

February 2019



"Sitrep, Over!"

To Perpetuate the Regiment

RAAF Base Edinburgh Support Exercise

Late last year we were asked to once again provide catering support for the Battalion at the 1st exercise for the year. This year we did it a little differently, asking for assistance from the guys at SAMRA (South Australian Mounted Rifles Association) and the Royal Australian Engineers Association (3 Field Squadron RAE.) Like true Aussies all associations sent along some folk to help out, and we all banded together to work like a well oiled machine. Figures of between 200 and 300 soldiers

were banded around, and I think the only one who knew how many troops we had on the ground was God, and he wasn't saying. Suffice to say, we had sh*tloads of food, including sausages, meat patties, hamburgers, fried onions (Bunnings Specials) pasta salad, green salad, potato salad and curried eggs and rice. Followed by fruit salad and ice cream. ICE CREAM??? Yes, they had ice cream! The soldiers were asked for a gold coin donation, and some were very generous, so we thank you for that.



Inside this issue:

Catering for the Masses 2-5

Editorial 6

Humour 7

LCPL Francis Curran DCM 8-11

CPL Dave's Page 12



Special Points of Interest

- RAAF Base Edinburgh Support Exercise. Story and Pictures Page 1 to 5
- See Page 4 for Merchandise available.
- If you have any stories and/or pictures of a military nature, please send them to the Editor for publication. All input is appreciated.
- Check out the Murray Bridge RSL Museum on Facebook.



Bringing together enough folk to feed around 250 soldiers takes a lot of planning, and we're doing it better each time. Next time we'll be even better. We'd like to thank, from SAMRA, Reg Williams, Dirk Nieuwenhoven, Jim Szpunar, Bill McKeough, Grant Kirkpatrick, Peter Cornelius and Bob Ireland. From the RAE, Ken Daly, and Trevor Rainey, and from the RSARA Rod Beames, Alan Orrock, Colin Phillips, Norm & Lyn Tregenza, Graham & Julie Elliott, Andrew Oakley, Col Abel and yours truly David Laing.

Fees and Merchandise can be paid by EFT through the following Bendigo Bank account:

RSAR Association

BSB 633 000

Acc. 1616 585 88

Cheques etc can be mailed to David Hope at:

The Treasurer RSAR Association
20 Katoomba Rd

Beaumont SA 5066

RAAF Base Edinburgh Support Exercise.



RAAF Base Edinburgh Support Exercise.



Don't just stand there.....cater!!



Cook it and they will come!





Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc

RSAR Association Inc
The Secretary David Laing
Riverglenn Marina RSD 3152A
White Sands SA 5253

We're on the web

www.rsara.asn.au

Phone: 0407 791822

E-mail: davidlaing49@bigpond.com



Association Merchandise available



- Regimental Tie \$20 plus \$3 postage
- Lapel Badge \$10 plus \$3 postage
- Name Badge \$20 plus \$3 postage

Other items like Polo Tops, Stubby Holders and Engraved Timber Shields also available. POR.

The Secret of Life!

Have I got your attention now? Good!

We, the Old and Bold, the Bald and the Grey always like to end a year with a full compliment of members of the association, but that doesn't always happen. 2018 was the year we said farewell to old friend Trevor Phillips, whose memorial service was a standing-room-only celebration of his life, with many family, mates and colleagues remembering the good times with him.

One loss is always one too many, but we prepared ourselves for Christmas and the Festive Season with nary a thought for those who had gone before us to that "Great Regiment in the Sky!"

Christmas loomed and numbers were taken for catering purposes at the End of Year BBQ, when all of a sudden we received news that TWO of our members had passed away on the same day!

Brian Kilford from Mannum and Mark Mau from Willaston had both lost courageous battles within hours of each other. They probably never met, with Brian seeing most of his time with the 27th SA Scottish Rifles, and Mark holding many command positions within the Regiment. Both were laid to rest many kilometres apart, with our members attending both services.

On we went with our Christmas planning, but this time a little more wary of the sanctity of life, and how lucky we are to be given this gift.

