, Kay  
 Main, Raelene  
 Marcus, Yvonne  
 Lee, Anne  
 Mitchell, Roma

Phillips, Heather  
 Sanderson, Lorraine  
 Tregenza, Lyn

**LM** denotes **LIFE MEMBER**

**SM** denotes **SERVING ADF MEMBER**

**CoM** denotes member of the Committee of Management

**#** Denotes **NEW MEMBER**

189 members as at 23/09/14

**A warm welcome to new members Bill Blackmore, Barry McGree, Glenn Domanski and Graham Gill**

### **HOW TO CONTACT US**

**The Secretary David Laing**  
**RSAR Association**  
**Riverglen Marina RSD 3152A**  
**White Sands SA 5253**

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**FACEBOOK**

**[www.rsara.asn.au](http://www.rsara.asn.au)**





**Private Gomad reckons.....**

**Here's something  
to think about!**

**Something to think about ...**

Imagine that you had won the following **\*PRIZE\*** in a contest:

Each morning your bank would deposit \$86,400 in your private account for your use. However, this prize has rules :

**The set of rules:**

1. Everything that you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.
2. You may not simply transfer money into some other account.
3. You may only spend it.
4. Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another \$86,400 for that day.
5. The bank can end the game without warning; at any time it can say, "Game Over!" It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.

**What would you personally do?**

You would buy anything and everything you wanted, right?

Not only for yourself, but for all the people you love and care for. Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend it all on yourself, right?

You would try to spend every penny, and use it all, because you knew it would be replenished in the morning, right?

***ACTUALLY, This GAME is REAL ...***

Shocked ??? YES!

Each of us is already a winner of this **\*PRIZE\***. We just can't seem to see it.

This PRIZE is **\*TIME\***

1. Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life.
2. And when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is NOT credited to us.
3. What we haven't used up that day is forever lost.
4. Yesterday is forever gone.
5. Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time WITHOUT WARNING ...

***SO, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds today?***

***Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars. Think about that, and always think of this: Enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think.***

So take care of yourself, be happy, love deeply and enjoy life!

Here's wishing you a wonderful and beautiful day.

Start spending ...

**...and now for something  
"Completely Different!"**

He was in ecstasy with a huge smile on his face as his wife moved forward, then backwards, forward, then backwards again..... back and forth...

She could feel the sweat on her forehead, between her breasts down the small of her back.

She was getting near to the end.

Her heart was pounding. Her face was flushed.

Then she moaned, softly at first, and then began to groan louder.

Finally, totally exhausted, she let out an almighty scream and shouted,

"Okay, Okay! I can't park the car! You do it you smug bastard!"

***Hehehe :-) See youse next month!!***



# RSAR Association Inc

## 2014 Christmas BBQ

**WHERE: KESWICK BARRACKS SERGEANTS MESS**  
**WHEN: SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER 1000 HRS - 1400 HRS**

**AMPLE FREE PARKING**

**ALL MEAT AND SALADS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BY  
THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

**ALL DRINKS CAN BE PURCHASED AT MESS PRICES ON  
THE DAY.**

**YOU NEED BRING ONLY YOURSELF AND YOUR WALLET**

For catering purposes please contact Norm Rathmann on  
[normgeelong@yahoo.com](mailto:normgeelong@yahoo.com) or 0448 460 884 before 1st Dec.



**ALL WELCOME, INCLUDING  
SERVING MEMBERS OF 10/27 Bn**