A week later we received more devastating news that association Life Member Marc Ockenden had passed away suddenly after suffering a stroke at his home near Victor Harbour. His memorial service was also attended by many association members, some who had known Marc for nearly 50 years, and..... we moved on with our Christmas planning. And just when you thought Christmas was the biggest part of your life, another good soldier was taken. Graham Growden, known as Smiley to some and Growler to others, passed away 2 days after Christmas, leaving grieving family and friends all over the country.

Suddenly I had the urge to write this article, as it came to mind.

Those who depart this Earth, leave a gigantic hole in our lives which affects each of us differently. Families are the hardest hit, heading into their first Christmas without their main patriarch, the one who had always kept the family together. Friends and colleagues remembered the good times, and how they would cope without their mate during this season of festivities.

I think how lucky I am to be writing this as I sit in my office, and I wonder, not of who will mourn me when my time comes, but of who will care for those dear to me when I am gone.

Take the time to give the families left behind a call during the year, and let them know you still care for them. I will.

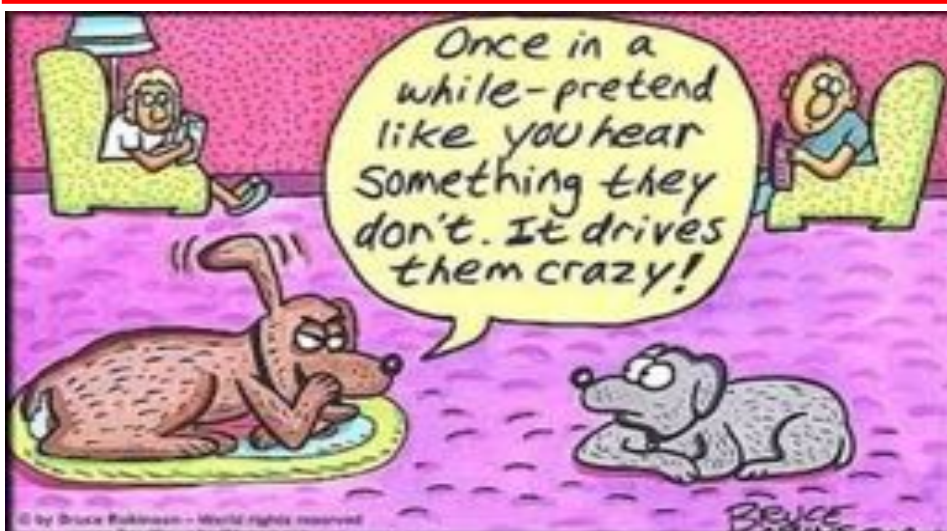
That is the secret of life!

David Laing - Editor

Oh Woe is me.....



My daughter used to be a Transport Supervisor in the Army. She loved this one!



Lance Corporal Francis Curran, DCM “The Bomber”

With the skill and athleticism of an A-grade cricketer, the khaki-clad figure repeatedly fielded the hissing bombs in mid air as they flew towards him. With no time to hesitate, yet with deadly accuracy, he hurled them back to their senders. Those missiles that managed to escape his agile hands fell spluttering to the trench floor, only to be smothered with a sandbag or flicked back over the parapet.

Francis Patrick Curran was born in Tenterfield, New South Wales, in 1887. On joining the workforce, he became a carter and postman by trade. Young Frank was also a very keen sportsman, excelling at football and boxing. In September 1914, Australia, now at war by virtue of being a member of the British Commonwealth, called for volunteers to join a military force to go to Europe to fight the German oppressors.

Like so many of the mates with whom he had attended school and played sport, Curran joined the queue at the local enlistment office. As a result of growing up in a country town and his choice of trade, Frank was a very competent horseman; it was therefore not surprising that he was assigned as a reinforcement to the 7th Light Horse Regiment (7 LHR).

The unit, as part of the 2nd Light Horse Brigade, departed Sydney by ship in late December 1914, bound for places Frank had only read about in his school geography books. The troops arrived at Mena Camp near Cairo in Egypt on 1 February 1915.



AWM P00152.020. Part of the Mena camp showing the proximity to the pyramids.

After months of intensive training in the hot, sandy conditions of the desert, the infantry battalions of the AIF were given the order to prepare to move.

They were fit, tanned and raring to go—in their minds they were invincible. As the trains carrying the troops to waiting ships pulled out from Cairo station, the departing Diggers shouted boisterously as they waved farewell to the light horsemen who were to remain behind. With shoulders slumped, a dejected Frank returned to the camp. (Initially, the light horsemen were considered unsuitable for Gallipoli, but were later sent as reinforcements, without their horses.)

The landing at Gallipoli did not go well for the Allies. In the early days of the war, the losses suffered by the infantry were severe; additional fresh forces were required to bolster the tiny beachhead before the ANZACs were pushed back into the sea.

To a man, the troopers of the light horse volunteered to double as infantry. They had come a long way to fight for their country—with or without their horses. Frank slammed home the bolt of his .303 rifle and threw his bandolier over his shoulder. Finally, it was the light horsemen's turn to show the Turks a thing or two. The 7 LHR disembarked at Gallipoli in late May—just in time to help repulse a series of savage attacks by the Turks. The troopers had barely reached the relative safety of the Australian trenches when they were suddenly exposed to a style of warfare they had not encountered before—nor been trained for in Australia or at the Mena Camp—hand-thrown missiles.

Grenades had not been issued to the landing force, so these were weapons that were unfamiliar to the ANZACs. However, the Turks had an endless supply of bombs—round black metal missiles, about the size of a cricket ball, with a few seconds' fuse. Initially, to retaliate, the soldiers had little option but to retrieve these bombs before they exploded and return them to their owners. However, it was not long before the resourcefulness of the Diggers led to 'homemade' bombs being manufactured on the beach, using jam tins filled with any available scraps of metal they could find.

Curran, now a lance corporal, soon showed the worth of his deadly throwing arm. His ability to catch the incoming bombs in mid air and to then launch the projectiles into the enemy lines with deadly accuracy became legendary. In their letters home, the troopers paid tribute to his bravery and the skill and audacity of his daring exploits.

By August, the campaign had developed into a prolonged war of attrition. In an attempt to break the stalemate, the British High Command devised a plan for a landing at Suvla Bay, while at the same time creating a series of diversions along the ANZAC lines to distract the Turks. These diversionary actions at Chunuk Bair, The Nek and Lone Pine—names that would become etched in history as places where so many heroic young Australian and New Zealand soldiers died—were scenes of some of the bloodiest battles fought on the Peninsula.

As the New Zealanders battled their way up the slopes of Chunuk Bair, the 8th and 10th Light Horse Regiments were suffering heavy casualties at The Nek. Wave after wave of ANZACs brandishing fixed bayonets charged the Turkish lines, only to be cut down by a wall of bullets. Each new line of attackers had to scramble over the dead bodies of mates who had been alive just a few minutes before. (In 1919, when a group of ANZACs returned to Gallipoli to give their dead a proper burial, at The Nek they found more than three hundred Australian bodies in an area smaller than a tennis court.)

Meanwhile, the infantry assault on the fortified trenches of Lone Pine was to continue for four days, mostly hand-to-hand fighting. On reaching the enemy trenches, the Diggers found them covered with thick pine logs. In some places, the attackers had to break through the roof with their bayonets, before dropping into the inky darkness of the trench to engage the defenders. No quarter was asked or given by either side. This protracted action resulted in the loss of more than two thousand Australians.



AWM G00267. Gallipoli 1915. Two soldiers sit beside a pile of empty tins cutting up barbed wire for jam tin bombs. The bombs were made near the beach, a spot popularly known as the 'bomb factory' near ANZAC Cove. All the old jam tins and other empty containers were used to make bombs which were filled with fragments of

The Bomber

Turkish shells and enemy barbed wire which had been cut into small lengths.

The 7th Light Horse was rushed in to consolidate the infantry gains. Curran immediately made his way to the unmanned forward trench, prepared to engage the enemy in a bombing duel, the action at which he excelled. The screams coming from the enemy positions indicated that his bombs were right on target. Two troopers rushed in to assist. Curran calmly turned to them in between throws and said, 'I can handle this, you just keep me supplied with the ammo'. Weaving along the length of the trench, Curran would light the fuse with one hand and throw with the other. At times he caught the Turkish bombs like a cricket ball in mid flight and threw them back before they exploded. However, some Turkish bombs did get through and, as they lay spluttering on the trench floor, Frank would either flick them over the lip of the trench or smother them with a sandbag. He kept this up for hours, unwilling to rest before the Turks withdrew. For his acts of bravery in the Lone Pine trenches, Curran was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. It was the first awarded to a member of the 7th.

Frank's daring exploits did not end at Lone Pine. In September, as a result of another hostile encounter with the enemy, he was Mentioned in Despatches. During this engagement he displayed exceptional bravery, impeding a Turkish bombing attack single handedly while in full view of the enemy.

Following the successful evacuation from Gallipoli in December 1915, the ANZAC forces were withdrawn to Egypt to rearm, reinforce and re-equip. The regiment became part of the ANZAC Mounted Division, joining the forces defending the Suez Canal against an anticipated invasion by the Turks across the Sinai Desert.

Curran, now a corporal, watched enviously as the infantry battalions boarded the ships to transport them to the Western Front. The light horsemen were to stay behind in Egypt to continue the fight against the Turks, but Frank was convinced the desert would become the backwater of the war.



AWM A02022. Australian troops in the Turkish Lone Pine trenches, captured on the afternoon of the 6 August 1915.



Today, in the immaculately kept Kantara War Memorial Cemetery, just a stone's throw from the Suez Canal, one can visit the final resting places of light horsemen who died in the desert campaigns of the Great War. Among them you will find a weather-beaten grave. Etched in the headstone are the words, In Memory of Corporal Francis Patrick Curran DCM.

The Bomber

He decided to take matters into his own hands, stowing away on a ship bound for France. Once there, he was sure that he would be able to secure a posting to the infantry. His mates tried to conceal his absence, but when the ship docked in Marseilles Curran was discovered. His dreams of staying in France were shattered when he was branded a deserter and returned to Egypt under close arrest. The news on his return to Egypt was that the

Turks had attacked the British garrisons at Katia and Oghratina, and that his regiment had gone into action to defend the vital Romani tableland. In doing so, the Mounted Division successfully halted the advance of the Turkish juggernaut as it swept towards the Suez Canal. Curran was spoiling for a fight. Seizing an opportunity, he escaped from his guard and made his way, unarmed, to the front line. On reaching the battlefield, despite having no weapon, he set about helping the stretcher-bearers with the casualties. Learning that some wounded troopers were still lying in no man's land in the blistering heat, Curran set forth on a one-man rescue mission.

Under heavy fire and with no protection, he carried the stranded Diggers back to the safety of his own lines. Time and time again, he braved enemy fire to collect yet another wounded comrade and drag him to safety.



AWM G01291. Gallipoli Peninsula, 17 December 1915. A delayed action device for firing a rifle by means of weights operated through water escaping from one tin into another. A rifle could be left to operate twenty minutes after the device was set. Six rifles were left by 3rd Brigade to fire following the departure of the last party

On Curran's fifteenth rescue sortie, a Turk fixed his rifle sight on the unarmed Digger and squeezed the trigger. In the blink of an eye, Frank Curran was dead—a bullet had pierced his heart.

CPL DAVE'S PAGE



A SHORT GUN STORY

A GUY WALKED INTO A CROWDED BAR, WAVING HIS UNHOLSTERED PISTOL AND YELLED, "I HAVE A 45 CALIBER COLT 1911 WITH A SEVEN ROUND MAGAZINE PLUS ONE IN THE CHAMBER AND I WANT TO KNOW WHO'S BEEN SLEEPING WITH MY WIFE."

A VOICE FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM CALLED OUT,

"YOU NEED MORE AMMO!!!"



My Dietician said I had to lose 20 kgs.
Great! Only 30 to go!

© 2000 Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com



"THE COMPUTER SAYS I NEED TO UPGRADE MY BRAIN TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH ITS NEW SOFTWARE."



"Dear Andy: How have you been?
Your mother and I are fine. We miss you.
Please sign off your computer and come downstairs for something to eat. Love, Dad."